Askesis

A Multi-Disciplinary Study Investigating A First Century Christian Concept.

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A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD Cardiff University
School of Religious and Theological Studies

September 2011.

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Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude and thanks to all members, past and present, of the School of Religious and Theological Studies for their support and encouragement during the time which I have spent with them and for their interest in the topic of this study. My grateful thanks are also extended to all the members of staff of the Arts and Humanities Library. Their efficiency, courteous assistance and friendliness have made possible the research for this study. To my supervisors, Professor Christine Trevett and Professor Josef Lössl, I owe a very deep debt of gratitude. Their advice, support and great encouragement, as well as their stimulating and enlightening comments, have been a constant source of help. I owe very special thanks to Tausif Rahman without whose expert computing skills I doubt whether this study would have seen the light of day. The vagaries in the formatting of the document are my responsibility.

Summary.

This study is an investigation of a concept of askesis in the life style of Jesus and his original followers in the Galilee in the first century of the present era. It has been undertaken because definitions of the term, asceticism, in much scholarly writings have been premised on a style of living associated with that of hermits and monks living in the third and fourth centuries CE.

Recent work on asceticism has opened up new avenues for consideration of this concept. However there is still little attention paid to the use of the Greek terms associated with ἀσκέω which had been in use in Greek writings for over a millennium prior to the era of the hermits and monks in the western world. These writings reveal that these terms embraced many meanings relating to behaviour and actions posited on the effort involved in fulfilling them. Chapter one of this study examines this group of cognate terms in order to establish a first century Christian concept of askesis which throws light on the way in which the Galilean followers of Jesus lived their lives in response to his teachings. One obstacle in this inquiry derives from the fact that ἀσκέω and its cognates do not appear in the Synoptic Gospels which remain the primary sources of evidence concerning Jesus and his followers. However, my studies have indicated the interconnectedness which existed in the eastern Mediterranean, of which the Galilee was part, in which over many centuries there had been a free flow of ideas and practices spearheaded by changes in administration and governance. This study proceeds on the assumption that in this region there were shared beliefs and values in the cultural and religious lives of its inhabitants in which Hellenism played no small part. Chapters two and three contextualise the cultural background in which Jesus and his Galilean followers lived. From that peculiar culture I examine two examples of ascetic practices, the writings of Qoheleth and the code of practice found in the Essene documents. Both exemplify an element in askesis, to be found early in the development of the concept, namely the counter cultural nature of the behaviour of the people involved.

Chapters four, five and six discuss the effect which the teachings of Jesus in the SM and the SP exercised on the lives of those who responded to his call. The ascetic nature of their response might be summed up in their voluntary acceptance of the demands of Jesus to undergo a new formation, the denial of self and love of one's

enemies. Chapter seven examines how these ascetic teachings were received by a later generation of followers (c. 100-200 CE). In the conclusion I sum up what I have attempted to argue in this study and suggest how the concept of askesis presented might contribute another dimension in ascetic living.

Contents.

Abbreviations

Apoc. Jas	Apocalypse of James
Apol	Justin Martyr, Apologia
ARN	Abot de Rabi Natan
Barn	Epistle of Barnabas
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CHJ	Cambridge History of Judaism
CD	Cairo Damascus Document
CUP	Cambridge University Press
Dial	Justin Martyr Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo
DL	Diogenes Laertius Lives of the Philosophers
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
CUP	Cambridge University Press
1QM	War Scroll
1QS	Manual of Discipline
11QT	Temple Scroll
ET	English Translation
Eus. d.e	Eusebius demonstratio evangelica
" *h.e*	" historia ecclesiastica
" *p.e*	" preparatio evangelica
G&R	Greece and Rome
GTh	Gospel of Thomas
HR	History of Religions
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
HUP	Harvard University Press
Hyp	(Philo) Hypothetica
I.Eph	(Ignatius) Letter to the Ephesians

I.Magn	" Letter to the Magnesians
I. Trall	" Letter to the Trallians
I. Philad	" Letter to the Philadelphians
I.Sm	" Letter to the Smyrneans
I.Pol	" Letter to Polycarp
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies
Jos. Ant	(Josephus) Antiquitates
" *BJ*	" Bellum Judaicum
" *Vita*	" Vita
" *Ap*	" Contra Apionem
JR	Journal of Religion
JSP	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KD	(Epicurus) Κύριαι Δόξαι
LCL	Loeb Classical Library series
LSJ	Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon
LXX	Septuagint
m ʿAbot	Mishnah ʿ Abot
Man	Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate
NEB	New English Bible
NovT	Novum Testamentum
NTS	New Testament Studies
OCD	Oxford Classical Dictionary
OTP	*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (J.H. Charlesworth, ed.)
OUP	Oxford University Press
pb	Paperback edition
Pol.Ep	Polycarp Letter to the Philadelphians
PL	Patrologia Latina
POxy	Oxyrhynchus Papyri

Rev.Bib	Revue Biblique
Rev.Q	Revue de Qumran
SBL(A)SP	Society of Biblical Literature (Advance) Seminar Papers
SC	Sources chrétiennes (Paris, Les éditions du Cerf.)
Semeia	Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies
SM	The Sermon on the Mount
SP	The Sermon on the Plain
Spec.Leg.	(Philo) De Specialibus Legibus
Str-B	Strack Billerbeck (H. L. Strack, P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*)
Studia Patristica	Papers delivered at the International Conferences on Patristic Studies, Oxford
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (G. Kittel *et al.*edd.)
Theo	(Hesiod) Theogony
T12P	Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
T Iss	Testament of Issachar
T Zeb	Testament of Zebulun
T Ben	Testament of Benjamin
T Asher	Testament of Asher
t Hullin	Tosefta Hullin
VC	Vigiliae Christianae
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Introduction to a study of Askesis.[1]

In most writings devoted to the study of askesis in the context of religious praxis there is rarely any discussion of its place in the life style of Jesus and his followers.[2] A possible reason for passing over this phenomenon in the formative period in the life of the communities of Jesus' followers might be found in the lack of any overt reference in the gospel accounts to concepts associated with ascetic living, such as ἄσκησις and its cognates[3] and ἐγκράτεια[4] and its cognates.

The silence in the gospel accounts has led to two interpretations concerning the life style of Jesus and his followers. First, their life style could not be considered ascetic if it could not be described in terms similar to those used to describe the lives of the desert fathers. This view sought support from the notion that there was no concept of ascetic living in the religious tradition and practice of the Jews. Such a view pays little attention to an ascetic tradition found amongst the Essenes and the Qumran community; however, we have no evidence that this tradition emphasised the rigorous and pain-inflicted practices found amongst the desert fathers.[5] Second, the lifestyle was presumed to have been ascetic because it was premised on the life and death of Jesus.[6]

A renewed interest in what is signified when the term askesis is used to denote a set of behaviours has led to questioning whether it is possible to define it by reference to a limited number of normative behaviours as is the case in the definition of asceticism which is posited on a set of behaviours

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[1] Throughout this study the anglicised form of the Greek term ἄσκησις will be used. It has been adopted to avoid nuances attached to the English translation of the term, asceticism.

[2] In this study the term "followers" refers to those early associates of Jesus who were with him during his ministry in the Galilee.

[3] ἀσκέω the verbal form is found in *Acts* 24:16.

[4] For the use of ἐγκράτεια see *Acts* 24:25; *Gal.* 5:23; 2 *Pt.* 1:6; for the use of the verbal form see 1 *Cor.* 7:9; 9:25; for the use of the adjectival form see *Tit.* 1:18.

[5] The ascetic practices of the Essenes and the Qumran community will be discussed in chapter three.

[6] See J. Lachowski, "Asceticism (in the New Testament)," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia,* Vol. 1, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967) 937-938. See also W. Kaelber on the imitation of Christ's suffering in Catholic Christianity in *Encyclopedia of Religion,* Vol. 1, (New York: Macmillan, 1987) 443.

manifested at a particular time and place, in this instance the actions of the desert fathers and early monastics. It is my view that such a set of behaviours does not allow for an adequate description of the ascetic life style of Jesus and his followers for the evidence is lacking of a similarity between their behaviour and that of the desert fathers and monastics. To obviate any difficulty which might arise in retrojecting patterns of behaviour which are found in the third and fourth centuries to the first century CE, it is my intention to examine the growth in meaning of the verb ἀσκέω and its cognates in Greek literature from the Homeric period to the first century of the present era and to consider three aspects in the life of Jesus and his followers which, in the light of that examination, might be viewed as ascetic practices. These are (1) their [re]formation as followers of Jesus,[7] (2) their marginalisation and the shrinking of their social self,[8] and (3) the commandment to them "to love their enemies."[9] In arriving at this view my thinking has been influenced by the theories of askesis expressed by Richard Valantasis,[10] Kallistos Ware[11] and William Deal;[12] these theories will be discussed in chapter one.[13]

Before discussing the methodology to be adopted in the examination of the behaviour, actions and teachings of Jesus and his followers, and of the implications of applying to their lifestyle the concept of askesis, it is necessary to deal with the difficulties which have arisen in discussing that life style from an ascetic perspective. In considering the nature of the evidence available it becomes clear that the Synoptic Gospels provide little evidence that Jesus and his earliest followers pursued an ascetic lifestyle in the accepted meaning of that term.[14] In the eyes of his critics, the Pharisees

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[7] The [re]formation of the followers of Jesus is discussed in chapter four below.
[8] Chapter five below contains a discussion on marginalisation and the shrinking of the social self.
[9] See below chapter six on the love of one's enemies.
[10] Valantasis, R, "Constructions of Power in Asceticism," in *JAAR* 63 (1995), 775-821; Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas,* (London: Routledge, 1997); Valantasis, "Is the Gospel of Thomas Ascetical?" in *JECS* 7 (1999), 55-81.
[11] Ware, K, "The Way of the Ascetics: Negative or Affirmative?" in *Asceticism,* (edd.) V. Wimbush & R. Valantasis, (New York / Oxford: OUP, 1995) 3-15.
[12] Deal, W, "Toward a Politics of Asceticism," in *Asceticism,* 424-442.
[13] See the section in chapter one entitled, 'An Alternative View'.
[14] In using the phrase "the accepted meaning" I am referring to the meaning of asceticism generally used in some of the definitions to be found in chapter one, which relate to the life style of monks and hermits of a later period. See Stephen Patterson in "Askesis and the Early Jesus Tradition," in

and their supporters, Jesus together with his disciples is described as a "loose liver"

> Look a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.[15]

Mary Ann Tolbert in an article on *Mark* as ascetic discourse examines the accepted categories of ascetic behaviour, - withdrawal, temptation, demonology, purification, renunciation, suffering and persecution.[16] Of course it would be possible to assert that these elements have a part in the accounts of the lives of Jesus and his followers. But it is still necessary to examine whether they lived ascetically. The era in which Mark's audience lived was such that to be a follower of Jesus exposed him/her to the risk of losing one's life willingly. Tolbert comments:

> [T]his aspect of direct self-choice of suffering is one of the sharpest ways to distinguish the "ascetic" themes of Mark from the asceticism of later Christianity.[17]

At the time of Jesus and his followers their suffering resulted from persecution; it was not "self-chosen."[18] Therefore in looking at askesis in their case it seems necessary to put aside the established view of asceticism, that is, of the third/fourth centuries CE, which privileged the accepted category of ascetic practices noted above. Some of the language may be found in the gospels; the situation described by that language is "drastically different."[19]

The difficulty arising from the paucity of evidence is further exacerbated by the nature of the evidence which we possess in the Synoptic Gospels. The process of redaction which has taken place in the compiling and transmission of these texts is the object of a great deal of examination, discussion and controversy among critical scholars. The scholarship with

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Asceticism and the New Testament, (edd.) L.E. Vaage & V. Wimbush, (New York /London: Routledge, 1999) on the dilemma of discussing Jesus and his early followers in relation to askesis. 49.

[15] *Lk.* 7: 33-34.

[16] Tolbert, M.A, "Asceticism and Mark's Gospel," in *Asceticism and the New Testament,* 35-42.

[17] Tolbert, "Asceticism," 45.

[18] See *Mk.*10:29-30 for the rewards of following Jesus. "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age – houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with *persecutions* – and in the age to come eternal life." (my italics).

[19] Tolbert, "Asceticism," 45.

which the studies relating to the establishment of the texts of the Synoptic Gospels have been carried out has been important in increasing our understanding of the provenance of the source and its development in the gospel accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus. The major area of this present study examines the sayings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Plain in *Luke* and the Sermon on the Mount in *Matthew* as the foundational teachings for the ascetical life style of his early followers.[20] Throughout this study reference will be made to the reliance of both *Matthew* and *Luke* on the hypothetical source *Q*.[21]

Since Jesus and his earliest followers were Jews it is necessary to examine the assumption held in some Jewish quarters that ascetic practices are contrary to the obligation laid on Jews in their observance of Torah. In accordance with the Law Jews were commanded to procreate.

> God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it."[22]

Consequently there has grown up in some Jewish circles a belief that a life style which embraced forms of celibacy was contrary to the command of God. A discussion as to whether there has been a place in Jewish religious practice for any form of askesis is to be found in chapter two of this study.[23]

In the light of my decision to evaluate the ascetical practices of Jesus and his followers in a "historio-critical context" (Deal's phrase, see chapter one below) my examination of the long history of the use of the Greek terms, ἀσκέω and its cognates might be open to criticism. But my awareness of that long history, in which ἡ ἄσκησις was used with various shades of meaning, allows me to see how these developments have affected the concepts which it is used to describe. This heuristic approach, I believe,

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[20] The two versions of the sayings of Jesus in these sermons, each with its own emphases, might provide evidence of what Deal states as an important factor in any consideration of askesis, namely that ascetic practice only has meaning in relation to its context. Cf. Tolbert's statement above that the first audiences of Mark's gospel lived in a very different world from that of their later successors.

[21] A detailed account of the history of Q research by J.M. Robinson is to be found in the introduction to *The Critical Edition of Q,* (edd.) J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S.Kloppenborg, (Minn.: Fortress Press / Leuven: Peeters, 2000) xix-lxxi.

[22] Gen, 1:28. See also m.Yebamoth, 6:6, No man may abstain from keeping the Law, "Be fruitful and multiply." *The Mishnah,* (ed.) H. Danby, (London: OUP, 1933) 227.

[23] See chapter two, passim, where the Jewishness of Jesus is discussed.

allows for a more nuanced application of the term, askesis, in relation to the way in which Jesus and his Galilean followers lived their lives.

It is important to remember that the ambience in which Jesus and his followers lived was Jewish. Therefore it might be feasible to argue that the teachings of Jesus, and by association those of his disciples, constituted one of the many varieties of Judaism about which Steven Fraade was writing when he posed the following question:

> The question is not: "Is ancient Judaism ascetic or not ascetic?" But: "Is asceticism manifested and responded to in the ancient varieties of Judaism...? [24]

In the discussion of the relevance of this question to the lives of Jesus and his followers it is my intention to adapt the model used by Michael Satlow to define Judaism.[25]

An Analysis of Satlow's Model and Its Relevance for the Present Study.

In the light of what Satlow considers to be the tendency in most academic writing to avoid an examination of the question, "What is Judaism?" [26] he attempts to define it. His basic premise is set out in his abstract.

> Despite the wide scholarly recognition and dissatisfaction with the first-order essentialism inherent in the academic study of individual "religions" or "traditions," scholars have been slower to develop nonessentialist models that take seriously both the plurality of religious communities that all identify as part of the same religion and the characteristics that allow these communities to see themselves as members of a single "religion." This article, building on earlier work by Jacob Neusner[27] and Jonathan Z. Smith,[28] attempts to develop a polythetic model for Judaism that has implications not only for the study and teaching of "Judaism" but more broadly also for how scholars might develop individual "traditions" as useful second-order categories of analysis.

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[24] Fraade, S. "Ascetical Aspects of Ancient Judaism," in *Jewish Spirituality,* Vol. 1. (ed.) A Green, (New York: Crossroad, 1986) 253-288 (257).

[25] Satlow, M. " Defining Judaism: Accounting for Religions," in *JAAR* 74. 4 (2006), 837-860.

[26] Satlow, "Defining Judaism". See the list of those scholars whom he considers to have side-stepped the issue of definition, 838-839.

[27] Neusner, J. *The Way of Torah: An Introduction to Judaism,* (Belmont CA.:Wadsworth.1993[5]). See Satlow's comments on Neusner's theory in "Defining Judaism," 843-845.

[28] Smith, J.Z. *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown,* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1982). Smith's "polythetic" model is derived from biological classificatory schemes, (2-5). See Satlow's comment on Smith's development of this model in "Defining Judaism," 845-846.

Important to the development of Satlow's theory is what he describes as his "overarching model."

> A community's "Judaism" is not made by a collection of texts or norms but by historically and socially situated human beings who engage, filter, and activate their traditions according to their local understandings... "Judaism" as such has no history. Jewish communities, of course, do have histories, but their diverse religious understandings cannot be linked into a cohesive narrative of second-order abstraction. Each of the three maps is, first and foremost, an investigation or charting of ways in which specific, historical Jewish communities choose, highlight, and discard parts of their received tradition (both textual and behavioral) to build their religious understandings. This model understands diversity not as deviance from the norm but the inevitable result of real communities making sense, in their own settings, of disembodied tradition.[29]

Satlow's model would provide a very useful basis for the study of the origins of early Christianity as one of those Judaisms, but my intention is to use the model in an attempt to discuss whether it is possible to apply the term askesis to the lifestyle adopted by Jesus and his early followers. I hold the view that the model has much in it to allow for its use, mutatis mutandis, in the examination of beliefs and practices on the part of Jesus and his followers which might be described as ascetic.

Amongst the issues raised in Satlow's model, of significance for the present study are the following: (1) his comment on the implications of the difficulty of linking "diverse ...understandings into a coherent narrative of second-order abstraction," (2) his emphasis on what he terms "historically and socially situated human beings who engage, filter and activate their traditions according to their local understandings," and (3) his recognition that diversity is not "deviance from the norm but the inevitable result of real historical communities making sense, in their settings, of disembodied

[29]Satlow, "Defining Judaism, *846.* Commenting on the "three maps" Satlow writes, "A polythetic description of Judaism, I suggest, comprises of three maps that for heuristic purposes I would label, Israel, discursive tradition, and practice." See also Smith, *Imagining Religion;* "We need to map the variety of Judaisms, each of which appears as a shifting cluster of characteristics which vary over time." 18.

traditions."[30] These broad issues will be commented upon in greater detail in the relevant chapters of this study.

The theories of Valantasis, Ware and Deal, which are mentioned above, can be accommodated within a model similar to that outlined in Satlow's article. In this model Satlow describes the ways in which specific Jewish communities reacted to their "received traditions"[31] in the construction of their religious understanding. It is my view that Satlow's views are similar to Valantasis' description of askesis as a phenomenon which changes what happens in an environment in which "received traditions" are subject to a community's questioning of them. For such questioning results in changes affecting the self-understanding of people, their relations with others and their perception of the symbolic universe. Deal, in part, is also echoing Satlow's model when he expresses the view that

> ascetic practice transforms a person's status within the web of complex social and political relationships and rearranges the power and authority brokered within these relationships in culturally significant ways.[32]

The followers of Jesus, having been evicted from their families and communities because of their adherence to the teachings of Jesus, assumed a new transformed status in their new communities, albeit fictive ones.[33] It is in these new groups, outside the natural communities, that one would look for evidence of ascetic behaviour. Where it is evidenced either as the behaviour of Jesus or that of his followers it is characterised as deviant.[34] Satlow makes a comment that in the local understandings of Judaism there were elements of counter culture or, as he expresses it, diversity rather than "deviance from the norm." The "disembodied tradition," of which he writes,

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[30] Cf. Satlow's model with Deal's thesis on the nature of ascetical behaviour in his article, "Politics of Asceticism." "Asceticism has meaning not as behaviour unto itself, but in relationship to behaviors that are conceived of as different from, or in opposition to, or complimentary (*sic*) to it. Thus there is no essential meaning to asceticism, but only its meanings in different contexts."428

[31] These "received traditions" are those contained in their sacred writings and continually reinterpreted in the responses to them by people.

[32] Deal, W.E. "Politics of Asceticism," 429.

[33] See *Mk.* 3:34-35, for Jesus' formulation of a "fictive" family. "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

[34] *Mt.* 11:19; 12:1-8; *Mk.* 2:5-7; 7:1-5; *Lk.* 6:6-11.

can be traced in the reaction of the followers of Jesus to the prevailing religious and cultural ethos of their day.

Ware's emphasis on the discipline element in askesis resonates throughout Satlow's model, although he does not allude directly to it. He suggests that those who are part of those individual "Judaisms" should constantly keep in mind how they should interpret their traditions in order to reflect them in their practices. But ultimately it is the scholar's discipline which is important. As Satlow writes in the concluding section of his essay,

> The core issue with which I struggle throughout this essay is the tension inherent in understanding "a religion" as a unified tradition in light of the diversity in the thought and practice of actual lived religious communities.[35]

Such a concern should constantly be that of a commentator on the askesis of Jesus and his followers.

Within the context summarised above from the writings of Valantasis, Ware, Deal and Satlow it is my intention to examine three elements which I consider indicate the presence of askesis in the life style of Jesus and his followers. They are:

1. The (re)formation which the early followers of Jesus experienced. (See *Lk.*SP. 6:39-45, and part two of chapter four of this study.)
2. The denial of self seen within the context of the marginalisation follow Jesus. (See chapter five.)
3. The acceptance of Jesus' command to love one's enemies. (See chapter six.)

The voluntary acceptance of these practices as part of their life style might be seen as the distinguishing marks of their 'new' life. Other practices described as ascetic, such as sexual abstinence and fasting, might be in accordance with obligations laid on adherents of religious cults.[36]

Summary of chapter contents.

In order to analyse the factors which might lead to the development of an ascetic life style amongst the followers of Jesus I have adopted a

[35] Satlow, "Defining Judaism," 854.
[36] Jesus' comments in the SM indicated his criticism of many of the cultic practices of Judaism in his time. See *Mt.* 5:21-6:18.

diachronic approach to the study in an attempt to establish a meaning of askesis which takes into consideration the usage of the term from its earliest recorded use in Homeric literature. Such an approach will also indicate the existence of ascetic living in the period of second temple Judaism prior to the era under discussion in this study. For this purpose the study is divided into two parts. Part One, consisting of chapters one to three, will trace the use of the term askesis in Greek writings to the end of the first century CE and will review evidence whether there existed a concept of askesis in Jewish and Judaeo-Hellenistic writings and in the life style of Jewish groups. Part Two, consisting of chapters four to seven, will be concerned with the "ascetic" teachings of Jesus and their effects on the lives of his followers, concluding with an account of the reception of these teachings in the writings of the early church fathers.

Chapter one consists of a survey of the use in ancient Greek, Hellenistic and Judaeo-Hellenistic literature down to the end of the first century CE of ἀσκέω and its cognates which include the term ἡ ἄσκησις (askesis). It attempts to discover how the basic concept of this group of words was used and developed in different genres of Greek writings. It indicates the various nuances in its usage from a disciplined approach to manual tasks to its application in the sphere of military training and to the description of a way of living, sometimes to a religious way of life. It will also include a discussion on some modern perceptions of askesis to be found in scholarly writings, particularly those from the second half of the twentieth century and the first decade of this century.

Chapter two is an attempt to contextualise the life style of Jesus and his Galilean followers in a Jewish ethos. This entails a brief survey of the social, political and religious history of the Jews during the Hellenistic period as reflected in one of the writings contained in the Hebrew Scriptures. As a paradigm of the reaction to the changes which affected the Jews and Judaism in the Hellenistic period I shall discuss some of thoughts of the writer of *Qoheleth* which are to be found in the canon of Hebrew Scripture. The equivocal place which it has in that canon and in that of the Christian churches makes it an interesting insight into the changes in Jewish

belief and practice upon which the author was commenting in the third century BCE.

Jesus and his followers were Galileans; therefore, this chapter will also assess the impact of the Galilee on their relationship with Judaism and will attempt to place Jesus and his followers within that context.

Chapter three provides an overview of the mode of life which the Essenes including the members of Qumran community adopted. Their importance to this study relating to the presence of ascetical practices amongst the followers of Jesus rests on two salient facts. They were in existence during the first century CE, and so they can be considered as being contemporaneous with the early groups of Jesus' followers. Further we possess two types of evidence concerning the ways in which these groups lived their lives. We have primary evidence contained in the Dead Sea documents which describe the organisation, the rules and life style of the groups. Secondary evidence is to be found in the writings of three near contemporaries of these groups, Philo, Josephus and Pliny the Elder. This chapter reviews this secondary evidence in the light of the writings found in the Dead Sea documents. It examines what influence these sectarian groups might have had on Jesus and his followers.

Chapter four discusses the importance of the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain as key to the ethical teaching of Jesus. This importance has been recognised since the time of the church fathers; the chapter, therefore, includes a discussion of the salient points in the history of the importance of these sermons. It develops a discussion on the counter-cultural position which arises in these discourses from a criticism of the beliefs and practices of the Jews, for such a counter-cultural stance is viewed by many commentators as an important element in ascetic practices. The chapter explores the relevance of the metaphors of salt and light in SM 5:13-16 in encapsulating the role and task of Jesus' followers and it interprets the process of their (re)formation, described in SP 6:39-45, as an ascetic practice.

The evidence from the Synoptic Gospels concerning the decision of the followers of Jesus to separate from their families and communities in answer to his call is examined in chapter five. It analyses some theories of

marginalisation and the question of deviance on the part of those who by their actions separate themselves from the honour and shame ethos which exemplified the culture of the eastern Mediterranean. In an examination of what modern descriptions of marginalisation mean, for example, Mack's description, that it is "the pain of social formation"[37] and Malina's theory of the "shrinking of the social self,"[38] there is a comparison with the descriptions found in the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas concerning the experiences of the followers of Jesus. These descriptions of what marginalisation entails make clearer the paradoxical nature of the makarisms in the Sermons.

The first part of chapter six considers the central teaching of the Sermons, namely the command to love one's enemies. It examines aspects of the behaviour of ancient communities in the eastern Mediterranean which conditioned the ways in which people related to each other in their own communities and with those outside. It discusses the attitudes of advocates for, and critics of, the law of equal retribution (ius talionis), the practice of reciprocity in the relationship of friends, and the treatment of those deemed to be enemies.

The second part of the chapter is an attempt to see how far and in what way the application of the commandment to love one's enemies and of the group of sayings calling for non-violence and non-resistance might have affected the life style of Jesus and his followers. For this purpose the explication of these sayings by Richard Horsley[39] and Aaron Milavec[40] respectively provide a basis for discussion and comparison. The chapter ends with an assertion that the difficulties of applying the radical nature of these sayings to one's life style, at whatever level they operated, whether locally or nationally, involved a counter-cultural approach to the resolution of hatred and violence which can be described as an ascetic practice.

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[37] Mack, B.L, "Q and the Gospel of Mark: Revisiting Christian Origins," in *Early Christianity, Q and Jesus,* Semeia 55, (edd.) J.S, Kloppenborg & L.E. Vaage, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991) 17.
[38] Malina, B, "Pain, Power, and Personhood: Ascetic Behavior in the Ancient Mediterranean," in *Asceticism,*(162-177).
[39] Horsley, R.A, "Ethics and Exegesis: 'love your enemies' and the Doctrine of Non-Violence," in *JAAR,* 54/1 (1986), 3-31.
[40] Milavec, A, "The Social Setting of 'Turning the Other Cheek' and 'Loving One's Enemies' in light of the Didache," *BTB* 25 (1995), 131-143.

Chapter seven contains an account of the reception of these sayings of Jesus in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists. The intention in this chapter is to examine what influence these sayings might have had on the attitude of early Christian groups in the period up to the third century CE.

Amongst the writings considered in this chapter is the *Didache.* Although it is to be found in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers[41] it is analysed separately on account of the complexity of its text and of the difficulty which this complexity causes for its dating.

The conclusion will provide a summary of the thesis together with some thoughts on the nature of the concept of askesis discussed in this study and its relevance in the twenty-first century.

[41] The *Didache* appears in the collection of the Apostolic Fathers edited in the LCL by Kirsopp Lake in 1912. In the introduction to that edition he wrote that "[t]he name of 'Apostolic Fathers' is so firmly established by usage that it will certainly never be abandoned; but it is not altogether a satisfactory title for a collection of writings to which it is given." (vii). In a new LCL edition, published in 2003, the editor, B.D. Ehrman, whilst recognising the anomaly of the title of the collection writes "the collection continues to serve a valuable purpose in providing the earliest noncanonical writings of authors who were forbears of what was to become, some centuries after their day, Christian orthodoxy." (1).

Part One

Chapter One

The Use of 'Ασκέω and its Cognates in Greek.

Introduction.

This study is concerned with the formulation of a thesis about practices in the life style of Jesus and his early followers which might be described as ascetic. In order to do this it is my intention to consider the use of the term *askesis* (ἄσκησις). This term is used in order to avoid certain nuances with which the term 'asceticism' is frequently associated in scholarly literature on this subject. It is not my intention to enter a discussion about asceticism and the role of the body and sexuality. In formulating this study I am aware that the meaning of asceticism which developed later has influenced perceptions of what the use of this term implies.[42] To clarify my approach I shall begin with an examination of the uses associated with this term and its cognates in early Greek, Hellenistic, Judaeo-Hellenistic, and Neoplatonic literary practices.[43]

The approach which I intend to take in this overview presents the following problems:

1. Over such a long period of time the meaning attached to terms expands with the addition of new concepts which, it is considered, may be embraced within the meaning.
2. The period under consideration was marked by significant social and cultural changes which affected the civilisation of the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean.
3. While it is possible to mark the use of these terms in the context of Greek and Hellenistic texts, it is more difficult to trace their usage in Judaeo-Hellenistic literature particularly in the early period.

[42] The reception of this term is best illustrated in the nuances which attach to the English word 'asceticism'. In the literature commenting on asceticism in the third and fourth centuries of the common era emphasis has traditionally been placed on monastic celibacy and sexual abstinence. See Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity,* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2008).

[43] Neoplatonic Literature is included in this study because some literature of that period might be considered to have influenced later ascetic practices in the lives of hermits and early monastics.

4. This study is concerned with the concept of askesis as manifested in the life style of Jesus and his followers. However an examination of both the Synoptic Gospels as part of the corpus of Judaeo-Hellenistic literature, and the literature which constitute the canon of the New Testament, indicates that the term ἄσκησις was not employed. In only one instance, in *Acts* 24:15-16, is the verb form, ἀσκῶ, used.

   I have a hope in God...that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. Therefore I *do my best* always to have a clear conscience toward God and all people. (my italics).

   ἐλπίδα ἔχων εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἣν ... ἀνάστασιν μέλλειν ἔσεσθαι δικαίων τε καὶ ἀδίκων, ἐν τούτῳ καὶ αὐτὸς *ἀσκῶ* ἀπρόσκοπον συνείδησιν ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διὰ παντός.[44]

In his article on ἐγκράτεια Walter Grundman makes a distinction between its use as part of the terminology describing the ethical conduct of the Greek and Hellenistic world and the belief of biblical man. This distinction has relevance for any consideration of askesis in the lives of the followers of Jesus. If belief in the gift of salvation left no place for an askesis which merited salvation, then it might be argued that those original followers of Jesus lived the sort of life which cannot be categorised according to the received typology of ascetic practice on which Grundman would seem to have premised his distinction. I consider that the history of the uses of ἀσκέω and its cognates prior to the first century CE allows for a discussion of other grounds on which a theory of ascetic practices might be developed in relation to the way in which the followers of Jesus responded to his life and teachings.

[44] It is of interest to point out the Walter Grundman was aware the term ἐγκράτεια, which developed strong ascetic overtones is rarely found in the New Testament canon. He cited the following passages: *Acts* 24:25; *Gal.* 5:23; 2 *Pt.* 1:6. See W. Grundman, "'Εγκράτεια" in *TDNT*, vol.2, 342.

The Use of 'Ασκέω and its Cognates in Early Greek Literature. [45]

The examination of these terms has it beginnings in the works of Homer. Initially they are limited to the use of the present tenses and participles of the finite verb ἀσκέω and the adjectival form ἀσκήτος. They described the work and effort on the part of a doer involved in using raw materials. Also involved in their use was the sense that a task had been completed with technical and artistic proficiency, whether it indicated the skill of a craftsman in shaping the horn involved in constructing Pandarus' bow.

> The horns [of the ibex]...*were worked on* by a craftsman in horn, who fitted and smoothed all with care and set on them a tip of gold.[46]

or the more intricate work involved in the construction of Odysseus' bed which was constructed around the trunk of an olive tree growing in the spot where Odysseus chose to build his bedroom.[47] The verb was also used to describe more domestic tasks such as the work of an old woman,

> a wool-comber who was accustomed to card beautiful wool (ἤσκειν εἴρια καλά) for Helen when she lived in Sparta.[48]

Eurycleia, Telemachus' nurse, picked up his discarded garment and smoothed out (ἀσκέω) the creases in it.[49] Hesiod used the adjectival form ἀσκητός when advising those who worked out of doors to wear a felt cap, skilfully made to keep the rain out of their ears.[50]

Dressler described as "a significant development" the meaning of ἀσκέω found in a fragment attributed to Heraclitus, who flourished c. 500

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[45] Dressler, H. *The Usage of 'Ασκέω and its Cognates in Greek Documents to 100 A.D,* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1947). I shall use Dressler's phrase "'Ασκέω and its cognates," in the discussion of the use of these terms in Greek literature.

[46] Homer, *Iliad,* 4:110-11. καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀσκήσας κεραοξόος ἤραρε τέκτων
πᾶν δ' εὖ λειήνας χρυσέην ἐπέθηκε κορώνην.
Cf. Hesiod, *Theo,* 580-581.

[47] Homer, *Od,* 23:192-204.

[48] Homer, *Iliad,* 3:387-388.

[49] Homer, *Od.* 1:437-439.

[50] Hesiod, *Opera,* 549-550. Cf. Xenophanes' use to describe the skilful preparation of unguents to dress the hair (of men) in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* Vol. 1, (5th edn.), (edd.) H. Diels and W. Kranz, (Berlin: Buckhandlung, 1934), 130, frg.3; E.T. K. Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), 21, frg. 3.

BCE. Its use clearly concerned the pursuit of a particular course of action. It describes Pythagoras' devotion to the pursuit of knowledge.

> Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchus, practised (ἀσκέω) research most of all men, and making extracts of these treatises he compiled a wisdom of his own, an accumulation of learning, a harmful craft.[51]

In the plays of the Greek tragedians the verb was used to convey the idea of disciplining oneself in the performance of a task. Electra in Sophocles' play of the same name was urged to strive (to train herself - ἀσκέω) always to hold fast to what she intended to do[52] and in a Sophoclean fragment the perfect participle active of ἀσκέω was used to describe a habit. It referred to men who were in the habit of talking.[53] A similar usage indicating a practice which developed into a habit can be seen in Euripides' *Hippolytus.* Hippolytus was accused by his father Theseus of habitually (ἀσκέω) paying more honour to himself than to his parents.[54] In the *Bacchae* a wise man was characterised as one who practised gentleness of temper and control.[55]

As the corpus of this early Greek literature expanded the verb ἀσκέω and the adjective ἀσκητός acquired new meanings. In the poetry of Pindar the verb was used to express reverence/worship of the gods or to pay homage to those who had achieved success in athletic competitions.[56]

In the early period in the development of Greek literature there appears no evidence of the use of the abstract nouns, ἄσκησις and ἄσκημα, denoting a practice, and ἀσκητής, as one who

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[51] Diels and Kranz, *Fragmente,* Vol.1. 180, frg. 129. E.T. Freeman, 33, 129
Πυθαγόρας Μνησάρχου ἱστορίην ἠσκησεν ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πάντων καὶ ἐκλεξάμενος ταύτας τὰς συνγραφὰς ἐποιήσατο ἑαυτοῦ σοφίην, πολυμαθίην, κακοτεχνίην.
[52]Sophocles, *Electra,* (ed.) A.C.Pearson, (Oxford:OUP, 1924(1957[8])) 1024 ἄσκει τοιαύτη νοῦν δι'αἰῶνος μένειν.
[53]See A. Nauck *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (2nd edn.), (Leipzig: 1889), 335: frg. 878, οἱ γὰρ γύνανδροι καὶ λέγειν ἠσκηκότες.
[54]Euripides, *Hippolytus,* (trans.) A.S. Way, Vol. 4. LCL, (London: Heinemann / New York: Macmillan 1912) 1080-1081.
[55]Euripides, *Bacchae,* (trans.) A.S.Way, Vol.3. LCL, 641..See also *Bacchae* 476 and *Supplices* 87 in the same volume.
[56]See *Olympian Ode* 9 in *Pindar,* Vol. 1. *Olympian Odes and Pythian Odes,* and *Nemean Odes,* 9: 11 in Vol. 2 *Nemean Odes and Isthmian Odes,* (trans.) W. H. Race, LCL, (Cambridge Mass. /London: HUP, 1997)

practises a skill or trade. This gives rise to speculation that in the early period the concern of writers in using the verb and adjective had to do with practical pursuits. It was the growth of prose writing which marked the use of these nouns.

In the prose writers of the fifth century BCE two meanings in the use of ἀσκέω and its cognates became apparent. One concerned the training of oneself or the disciplining of oneself in the performance of some activity, for example, athletics. Herodotus' use of ἀσκέω marks a significant development in its meaning when ἐπασκέω, a compound of ἀσκέω, was used to describe the training of soldiers in warlike pursuits.[57] The second meaning arose from the use of the verb to convey a particular course of action involving a moral decision. When Darius sought advice on what he should do at Thermopylae, he consulted Demaratus who told the king that it was his [Demaratus'] greatest and chief endeavour to practise truthfulness, or simply to tell the truth in the royal presence.[58]

In the later decades of the fifth century and the early part of the fourth training and the pursuit of a particular course of action were the predominant ideas in the use of ἀσκέω and its cognates particularly in the writings of philosophers. In Plato's dialogue *Laches,* Socrates posed a question to Milesias as to whose advice he would seek about how his son should be trained, τί χρή ἀσκεῖν; Socrates suggested two possibilities which might provide answers to the question he posed: to be persuaded either by the majority or by someone "who might have been educated and trained under a good instructor.[59] In the *Republic,* a manual for the training of those who would be guardians, Socrates had much to say about training and practice not only of the guardians but also of the citizens. While guardians were exempted from always telling the truth on the grounds of a city's safety and

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[57] Herodotus, 2. 166. 2. Dressler writes that this passage was the first occasion of the use of the verb in connection with military training, a usage which became frequent in later writings.(10). οὐδὲ τούτοισι ἔξεστι τέχνην ἐπασκῆσαι οὐδεμίαν ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐς πόλεμον ἐπασκέουσιν μοῦνα, παὶς παρὰ πατρὸς ἐκδεκόμενος.

[58] Herodotus 7. 209. 2. ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὴν ἀληθείην ἀσκέειν ἀντία σεῦ, ὦ βασιλεῦ, ἀγὼν μέγιστός ἐστι.

[59] Plato, *Laches,* 184E, (trans.) W.R. Lamb, Vol. 1. LCL, (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP / London: Heinemann, 1924(1967[4])); ἐκείνῳ, ὅστις τυγχάνοι ὑπὸ παιδοτρίβῃ ἀγαθῷ πεπαιδευμένος καὶ ἠσκηκώς.

welfare, citizens were to consider it a crime for whatever reason not to do so. For that reason Socrates said that a young man who was in training should not deceive his trainer concerning his physical health.[60]

Plato also used ἀσκέω in relation to the pursuit of some virtue or excellence. In his dialogue *Gorgias* a discussion took place concerning doing wrong or suffering wrong. On the issue of not doing wrong, the question was asked whether merely not wishing to do wrong would suffice, since in that case a person would not do it, or whether it required that the person should also provide himself with power or art "since, unless he had such learning and training, he would do wrong."[61]

By this time in the writings of both historians and philosophers the primacy of meaning attached to ἀσκέω and its cognates was located in the concepts of training and the pursuit of some objective, and associated with these was the need for a disciplined approach to their fulfilment. Amongst the historians, such as Xenophon, these terms were closely linked with the importance of training in warfare.

> I say these things to be so if your soldiers are physically in good training, if their hearts are well steeled and the arts of war well studied.[62]

Throughout the *Cyropaedia* Xenophon pointed to the efforts which Cyrus made to develop the physical strength of his soldiers and to instil in them the thought that by being well-drilled (εὖ ἠσκηκότες) they would be more courageous in facing the enemy in battle.[63] In promoting this regimen he showed himself to be aware of the benefits of self-denial pointing out to his soldiers that at home they had been trained to control their appetites and to abstain from unseasonable gain so that, if it became necessary, they might

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[60] Plato, *Republic,* 389C (trans.) P. Shorey, Vol. 1. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.:HUP,1930(1953[4])),
ἀσκοῦντι πρὸς παιδοτρίβην περὶ τῶν τοῦ αὐτοῦ σώματος παθημάτων μὴ τἀληθῆ λέγειν.

[61] Plato, *Gorgias,* 509E. (trans.) W.R. Lamb, Vol. 3. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1925 (1967[6])); ὡς, ἐὰν μὴ μάθῃ αὐτὰ καὶ ἀσκήσῃ, ἀδικήσει.

[62] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia,* 1. 6. 41, (trans.) W. Miller, Vol. 1. LCL, (London: Heinemann/New York:Macmillan,1914),
ταύτας δὲ ἐγὼ λέγω εἶναι, ἢν τῶν στρατιωτῶν εὖ μὲν τὰ σώματα ἠσκημένα ᾖ, εὖ δὲ αἱ ψυχαὶ τεθηγμέναι, εὖ δὲ αἱ πολεμικαὶ τέχναι μεμελετημέναι ὦσιν.

[63] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia,* 2. 1. 29, Vol. 1, 8. 1. 34, Vol.2.

be able to exercise their self-control to their advantage (αὐτοῖς συμφόρως χρῆσθαι) [64]

Mention has already been made above that there is lacking in the extant writings of the earlier period evidence of the use of the nouns ἄσκησις, ἄσκημα and ἀσκητής.The first recorded use of ἄσκησις can be dated to the middle of the fifth century BCE in the works of the philosopher Protagoras. He wrote that education required both natural aptitude and practice.[65] Among the historians Thucydides in the funeral oration in the second book of his *History* compared the Athenians' unrestricted mode of living (ἀνειμένως διαιτώμενοι) with the Spartans' laborious discipline (ἐπιπόνῳ ἀσκήσει) in their respective pursuit of manly courage.[66] In Xenophon the noun ἄσκησις was used with the meaning of practice or method particularly when it referred to the exercising of a skill. In his treatise *On the Duties of Domestic Life,* he praised the tasks involved in farming as physical exercise worthy of a free man.[67] Implicit in the examples found in Xenophon's writings relating to training is the idea that such training should involve a degree of difficulty which would inure someone to hardship. Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* commented that athletes who won easy victories were more likely to neglect their training.[68]

In philosophical works ἄσκησις as metaphor was easily transferred to the pursuit of qualities such as virtue, wisdom and moderation. In the *Republic* Socrates remarked that

> The other so-called virtues of the soul seem akin to those of the body. For it is true that where they do not pre-exist, they are afterwards created by habit and practice (ἐθεσί τε καὶ ἀσκήσεσιν).[69]

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[64] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia,* 4. 2. 45, Vol. 2.
[65] Diels, *Fragmente,* Vol. 2. 264, frg. 3. φύσεως καὶ ἀσκήσεως διδασκαλία δεῖται.
[66] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* 2:39, (trans.) C.F. Smith, LCL, (London: Heinemann / New York: Putnam's, 1919).
[67] Xenophon, *Oeconomicus,* 5. 1. (trans.) E.C. Marchant, LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1923).
[68] Xenophon, *Memorabilia,* 1. 2. 24. (trans.) E.C. Marchant, LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1923).
[69] Plato, *Republic,* 518D-E, (trans.) P. Shorey, Vol. 2. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1935 (1963[4]))

Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* wrote that to associate with good people was a training in virtue and excellence.[70] In a discussion on the efficacy of music in the education of a child he stated that it should not be thought that learning music would be unsuitable for what a child would do when he/she reached maturity.[71]

Commenting on ἄσκησις as practice Aristotle in an observation that happiness was one of the greatest blessings bestowed on humankind posed a question whether such happiness was gained through learning or practice.[72] In a passage in the *Politics* his use of ἄσκησις subtly shifted the meaning to express the idea of an experience which resulted from a practice. Among the things which children should experience he considered it an excellent idea to accustom them to endure the cold.

> To accustom children to the cold from their earliest years is an excellent practice, which greatly conduces to health, and hardens them for military service.[73]

While there were in the uses to which this group of terms were put basic concepts which had remained from the Homeric period and which appeared in the works of most writers in the period under discussion, Dressler was able to illustrate that there were subtle changes and emphases which shifted their meanings in various directions. This movement can be seen in the use of the term ἀσκητής. In Plato's *Republic* the phrase ἡ τῶνδε τῶν ἀσκητῶν ἕξις refers to the "physical habits of these athletes," a meaning common in this period. In the *Cyropaedia* Xenophon's use of the term added another dimension to its meaning; of his own soldiers Cyrus used the phrase ἀσκηταὶ ὄντες το make a distinction between them and the soldiers of his enemy, whom he described as ἰδιώτας ὄντας. The

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[70] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1070 a 11, (trans.) H. Rackman, Vol.19, LCL, (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP / London: Heinemann, 1926 (1975[8])).

[71] Aristotle, *Politics,* 1341 a 6-8, (trans.) H. Rackman, LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932 (1967[4])).
φανερὸν τοίνυν ὅτι δεῖ τὴν μάθησιν αὐτῆς μήτε ἐμποδίζειν πρὸς τὰς ὕστερον πράξεις, μήτε τὸ σῶμα ποιεῖν βάναυσον καὶ ἄχρηστον πρὸς τὰς πολεμικὰς καὶ πολιτικὰς ἀσκησεις.

[72] Aristotle, *N E,* 1099b IX,
ὅθεν καὶ ἀπορεῖται πότερόν ἐστι μαθητὸν ἢ ἐθιστὸν ἢ ἄλλως πως ἀσκητόν ἢ κατά τινα θείαν μοῖραν ἢ καὶ διὰ τύχην παραγίνεται.

[73] Aristotle, *Politics,* 1336a,21,
εὐφυὴς δ' ἡ τῶν παιδῶν ἕξις διὰ θερμότητα πρὸς τὴν τῶν ψυχρῶν ἀσκησιν.

conclusion to be drawn is that the meaning in this instance implies a distinction[74] between a body of professional soldiers and amateurs.

Dressler commented upon what he called an "interesting use of ἄσκησις" in the *Busiris* of Isocrates (c.436-378 BCE) who for the first time in the extant writings linked the noun with the practice of religion. Isocrates in discussing the people of Egypt described them as a very religious group.[75] Busiris was said to have introduced "many and varied kinds of practices of ritual piety (ἀσκήσεις τῆς ὁσιότητος). Dressler stated that the addition of the genitive case of ἡ ὁσιότης was necessary to "convey the meaning of a religious observance as ἄσκησις alone would not at that time have given that idea."[76] However he considered it "a significant development."

The Development of the Meanings of 'Ασκέω and its Cognates in the Hellenistic Period.

This development in the meaning of ἄσκησις has to be seen in the light of its use in the teachings of the later Hellenistic philosophers, both Cynic and Stoic. Increasingly in their thinking the term ἄσκησις, while retaining its meaning of training and practice and a disciplined approach to any action, physical or mental, took on the meaning of a way of life which such training and practice encouraged. And so in the commentaries on the lives of philosophers found in the work of Diogenes Laertius, and, in the case of the Cynic philosophers, in the pseudepigraphal letters attributed to the earlier Cynic philosophers, and in the works of later philosophers such as Musonius Rufus and Epictetus, and in the writings of early Christian writers such as Clement of Alexandria, the term ἄσκησις was used to describe a way of living and how that way might be achieved.

Diogenes of Sinope (c.412/403 - c.324/321 BCE) was said by Diogenes Laertius to have stated that training was of two kinds, mental (ψυχική) and bodily (σωματική). By training the body, which necessitated

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[74] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia,* 1. 5. 11, (trans.) W. Miller, Vol. 1. LCL. On this use of ἀσκητής to suggest the professional nature of training of Cyrus' soldiers, see Dressler, *'Ασκέω,* 35-36.
[75] Isocrates, *Busiris,* 26, (trans.) L. van Hook, Vol.3. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1961).
[76] Dressler, *'Ασκέω,* 35.

constant exercise, "perceptions were formed such as secure freedom of movement for virtuous deeds."[77] He asserted that to have trained the body only was not sufficient without the training of the mind (soul). An early advocate of the theory of transferable skills, Diogenes argued that the effort which flute players and athletes had expended by their constant toil (τῇ ἰδίᾳ πονήσει τῇ συνεχεῖ) in acquiring their skills might be transferred to the training of the mind (τὴν ἄσκησιν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχήν). "Nothing in life," Diogenes maintained, "has any chance of succeeding without strenuous practice and this is capable of overcoming anything."[78] When the hostile comment which Cynicism and the actions of Diogenes attracted is seen in the light of this statement, it becomes easier to judge the importance which askesis played in their behaviour as an expression of their philosophy as a way of living in the face of a societal ethos (communal behaviour) which demanded conformity to cultural norms.[79]

> Pitiable indeed are those people who do not understand that the things that they seem to be practising are in fact brought to perfection by me alone. For I do not know whether anyone has practised simplicity of life more than I.[80]

That all of Diogenes' actions involved practising that simplicity of life seemed to have been one of the aspects of his teaching and his life which those Cynics, who were responsible for the pseudepigraphal letters, wanted to impress on their readers. Diogenes' letter to Phaenylus recounted his conversation with the pancratiast Cicermus about the futility of competing in sporting events. Rather it was by overcoming obstacles such as poverty, disrepute, lowly birth that he would win happiness.

> When you have trained to despise these things you will live happily and will die in a tolerable way. But if you strive after other things you will live in endless suffering.[81]

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[77] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* 6:70, (trans.) R.D. Hicks, Vol. 2. LCL, (London: Heinemann /Cambridge Mass.:HUP, 1965).

[78] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives,* 6. 71, Vol. 2. LCL
οὐδέν γε μὴν ἐλεγε τὸ παράπαν ἐν τῷ βίῳ χωρὶς ἀσκήσεως κατορθοῦσθαι, δυνατὴν δὲ ταύτην πᾶν ἐκνικῆσαι.

[79] The counter cultural aspect of behaviour at variance with the societal ethos is considered in chapter five.

[80] "The Epistles of Diogenes," (trans.) B. Fiore, in *Cynic Epistles,* (ed.) A.J. Malherbe, (Missoula, Mont.: SBL, 1977) 119.

[81] "Epistles of Diogenes", 137,
τούτων γὰρ ἀσκήσας καταφρονεῖν μακαρίως μὲν ζήσεις, ἀνεκτῶς δὲ ἀποθανῇ ἐκεῖνα δε

To Crates, one of his pupils (flor. 326 BCE), Diogenes wrote urging him to continue in his training as he had begun by earnestly pursuing "a balanced resistance to both pleasure and hardship.[82] The use of the verb σπουδάζω gives emphasis to the notion that the training which Crates was urged to continue involved the expenditure of energy echoing the original meaning in the Homeric concept of ἀσκέω.

This advice Crates passed on to his students so that they should practise being content with little. Ἀσκεῖτε ὀλίγων δεηθῆναι, for that way would be closer to God, while the opposite was the further from God. Because they were midway between gods and irrational beasts, Crates told them that it would be possible for them to become like gods and not like beasts.[83] In a letter recommending that Orion should send his sons to a philosopher's school, (the same school which both Crates and Orion had attended) if he wanted them to become good men and not bad, Crates wrote that "virtue [right living] is acquired by practice (ἄσκησις) [of right living] and does not enter the soul spontaneously as evil does."[84]

The tradition is that Zeno (335-263 BCE), the founder of Stoicism, had been a student of Crates; and so it is not surprising that in their ethical teaching there is little difference between what the Cynics taught and that which was taught by the early Stoics. However in response to a letter from Antigonus, king of Macedonia (c.277/6-239 BCE), inviting him to visit Macedonia in order to be his teacher, Zeno wrote declining the invitation on the grounds of old age. But he gave the following advice for one who was eager to be a philosopher.

> But if anyone has yearned for philosophy, turning away from much–vaunted pleasure which renders effeminate the souls of some of the young, it is evident that not by nature (φύσει) only, but also by the bent of his will (προαιρέσει) he is inclined to nobility of character. But if a noble nature be aided by ***moderate exercise*** (μετρίαν ἄσκησιν) and further receive ungrudging instruction, it easily comes to acquire virtue in perfection.

ζηλῶν ζήσεις ταλαιπώρως.

[82]"Epistles of Diogenes", 107,
σὺ δὲ ἐπίμενε ἐν τῇ ἀσκήσει ὥσπερ ἤρξω καὶ σπούδαζε κατ' ἴσον ἡδονῇ ἀντιτάττεσθαι καὶ πόνῳ.

[83]"The Epistles of Crates," (trans.) R.F. Hock, in *The Cynic Epistles,* 62-63.

[84]"Epistles of Crates" 62, ἀσκητὸν γὰρ ἀρετὴ καὶ οὐκ αὐτόματος ἐμβαίνει τῇ ψυχῇ ὥσπερ κακία.

(ῥᾳδίως ἐρχεται πρὸς τὴν τελείαν ἀνάληψιν τῆς ἀρετης).[85]

What is implied in Zeno's use of askesis in the above quotation suggests a criticism of the Cynic position. If this is so it has to be interpreted as a criticism levelled at their approach to social mores. For Diogenes Laertius referred to the frugal life style which Zeno followed.

> He showed the utmost endurance and the greatest frugality; the food he ate was uncooked and the cloak he wore was thin.[86]

Despite this way of life on the part of the founder of Stoicism, it would be possible to assert that the "ascetic" emphasis in Stoicism was concerned with the intellect and the mind. Diogenes Laertius told the story of Zeno's desire to acquire the seven logical forms concerned with the sophism known as "The Reaper;" for so great was his love of learning, τοσοῦτον ἤσκει φιλομάθειαν [87]

Ariston (c320-250 BCE), a Stoic philosopher and a near contemporary of Zeno, considered "the end to be a life of perfect indifference to everything which is neither virtue nor vice."[88] Clement of Alexandria wrote that Ariston emphasised the need for askesis along with struggle to combat pleasure, sorrow, fear and desire.[89]

A later Stoic philosopher, Musonius Rufus, writing in the first century of the present era posed a question about the way in which a philosopher should receive such training since a human being was not soul/mind alone, or body alone, but a kind of synthesis of the two, ἀλλά τι σύνθετον ἐκ τοῖν δυοῖν τούτοιν. His answer to the question which he posed was that the training should take care of both, but that greater care should given to the soul/mind without neglecting the body, for

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[85] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives,* 7.8, Vol. 2.See R. Finn's reference to Zeno's phrase "moderate exercise" in *Asceticism in the Graeco-Roman World,* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009); "A moderate asceticism of this kind was part of an education in virtue for young men from the governing elites." 26 and n. 139, where he refers to J. Francis, ***Subversive Virtue: Asceticism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World,*** (USA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995) 18 and 24.

[86] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives,* 7. 26, Vol. 2,
ἦν δὲ καρτερικώτατος καὶ λιτότατος, ἀπύρῳ τροφῇ χρώμενος καὶ τρίβωνι λεπτῷ...

[87] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives,* Vol. 2. 7.25.

[88] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives,* Vol. 2. 7. 160,
'Αρίστων ὁ Χίος - τέλος ἔφησεν εἶναι τὸ ἀδιαφόρως ἔχοντα ξῆν πρὸς τὰ μεταξὺ ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας.

[89] Clement of Alexandria, ***Stromata,*** 11. 20,
ὅθεν, ὡς ἔλεγεν 'Αρίστων, πρὸς ὅλον τὸ τετράχορδαν,ἡδονὴν, λύπην, φόβον, ἐπιθυμίαν, πολλῆς δεῖ τῆς ἀσκήσεως καὶ μάχης.

the body of the philosopher should be well prepared for physical activity "because often the virtues made use of this as a necessary instrument for the affairs of life."[90] Musonius recognised that there was a training common to both body and soul/mind. He taught that

> [We] use the training common to both when we discipline ourselves to cold, heat, thirst, hunger, meagre rations, hard beds, avoidance of pleasures and patience under suffering.[91]

He summed up the training which was peculiar to the soul/mind as having proofs ready at hand (τὰς ἀποδείξεις προχείρους) which distinguished between real good and evil and apparent good and evil, and knowing the difference. In following these principles the one who was in training should strive to overcome the habit of loving pleasure, of avoiding hardship, of being in love with living and of fearing death, and in the case of money and property of valuing receiving above giving.[92]

It has been necessary to consider these usages of the Greek terms associated with ἀσκέω in order to indicate the principal concept underlying the ways in which they were employed in early Greek and Hellenistic writings. That principal concept was concerned with a disciplined approach to whatever task was being undertaken. The abstract noun ἄσκησις reflected that approach but significantly in the Greek philosophical writings its meaning increasingly indicated a relationship between discipline and a mode of living. While the descriptions of askesis considered above were the work of philosophers from the various philosophic schools, it is necessary to bear in mind that some of the more stringent practices were quite often the object of modification on the part of later teachers.[93]

In this period the expression of askesis as a way of life gave rise to the growth of a vocabulary which was peculiar to it. In that vocabulary

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[90] Lutz, C.E, *Musonius Rufus, "The Roman Socrates,"* Text and Translation, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947) 55,
ὅτι πολλάκις αἱ ἀρεταὶ καταχρῶνται τούτῳ ὀντι ὀργάνῳ ἀναγκαίῳ προς τας τοῦ βίου πράξεις.

[91] Lutz, *Musonius Rufus,* 55. κοινὴ μὲν οὖν ἄσκησις ἀμφοῖν γενήσεται, συνεθιζομένων ἡμῶν ῥίγει, θάλπει, λιμῷ, τροφῆς λιτότητι, κοίτης σκληρότητι, ἀποχῇ τῶν ἡδέων, ὑπομονῇ τῶν ἐπιπόνων.

[92] Lutz, *Musonius Rufus,* 55.Cf. Epictetus, *Arrian's Dissertations.* 4. 8. 14-21, (trans.) W.A. Oldfather, Vol. 2. LCL, (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1928).

[93] For differing approaches to these practices see Francis, *Subversive Virtue,* 18 where he discusses the difference between Musonius' approach to ascetic practices and that adopted by Epictetus.

εὐτέλεια sums up all those aspects of the philosophical life which point to its simplicity. Diogenes was described as setting out upon a simple life - ὥρμησεν ἐπὶ τὸν εὐτελῆ βίον.[94] In their search for this simple life the concept of εὐτέλεια (frugality) was basic to all they did and all they thought. It reduced their needs to a minimum making possible the growth of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια), the development of self-control (ἐγκράτεια) in respect to food, drink and sex, and endurance to hardship. Thus a philosopher, such as Diogenes, by exhibiting such qualities, was able to assert that "the manner of life he lived was the same as that of Heracles when he preferred liberty to everything." [95]

The Use of 'Ασκέω and its Cognates in Judaeo-Hellenistic Literature.

In the conclusion to his chapter on pagan asceticism Finn, referring to the practices of Cynic philosophers stated that "[s]uch asceticism was not associated with ritual abstention, purity or cult..." However, when we turn to the use of ἀσκέω and its cognates in Judaeo-Hellenistic literature, their use is problematised with regard to terminology because they are used in relation to practices found in the cultic observances of Jewish (Judaic) religion. (Later in this study it is my intention to argue that one of the necessary conditions in any description of askesis is that it refers to a voluntary action on the part of the doer. It represents some practice (or thought) which might be described by the term τὸ περισσόν which Jesus used in the SM *Mt.*5:47.)

Notwithstanding the caveat in the previous paragraph, it is not surprising that among the Jews, whose religion and culture were closely integrated, these terms were very often used in the context of religious observances. When in 2 *Maccabees* 15:4 the phrase ἀσκεῖν τὴν Ἑβδομάδα was used it was about observing Šabbāt in the sense of celebrating it in accordance with the command of God.

> It is the living Lord himself, the sovereign in heaven, who ordered us to observe the seventh day.[96]

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[94] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives,* Vol. 2, 6. 21.
[95] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives,* Vol. 2, 6. 71.
[96] 2 *Macc.* 15:4, ἔστιν ὁ κύριος ζῶν αὐτὸς ἐν οὐρανῷ δυνάστης ὁ κελεύσας ἀσκεῖν τὴν Ἑβδομάδα.

4 *Maccabees,* written sometime in the first century CE, is a philosophical discussion on the mastery of the passions in which the writer described the martyrdom of Eleazer and the seven sons and their mother at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. In this text we find expressed a close link between discipline and training and their effect on bonds of brotherly love shown in the behaviour of the seven brothers.

> The ties of brotherly love, it is clear, are firmly set and never more firmly than among the seven brothers for *having been trained* (παιδευθέντες) *in the same Law and having been disciplined* (ἐξασκήσαντες) *in the same virtues*, and having been reared together in the life of righteousness, they loved one another all the more. (my italics).[97]

Earlier in the text Eleazar addressing Antiochus spoke of the influence of Torah on the lives of the Jews and about their strict observance of its requirements. It was their training in obedience to Torah which gave them courage in adverse situations.

> You mock at our philosophy [observance of Torah] as though our living under it was contrary to reason. On the other hand, it teaches us temperance so that we are in control of all our pleasures and desires; and it gives us a thorough training (ἐξασκεῖ) in courage so that we willingly endure all hardship; and it teaches us justice so that whatever our different attitudes may be we retain a sense of balance; and it instructs us in piety so that we most highly reverence the only living God.[98]

Both these passages with their emphasis on training, discipline and teaching as a way of life reveal on the part of the writer an awareness of their importance in an approach to living within a particular society which might be described as ascetic.

The various writings of Josephus reveal the use of ἀσκέω and its cognates with meanings which had been developed in their use through the previous millennium. He described Jubal practising, or devoting himself to,

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[97] 4 *Macc.* 13:23-24. οὕτως δὴ τοίνυν καθεστηκυίης συμπαθοῦς τῆς φιλαδελφίας οἱ ἑπτὰ ἀδελφοὶ συμπαθέστερον ἐσχον πρὸς ἀλλήλους. νόμῳ γὰρ τῷ αὐτῷ παιδευθέντες καὶ τὰς αὐτὰς ἐξασκήσαντες ἀρετὰς καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ συντραφέντες βίῳ μᾶλλον ἑαυτοὺς ἠγάπων.
[98] 4 *Macc.* 5: 22-24

music and inventing the psaltery and harp.[99] Eleazer at the siege of Massada urged his followers to commit suicide, telling them to study the example of the Indians who readily prepared for death as part of their philosophy.[100] In the *Contra Apionem* Josephus, referring to the loyalty of the Jews to their laws, wrote that they were trained in courage not to wage war for self-aggrandisement, but so that they might protect their laws.[101] Josephus also used the verb ἀσκέω with the meaning to train an army[102] He used the compound verb ἐξασκέω coupled with the adverb φιλότιμως to indicate how lavishly the fortress of Alexandreion had been equipped.[103] Similarly the compound verb προσεξασκέω was used by Josephus to show how the natural beauty of Panion had been enhanced by Agrippa at great expense.[104]

Josephus, like earlier historians used the noun ἄσκησις (and its compound συνάσκησις) to convey the meaning of practice and training. Writing about the forces which had been mobilised by the Romans during the first Jewish rebellion Josephus mentioned that a large number of servants was not included among the combatants although they had shared in their military training. In his admiration of the training of Roman soldiers he wrote that they had never ceased from training as though they had been born with weapons in their hands, nor did they wait for emergencies to occur before starting to train.[105]

We also find these terms used by Josephus in ethical contexts. In the introduction to his *Antiquities* he expressed his intention to relate how under the leadership of Moses the Jews had been "trained in piety and in the exercise of other virtues."[106] In a later book of the *Antiquities* he used the noun ἄσκησις to describe the way of life of a man named Nabal; he

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[99] Jos, *Ant,* 1:64.
[100] Jos, *BJ,* 7:351, βλέψωμεν εἰς Ἰνδοὺς τοὺς σοφίαν ἀσκεῖν ὑπισχνουμένους.
[101] Jos, *Ap,* 2:272,
οὐδὲ τὴν ἀνδρείαν ἠσκήσαμεν ἐπὶ τῳ πολέμους ἀρασθαι χάριν πλεονεξίας, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῷ τοὺς νόμους διαφυλάττειν.
[102] Jos, *Ant,* 17:31.
[103] Jos, *BJ,* 1:134.
[104] Jos, *BJ,* 3:514.
[105] Jos, *BJ,* 3:72.
[106] Jos, *Ant,* 1:6, ὑφ'οἵῳ τε παιδευθέντες νομοθέτῃ τὰ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν καὶ τὴν ἀλλην ἄσκησιν ἀρετῆς.

described him as a hard man of bad character who lived his life in accordance with the practices of the Cynics.[107]

A survey of the works of Philo indicates that he too was familiar with many of the usages of ἀσκέω and its cognates.[108] His importance as a witness is acknowledged in Dressler's chapter on Philo in which he stated that Philo's significance rested on the fact that he gave "religious and moral significance to some usages already noted, or at least he used ἀσκέω and its cognates in contexts which had religious and moral implications." However of greater significance was the fact that he introduced "new meanings for some of the cognates of ἀσκέω which are not found in other writers."[109]

In any discussion of Philo's use of these terms it is necessary to remember that as a result of his upbringing in the Hellenised society of Alexandria he had received a Hellenistic philosophical and literary education which exposed him to the influence of a Platonic understanding of asceticism. This understanding he attempted to blend with his Jewish religious beliefs. Richard Finn writes of Philo's philosophical understanding that

> [s]trong acculturation served to reinterpret Judaism in what amounted to a limited assimilation or 'integrative accommodation' with the dominant culture in defence of distinctive form and tenets.[110]

Fundamental to this attempt to reinterpret Judaism was the authority of Torah (Mosaic Law); and so Philo rejected practices which characterised some forms of Greek philosophical tradition such as the behaviour of Cynic philosophers, advocating in this instance that

> [I]f you see anyone not taking meat and drink at the usual time, or refusing a bath and ointments or being neglectful of clothing for his body or sleeping on the ground and in poor lodgings, and then, by such conduct as this, pretending to be exercising self-control, take pity on his self-delusion and show him the true path to self-control, for all the practices which he is pursuing are

[107] Jos, *Ant*, 6:206, τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ἐκ κυνικῆς ἀσκήσεως πεποιημένος τὸν βίον.
[108] See *The Philo Index: A Complete Greek Word Index to the Writings of Philo of Alexandria,* (edd.) P. Borgen, K. Fugsleth, R. Skarten, (Grand Rapids, Mich; Eerdmans/ Leiden: Brill, 2000) on the number of references in Philo: ἀσκέω - 40, ἄσκησις - 60, ἀσκητής - 102, ἀσκητός - 1.
[109] Dressler, *Usage* , 55-66.
[110] Finn, R, *Asceticism,* 36.

useless and profitless labours, prostrating both his soul and body with hunger and all sorts of mistreatment.[111] [adapted]

He sought also to use stories and traditions from Jewish history in order to teach those who had been brought up in a Hellenic environment to remember their Jewish heritage. It was in this way that Philo tried to do what Greek philosophers did in their own culture, to correct the pleasures and appetites and the passions which weighed down and oppressed the soul, and to introduce other qualities, which were sound, by a "legitimate style of education and a healthy kind of discipline."[112] Those qualities to which they should adhere were frugality, simplicity and temperance. For those in pursuit of these qualities nature provided an abundance of good things by way of sustenance and shelter.[113]

It is obvious from the number of references in Philo's writings to ἀσκέω and its cognates that he, like the Greek philosophers, was eager to probe the whole concept of askesis, and to relate it to the way that people lived their lives. Philo did this in a way which reflected his upbringing and education in Alexandria. There he had been instructed in the tradition of allegorical interpretation, which had been developed in Alexandria in order to understand Homer and other Greek traditions. He took this tradition and applied it to the Hebrew Scriptures, especially to the books of the Law. This allegorisation is interesting but the volume of writing which Philo produced in his philosophical works precludes even the briefest survey of his study of the use of ἀσκέω and its cognates. However his treatise *On the Contemplative Life* provides us with one of the two studies of what might be considered descriptions of ascetic communities in Judaeo-Hellenistic literature.[114]

The treatise *On the Contemplative Life* is an account of a group living in a community near the Mareotic lake in Egypt. In this treatise we find an

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[111] Philo, *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat.* 19, (trans) F.H. Colson & G.H. Whitaker, Vol. 2. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1929 (1950[2])).

[112] Philo, *Quod deterius,* 16.

[113] Philo, *De praemiis et poenis,* 100, (trans.) F.H. Colson, Vol. 8. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1939),
οἱ δ' ἂν ζηλώσωσιν...πλοῦτον ἀσπασάμενοι τὰ φύσεως δῶρα, μὴ τὰ τῆς κενῆς δόξης, ὀλιγοδείαν καὶ ἐγκράτειαν ἀσκήσαντες. ἐξουσι κατὰ πολλὴν περουσίαν...

[114]The other groups are the Essenes and the community in Qumran. Discussion of these will appear in chapter three.

illustration of Philo's use of the synthesis of Greek philosophical thought and Jewish religious thought. He described the vocation of those living in this community as a προαίρεσις, a term taken from the rhetoric of Greek philosophy. The members of the community, having withdrawn from the world, devoted their lives to contemplating God. Philo epitomised their life style by the Greek term εὐτέλεια, expressing the basic frugality which marked their existence. The bread which they ate at their only meal of the day was described as basic, ἄρτον εὐτελῆ and the same adjective was used for the accommodation which provided shelter against the heat of the sun and the cold from the open air. Philo's use of these terms implies that the members of this community were participating in an ascetic act, ἄσκησις. It is obvious from the description which we have of this community that their decision to live in this way had nothing to do with any cultic practice or religious obligation.

> Those, entering upon their service neither out of habit nor from the urging and the exhortation of others, but because they have been seized by a heavenly desire, are possessed by God like bacchantes and corybants, until they behold the object of their desire.[115]

This overview of the history of ἀσκέω and its cognates in the writings of the Greeks from the time of Homer to the early centuries of the present era has indicated that these terms were in frequent use and that their meanings, although shifting, remained on the same trajectory. They dealt with concepts which were associated with a disciplined approach to particular tasks, whether in manual work and artistic pursuits or in the training and practice in athletics or soldiering or in the exercise of moral qualities. In the later writings of the Hellenistic and Judaeo-Hellenistic authors the term ἄσκησις was very often seen to equate with the phrase, a way of living, with an implication of the existence of a 'religious' dimension to that life style.

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[115] Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa,* 2.12, (trans.) F.H. Colson, Vol. 9. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass: HUP, 1966),
οἱ δὲ ἐπὶ θεραπείαν ἰόντες οὔτε ἐξ ἔθους οὔτε ἐκ παραινέσεως ἢ παρακλήσεώς τινων, ἀλλ' ὑπ' ἔρωτος ἁρπασθέντες οὐρανίου, καθάπερ οἱ βακχευόμενοι και κορυβαντιῶντες, ἐνθουσιάζουσι μέχρις ἂν τὸ ποθούμενον ἴδωσιν.

It has been pointed out in the introduction to this chapter that, although the Synoptic Gospels in the canon of the New Testament can be considered as Judaeo- Hellenistic writings, the only evidence we have of the use of ἀσκέω and its cognates is to be found in *Acts* 24:16, where it described Paul's striving to achieve a particular end. I am aware that the absence of terminology associated with ἀσκέω and its cognates does not necessarily preclude the concept of a life style which might be described as ascetic.

It is necessary to state at this point that the description of askesis which I intend to discuss in the following chapters is not that with which the use of the word, asceticism, in English has normally been associated. That usage results from its association with the life style of hermits and monastics who lived in the third and fourth centuries of the first millennium CE. The use of ἄσκησις to describe a way of life by philosophers, whose writings spanned the two millennia (BCE to CE), has been discussed above. However this period also witnessed the growth of a particular genre of literature, hagiography, biographical writings, which sought to promote the lives of heroes by attributing to them such outstanding characteristics as divine origin and wonder-working powers including miracles and magic.

Philostratus wrote his life of Apollonius of Tyana in the third century CE. Apollonius was reputed to have lived in the first century CE. He led the life of an ascetic teacher visiting distant lands including India, and performing many miraculous deeds; hence he earned the title of a holy man He has been described as a new Pythagoras.[116] Whatever credibility is given to Philostratus' account of the life and miraculous deeds of Apollonius his Neopythagorean connections would appear to have influenced Porphyry (234-c.305 CE) and Iamblichus (245-c.325 CE) in their compositions on the life of Pythagoras.[117] But Greek philosophers were not the only advocates of the ascetic life at this time. Origen, in a period when ascetic practices "had

[116] Finn, *Asceticism,* 29.

[117] Porphyry, *The Life of Pythagoras,* Iamblichus, *On the Life of Pythagoras,* (Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica Liber,* (ed.) L. Deubner, (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1925). Both Porphyry and Iamblichus displayed in their life style an ascetic tradition influenced by Neopythagoreanism which they incorporated into Neoplatonic philosophy.

not yet been adapted into a popular [Christian] narrative,"[118] by his life, writings and teaching was influencing the growth of asceticism.

Of interest to this study is the model which emerged from this hagiographical literature which celebrated the lives and superhuman deeds of hermits and early monastics. It was the study of these Christian writings with their evidence of the life styles of hermits and monastics which led later generations of commentators to accept them as standard practice and influenced a definition of askesis which later became 'normative'[119]

An examination of definitions of asceticism to be found amongst some modern commentators will indicate how closely they mirror what Eusebius wrote about Origen's life style (see footnote 117 above). J. Lachowski in his comments on asceticism in the New Testament, writes,

> In the Gospels asceticism is presented under the concrete theme of following the historical Christ and thus sharing in the hardships, dangers, and penalties that loyal discipleship to Him exact...[120]

Lachowski goes on to state that following Christ "implies an ascetic self-renunciation by the disciple." Walter Kaelber also defines the term in a religious context based on the contrast between the world and a higher, more spiritual and more sacred world.

> ...the term (asceticism), when used in a religious context, may be defined as a voluntary, sustained, and at least partially

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[118] Finn, *Asceticism,* 100. Eusebius, *h e,*6:3, described the ascetical practices of Origen as follows: "For many years he persisted in this philosophic way of life putting away from him all inducements to youthful lusts , and at all times of the *day* disciplining himself by performing strenuous tasks, while he devoted most of the night to the study of the Holy Scriptures. He went to the limit in practising a life given up to philosophy; sometimes he trained himself by periods of fasting, sometimes by restricting the hours of sleep, which he insisted on taking never in bed, always on the floor. Above all, he felt that he must keep the gospel sayings of the Saviour urging us not to carry two coats or wear shoes, and never to be worried by anxiety about the future. He displayed an enthusiasm beyond his years and patiently enduring cold and nakedness went to the furthest limit of poverty, to the utter amazement of his pupils and the distress of his countless friends who begged him to share their possessions in recognition of the labours they saw him bestow on his religious teaching. Not once did his determination weaken; it is said that for several years he went about on foot without any shoes at all, and for a much longer period abstained from wine and all else beyond the minimum of food, so that he ran the risk of upsetting or even ruining his constitution." Cf. Ps-Athanasius, *Life of the Holy and Blessed Teacher Syncletica,* (trans.) E.A. Castelli) in *Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook,* (ed.) V. Wimbush, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) 265- 311.

[119] I use the tern 'normative' to qualify definition in the sense that the definition derives from a particular source (or period). In this instance it is its usage in the third and fourth centuries of the common era which led later commentators to accept the ascetic practices on the part of hermits and monastics as normative,

[120] Lachowski, J, "Asceticism in the New Testament," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* , 937.

> systematic program of self-discipline and self-denial in which immediate, sensual, or profane gratification are renounced in order to attain a higher spiritual state or a more thorough absorption in the sacred.[121]

He enumerates the practices which are considered to be part of the rigorous application of askesis.

> Virtually universal are (1) fasting, (2) sexual continence, (3) poverty, under which may be included begging, (4) seclusion or isolation and (5) self-inflicted pain, either physical (through such means as whipping, burning or lacerating) or mental (e.g. contemplation of a judgment day, of existence in hell, or of the horrors associated with transmigration).[122]

To these practices may be added from Eusebius' list, sleep deprivation, application to study and lack of concern for one's own well-being.

The description of ascetic practices, which exemplified the lives of the hermits and monks of the third and fourth centuries, remained the norm by which the life styles of monastics were measured throughout the medieval and early renaissance periods. The iconography of those periods, manifested in such paintings as Mathis Grünewald's, *The Crucifixion* (*Isenheim Altarpiece*) and Francisco Zurbarán's portraits of ascetic saints, is evidence of the persistence of this norm. Even in later periods, particularly in protestant countries, when monastic living was being subjected to much criticism, it was the nature of asceticism as portrayed in hagiographical literature emanating from those earlier centuries which was under attack. The first recorded use of the terms 'asceticism' and 'ascetic' in the English language, found in the *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* of Sir Thomas Browne in 1646 indicated the low esteem which the use of the terms evoked. Browne wrote of those "who had been doomed to a life of celibacy by the asceticism which had corrupted the simplicity of Christianity," and of "the ascetic rule which held that a saint was disgraced by the very society which his mild master sought and loved." It would be surprising in the light of such comments if Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* had not chosen to comment similarly in his excoriation of monastics. He contrasted "the loose and imperfect practice of religion" on

[121] Kaelber, W. "Asceticism," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion,* Vol.1, 441.
[122] Kaelber, "Asceticism," 442.

the part of ascetics "who obeyed and abused the rigid precepts of the gospel inspired by a savage enthusiasm which represents man as a criminal and God as a tyrant." This view of asceticism continued in William James' description of it as "a virtue liable to extravagance and excess" adding "[t]he older monastic asceticism occupied itself with pathetic futilities or terminated in the mere egotism of the individual increasing his own perfection."[123] It might be true to say it was well into the twentieth century before the concept of asceticism became the renewed object of study resulting from the application of new perspectives on the way people lived their lives.

Keeping in mind that these ascetic practices represent those dating from the third and fourth centuries of the common era and, in the case of those in Kaelber's list above, from life styles portrayed in other periods and religious traditions, it is necessary to pose the question whether they present apt descriptions of the life style followed by Jesus and his disciples. James Goehring asserts that "[t]he Jesus of the Gospels was not ascetic."[124] He refers to Jesus' saying in *Mt.*11:19; "[T]he Son of Man came eating and drinking and they say, 'Look a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners'" Other sayings and injunctions which might be seen as ascetic in purpose, such as the abandonment of family and property, Goehring considers, "to be eschatologically motivated."[125]

'Normative' definitions of askesis have little reference to the life style of Jesus and his disciples as portrayed in the Synoptic Gospels. Goehring is probably correct in his assertion that Jesus was not an ascetic, but only if his reference point for the usage of the term is later than the third and fourth centuries of the common era. It is for this reason that my aim in this thesis is to examine the term askesis on a broader canvas where it might be possible to include the behaviour and practices of Jesus and his followers as those who lived their lives in an ascetic way. That I do not intend to examine 'normative' definitions of askesis is not because I do not consider them to

[123] See E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* Vol. 2, (London: Jones, 18250 417-418; W. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience,* (Glasgow: Collins, 1977) 350-354.
[124] Goehring, J, "Asceticism," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity,* (ed.) E. Ferguson, (London:1997) 128.
[125] Goehring, "Asceticism," 128. It is my intention to consider in chapter five the significance of the rejection of family ties as an ascetic practice in the Synoptic Gospels.

refer to ascetic acts but rather that there is no place in them to locate, and so to discuss, the life style of Jesus and his disciples.

Askesis in Modern Critical Literature.

In the modern discourse on askesis discussion embraces a much wider concept than that formulated on the perspectives of eremitic and monastic practices. It includes practices which are seen as an expression within the culture of a society of the relationship between askesis and the exercise of discipline. This approach is exemplified in the writings of Geoffrey Harpham, who states that "the idea of ethics is inescapably ascetical" and that "all cultures are ethical cultures" which "impose on members the essential discipline of self-denial."[126]

It is this assertion by Harpham which Oliver Freiberger questions in his introduction to a series of essays discussing criticisms of askesis by a group of modern scholars. Freiberger comments on the popularity of the term asceticism (in the liberal arts) which has expanded "its semantics often well beyond the ordinary sense."[127] Having referred to Max Weber's expansion of its meaning, which made a distinction between "other-worldly asceticism" and "this-worldly asceticism",[128] he goes on to suggest the possibility of going further and releasing "asceticism from its link with Protestant ethics," thus raising it to a more abstract level of cultural theory, namely to consider "all self-restraint and self-denial 'ascetic'." This, he believes, is what Geoffrey Harpham has done, by locating asceticism "at the root of all culture."[129]

Important as Harpham's definition of askesis has been in the developing discussion of its nature and role in the lives of people and

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[126] Harpham, G. *The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism,* (Chicago: Univ.of Chicago, 1987). See the following studies relating to topics associated with askesis: M. Focault, *Le Souci de Soi,* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), E.T. *The Care of the Self,* (trans.) R. Hurley, (New York: Pantheon, 1985); idem, *L' usage des plaisirs,* (New York: Gallimard, 1984), E.T. *The Use of Pleasures,* (trans.) R. Hurley, (New York:Pantheon,1985); Steven D. Fraade, "Ascetical Aspects," 253-288; P. Brown, *The Body and Society,* passim.

[127] Freiberger, O. (ed.), *Asceticism and Its Critics: Historical Accounts and Perspectives,* (Oxford: OUP, 2006) 3. On the extended meaning of a word see Alice's comment to Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass,* chap. 6, "That's a great deal to make one word mean."

[128] Weber, M. "Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie,* vol. 1 (1920; repr; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988) 17-206; translated by S. Kahlberg as *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002) cited in Freiberger, *Asceticism,* 3.

[129] Freiberger, *Asceticism,* 3.

communities, it represents a far cry from that which is commonly considered to be a description of its meaning. For the most part, at least in the dictionaries of the English language, entries on asceticism and its cognates include synonyms which relate to extreme rigour, celibacy and fasting.[130] Patrick Olivelle is probably right when he states that the use of such terms is "justified: that is how the term *ascetic* is used by most native speakers of English,"[131] but only because this is the way in which many scholars have chosen to discuss asceticism.

Vincent Wimbush in the introduction to a sourcebook on *Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity* alludes to the difficulty of defining asceticism in comments on the failure of the SBL/AAR Group, set up to discuss ascetic behaviour, to reach agreement on a definition of *ascetic.*[132] In the end it settled for a definition of *ascetic behavior,* which Elizabeth Clark describes as a retreat from the "thing-in-itself" to its observed practices.[133] It describes this behaviour as representing:

> a range of responses to social, political, and physical worlds often perceived as oppressive or unfriendly, or as stumbling blocks to the pursuit of heroic personal or communal goals, life styles, and commitments.

In the conclusion to the introduction Wimbush states that the SBL/AAR project did not from its beginning seek any "grand common themes or theses", but that what might be generally said about ascetic behaviour was that it "represents abstention or avoidance." However he adds that in different times and places "ascetic behavior represented different expressions of and reasons for avoidance and condemnation."[134]

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[130] See the entries on asceticism and its cognates in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary,* vol. 1, 112. See also Patrick Olivelle's reference to his *Synonym Finder,* which gives the following synonyms of asceticism, *self-denial, self-abnegation, self-mortification, self-punishment, self-torment, self-control, and self-restraint,* in his article, "The Ascetic and the Domestic in Brahmanical Religiosity," in O. Freiberger, *Asceticism,* 27.

[131] Olivelle, P. "The Ascetic and the Domestic in Brahmanical Religiosity," in Freiberger, *Asceticism,,* 28.

[132] Wimbush, V. (ed.), *Ascetic Behavior,* 1. Elizabeth Clark in, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity,* (Princeton, N.Y.: Princeton University Press, 1999), writes of the discussions within the Ascetics Group, "Group members disagreed as to whether they should stress deprivation, pain, and the 'shrinking of the self' as definitive components of asceticism- or, conversely, the liberation of 'true human nature.'" 14.

[133] Clark, E. *Reading Renunciation,* 14.

[134] Wimbush, V. (ed.) *Ascetic Behavior,* 10-11. Cf. the comments of Wimbush and Valantasis in their introduction to *Asceticism,* xxv.

Modern Attempts to define Askesis.

Attempts have been made by modern scholars to provide definitions of the term askesis which embrace not only practices found in those regions whose heritage can be described as Graeco-Roman but also those found in Far Eastern countries, such as India and those regions in which Buddhism has been practised. Hence askesis has been considered as a cross-cultural phenomenon.

Anthony Saldarini in an article discussing evidence for the presence of ascetical practices in Matthew's gospel[135] observes that the term askesis has been used to refer to "a relatively narrow range of activities in both ancient Greek and Christian literature."

> In recent centuries in the West, asceticism has been understood as an aspect of Christian religious behavior and has been transferred to similar behaviors and outlooks in other religious cultures such as Hinduism and Buddhism.[136]

Robert Thurman would challenge the primacy which Saldarini appears to give to western origins of askesis.

> In recent millennia...India seems to be the primary land of spiritual athleticism, spiritual militancy or asceticism...Within India Buddhism was the ancient movement that promoted asceticism to a new level, through the significant institutional innovation of the cenobitic monastery, some five to seven centuries before such institutions began to develop in western and eastern Asia.[137]

However, it would be wrong to conclude that Saldarini's view is a criticism aimed at the cross-cultural nature of askesis. For him it goes very much deeper in that he considers that askesis is not a "flexible enough category to bear the weight of the varied phenomena which most modern scholars have suggested constitute askesis."[138] Similarly Freiberger, whilst

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[135] Saldarini, A. "Asceticism and the Gospel of Matthew," in *Asceticism in the New Testament,* (edd.) L.E Vaage & V.L. Wimbush, 11-27.

[136] Saldarini16. Cf. Harpham in *Ascetic Imperative,* xiii, "In the tight sense asceticism is a product of early Christian ethics and spirituality." See also Olivelle's comment on Harpham's historical sense as "deeply ethnocentric" in Freiberger, *Asceticism and Its Critics,* 27.

[137] Thurman, R. "Tibetan Buddhist Perspectives on Asceticism," in *Asceticism,* (edd.) Wimbush & Valantasis, 108.

[138] Saldarini, "Asceticism and the Gospel of Matthew," 16. The criticism is aimed particularly at the definition of asceticism proposed by Valantasis, which is discussed later in this chapter on p. 41.

recognising the value of Harpham's definition as a "useful heuristic tool" takes the view that, when transferred to an actual historical context it ran the risk of ending up with the impression that virtually everything is ascetic.[139]

For Freiberger the use of the term askesis in a narrower sense, a use which recalls the original meaning of the Greek word, might enable us to see it as a certain "'exercise,' that is, as a rather strenuous way of religious practice."[140] However his limiting of that 'exercise' to 'religious practice' would seem to suggest that he too has not appreciated the use of the Greek term ἄσκησις and its cognates in the works of Homer and the tragedians, where they are used to describe any action which demands skill and exertion.

Despite the caveat above many definitions of askesis privilege the religious nature of its practice. In traditional Christian theology ascetical practices have been associated with New Testament texts but the interpretations placed on them have been much influenced by later understandings of asceticism.[141]

The discussion of askesis as a religious phenomenon is continued in the writings of Gavin Flood who provides a definition which emphasises to a much greater extent than most others the religious nature of askesis. He disagrees with Harpham's definition as formulating too wide a base from which to initiate discussion. He sets out three characteristics of what should constitute an ascetic tradition. First, ascetic traditions have their origins in cosmological religious traditions. Second, cosmological traditions emphasise interiority which, Flood states, "interfaces with the structure of a hierarchical cosmos in a way that goes beyond what might be understood simply as subjectivity." Third, he states that "ascetic traditions are the enactment of the memory of tradition, which is also the expression of the cosmic structure."[142] Flood indicates what he means in using the phrase "cosmological religions."

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[139] Freiberger, O. *Asceticism,* 4.
[140] Freiberger, O, *Asceticism,* 5.
[141] See the references on pp.33-34 above to the definitions of Lachowski and Kaelber
[142] Flood, G. *The Ascetic Self: Subjectivity, Memory and Tradition,* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004) 9.

> I mean traditions that give an account of the relationship between self and cosmos, or, in theistic traditions, self, cosmos and God. Jainism, Śaiva Siddhānta and Orthodox Christianity would be good examples. In such religions, ideas of creation or manifestations will be important and they will have developed a sense of tradition."[143]

The Body and Descriptions of Askesis.

By the third and fourth centuries CE askesis came to refer to the practice of celibacy and to more extreme physical discipline in relation to the body (το σῶμα). Although the attempts to define askesis mentioned above are all directed toward the control of the body, Flood's definition exemplifies, indeed amplifies, the direction which has been taken in these definitions. He argues that " asceticism is the reversal of the flow of the body" in that it "refers to a range of habits or bodily regimes designed to restrict or reverse the instinctual impulses of the body and to an ideology that maintains that in so doing a greater good or happiness can be achieved."[144] He sees a key feature of this reversal to be "the renunciation of food and sexual practice along with the eradication of sexual desire." Furthermore, he suggests that in the pursuit of "a life of simplicity and minimal interaction" aesthetic pleasures, such as music and dancing, are renounced in ascetic cultures.[145]

The regimen to which the ascetic self submits results, according to Flood, from "tradition-specific bodily regimes or habits in obedience to ascetic discipline." The cultural habits are "the hallmarks of asceticism and can be understood as bodily performances."[146]

As has been suggested, Flood's definition of askesis with its emphasis on the control of the body in the way a person attempts to live his/her life

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[143] Flood, G, *Ascetic Self,* 10.
[144] Flood, G. *Ascetic Self,* 4. See also Flood's further description. "Asceticism is a way in which a tradition patterns the body or imposes order upon it, in the sense that the body is subjected to an institutional power by which it is inscribed, but the ascetic self also transcends that institutional power. The ascetic appropriates the tradition to his/her self-narrative for a range of reasons. At one level, this is to achieve a tradition-specific goal of sainthood, liberation, or whatever, through bodily restriction." 4.
[145] Flood, *Ascetic Self,* 5.
[146] Flood, *Ascetic Self,* 5- 6.

resonates with many other definitions or descriptions which have been discussed in scholarly circles across the spectrum of disciplines.[147]

From this brief overview of the use of the term askesis in many modern scholarly writings it is possible to see the emergence of two separate but, in some ways, related themes. The term askesis might be used in relation to particular practices undertaken by people at a particular time – in what Harpham (and others) describes as the "tight sense" of the term, referring to a "highly specific historical ideology," that is, to practices pursued by hermits and monks in the third and fourth centuries CE. In its "loose sense" it has been described as "enabling the conceptual transposition of that ideology [the tight sense] to other cultures remote from the original in time, space and everything else."[148] The second theme is about the place of the body in ascetic discourse. Whether viewed in its tight or loose sense askesis is perceived to be ultimately concerned with the physical body and with what can be done to subdue/eradicate its needs and desires in the creation of the ascetic self.

Both themes present problems. In the first, the privileging of a particular period and culture so that they become the paradigm by which ascetic behaviour (or even asceticism) is defined – a position which I consider to be the case with the third/fourth century practices of hermits and monks, where early Christian asceticism is concerned, - leads in other instances to ascetic performance being assessed by a paradigm which ignores cultural, historical and geographical contingencies. Consequently askesis is abstractly categorised according to a list of practices.[149]

The second theme emphasises in definitions of askesis the centrality of physical acts related to the body but without references to the contingencies mentioned in the previous paragraph. Such an emphasis "dehumanises" the ascetic. It is a theme, of course, attuned to Flood's cosmological views. Freiberger questions this view in a critical note referring to the admiration of some scholars for an ascetic lifestyle as the "best and ultimate way of

[147] I have indicated my use of an anglicised form of the Greek term ἄσκησις in order to avoid some of the nuances attached to the English translation, asceticism. See p.1. n.1. above.
[148] Harpham, *Ascetic Imperative,* xiii.
[149] See Olivelle's defence of his categorisation of asceticism into "root/cultural/elite," in O. Freiberger, *Asceticism,* 29.

attaining the respective religious goal." He goes on to state that such admiration is not surprising "as most textual sources depict ascetics as perfected human beings."[150] Freiberger's recognition that "hagiographical and normative" sources, depicting "ascetics as perfected human beings" thus making it "difficult to assess the extent to which they represent ascetic practices" presents another problem. [151]

An Alternative View.

In the light of the considerable evidence concerning the nature of askesis and of the practices of ascetics found in many scholarly works it might be thought a daunting task to discuss the 'ascetic' life style of the followers of Jesus without necessarily applying the established criteria so commonly considered applicable to ascetic attributes. Mary Ann Tolbert in her discussion of asceticism in the Gospel of Mark appears to be in a similar dilemma. She writes:

> If Mark is portraying Jesus in any kind of ascetic mode it is clearly of a very different character from that which later develops in Christian monasticism.[152]

On the assumption, therefore, that definitions of askesis and descriptions of ascetic practices in the life style of Jesus' followers are premised on the activities of third and fourth century hermits and monks, which are retrojected to earlier periods, and hence can be thought anachronistic, it is my intention in the present study to consider the development of the Greek term ἄσκησις and its cognate forms from the Homeric period to the first century CE. In this way it is hoped that the evidence of the nuanced forms in which they were used over this period will allow for discussion of the "ascetic mode" of "a very different character", from those offered in the accepted definitions. Moreover it is necessary to keep in mind that the earliest followers of Jesus were Galilean Jews. Therefore, in recognition of this fact, it is necessary to locate them in their geographical, historical, religious and linguistic environment and to be constantly aware of the external pressure placed on the region by the

[150] Freiberger, O, *Asceticism,* 5. This criticism is not directed at Flood as Freiberger in an end note 10 p.19 writes that the manuscript of his publication was completed before Flood's book appeared.
[151] Freiberger, O, *Asceticism,* 5.
[152] Tolbert, M.A, "Asceticism and Mark's Gospel," 29.

empires of which it was either a part or to which it was tangentially associated under the rule of client kings.

In developing this line of argument my thinking has been influenced by following writers: Richard Valantasis, Kallistos Ware and William Deal. (1) Valantasis' succinct definition of askesis "as performances within a dominant social environment intended to inaugurate a new subjectivity, different social relations and an alternative symbolic universe,"[153] provides for a much greater scope of investigation on the nature of askesis by not limiting it to those practices so commonly described in other definitions. (2) Ware's perspective owes much to the ancient Greek view of discipline and practice in the achievement of a given end. He describes askesis as that which

> leads us to self-mastery and enables us to fulfil the purpose that we have set for ourselves, whatever that may be. A certain measure of ascetic self-denial is thus a necessary element in all that we undertake, whether in athletics or in politics, in scholarly research or in prayer. Without this ascetic concentration we are at the mercy of exterior forces, or of our own emotions or moods; we are reacting rather than acting.[154]

(3) It is Deal's contention that it is impossible to define asceticism satisfactorily.[155] Having examined some of the definitions of asceticism he argues that it has to be viewed in a contextualised perspective which examines it within a tradition and culture rather than "as a normative description of one aspect of human behavior that can be generalized or universalized to include all cultures."[156] And so he maintains that it is necessary "to look at the reasons for ascetic practice, what is accomplished by it, what social, political, economic and other relationships are shifted and altered by engaging in certain forms of behavior that can be labeled ascetic." He concludes that it is necessary to consider ascetic practices within a "historio-cultural context," for the behaviour of an ascetic cannot be

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[153] Valantasis, R. "Constructions of Power in Asceticism," in *JAAR* 63 (1995), 775-821, (797). See also Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas,* (London: Routledge, 1997), and, "Is the Gospel of Thomas Ascetical?" in *JECS* 7 (1999), 55-81.

[154] Ware, K. "The Way of the Ascetics: Negative or Affirmative?" in *Asceticism,* (edd.) Wimbush & Valantasis, 3-15.

[155] Deal, W.E, "Toward a Politics of Asceticism," in *Asceticism,* 424-442.

[156] Deal, "Politics of Asceticism," 428.

construed as "a universal transcendent activity" outside the context in which it is enacted.

> Asceticism has meaning not as behavior unto itself, but in relationship to behaviors that are conceived of as different from, or in opposition to, or complimentary (*sic*) to it. Thus, there is no essential or universal meaning to asceticism, but only its meanings in different contexts.[157]

In this study it is my intention to examine the life style of the followers of Jesus using Deal's perspective on askesis. This together with the valuable insights found in Valantasis' and Ware's descriptions of ascetic behaviour will provide in broad outline the framework for an investigation into a first century Christian concept of askesis.

[157]Deal, "Politics of Asceticism," 428. See also Tolbert's comments in "Asceticism and Mark's Gospel," 45. "In acting on their formation by the rhetoric of Mark, early Christians accepted a life that we now would perhaps see as a kind of 'asceticism.' If we want to designate it as such, however, we must be careful to continue to distinguish it from the better-known asceticism of the later Christian monastic movement, for the first audience of Mark's gospel lived in a very different world than their later successors."

Chapter Two

Jesus and his Galilean Followers in context.

Introduction.

The Use of Sources in this chapter.

As this chapter aims to provide an overview of the period prior to the first century CE it is necessary to specify the literature which will be the basis of a discussion on ascetic practices during that period. Apart from those practices of fasting, sexual abstinence and ritual purification which Jews were expected to observe in their compliance with the Law, the Hebrew Scriptures provide little evidence of practices which Eliezer Diamond considers "must involve the voluntary acceptance of a spiritual discipline which is not binding on one's larger community.[158] In the Jewish *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha* we find examples of what Lawrence Wills describes as the "decentering of the self" in the Septuagint version of *Daniel* (Greek *Daniel*), *Tobit,* the Septuagint version of *Esther* (Greek *Esther*) and in *Joseph and Aseneth.* There is one other source which provides important information about ascetic life styles among the Essenes and the members of the Qumran community. This information will be considered in chapter three. However at this point I wish to refer to a work which can be found in the canon of Hebrew Scriptures, namely *Qoheleth,* which has been described as an anomaly within that canon.[159] However the process of personal transformation, or the decentering of self, or the shrinking of the social self appears to be at the base of the author's thinking as he attempted to come to terms with a new situation and to make people aware of the significance of the changes.

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[158] Diamond, E, *Holy Men and Hunger Artists*, 10. Cf. Kaelber's definition in *Encyclopedia of Religion,* 441; "The term [asceticism], when used in a religious context, may be defined as a *voluntary*...program of self-discipline and self-denial..." (my italics). See also L.M. Wills, "Ascetic Theology before Asceticism? Jewish Narratives and the Decentering of the Self." in *JAAR,* 74 (2006) 4, 902-925, (904).

[159] Cox, D, "Ecclesiastes," in *Oxford Companion to the Bible,* (edd.) B.M. Metzger & M.D. Coogan , (New York / Oxford: OUP, 1993), 176-178 (178).

Dermot Cox in his article on *Qoheleth*[160] writes that it "represents an individual's experiential view of the world and human existence and a resultant ethic based on reason applied to that experience." He justifies the place of *Qoheleth* in the canon by the fact that "a religious scholar, heir to a tradition, could face a world of cultural ferment and make a personal contribution by offering an intellectually valid answer to the problem of existence." It is important at this point to stress that in pursuing this existential argument *Qoheleth* was challenging the orthodox religious praxis of the Jews; therefore it might be claimed that in doing this the work can be considered ascetic in purpose.

The cultural ferment of which Cox writes was the process of Hellenisation which the cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean experienced in the era prior to the first century CE and which was still in progress at the time of Jesus and his followers. It is possible then to consider that both *Qoheleth* and the sayings of Jesus were responses to the influences which Hellenisation exercised on aspects of Jewish religion and culture at that time. Although a period of some three hundred years had elapsed between the writing of *Qoheleth* and the sayings of Jesus found in the *sermons* in *Matthew* and *Luke,* the issues which they presented were similar, the nature of God and the consequence of the perception of those views on readers/listeners in the way they lived their lives. That similarity arose in a society in which increasingly Jewish writers used Greek exegetical techniques translated into Aramaic/Hebrew in their exegesis of Hebrew Scriptures.[161]

This chapter is an attempt to contextualise the ascetic practices of the followers of Jesus. It will broadly set out the factors, such as the geographical, historical, political, economic and religious contexts which might contribute to a people's life style. It is based on the assumption that

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[160] Cox, D. "Ecclesiastes," 176-178.

[161] As will be discussed later in this chapter, *Qoheleth* has been seen as the collection of sayings of a teacher (rabbi). Throughout this chapter the translation of passages from *Qoheleth* is taken from the commentary of Norbert Lohfink in *Qoheleth: A Continental Commentary,* (trans.) S. McEvenue, (Minn.: Fortress Press, 2003). See *Qoh.* 12:9; "Qoheleth was a man of knowledge. But even more he taught the people the art of perception. He listened, and tested, and he straightened out many a proverb". In the gospels Jesus is portrayed as a rabbinical teacher answering questions about the Law," *Mk.*10:1-12, 17-31; 12: 13-34; *Lk.*12:13-15.

the followers of Jesus were to be found in the region which we know as the Galilee in Palestine.

My intention in this chapter is to provide information and comment on the behaviour and beliefs which particularise the following comments of Deal:

> The politics of asceticism refer to a contextualized sphere of action and interpretation, and from this the following kind of questions arise: What is the religious, historical, social, political and economic context in which one becomes an ascetic or enacts a culture's version of ascetic practice?.. Is ascetic practice normal or normative within the tradition in which it is performed, or is it a break from traditional modes of religious activity? That is to what extent are ascetics 'othering' themselves to some end or goal? What is accomplished by living an ascetic lifestyle? Does becoming an ascetic or engaging in ascetic activity free one from some social or political structure? Does it resolve or cause a problem? Does it rearrange patterns of authority and power?[162]

The questions posed in this quotation provide a succinct précis of the contents of my enquiry into the ascetic life style of the followers of Jesus. Important questions might be raised about the counter cultural nature of askesis, for example, with reference to the 'othering' of Jesus and his followers from their ambient communities, and to the problems involved in 'othering' in relation to the exercise of authority and power.

In any consideration of the issues which might have influenced the lives of Jesus and his Galilean followers three elements can be seen as of importance:

1. the spread of Hellenism;
2. their Jewishness;
3. their Galilean origin.

The Spread of Hellenism.

In any discussion of the Galilee /Palestine at this period it is inevitable that the influence arising from the role of Hellenism in the life of the region becomes a matter for consideration. The Hebrew Scriptures provide evidence of the existence of trade links between Palestine and other

[162] Deal, "Toward a Politics of Asceticism," in *Asceticism,* (edd.) Wimbush & Valantasis, 429.

Mediterranean countries.[163] In the process of acculturation these links are not to be underestimated.[164] However, it was the conquests of Alexander and the subsequent establishment of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties, the heirs of Alexander's empire, which accelerated the process of Hellenisation. In the discussion of this process Martin Hengel's assertion that by the time of Jesus all '*Judaism*' must really be designated '*Hellenistic Judaism*' has been influential.[165] Hengel argues that Hellenistic influence was to be found in many spheres of Jewish life in the region and not only in the Jewish Diaspora.[166] Consequently, as Mark Chancey argues, any attempt to portray Palestinian Judaism as more 'orthodox' than Diaspora Judaism on the basis of its supposedly lesser Hellenisation is doomed to failure.[167]

In his very detailed study of the extent of the influence of Hellenistic and Roman culture on the Galilee, Chancey draws attention to what he describes as "the 'all or nothing' mindset that the possibilities are limited to full Hellenization and/or Romanization, on the one hand, or full isolation on the other."[168] To obviate this, he suggests that "differentiating archaeological evidence by time period will help to avoid anachronistic conclusions about the early first century CE."[169]

In his exploration of the effect of Hellenism on Judaic practices Philip Alexander states that accounts of Jewish opposition to Hellenism in antiquity have been subject to exaggeration for nearly two thousand years,

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[163] *Ezekiel,* 27:11-25. The list of imports indicates the existence of trade with Sardinia and Spain (Tarshish), Ionia and Greece (Javan), areas of Asia Minor (Tubal, Meshech, Bethtogarmah) and Rhodes.

[164] See the reference to the thesis of Philip Alexander below.

[165] Hengel, M. *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period,* (trans,) J. Bowden, (London: SCM, 1996; first published in 2 vols. in 1974, in 1 volume edition in 1981); German edition, *Judentum und Hellenismus, Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2 Jh.s. v. Chr.* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1973) 104.

[166] Chancey, M. *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus,* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005) 1. Commenting on Hengel's views Chancey writes, "His review of evidence from the Persian through the early rabbinic periods demonstrated that Hellenic influence was felt in many spheres of Jewish life in Palestine: linguistic, literary, educational, architectural, religious, philosophical, artistic, political, economic, and military."

[167] Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture,* 1. See also Hengel, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ,* (trans.) J. Bowden, (London: SCM, 1989) 1-6.

[168] On his use of terminology defining cultural phenomena, such as Hellenism, Hellenisation, Romanisation, Judaism and Paganism, see Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture,* 18-19.

[169] Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture,* 16. A fuller discussion of the importance of archaeological evidence appears later in this chapter (pp. 67-68).

an exaggeration which stems from the ideological concerns of later groups, whether Jewish, Christian or "post enlightenment" Hellenists.[170] He expresses the view that in antiquity opposition to things Greek was found on a comparatively narrow front; it consisted of opposition to "Greek political domination," opposition to the "idolatry of popular Greek religion", and opposition to what the Rabbis saw as "Ways of the Amorites."

Alexander in an attempt to deconstruct Hellenism historically questions whether it was in origin 'autochthonous' stating that the evidence of archaeology suggests that all cultures of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East were in constant contact and interchange at both the material and intellectual levels from earliest antiquity.[171] This gave rise to a "set of cultures whose boundaries were always permeable to outside influences" allowing "a constant flow back and forth across them of cultural exchange."[172] Such a perspective had important consequences.

> A member of one society understands another society largely through the process of cultural translation, similar to the process of linguistic translation. He/she finds in his or her own society analogies to the elements of the alien society that they are trying to understand.[173]

As part of that "cultural translation" Loveday Alexander refers to "patterns of academic activity" that were more or less universal in the Eastern Mediterranean.

> Where they arose and how they may have been carried from one cultural setting to another are questions of some historical interest: the lasting influence of educational patterns associated with "wisdom" in the ancient Near East must be part of the picture, and only a severe form of Hellenic diffusionism can seriously contemplate the proposition that all patterns of

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[170] Alexander, P.S, "Hellenism and Hellenization as Problematic Historiographical Categories," in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide,* (ed.) T. Engberg-Pedersen, (Louisville /London/Leiden: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001) 63-69.

[171] Alexander, "Hellenism," 69.

[172] Alexander, "Hellenism," 70, "[B]y late antiquity such cultural exchange had been going on for at least a thousand years, accelerated latterly by the political unification of the Levant and Near East under the Persians, Greeks and Romans."

[173] Alexander's perception of a "process of cultural translation" has important ramifications for this present study of askesis in the life style of the Galilean followers of Jesus. The word ἄσκησις nowhere appears in the Synoptic Gospels to describe this life style. However the concept resonates in the actions and words of Jesus recorded in them.

> intellectual activity in the region were derived from Greek models.

She goes on to state that the importance of this observation might be seen in the fact that ancient observers were able "to use the related terms 'schools' and 'sects' as mutually meaningful models for conceptualizing what is going on in one cultural community in terms of what is going on in another." As an example of this she cites Josephus' description of sects in existence in first century Judaism in terms of Greek philosophical schools.[174]

The effect of this fusion on the religious and cultural practices of the Jews was a constant theme not only in the Hebrew Scriptures[175] but also in the later Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha.[176] These writings contain a record of the debate which ensued as Hellenistic (and Roman) ideas and practices infiltrated Jewish religious and ethical thought. The significance of these writings is the revelation that at this period there was great fluidity in the interpretation of the Pentateuch, as the retelling of the 'biblical' stories in *Jubilees* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* shows. That such writings continued into the early centuries of the present era might be ascertained from some of the dates suggested, albeit tentatively, for much of this literature.[177] It might be assumed, therefore, that Jesus and his followers were not unaffected by attempts to interpret the Pentateuch in the light of those events happening around them. Sean Freyne writes

> Once the immediacy of the Biblical stories for the concern and difficulties facing Jews in the Greek and Roman periods is recognised, there seems to be little good reason to deny to Jesus, as a reforming prophet endowed with the Spirit, a familiarity and engagement with those stories in whatever form they reached him.[178]

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[174] Alexander, L. "IPSE DIXIT: Citation of Authority in Paul and in the Jewish and Hellenistic Schools," in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenistic Divide,* (ed.) T. Engberg-Pedersen, 103-127, 122. See Jos. *Life,* 10-12,
περὶ ἐκκαίδεκα δὲ ἔτη γενόμενος ἐβουλήθην των παρ'ἡμιν αἱρέσεων ἐμπείριαν λαβειν· ἐννεακαιδέκατον δ' ἔτος ἔχων ἠρξάμην τε πολιτεύεσθαι τῃ Φαρισαίων αἱρέσει κατακολουθων, ἣ παραπλήσιός ἐστι τῃ παρ'Ἕλλησι Στωικῃ λεγομένῃ.

[175] See the discussion on *Qoheleth* in this chapter (pp. 54-65).

[176] From these genres, *Jubilees, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* 3 and 4 *Maccabees,* and *Joseph and Aseneth,* all indicate the effect which Hellenism had on Jewish religion and ethics.

[177] See the dates suggested in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* (ed.) J.H. Charlesworth, Vol.1, (New York & London: Doubleday, 1983), Vol. 2, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985).

[178] Freyne, S, *Jesus, A Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus-Story,* (London & New York: T&T. Clark International, 2004) 22.

The Jewishness of Jesus and his Followers.

The Synoptic Gospels portray Jesus as a member of a family which might be described as devout in its observance of Jewish religious practices. It is clear from the account in Luke's gospel that the attendance of Mary and Joseph at the feast of the Passover was a custom which they observed annually. The annual nature of their pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast is marked in the language in which the event is described; the use of the imperfect tense of the verb, ἐπορεύοντο, and of phrases such as κατ' ἔτος -yearly- and κατὰ τὸ ἔθος – according to their custom -, indicate their attendance was an annual event.[179]

All the gospels record that Jesus attended the Passover in Jerusalem as an adult.[180] It is also recorded in John's gospel that Jesus was present at other festivals in Jerusalem, such as the feast of Tabernacles (ἡ σκηνοπηγία) and the feast of the dedication of the Temple, Hanukkah, (τά ἐγκαίνια).[181]

To consider the Jewishness of Jesus (and his followers) while positing the possibility that the content of what he taught might be ascetic in purpose would have been a difficult task prior to the latter part of last century because of the belief that ascetic practices were contrary to the obligation laid on Jews in the observance of the Law.[182] That belief arose from a circumscribed view that asceticism was concerned with abstention from sexual relations; for that reason celibacy was deemed to be contrary to the command in Torah concerning procreation. Eliezer Diamond observes that Judaism and asceticism have not generally been associated with each other in the popular and, until recently, in the scholarly mind.[183] Among Jewish

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[179] On the participation of the Galileans in the Passover festival see the account in Josephus *Ant.* 20: 118-120 of the dispute between Galilean pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem and the people of Samaria through whose territory they were accustomed to travel. Cf. *Lk.*9: 52-53. See *Lk.* 13:1 which refers to the presence of Galileans at festivals in Jerusalem.

[180] *Mt.* 20:17; *Mk.*10:32; *Lk.* 18:31, 19-28; *Jn.* 2:23, 12:1, 12-15.

[181] *Jn.* 7:2; 10:22-23.

[182] See the references to a concept of askesis in the practices of Judaism in the Introduction to this study, p. 4. above.

[183] Diamond, *Holy Men,* 7. "[M]ost scholars of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, both Jewish and Christian, characterized Christianity as ascetic and Judaism as non- or anti-ascetic." Diamond notes that the exception is James Montgomery in his article, "Ascetic

scholars the question of the place of asceticism in Judaism was brought sharply into focus by the differences on the issue expressed by Yitzhak Baer[184] and Ephraim Urbach.[185] Baer defines the concept of askesis as "moral striving," manifesting itself in self-education, character development, service to God and generosity to others, qualities which are to be found in Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism. Urbach on the other hand associates the concept with dualism, mortification of the flesh and the creation of an elite class of ascetics, characteristics not found in rabbinic Judaism. [186]

That changes have taken place in the general view of the place and function which askesis played in the religious life of Judaism is evidenced in the writings of scholars in the latter part of the last century. Among these Steven Fraade's advocacy of a definition of askesis which would encompass "the varied forms of ascetic practice," and his recognition that it has been "a perennial side of Judaism as it struggles with the tension between the realization of transcendent ideals and the confronting of this-worldly obstacles to that realization" have played an important role in the discussion of askesis and Judaism. His definition of askesis would include (1) "the exercise of a disciplined effort toward the goal of spiritual perfection," and (2) "abstention (whether total or partial, permanent or temporary, individualistic or communalistic) from the satisfaction of otherwise permitted earthly, creaturely desires." For Fraade "the question is not: Is ancient Judaism ascetic or non-ascetic? But: How is asceticism...manifested and responded to in the ancient varieties of Judaism?"[187] In his comment on Fraade's definition Diamond perceptively remarks that in identifying askesis with "religious discipline in general" he (Fraade) had rendered his definition "useless," "for askesis should be something other than a synonym for

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Strains in Early Judaism," in *JBL* 51 (1932), 183-187. For those scholars who accepted the traditional view see Diamond's footnote 12 on pp. 144-145.

[184] Baer, Y. *Yisrā 'ēl bā-'Amim,* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1955) 38-57, (in Hebrew) cited in Diamond, *Holy Men,* 8.

[185] Urbach, E.E, "Asceticism and Suffering in Rabbinic Thought," (in Hebrew) in *Sēfer Yôvēl le-Yishāq Baer,* (edd.) S Ettinger, S Baron, et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961) 48-68; Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs,* (trans.) I. Abrahams, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), both cited in Diamond, *Holy Men,* 8.

[186] See Diamond, *Holy Men,* 9, for his comments on the views expressed by Baer and Urbach. See also M. Satlow, "'And on the Earth You shall sleep': *Talmud Torah* and Rabbinic Asceticism," in *JR* (2003) 204-225, (206-207).

[187] Fraade , S. "Ascetical Aspects of Ancient Judaism," in *Jewish Spirituality,* Vol. 1, 253-288 (257-260).

religious praxis, for it must involve the voluntary acceptance of a spiritual discipline that is not binding on one's larger community."[188] Fraade's extended description, together with his own comments and those of Diamond, has implications for the discussion as to whether askesis played a part in the lives of Jesus and his followers.

It might be questioned whether the present consideration of the role of askesis in the thought and practice of Judaism should more appropriately appear earlier where some *definitions* of askesis are discussed.[189] However, my intention in placing it at this point is to signal the fact that Jesus and his early followers were Jews who in the Synoptic Gospels appeared to have been orthodox in belief and practice.[190] A further objection might be made that where the issue of askesis is discussed in Judaic practices it is in relation to rabbinic Judaism, which some scholars date to the period after the destruction of the Temple or even to the compilation of the *Mishnah* toward the end of the second century CE. Such a conjecture, I consider, does not take into account the persistence and strength of tradition in cultural and religious practice and the collective nature of the sayings of the *Mishnah* which reveal that the thinking evolved over a long period of time.

It is important to remember that the ambience in which Jesus and his followers lived was Jewish. Therefore it might be feasible to argue that the teachings of Jesus, and by association those of his disciples, constituted one of the many varieties of Judaism about which Fraade was writing when he posed the following question:

> The question is not: "Is ancient Judaism ascetic or not ascetic?" But: "Is asceticism manifested and responded to in the ancient varieties of Judaism...? [191]

Within the ambit of Fraade's question and Diamond's criticism of this in his assertion that askesis must be "something other than a synonym for religious praxis," it might be possible to examine ascetic practices in

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[188] Diamond, *Holy Men,* 10. Cf. Kaelber's definition in *Encyclopedia of Religion,* 441; "The term [asceticism], when used in a religious context, may be defined as a *voluntary*...program of self-discipline and self-denial..." (my italics).

[189] See chapter one above where definitions of asceticism and descriptions of ascetical behaviour are discussed.

[190] See earlier in this chapter, p.51, a description of Jewish religious observances carried out by Jesus.

[191] Fraade, S. "Ascetical Aspects," 257.

Judaism outside those ordinances placed on Jews by the observance of Torah. For this purpose it is intended to discover whether in pre-first century Jewish literature it is possible find evidence of practices which might be described as ascetical under the wider concept of askesis and which have been discussed in chapter one. In the canonical Books of the Hebrew Scriptures the ambiguities to be found in *Qoheleth* make it an obvious choice in order to examine practices which illustrate characteristics associated with askesis.

Qoheleth is to be found in the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scriptures. All that is known about it comes from the book itself.[192] The place of composition is generally accepted as being Palestine, probably Jerusalem, where the author was a rich aristocrat.[193] Lohfink speculating on the role of Qoheleth as a teacher, real or fictional, and his writings as a text book, states that it is possible that he offered "his teaching publicly in the market place as did the Greek peripatetic philosophers" adding "[a]nyone who managed to do this in Jerusalem must have been not only a (probably well-traveled) person of broad culture with high spiritual and linguistic abilities, but also a powerful personality able to get things done. A lot easier to understand if we presume that he came from a powerful family."[194]

If these suppositions concerning Qoheleth have any validity, then they point to him as someone who adopted a counter-cultural stance which in the

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[192] Concerning the place of its composition see J. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes: A Commentary,* (London : SCM. 1988), 50, who writes "the meagre political data that scholars have detected in the work point to a period prior to the Maccabean revolt in 164 BCE, for the attitude toward foreign rulers fits best the Ptolemaic period." See also Hengel in *Judaism and Hellenism,* vol. 1, 115, who draws attention to "indications [in *Qoheleth*] of a strict, indeed a harsh administration which joined the rich in oppressing the poor and of an omnipresent power of the king, which fit best the Ptolemaic period," (*Qoh.* 4:1; 7:7; 5:7; 8:2-4; 10:20). See also on the concept of absolute monarchy T. Frydrych's comments in *Living Under the Sun: Examination of Proverbs and Qoheleth,* (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2002) 161-165. On the consensus that Qoheleth was active in Jerusalem around the middle of the third century, see F Crüsemann, "The Unchangeable World:The 'Crisis of Wisdom' in Koheleth," in *God of the Lowly: Socio-Historical Interpretation of the Bible,* (edd.) W. Schottroff and W. Stegemann, (trans.) M.J. O'Connell, (New York: Orbis Books, 1984) 58. Contra, N Lohfink, in *Qoheleth,* who considers that it should be dated as late as possible since "its Hebrew is akin to that of the Mishnah," nevertheless he concedes the possibility that *Sirach* which might be dated to the period between 190-180 BCE might be a possible terminus ad quem, (4).

[193] Gordis, R. *Koheleth: The Man and His World,* (New York: Bloch, 1955[2]), idem, "The Social Background of Wisdom Literature," *HUCA* 18 (1943-1944), 77-118; E. Bickerman, "Koheleth (Ecclesiastes) or the Philosophy of an Acquisitive Society," in Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible,* (New York: Schocken, 1967); Crüsemann, "The Unchangeable World", 58-59.

[194] Lohfink, *Qoheleth,* 10-11.

changed circumstances in which the Jews found themselves under Ptolemaic rule challenged their long-standing belief in their covenantal relationship with Yahweh.

The Message of *Qoheleth.*[195]

It has been stated above that *Qoheleth* is considered as wisdom literature[196] in the canon of Hebrew Scripture, a status which it shares with Proverbs; Qoheleth's aim is similar to that found in *Proverbs.* "They are all interested in the question of how to make the most of life."[197] But beyond this there is no consensus about the respective use of the term wisdom in these writings. James Loader in alluding to a possible reason for this lack of consensus notes in relation to *Qoheleth* as a wisdom book:

> Wisdom is concerned with the correct ordering of life, with man's harmonious integration into the order of the world upheld by God. The value of this wisdom is situated in its relation to time and circumstance. Therefore it is not "übergeschichtlich". A statement is only valid in a specific time and situation. But when such a statement (with its inherent truth) is fixed, it also acquires value for other situations. Then, however, it has to be brought back to reality in time. If this does not happen, wisdom petrifies into a dogmatic system above and obtruding upon reality. Just here the Book of Qohelet has its place in wisdom literature. Qohelet is not merely a *hākām* with deeper vision than others and he does not practice *Lebenskunde* as the older wisdom, but he protests.[198]

Loader, in describing the value of wisdom as being situated in its relation to time and circumstance and by stating that without these it becomes ossified, uses language which recalls that used by Deal when he argues that askesis has to be viewed within a tradition and culture, that is in a "historio-cultural context."[199] Furthermore the last clause in the passage quoted above aptly describes the primary role of an ascetic – to protest.

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[195] Craig Bartholomew in "Qoheleth in the Canon? Current Trends in the Interpretation of Ecclesiastes" in *Themelios* 24.3 (May 1999), 4-20 provides a concise and useful guide to the recent scholarship on *Qoheleth.*

[196] Dell, K.J. "Ecclesiastes as Wisdom: Consulting Early Interpreters," in *VT* 44 3 (1994), 301-329. For an earlier view on studying wisdom literature see J.L. McKenzie in "Reflections on Wisdom," in *JBL* 86 (1967), 1-9. McKenzie writes, "We study wisdom literature because that is all we can study; but we do not by this study learn what was the living tradition of wisdom." (2).

[197] Frydrych, *Living Under the Sun,* 189.

[198] Loader, J.A. *Polar Structures in the Book of Qohelet,* (Berlin &New York, 1979) 3.

[199] Deal, "Toward a Politics of Asceticism," in *Asceticism,* 428.

In reading *Qoheleth* we might ask what the writer's protest was about. He was protesting that while the annexation of Palestine by the Ptolemies had changed everything, the worldview of his Jewish contemporaries had failed to recognise that the changes had brought into question their covenantal relationship with Yahweh. Crüsemann states that that recognition of a changed world and its effect on religious belief was the essential "starting point for understanding Koheleth."[200]

In the period before the annexation of Palestine by the Ptolemies Crüsemann describes Palestinian society as

> "largely molded by segmentary- that is, kinship-structures...Below that level of the state, and to some extent incorporated into the very structure of the state, kinship marked social relationships, and created relationships of solidarity that afforded security, just as it left its mark on many of Israel's laws. Ownership of land, which was a family matter, ensured a large measure of economic self-sufficiency.[201]

Such was the foundation of the society reflected in *Proverbs.* In that society were to be found "all the basic human types, the diligent and the slothful, the just and the wicked, the wise and the foolish." There was revealed in the book a society in which the righteous man was one who met "the requirements set by his fellows according to the customs and norms of his group" and benefited from the reciprocity practised in such a society. The writer/compiler of *Proverbs* reflected such a situation in which people knew their place in the order of things and most importantly their relationship with their creator; for, as Loader writes,

> In general ***hokmā*** wisdom is regarded as *Lebenskunde,* i.e. the integration into the order of life...This order is God's making. If one acts in harmony with this order it is correct conduct and prosperity follows. If one's conduct disturbs this order it is wrong and misfortune follows.[202]

Lohfink in his commentary[203] describes the purpose of *Qoheleth* as the deconstruction of that existing worldview and as the initial stages of a new one. In this process two factors are necessary: definitions of reality ("one is thus or so") and the presence of a body of advice ("one should act thus or so"). "Only when both are present does a common understanding of the

[200] Crüsemann, "Unchangeable World," 62.
[201] Crüsemann, "Unchangeable World," 62.
[202] Loader, *Polar Structures,* 97.
[203] Lohfink, *Commentary,* 117.

world exist upon which a human society can function." Qoheleth recognised their presence in "the old wisdom, interwoven in its teachings," and was able to use them in his attempt to describe a new worldview. In drawing the attention of his readers to this attempt to create a new worldview, Lohfink points to two apparent weaknesses in Qoheleth's scheme: its brevity and unsystematic selection. He refers to the absence of reference to family behaviour and neighbourliness. However he speculates that the old wisdom might have been adequate in these areas, and so Qoheleth's students would have been instructed in them. Lohfink is probably correct in his assumption that "Qoheleth would have intended to *equip them only for what was specifically new* (my italics), that revolution in commercial, political and social life with regard to which the tradition offered no illumination."[204]

The certainties of an existence in a society which had meaning for the author/compiler of Proverbs appeared to have changed prior to the composition of *Qoheleth.* All that remained was the cyclic inevitability of life over which human beings had no control. The deterministic nature of the life of those who lived in this relationship with the creator is typified in the poem in *Qoheleth* on the predictability of events.

> Everything has its hour. For every interest under the heavens
> there is an appointed time: a time to give birth and a time to die;
> a time to plant and a time to harvest the plants...[205]

In historical terms the crisis of belief, which *Qoheleth* describes, may be attributed to the annexation of Palestine into the Ptolemaic empire, when ownership of the land became the preserve of the king and the economy became the activity of the king's agents.[206] Qoheleth recognised in the administrative system of the Ptolemaic dynasty what Frydrych describes as

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[204]Lohfink, *Commentary,* 117.

[205] *Qoh.* 3:1-9. In his comments on this poem Loader in *Polar Structures* writes that "the reflection on the series of mutually exclusive events is not prescriptive but descriptive...Here there is no talk of *when* things occur – the fact is *that* they occur and that they occur in such a way that man cannot determine what happens to him." See also Frydrych, *Living Under the Sun* 118-123 on the cyclic nature of human existence in *Qoheleth.*

[206] Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism,* vol.1 43 "...the Zeno correspondence, even as far as Palestine is concerned, gives the picture of a very active, almost hectic commercial life, originated by that host of Greek officials, agents and merchants who flooded the land in the truest sense of the word and 'penetrated into the last village of the country.'" On the quotation from Morton Smith see Hengel , vol. 2. 34, n. 338.

"a well developed monarchic set up" in which "[t]he royal figure is much more central to the life of Qoheleth's society than we found to be the case in Proverbs," [207] and in which the socio-economic structures were corrupt and instruments of oppression.

> Again, I further observed all that is carried out under the sun in order to exploit people. Just look: the exploited ones weep and no one comforts them; from the hands of those who exploit them comes violence, and no one comforts them...When you observe that the poor in the province are destitute, and justice and law-abiding thwarted, don't be surprised when interests work this way: one higher up covers for another and others even higher up are behind both of them[208]

In the new circumstances in which he found himself Qoheleth, this wise member of the Jewish aristocracy, reflected on his fate.

> I am Qoheleth. I was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I had made up my mind to examine and explore, with the help of knowledge whether all that is carried out under the heavens is really a bad business in which humankind is forced to be involved, at a god's command. I observed all the actions that are carried out under the sun. The conclusion: all are a breath, an inspiration of air.[209]

But in his observations he realised that it was not only in the pursuit of knowledge that he failed to discover for what he was searching. "[T]he fate that awaits the fool also awaits me." When he turned his attention to the other quests which occupied the concern of human beings – the pursuit of happiness, of status, of wealth and possessions – he discovered that all of them were "breath and an inspiration of air."[210] Consequently living became irksome for Qoheleth, "for the actions that are carried out under the sun weighed on me as an evil."[211]

Pessimism appears to be the dominant characteristic of the sayings found in *Qoheleth* both in the relationship between God and human beings and in the relationships which existed between human beings in their social world. In earlier wisdom literature God in his relationship with humans was

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[207] Frydrych, *Living Under the Sun,* 161-164. On the presence of an oppressive surveillance regime see *Qoh.*8:2-4;10:20.
[208] *Qoh.* 4:1; 5:7.
[209] *Qoh.* 1: 12-14.
[210] *Qoh.* passim.
[211] *Qoh.* 2:17.

portrayed as creator with the created; in *Qoheleth* the worldview was of a god who saw human beings in the same light as animals.

> With regard to humans as individuals, I thought to myself, God has singled them out and (from this) they must recognize that in reality they are animals. For fate awaits each human and fate awaits the animals. One single fate awaits both. As these die, so the others die. Both share the same air. There is in this no advantage for the human over the animal. Both are breath.[212]

The uncertainty of human beings about their place in the created order had its influence on the manner in which they related to others within the social order. The established communal ties no longer exerted influence on individuals who in their eagerness "to get on" in the world ignored their social responsibilities.[213] And so Qoheleth commented;

> And I observed that every labor and every successful action means rivalry between people. That too is breath and an inspiration of air.[214]

The apparent bleakness which Qoheleth witnessed in the relationship of God with his people stemmed from what he perceived as the remoteness of the creator from his creation. Consequently he wrote as a witness of the end of the covenant relationship between God and Israel.[215] But despite the remoteness of the creator from his creation he still exercised absolute control.

> But note the actions of God: for: Who can make straight what he has bent? On a happy day, take part in the happiness; and on a bad day, take note: God has made the latter just as he made the former, so that humans can find out nothing about what comes afterward.[216]

The remoteness of a god who was responsible for everything presented Qoheleth with a problem about the responsibility for evil in the world. Although the question was not posed there is an ambivalence pervading the texts in which Qoheleth spoke of the evil of human beings. No

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[212] *Qoh.* 3:18-19.
[213] See Jos. *Ant.* 12: 158-170 on the activities of Onias and Jos. *Ant.*12: 239-240 on the behaviour of the Oniads.
[214] *Qoh.* 4:4.
[215] Nowhere in *Qoheleth* is there a denial of the existence of God but there is a realisation that the remoteness of God had consequences for the way in which people behaved in society. On this see Frydrych, *Living Under the Sun,* 125.
[216] *Qoh.* 7:13-14.

longer are we aware of the clear distinction found in *Proverbs* that God was responsible for what was good and the forces of evil for what was evil and that God exacted retribution for evil committed.[217] Qoheleth acknowledged that "God made human beings straightforward but that they have gone searching for all sorts of reckonings."[218] But when they went astray who exacted retribution, for without retribution, that is, "where no punishment is enacted, evil is soon afoot?"[219] Although recalling "the saying: Those who fear God will prosper, because they fear before him,"[220] Qoheleth's experience was that things happened on earth that were "a breath."

> There are law-abiding people to whom things happen as though their action were of a lawless person; and there are lawless people to whom things happen as though their action were of a law-abiding person.[221]

And he was aware also of the random nature of the allocation of rewards for the exercise of people's skills and qualities.

> I further observed under the sun that: The race does not go to the swift, victory in battle does not go to the powerful, nor does bread go to the knowledgeable, nor wealth to the clever, nor applause to the perceptive, since time and chance await each one.[222]

If such was the society in which Qoheleth lived it would not have been difficult to envisage an existence dominated by the pursuit of selfish ends within the limitations of living in the here and now – in Qoheleth's words, *under the sun.* But, nevertheless, Qoheleth recognised even in such a society human beings were social animals who were strong when cooperating one with the other.

> It happens that a person stands alone, and there is no second. Yes, not even a son or brother. But his possessions are limitless, and moreover his eyes are not sated by wealth. But for whom am

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[217] *Prov.* 16:4-6, "The lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. All those who are arrogant are an abomination to the Lord; be assured, they will not go unpunished. By loyalty and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by fear of the Lord one avoids evil."
[218] *Qoh.* 7:29.
[219] *Qoh.* 8:11.
[220] See *Prov.*. 10:27-29: "The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short. The hope of the righteous ends in gladness but the expectation of the wicked comes to nothing. The way of the Lord is a stronghold for the upright, but destruction for evildoers."
[221] *Qoh.* 8-14.
[222] *Qoh.* 9:11.

> I labouring, and why deny myself happiness? That too is a breath; it is a bad business. Two are better than one, if it happens they are well rewarded by their possessions. For if they fall, the one can lift up his partner. Too bad for the one who falls, with no second to help him up. Moreover, when two sleep together, they warm one another; but how will one alone get warm? And if someone can overpower one person, still two will resist him; and a three-ply cord will not be broken[223]

Qoheleth can be viewed as the meditation of a rich, educated, aristocratic Jew living in Jerusalem in a crisis situation resulting from the occupation of Palestine by the Ptolemies. It can be interpreted as an attempt to establish a strategy for living in a society in which old certainties were being called into question by the changes taking place in social, political, moral and theological thinking. But a reading of the text indicates that for Qoheleth, its author, it proved difficult to abandon completely the traditional worldview of his people; hence what might be described as ambivalence can be found in his writings. This can be clearly seen in his musings on the role of Yahweh in the lives of his people. Sometimes the deity was represented as remote and indifferent to their fate; at other times as still in charge and exercising care of those whose lifespan he had determined.

> Go ahead, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God long ago determined your activity as he desired. Always wear clean clothes, and care for your head with hair creams. Experience life with a woman you love, all the days of your life of breath that he has given you under the sun, all your days of breath. For that is your portion of life, and the possessions for which you labor under the sun. Everything that your hand finds worth doing, do it, as long as you have the strength! For there is neither action, nor accounting, nor perception, nor knowledge in the netherworld to which you are going.[224]

The message throughout *Qoheleth* was that it was still possible to experience happiness in one's present life (under the sun). Perfect happiness in Qoheleth's view was

> To eat and drink and taste happiness through all one's possessions for which one has labored under the sun during the few days that God has given one. For that is one's portion.

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[223] *Qoh.*4:8-12.
[224] *Qoh.* 9:7-10.

But Qoheleth went on to write that "the real divine gift" did not consist in wealth and possessions and in the joy of possessions but that,

> one will not much remember how few are the days of one's life, because God continuously answers through the joy in one's heart.[225]

The "*fin de siècle*" pessimism which the annexation of Palestine evoked in Qoheleth has been interpreted as the reaction of a sceptic to the clash of the traditional beliefs and practices of a society with those of the occupying power. However, in advocating a strategy for living to deal with new situations Qoheleth's mission might be interpreted as providing means by which people could still experience happiness and enjoyment despite the changes to which they had been subject.

> Just as you cannot perceive the blowing air any more than the development of a child in the pregnant womb, so can you not perceive the action of God who enacts everything...Then will the light be sweet, and happy for the eyes to see the sun. Because, even when a human being has many years of life, one should be joyful in each of them; and one should remember the days of darkness: they will be many.[226]

It is not possible to say how far the views of the Greeks on the nature of the gods impinged on Qoheleth's thoughts concerning the nature of God and his involvement in the affairs of human beings. However, it is possible to point to the steady erosion of belief in the Greek gods and their activity in the world. As early as the end of the fifth century BCE Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic* stated that the gods had no concern for human beings; they overlooked justice.[227] In the popular drama also of that period the tragedian Euripides was questioning traditional religious belief. Even if the gods

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[225] *Qoh.*5:17-19.Other passages on the theme of joy and happiness in *Qoheleth* are 2:24-26; 3:12-13, 22; 8:15; 11:7-9.

[226] *Qoh.* 11:5-8. On the significance of happiness in *Qoheleth* see A. Gianto, "The Theme of Enjoyment in Qohelet," in *Biblica* 73 (1992), 528-532. Gianto analyses the Hebrew word *śimhâ* and its cognate forms in *Qoheleth.* His view is expressed in the final paragraph of his article. "Is human joy a central theme of Qohelet's message? Or is it a muted theme? The answer cannot be a simple yes or no. It is only in the first stage of the development of the theme [2:1-8:14] that one may get the impression that it is an important yet muted theme. In the second stage the emphasis on enjoyment is beyond doubt. Is joy in the heart a gift from God to help humankind face life's predicaments? While a positive answer may sound rather optimistic for the first stage, it is nevertheless clear in the second stage: God who inspires this joy, has given his approval to human efforts." (9:7). See also E. Levine, "The Humour of Qohelet", *ZAW* 109 (1997), 71-83 (82-83).

[227] Plato, *Republic,* Book 1. See the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus 338-354 on the nature of justice.

existed they played no part in the lives of human beings or were openly hostile. Hecuba in the *Trojan Women* summed up the ambivalence of the Athenians of that era as to who or what controlled human affairs.

> Sustainer of the earth, o'er earth enthroned,
> Whoe'er thou art, so dim to our conjecture-
> Zeus, or the Law of Nature, or Man's own Mind,
> I cry to Thee! Who on Thy noiseless path
> Leadest all human things the way of justice.[228]

Similar doubts about the influence which the gods exercised over the destinies of people also played a part in the plots of the comedies written by the fourth century playwright Menander. Nearer the time of Qoheleth Cercidas, a politician from Megalopolis in Arcadia who was influenced by Cynic philosophy, was questioning the workings of divine justice and was critical of traditional religious beliefs. It has been argued that the scepticism about the role of the gods, current in other parts of the Hellenistic world was reflected in *Qoheleth.* Hengel would seem to be summing up those arguments when he states:

> Koheleth stands at the parting of the ways, at the boundary of two times. Under the impact of the spiritual crisis of early Hellenism, his critical thought could no longer make sense of traditional wisdom and, consequently, of traditional piety and the cult.

However, he adds:

> his aristocratic and conservative attitude prevented him from breaking with the religion of his ancestors and identifying God, say, with incalculable fate. For him God is and remains the sovereign law of every happening.[229]

Frydrych in a comment on Qoheleth's experience that in the real world righteous people suffered and the wicked prospered, states that "the tension observed here is at the heart of Qoheleth's world which does not subject itself to human rationality – this is the way, Qoheleth believes, God intended it. The rationale for fearing God is not simply that it pays off, but that God is

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[228] Euripides, *The Trojan Women,* 884-888.

[229] Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism,* vol.1, 127. See above references to Qoheleth's failure to abandon completely his attachment to Jewish belief in God. See also Frydrych's comment in, *Living under the Sun,*111 on the "the tension...at the heart of Qoheleth's world which does not subject itself to human rationality – this is the way, Qoheleth believes, God intended it. The rationality for fearing God is not simply that it pays off, but that God is beyond reach."

beyond human reach."[230] The remoteness of God from his creation sums up Qoheleth's experience of God, but in this he was not alone amongst the writers of wisdom literature.

> Weary not, though you cannot fathom him. For who has seen and can describe him? Or who can praise him as he is? Beyond these, many things lie hid; only a few of his works have I seen. It is the Lord who has made all things, and to those who fear him he gives wisdom.[231]

Qoheleth was written in a period which witnessed the increasing impact of Hellenisation on the thoughts and actions of the people of Judea. The growth of that influence, which had its origin in the commercial relations which existed with other countries in the eastern Mediterranean, was extended by the conquests of Alexander and by the consequences which followed from the division of his empire after his death.

The influence of Hellenic thought can be traced in Qoheleth's questioning of the traditional view of the nature of God and of the exercise of his power over the lives of human beings. In summary Qoheleth might be said to have held an existentialist view of the lives of human beings. Nowhere did he deny the existence of deity but his concern was to show his readers/hearers that the evidence suggested that God exercised no influence over what happened in their lives. Such an existentialist approach ran counter to the beliefs of the Jews found in the Hebrew Scriptures. This counter cultural teaching about the nature of God is in accordance with the definition of asceticism formulated by Valantasis.[232] This I have argued in chapter one extends the concept of ascetic behaviour and practice beyond those commonly associated with later practices found amongst hermits and monks of the third and fourth centuries CE and which have informed much later thought on the nature of asceticism.

It can only be conjectured that Qoheleth's questioning of the nature of God might have influenced the thinking of his fellow Jews, thereby

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[230] Frydrych, T. *Living under the Sun,* 111. See *Qoh.* 8:14-15.
[231] *Sir.* 43:30-33.
[232] Valantasis, R. "Constructions of Power and Asceticism," in *JAAR* 63/4 ( ) . " Asceticism may be defined as performances within a dominant social environment intended to inaugurate a new subjectivity, different social relationships and an alternative symbolic universe." 797.

changing what they believed about God and themselves. However, in his particular circumstances Qoheleth's questions seem to fit the theory of Deal that the religious, historical, political and economic context in which someone lives his/her life acts as a determinant on whether that person becomes an ascetic or enacts a culture's version of ascetic practices.[233]

In the writings of Qoheleth we are made aware of a theological crisis in a man's belief about the nature of God and his relationship with his creation, and the subsequent effect on the way human beings lived their lives. Qoheleth's view of God was at variance with much of the wisdom writings in Hebrew Scripture. In the eyes of many it was considered a gloom-laden cynical view. Such an interpretation of Qoheleth's writing made it easy to dismiss it. If the purpose of his writing was to provide an existentialist view of what it was to live in a rapidly-changing society then it might be possible to argue that what he achieved was a counter cultural critique of life in the period of the latter decades of the third century BCE. In challenging the prevalent religious and social culture of the Jews and, by so doing, attempting to change their religious and social perceptions, it might be said that the teaching contained in Qoheleth's writing was an ascetic act.

The Galilee: Its History and People: Influences on Jesus and his Followers.

Jesus was a Jew who spent a large part of his life in the Galilee. Such an assertion might also be made about most of his early followers. The gospel accounts illustrate his acquaintance with many of the districts. They describe his journeys to the towns and villages throughout the whole of the Galilee,[234] and to the surrounding territories.[235] Remarking on these gospel accounts Freyne states that

> Mark is meticulous in suggesting that Jesus operated within the orbit of the cities of the region – 'the borders of Tyre', 'the territory of Gadara', 'the midst of the Dekapolis' and 'the

[233] See above p.47. n.162.
[234] *Mk.* 1:39; 6:7; *Mt.* 4:23: *Lk.* 8:1; *Jn.* 2:1-11; 4:46-56.
[235] *Mk.* 5:1 (the district of the Gerasenes - ἡ χώρα τῶν Γερασηνῶν), cf. *Mt.*8:28; *Lk.* 8:26. *Mk.* 7:24 (the region around Tyre - τα ὅρια Τύρου), cf. *Mt.* 15:21 (the region of Tyre and Sidon - τὰ μέρη Τύρου και Σιδῶνος). *Mk.* 8:27 (the villages of Caesarea Philippi - αἱ κώμαι Καισαρείας τῆς Φιλίππου), cf. *Mt.* 16:13 (the region of Caesarea Philippi - τὰ μέρη Καισαρείας τῆς Φιλίππου).

villages of Caesarea Philippi' – but in none of the cities in question.[236]

If Freyne is right about Mark's accuracy in detailing Jesus' missionary journeys, it has certain implications about the nature of his mission. If in his ministry in the Galilee Jesus did not target urban centres but restricted his activities to rural areas, that is to peasant communities, in which traditional Jewish beliefs and values had been preserved, then it was not likely that he would have had much contact with Gentiles.[237] It would imply that initially his mission was judaeocentric, thus confirming his command to his disciples to go to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" and not to the Gentiles and Samaritans.[238]

Historical Developments.

When we turn to the history of the Galilee to discover what influence it might have contributed to the essential Jewishness of Jesus we encounter problems concerning the sources which provide information on the extent to which it is possible to describe the people of the Galilee as Jewish. In the period of the dominance of imperial powers, such as the Assyrians, Persians, and of Alexander and his early successors, when the Galilee as well as most of the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean was subject to foreign powers, there is a paucity of written evidence about the region and its people. For the later period after the establishment of the Hasmonean dynasty most of our evidence is drawn from two sources, 1 and 2 *Maccabees* and the writings of Josephus. The reliability of the first is called into question because of their apologetic purpose, while in the works of Josephus, much of what he writes on the Galilee and its people has to be viewed in the light of his political and personal objectives in writing the *Bellum Judaicum* and the *Antiquitates*, and so their reliability is also open to question. To obviate these difficulties other

[236] Freyne, S. *Jesus*, 76.
[237] There are two references in the synoptic gospels of Jesus' meeting with Gentiles. *Mt.* 8:5-13 and *Lk.* 7:1-10 both record his meeting with a centurion in Capharnaum and *Mt.* 15: 21-28 and *Mk.* 7: 24- 31 record his encounter with a Canaanite (Syro-Phoenician) woman in the district of Tyre and Sidon. In the gospel of John there is a reference to Greeks who wished to see Jesus (*Jn.* 12: 20-22).
[238] *Mt.* 10:5-7.

disciplines, such as archaeology and comparative studies in sociology have played an increasing part.

In his book on the relevance of archaeology in the pursuit of the Galilean Jesus, Jonathan Reed states that in the first century CE the Galilee was essentially Jewish.[239] To support this claim he puts forward two propositions namely that, either the Galilee was already inhabited by Jews prior to its annexation by the Hasmoneans, or the Hasmoneans introduced Judeans to colonise it.[240] In view of the meagreness and ambiguity of the written evidence Reed defends his hypothesis of an essentially Jewish Galilee by examining the archaeological evidence. The evidence indicates that from the end of the Late Iron Age (the early sixth century BCE) to the late Hellenistic Period there was little continuous settlement of the Galilee.

Chancey in his study of the Hellenic and Roman influence in the Galilee is substantially in agreement with Reed's hypothesis. Helped by the archaeological evidence and building on the work of E. P. Sanders,[241] E.M. Meyer[242], S. Freyne[243] and M. Goodman,[244] Chancey states that in the first century CE the population of the Galilee was "predominantly Jewish, with

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[239] Reed, J. *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-Examination of the Evidence,* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2000), 24.

[240] In the account of the annexation of the Galilee in 1*Macc.* 5:14-23, we read that Simon, the brother of Judas Maccabaeus, having routed the heathen Gentiles and driven them out of the Galilee, evacuated all the Jews and took them to Judea. However Josephus in *Ant.* 13: 318-319 attributes the judaization of the population of part of the territory of Ituraea (possibly north Galilee) to Aristobulus (c.104 –103 BCE) after his campaigns against the Ituraeans. In *BJ.* 1:76 Josephus writes of the very fine armour and military decorations which Antigonus, the brother of Aristobulus, had procured in the Galilee. If these campaigns were directed against north Galilee then it would suggest that towards the end of the second century BCE Galilee was still occupied by Gentiles (ἀλλόφυλοι).

[241] Sanders, E.P, *The Historical Figure of Jesus,* (London: Penguin Press 1993); Sanders, "Jesus in Historical Context," in *Theology Today* (1993) 429-438; Sanders, "Jesus' Galilee," in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflict in Early Christianity: Essays in Honour of Heikki Räisänen,* (edd.) I. Dunderberg et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 3-41.

[242] Meyer, E.M, "Jesus and his Galilean Context," in *Archaeology and the Galilee: Texts and Contexts in the Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Periods,* (edd.) D.R. Edwards and C.T. McCollough, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 57-66.

[243]Freyne, S, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian: A Study of Second Temple Judaism,* (Wilmington, DL: Michael Glazier, 1980; reprint Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 2000);Freyne, "Urban-Rural Relations in First Century Galilee," in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity,* (ed.) L.I. Levine, (New York / Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992) 75-91; Freyne, *Jesus, A Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus Story,* (London /New York: T&T. Clark International, 2004).

[244] Goodman, M, "Galilean Judaism and Judean Judaism," in *CHJ,* vol.3, (edd.) W. Horbury, W.D. Davies, J. Sturdy, (Cambridge; CUP, 1999) 596-617; Goodman. *State and Society in Roman Galilee, AD 132-212,* (Totowa: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983).

gentiles only a small minority."[245] Archaeological evidence, revealing the presence of peculiarly Jewish artefacts, such as stone vessels, ritual baths (miqva'ot) and ossuaries, indicate that the change in population in the Galilee took place after the Hasmonean conquest in the late second century or early first century BCE with the establishment of new Jewish settlements.[246]

In an earlier study Chancey examines the belief, held by New Testament scholars, that Pagans (τὰ ἔθνη) composed a "large part of the population of the Galilee."[247] It is his view that that belief was not substantiated either by the literary evidence found in the writings of Josephus or by the archaeological evidence, and that in the first century CE Jews constituted the majority of the population of the Galilee. During its history the Galilee like the rest of Palestine had been subject to invasion from successive foreign powers and thus it was often ruled by non-Jewish dynasties–Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians (Alexander the Great), the Ptolemies, the Seleucids and Romans. However, contrary to the theories of some modern scholars it did not experience the influx of new peoples.[248]

Many of these theories arise from interpretations of the meaning of the Isaianic phrase Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν, the Galilee of the nations.[249] While some modern scholars still maintain that the phrase implies the presence of foreign peoples settled in the Galilee, Chancey argues that modern archaeological evidence supports Josephus' description of an area surrounded by hostile forces.[250] Of these Gentile areas, he writes that "the unanimity and clarity of the remains of paganism in these territories starkly

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[245] Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture,* 19, writes that "scholars like Eric M. Meyers, E.P. Sanders, and Sean Freyne have long advocated this position and recent studies by Peter Richardson and Mordechai Aviam, Jonathan l. Reed, and myself confirm it."

[246] Chancey, 19. According to Chancey this evidence "far outweighs the surprisingly little evidence for pagan cultic practice. Reed, in *Archaeology,* in his analysis of the archaeological evidence states the material culture in the Galilee shared with Judea "indicators of Jewish identity" which suggested a Judean colonisation of the region. (52).

[247] Chancey, M, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee,* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002) 167.

[248] For a discussion on the theories of modern scholars relating to the presence of non-Jewish elements in the population of the Galilee and the influence of Hellenism in the region (two separate issues) see Chancey's introduction to *Myth,* 1-7.

[249] *Is.*9:1. Cf. 1 *Macc.* 5:15, πᾶσαν Γαλιλαίαν ἀλλοφύλων, *Mt.* 4:15, Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν; Jos. *BJ.*3:4, τοσούτοις ἔθνεσιν ἀλλοφύλοις κεκυκλωμέναι πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀεὶ πολέμου πεῖραν ἀντέσχον.

[250] See Chancey, *Myth,* 120-166.

contrast with the minimal evidence for paganism within the interior of Galilee itself."[251] However, the proximity of these Gentiles ensured that the Galileans were not immune from contact with Hellenising influences. That contact as evidenced in the archaeological record was based on commerce. Douglas Edwards states that, while economic and administrative structures in existence in the Galilee in the first century did not "convey fully the value, aspirations, and beliefs of a people," a great deal might be learned about the networks which those structures created and in which its inhabitants in both towns (cities) and villages were prepared to participate.[252] He sums up using a phrase from Martin Goodman that the Galilee of the first two centuries of the present era was no "Semitic enclave surrounded by Hellenism."[253] However by this time the influence of Hellenism was being mediated through the power of Rome.

We have little information about the early history of the Galilee. Josephus informs us that it was surrounded by powerful nations and so vulnerable to invasion.[254] After the defeat of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in 722 BCE the Galilee was absorbed into the province of Samaria. With the declining power of Assyria other empires flourished including that of the Persians to which the Galilee along with most of the eastern side of the Mediterranean and Egypt became subject. Persian control came to an end with the conquest of Alexander. After his death and the fragmentation of his empire the Galilee, like the rest of Palestine, was under the control of either the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt or the Seleucids.

For the period when the Hasmoneans were extending the territories under their control we have more written evidence.[255] It is possible by observing certain caveats to gain some perspectives on the history of the Galilee between 100 BCE and 100 CE. In the *Bellum Judaicum* Josephus provided some indication of the population size in the Galilee stating that

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[251]Chancey, *Myth,* 165.
[252] Edwards, D, "The Socio-Economic and Cultural Ethos of the Lower Galilee in the First Century: Implications for the Nascent Jesus Movement," in *Galilee in Late Antiquity,* (ed.) L.I. Levine, 53-73 (69).
[253] Goodman, M, *State and Society in Roman Galilee AD.132-212,* 65-66.
[254] Josephus, *BJ,* 3:35-43. On the biblical references to the early period see *Jos.* 19 and *Jud.* 1:30-35. For comment on these passages see Freyne, *Galilee,* 17.
[255] Josephus, *BJ,* 3:42.

the inhabitants "have at all times been numerous" and that "the cities [πόλεις] also are closely packed together, and even the larger number of villages [κώμαι], because of the richness of the soil, are everywhere densely populated so that the smallest of them has more than fifteen thousand inhabitants." Josephus was prone to exaggeration in his writings, and further, even without the exaggeration, it has to be remembered that he was recalling the situation in the Galilee at the time of the first Jewish rebellion against Rome between 66-70 CE. However it is possible to concede that, for whatever reason, it was Josephus' intention to provide his readers with a picture of a thickly-populated and prosperous region.[256]

That Josephus' estimate of the size of the population of the Galilee was not altogether the result of his imagination is also borne out by the archaeological evidence which indicates that the settlement patterns of Galilean sites from the Iron Age to the Roman period show "an almost complete abandonment of the region at the close of the Iron Age." They also illustrate that in the late Hellenic period there had been "a sudden rise in the number of sites in a sparsely populated Galilee and an overall increase in material culture."[257]

The People of the Galilee,

The lack of primary documents or, where they exist, the unreliable nature of the evidence which they provide, makes it difficult to give more than a generalised assessment of the characteristics of the people of the Galilee. In the attempt to give some account of them data derived from comparative sociology will be used as well as archaeological evidence although Reed provides a warning note about the use of archaeological

[256] Two events in the first century BCE might be considered as adding some credibility to Josephus' description of the Galilee. After the Roman intervention in the affairs of the Jewish nation in 63 BCE the country became subject to the control of the Roman legate in Syria (Jos. *BJ.* 1:154; Jos. *Ant.*14:74). Aulus Gabinius as governor of Syria (57-55 BCE) reorganised the administration of the region dividing it into five unions (Jos. *BJ.* 1:170; Jos. *Ant.* 14:91), of which the Galilee was one, with Sepphoris as the administrative centre. The Roman settlement of the region after the death of Herod again distinguished the Galilee from Judaea by the creation of the tetrarchy of Galilee and Peraea under the rule of Herod Antipas (Jos. *BJ.* 2:93-97; Jos. *Ant.* 17:317-320). The recognition of the Galilee in both settlements probably resulted from the size of its population and its prosperity.

[257] Reed, J. *Archaeology,* 27. See also Chancey, *Myth,* 28-47; Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture,* 32-42.

evidence when examining the religious attitudes of people.[258] Evidence from the gospels and the rabbinical writings will also be used, but always with the caveat that such evidence is either biased or late or both.

The physical features of the Galilee suggest a settlement pattern in which inhabitants would follow the model existing in similar regions where the working life of the inhabitants would revolve around subsistence farming and their social life would depend on the maintenance of the close ties of kinship which characterise isolated peasant communities. Such a mode of living has been thought to cultivate a sense of independence. In the case of the Galileans that sense of independence might have been further quickened by the strategic position of the Galilee, which is encapsulated in the term *"Circle of the nations."*[259] Josephus described the region as "encircled by such powerful nations".[260] He wrote that in order to protect their independence in the face of "every attack of a persistent enemy" the Galileans were "fighters from infancy" and "never lacked courage".[261] That sense of independence might also have been fostered by the remoteness of the Galilee from Jerusalem. The term *"Circle of the nations"* has also been interpreted as a region inhabited by Gentiles.[262] Notwithstanding the way in which this term is interpreted in relation to the early history of the Galilee, the evidence of the historical records indicate that it was firmly part of the Hasmonean state by the beginning of the first century BCE.[263]

The significance of this statement has to be seen in the light of the separateness of the Jews from all other nations as the holy people of the covenant. If the Galilee had been inhabited by Gentiles and had remained so, then their non-observance of Torah and other religious practices would not have been of concern to the religious authorities in Jerusalem. That this was

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[258] Reed, J. *Archaeology,* 27. On the interpretation of archaeological evidence see M. Chancey, *Myth,* 8. "All studies based on archaeological data are somewhat provisional...Archaeological finds, like texts, are subject to multiple interpretations." See also H. Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom,* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 20.

[259] *Is.* 9:1. Gelil ha goyyim.

[260] Jos. *BJ.* 3:41. τοσούτοις ἔθνεσιν ἀλλοφύλοις κεκυκλωμέναι.

[261] Jos. *BJ.* 3:41 μάχιμοί...ἐκ νηπίων...οὔτε δειλία ποτὲ τοὺς ἄνδρας...κατέσχεν.

[262] See M. Chancey, *Myth,* 170-174, "Was Galilee known as 'Galilee of the Gentiles'?" for a rebuttal of the claim that the Galilee was a region inhabited by Gentiles.

[263] Jos.*Ant,* 13:318.

not the case is evidenced in early Christian literature and in later rabbinical writings in which the Galileans were criticised for their neglect of the Law. In the Christian writings this criticism was levelled against Jesus and his disciples by those who opposed their activities in the Galilee; in the rabbinical texts the Galileans in general were the object of the criticism.

In the gospels it is clear that Pharisees together with scribes from Jerusalem took part in the attempt to ensure adherence to these religious practices.[264] The role of the Pharisees was to ensure that the holiness of the Temple extended to every aspect of the life of ordinary people; the presence of the scribes was to ensure that the law was properly observed. From the evidence in the gospels it is possible to extrapolate those issues in which the Galileans were perceived to have been lax. They were those which were concerned with the strict observance of Šabbāt and of the purity regulations, and in matters of tithing.[265] The apparent lack of success which the scribes and Pharisees had in their endeavour to improve the Galileans in their religious observances might be the reason for the exasperation of Yohanan ben Zakkai recorded in the *Palestinian Talmud;*

Galilee, Galilee, you hate the Torah; your end will be destruction.[266]

From the rabbinical texts we discover that not even the Galilean Hasidim were exempt from criticism as they also were portrayed as being careless in their observance of proper behaviour. Honi the Circle Drawer (c 200 BCE – 10 CE) was reproved by Simeon ben Shetar for irreverence.[267] "Hadst thou not been Onias, I had pronounced a ban against thee." Hanina ben Dosa (c 80 – 120 CE) received censure for walking alone in the street by night.[268] It is recorded in the *Babylonian Talmud* that Yose the Galilean

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[264] *Mk.* 3:22; 7:1-2; *Mt.* 15:1. Josephus in his *Vita,* 197-198 provides evidence which indicates the interest of the Pharisees in the Galilee. When the council in Jerusalem decided to remove Josephus from his command in the Galilee, the deputation sent to carry out its decision consisted of three Pharisees and a member of a high priestly family. But for a more nuanced view see Horsley on the role of the Pharisees in the Galilee in his article, "The Pharisees and Jesus in Galilee and Q," 132-134.

[265] *Mk.* 2:23-28; 3:1-6; 7:1-8 (cf. *Lk.*11: 37-41; *Mt.* 23:25-26); *Mt.* 23:23-24 (cf. *Lk.* 11:42).

[266] *p Shabb,* 16,15d. . Yohanan ben Zakkai is said to have lived in the Galilee for eighteen years in the middle of the first century CE. The renewal of Judaism after 70CE is attributed to him. See .J. Neusner, *A Life of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai,* (Leiden: Brill, 1962).

[267] *m Taan.* 3:8. In Jos. *Ant.* 14:22-24 Honi the Circle Drawer becomes Onias the Righteous.

[268] *b Pes.* 112b.

(c 120 – 140 CE) was criticised by a woman for being too talkative when asking the way to Lydda.

> You stupid Galilean, have the sages not commanded, "Do not engage in a lengthy conversation with a woman."[269]

Such a comment would seem to encapsulate the attitude in the rabbinical writings towards the Galileans. Their seeming stupidity, uncouthness and lack of knowledge of Torah led some later rabbis to associate the term, *am ha-arez,* with the Galileans.

> Greater is the hatred of the am ha-arez for the learned than the hatred of the Gentiles for Israel; but the hatred of their wives is even greater.[270]

Notwithstanding the sharpness of their criticism of Galileans in general, the rabbinical texts provide us with evidence that the Galilee was home to Hasidim and charismatics. Vermes recognised these, as continuing the ancient prophetic tradition of the northern kingdom, and pointed to "the unsophisticated religious ambiance (sic)" of the Galilee as the reason for their presence there.

> [T]heir success in that province was attributable to the simple spiritual demands of the Galilean nature, and perhaps also to a lively local folk memory concerning the miraculous deeds of the great prophet Elijah.[271]

As for the ordinary Galileans, those who in the rabbinical writings are criticised as *am ha-arez,* the Gospels and Josephus attest to their essential piety in their observance of pilgrimages to Jerusalem.[272] From the evidence contained in these gospel references and in Josephus we are able to gain some appreciation of the significance of the Temple in the lives of the

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[269] *b Erub.* 53b. Cf. *m Abot.* 1:5. "He that talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the Law and at last will inherit Gehenna."

[270] *b Pes.* 49b. On the likening of the Galileans to the am ha-arez see A. Büchler, *Das Galiläische Am ha-ares des zweiten Jahrhunderts,* (Olms: Hildesheim reprint, 1968), cited in Vermes, *Jesus the Jew:A Historian's Reading of the Gospels,* (London: SCM, 1983) 54. For comment on Büchler's views see Freyne, *Galilee,* 308.

[271] Vermes, *Jesus,* 79-80. Among the Hasidim and charismatics Vermes included Jesus. Cf. the more contentiously expressed view of the Galileans in D.F. Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined,* reprinted English trans, (London: SCM, 1972), 264, quoted in Freyne, *Jesus, 9.* "The Galileans had simple and energetic minds, whereas the Judeans had a higher culture and much more foreign intercourse. However they were fettered by priestcraft and Pharisaism."

[272] See the references to the observance of Jewish religious practices on the part of Jesus and his family and of Galileans generally on pp. 51 and nn. 179-181.

Galileans and, from it to redress the criticism of the Galileans as *am ha-arez* in the rabbinical texts. This rabbinical view has led modern commentators to posit the possibility of the existence of different halakhah in Galilee. Lawrence Schiffman commenting on this view writes:

> Many scholars have assumed that by the first two centuries of our era a distinctive pattern of halakhah covering a wide range of issues and aspects had evolved in the Galilee that was practiced by its inhabitants.

He goes on to state that such a supposition helped to "explain the sympathy of the Galileans for a variety of movements, including Sadduceanism, nascent Christianity, and the revolt against Rome."[273]

Schiffman criticises this notion of a Galilean halakhah in that it suggests that there was in existence in the Galilee in the first century CE a system "native to the Galilee... which differed markedly from the 'Judean' system of halakhah."[274] His examination of passages from the Mishnah referring to Galilean halakhic practice reveals that the texts dealt with:

the conditions of the marriage contract regarding the support of widows. M Ketubot 4:12.

the differences between Judea and the Galilee in taking vows. M Nedarim 2:4.

tithes in Judea. M Hagigah 3:4.

matters concerning feasts and fasts in which one is to follow local customs. M Pesahim 4:1-5.

It indicated that while the Galileans followed certain local customs, for the most part they observed "the same rulings as the tannaitic Jews of the south."[275] One of the conclusions of Schiffman's analysis was that there was

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[273] Schiffman L.H, "Was There a Galilean Halakhah?" in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity,* (ed.) L.I.Levine, 143-156. See also Freyne, *Galilee,* 307-329 on the Galileans' attitude to halakhah.
[274] Schiffman. "Galilean Halakhah," 143.
[275] Schiffman, "Galilean Halakhah," 144. It might be argued that these observances might relate to a later period. However in view of the conservative practice of peasant communities such observances were not likely to have changed between the first century CE and the period of the compilation of the Mishnah.

a greater stringency on the part of the Galilean Jews in the observance of halakhah than that found amongst the Jews of Judea.[276]

Conclusion.

This chapter has been an attempt to locate Jesus and his followers within the environment which conditioned their reaction to the world in which they found themselves in the first century of the present era. It has been demonstrated that in *Qoheleth* the Hebrew Scriptures contained a book which can be described as an ascetic discourse in which its author attempted to point out to those who read/heard it the need to live their lives without the 'comforts' of their former religious faith and to embrace a new worldview. By the first century CE Judaism had changed and in its place there existed many Judaisms (or Judaism in many forms) of which the sayings and acts of Jesus (and of his followers) were a part. The growing awareness of the common ground between Jewish religious groups has led modern commentators on the life of Jesus and of his followers to emphasise their essential Jewishness and their sharing of this common ground. This emphasis has implications for the purpose of this study, which is to examine in what way that life style might be described as ascetic.

The studies of the life and teachings of Jesus fall broadly into two categories, one emphasising the importance of the influence which Graeco-Roman culture had on Jesus and his followers, and the other affirming that they were essentially Jewish in belief and culture. None of the writers who might be found in the first category would dispute that Jesus and his followers were Jews; rather they would claim that, because of their Galilean environment, they were influenced more by the beliefs and practices of Greek Cynic philosophers than by those of the Hebrew prophets.[277] This claim is based on the assumption that the Galilee had been settled by Gentiles before its incorporation into the Hasmonean kingdom in the last decade of the second century BCE. Amongst scholars who hold this view

[276] Schiffman, "Galilean Halakhah," 156.
[277] Powell, M.A, *The Jesus Debate: Modern Historians Investigate the Life of Christ,* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 2000) 183.

are members of the Jesus Seminar,[278] Burton Mack,[279] John Crossan,[280] Ron Cameron[281] and Gerald Downing.[282] Mack's view that "this traditional picture of Galilean culture needs to change" so that a "truer picture" of the Galilee might emerge as a "land of mixed people" encapsulates the view of many of those commentators, mentioned above, who promote the picture of Jesus and his earliest followers as Cynics (and/or Gnostics).[283] Of these N.T. Wright writes:

> Scholars like Mack, Crossan and Cameron have argued for a Gnostic or Cynic early Christianity, into which the synoptics came as tidiers up, as historicizers, who put the clock back to a Jewish way of thinking which had been alien to the first Christian generation.[284]

In the second category are commentators whose interest is to present Jesus in a Jewish environment. The dilemma facing these scholars, who assert the essential Jewishness of Jesus and his followers, is to observe a balance between those teachings and practices of Jesus which show continuity with those of Judaism and those which appear to be contrary to Jewish beliefs and practice. Ben Witherington has encapsulated this problem for those who insist on the Jewishness of Jesus in his comments on the need

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[278] The Jesus Seminar was founded in 1985 by Robert Funk "to examine every fragment of the traditions attached to the name of Jesus in order to determine what he really said." Robert Funk in "The Issue of Jesus", *Foundations and Facets Forum1,* no.1, 1985, 7-12 (7). See also Funk et al. *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus,* (New York: Macmillan, 19930; Funk, *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium,* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1996), 33, 79; Funk, *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus,* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco,1998). For a summary and critique of the work of the Seminar see Powell, *The Jesus Debate,* 76-92. See also H.C, Kee, "Early Christianity in the Galilee: Reassessing the Evidence from the Gospels", in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity,* (ed.) L.I. Levine, 3-22.

[279] Mack, B. *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins,* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins,* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993).

[280] Crossan, J. *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant,* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991). Crossan describes Jesus as "a peasant Jewish Cynic." See Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity,* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1998).

[281] Cameron, R.D. *The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts,* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982); Cameron, "The Apocryphal Jesus and Christian Origins," in *Semeia* 49, (Atlanta:1990), 35-69 (38-45; 62).

[282] Downing, F.G, *Cynics and Christian Origins,* (Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1992). Downing describes his study as an attempt "to analyse and chronicle the varying relationships, positive and negative, between kinds of Christianity and the radical socially critical ascetic 'philosophy' of sorts of Cynics." (vii).

[283] Mack, B. *The Lost Gospel,* 53.

[284] Wright, N.T, *The New Testament and the People of God,* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 403.

for a historian to achieve a right balance between Jesus' continuity with, and his discontinuity from, early Judaism.

> Insist on too much discontinuity, and it becomes impossible to explain why Jesus had an exclusively Jewish following during his lifetime and why so many different kinds of Jews were interested in giving him a hearing. Insist on too much continuity, and differences of the church from Judaism, even in the church's earliest days, become very difficult to explain.[285]

Witherington makes a significant point about the complex character of Jesus, when he writes of the interest shown by many modern scholars in the existence of "so many kinds of Jews in Jesus and in the Jewishness of Jesus in so many different, and sometimes opposing, ways."[286]

In the light of what has been said above about the pluriform nature of Judaism at this period the assertion that Jesus was a Jew prompts the question, "What sort of Jew?" Many modern studies of Jesus have attempted to answer this question and so he has been described as a Hasid,[287] a Pharisee,[288] an eschatological prophet,[289] a Galilean Jew[290] and a marginal Jew.[291] To these descriptions may be added those of social revolutionary[292] and Mediterranean Jewish peasant.[293] Despite this diversity of views on what sort of Jew Jesus was, most commentators point to the influence of the Galilee where, the synoptic gospels indicate, Jesus grew up and exercised

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[285] Witherington III, B. *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for Jesus of Nazareth,* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter- Varsity Press, 1995), 122. Cf. the comment of George Nickelsburg on the diversity in early Judaism and early Christianity and on the continuities and discontinuities between the two traditions in, G. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation,* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 8.

[286] See also D.J. Harrington, "The Jewishness of Jesus: Facing Some Problems", in *CBQ,* 49 (1987). Harrington comments on the difficulty which " increased understanding of the diversity within Palestinian Judaism in Jesus' time" has produced in attempts to know what kind of Jew Jesus was and the background against which he should be interpreted. (13).

[287] Vermes, G. *Jesus the Jew*, Vermes, *Jesus and the World of Judaism,* (London: SCM, 1983).

[288] Maccoby, H. *Jesus the Pharisee,* (London: SCM, 2003).

[289] Sanders, E.P, *The Historical Figure of Jesus,* (London: Penguin Books, 1995).

[290] Freyne, S. *Jesus, A Galilean Jew.*

[291] Meier, J.P, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus,* 3 vols. (New York & London: Doubleday, 1991, 1993, 2001).

[292] Horsley, R.A, and J.S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus,* (Minneapolis: Winston Press / Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1985). See also R.A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence. Popular Jewish Resistance in Jewish Palestine,* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987). For criticism of the description of Jesus as a social revolutionary see Meier, *A Marginal Jew,* Vol. 1, 199, 201, n.6.

[293] Crossan, J.D, *The Historical Jesus.*

much of his ministry.[294] These commentators have variously perceived the Galilean legacy and its effect on Jesus and his earliest followers in terms of the geography of the region, its history and the characteristics of its inhabitants.

"Putting Jesus in his place,"[295] to use the title of Halvor Moxnes' book, is to see him (and his followers) in relation to the environment of the Galilee where he grew up and where he conducted the major part of his ministry. A reading of the Synoptic Gospels reveals the complexity of his character which resulted from the forces at work in the Galilee, its geography, its location, its history and its peculiar religious culture. As a product of that environment it is not difficult to see in the words and actions of Jesus one who was able to exercise an independence of thought in responding not only to the challenges presented by his own community in Nazareth but also to the criticism and hostility of those who exercised authority in the wider Jewish community. But in the exercise of that independence he revealed an eclecticism in thought and action which presents difficulties in any attempts to bracket him in some category or other.[296]

The exercise of this eclecticism is to be seen in his multifaceted response to the religious culture of his day. His criticism of the Pharisees concerned their emphasis on the minutiae of the law and their neglect of its greater demands.

> You tithe mint, dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practised without neglecting the others.[297]

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[294] However Freyne in *Jesus, A Galilean Jew,* points to the fact that Galilee was not the only 'theatre' in which Jesus' life was played out. "Some recent studies have tended to minimize or even ignore his Judean roots and subsequent ministry, basing themselves on the perceived opposition between Galilee and Judea/Jerusalem, and in the process ignoring the leads suggested in the Fourth Gospel, which depicts Jesus as a companion of John the Baptist in the Judean desert and concentrating his ministry in Jerusalem, with Galilee functioning as a virtual place of refreshment." (*Jn.* 4:1-2, 45), (7). Freyne also refers to what he calls 'the basis-biography' found in Acts, 10: 36-41, in which the biography of Jesus was summed up by " a beginning with John the Baptist, a middle doing good in Galilee and an end in Jerusalem..." 18.

[295] Moxnes, H, *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom,* (Louisville / London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

[296] See on pp.75-77 above reference to the attempts of some modern authors to categorise Jesus.

[297] *Mt.* 23:23. Cf. *Lk.* 11: 42.

But Jesus showed himself more stringent in the application of other aspects of the Law. This is apparent in his views on divorce which stressed the importance of the permanence of the union in keeping with the Genesis text.

> Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh.[298]

To break that union and remarry was to commit adultery.[299] Jesus saw the bill of divorcement (sefer beritat) as an attempt to satisfy the hardness of men's hearts,[300] emphasising that his view of marriage was that which existed from "the beginning of creation" and thus stressing its unchangeable nature.[301] It is feasible to suggest that Jesus' attitude to the permanence of marriage is a reflection of the conservative Sadducean influence on Galilean religious culture.[302] Such a suggestion is given added force by Jesus' attack on the concept of tradition (paradosis) in the teachings of the Pharisees and scribes[303] and by his assertion that he had not come to destroy the law.

> Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets: I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.[304]

Although there is no overt mention of the Essenes in the Synoptic Gospels it would not be difficult to envisage that Jesus at some stage in his ministry had met with groups of Essenes. This assumption is made in the light of references in both Josephus and Philo to the existence of Essene communities throughout Palestine.[305] And so it is possible that in the discussion concerning marriage in *Mt.* 19 the remark of Jesus, that only those to whom it had been granted were able to refrain from marriage, was an echo of the passage in the *Damascus Document* in which there appears to be a distinction between those "who walk in these (precepts) in perfect holiness" and those who marry and have children "by walking according to

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[298] *Gen.* 2: 24.
[299] *Mk.* 10: 11-12.
[300] *Mk.* 10: 5. Cf. *Mt.* 19: 3 .
[301] *Mk.* 10: 6. Cf. *Mt.* 19: 8.
[302] See references to the suggestion of some commentators of the possibility of Sadducean influences on Galilean religious culture on p.71 and nn.274-275 above.
[303] *Mk.* 7: 6-13. Cf. *Mt.* 15: 1-9.
[304] *Mt.* 5: 17-18.
[305] Jos, *BJ.* 2: 124; Philo, *Quod omnis probus,* 76; *Hypothetica,* 11. 1, (trans.) F.H. Colson, Vol. 9. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1941).

the Law and according to the statute concerning binding vows."[306] Both passages seem to refer to celibacy as a special choice, and both of them resonate with the rabbinical view of only imposing burdens which people can bear. R. Joshua told those who refused to eat meat and drink wine, after the Temple had been destroyed for the second time, "We do not impose a decree on the community unless the majority are able to bear it."[307] Further George Brooke in his book, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament,*[308] comments on the similarity in sentiment between CD 7:4-10 and *Mk.* 10:2-9 (*Mt.* 19:4-9) on the question of marriage and divorce, suggesting that the passages in the gospels are the nearest that a "New Testament work comes to citing a Qumran text."[309] He also points to the similarity of the phrase ἀπὸ δὲ ἀρχῆς κτίσεως in *Mk.*10:4 to yswd hbry'h found in CD 4:21.[310]

The areas of agreement which it is possible to detect in the teachings of Jesus and those of other religious groups probably reflect that pluriform nature of belief and practice which has been commented upon in the period of late second temple Judaism. However, despite this agreement, in the gospels Jesus is portrayed as a figure, marginalised in respect of his family,[311] his community[312] and the religious culture of his day.[313] This marginality conditioned the way of life which Jesus followed and was to prove an important element in the life style of his followers. The perception of his own marginality enabled him to see the needs of the marginalised groups in Galilean society and in his teachings to provide strategies to meet their condition.[314]

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[306] CD, vii: 4-10, Vermes, *Scrolls,*132.
[307] *Tosefta,* Sota 15: 11-12, Bava Bathra 60b, cited in Ellis Rivkin, "Defining the Pharisees: The Tannaitic Sources", *HUCA,* 40-41 (1969-70), 235. Cf. Jesus' saying about the easiness of his yoke and the lightness of his burden, *Mt.* 11: 28- 30.
[308] Brooke, G.J, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament: Essays in Mutual Illumination,* (London: SPCK, 2005).
[309] Brooke, *Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament,* 92.
[310] Brooke, *Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament,*92.
[311] *Mk.* 2: 21; *Mt.* 12: 46-50.
[312] *Mk.* 6: 1-6; *Lk.* 4: 29-30; *Mt.* 13: 53-58.
[313] *Mk.* 2: 5-7, 18-20; 7: 1- 15; 8: 15.
[314] Marginality as a necessary condition in ascetic living is discussed in chapter five.

Chapter Three

The Essenes: A Study of Ascetical Groups in Palestine in the first century CE.

Introduction.

The discovery in caves around the Dead Sea of documents, which scholars claim to be the library of a community belonging to an Essene group living in Qumran, has engendered a great deal of discussion about their importance not only to the study of Judaism but also to the place which the Essenes occupied among the many and diverse groups, which constituted Judaism in the first century BCE and the first century CE. Among these groups the earliest followers of Jesus might be numbered. The site at Qumran was occupied in the period from the latter part of the second century BCE until its destruction by the Romans in 68 CE, but writers, such as Philo and Josephus,[315] assert the existence of groups of Essenes throughout the region of Palestine. Of interest to this present study are the sectarian writings of the Essenes which provide evidence of their beliefs and the rules by which they governed the conduct of their lives.

This chapter is an overview of these rules and practices which influenced their life style. The description of that life style in the documents illustrates the existence in the first century BCE to the middle of the first century CE of groups whose mode of living exhibited ascetic practices which can be seen as a possible exemplar for the early followers of Jesus. The relationship between these documents and the New Testament is extensively covered by George J. Brooke in his book, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament: Essays in Mutual Illumination:*

> The essays collected here are mostly concerned with how scriptural interpretation, commentary or exegesis as found in the Dead Sea Scrolls might illuminate similar matters of interpretation in the writings of the New Testament and vice versa.[316]

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[315] See Philo, *Hyp,*11. 1, (trans.) F.H. Colson, Vol. 9. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1941), and Jos, *BJ.* 2:124.

[316] Brooke, G.J, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament,* xv.

The Relevance of this Chapter to the Study of the Life Style of the Early Followers of Jesus.

Two important reasons may be given for the inclusion in this study of an examination of the life style and beliefs of the Essenes and of the group associated with the desert settlement at Qumran. (1) The Essene[317] groups were in existence in Palestine during the first century CE. (2) We possess two types of evidence concerning the Essenes: primary evidence found in the Dead Sea documents describing the organisation, the rules and life style of these sectarian groups, and secondary evidence contained in the works of Philo, Josephus and Pliny the Elder. The aim of this chapter is to review the evidence concerning these groups to be found in the works of these three authors in the light of writings, found among those Dead Sea documents, which are best described as sectarian.[318]

The existence of these Essene groups, including the Qumran community, is attested in the writings of the three aforementioned commentators, Philo, Josephus and Pliny the Elder who were writing during the period when these groups were still in existence in Palestine.[319] Therefore some credence must be given to what they wrote although it is necessary to keep in mind that what they wrote about the Essenes might have been conditioned by some dominant aspect of the life and culture of their own period. It is possible to detect in these accounts a degree of admiration for the way of life followed by these groups which suggests an unease with the prevalent beliefs, mores and practices of contemporary societies.

That the Essene communities and their way of life were objects of admiration in the writings of these commentators might be seen in Philo's

[317] The term, "Essene" is used in this chapter to include both the groups found throughout Palestine (and possibly Eygpt. See Philo *De Vita Contemplativa*) and the desert group in Qumran. It is not the purpose of this chapter to examine theories concerning the origin of these groups and the relationship between them.

[318] On the characteristics of sects see R.Scroggs, "The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movements," in *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults, Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty, Part Two: Early Christianity.* (ed.) J. Neusner, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), reprinted in *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation,* (ed.) D.G.Horrell, (Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1999), 69-91 (72-76).

[319] The community established at Qumran was destroyed during the Jewish rebellion against Rome probably in 68 CE.

comment on the respect which even unsympathetic and cruel rulers had for their way of life.

> But all of them unable to withstand the nobility of character of these men dealt with them as though they were living under their own laws and free by nature. They praised their communal meals and their sense of fellowship, which is stronger than any words can describe, the clearest sign of a perfect and very happy life.[320]

Josephus commented that the Essenes were to be admired above all other people, Greek or barbarian, since their virtues had been constantly practised without interruption since their adoption.[321] And Pliny, whose view of Essene practice was probably based on the Qumran group, wrote that they were "to be admired beyond all other tribes" on account of their way of life. He went on to write that so desirable was that way of life that people tired of life flocked to the community. This constant stream of world-weary people, Pliny believed, ensured the continuation of the community into which no one was born.[322] The description of this ideal wilderness community as an attraction to those who had tired of life, presumably in the urban environment of the Hellenistic-Roman world, suggests a reason for the praise which Philo, Josephus and Pliny accorded to the Essene way of life.

This world-weariness marked much of the culture in this period. It is present in the literature on the growth of the mystery religions and in the debates of the philosophical schools, particularly those of the Stoics, Pythagoreans and Cynics. Much of the discussion was about living an ideal life based on the return to a simple country life. And so there grew up a

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[320] Philo, *Quod omnis probus.* 91, (trans.) F.H. Colson, Vol. 9. LCL, (London; Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1941),
πάντες δὲ ἀσθενέστεροι τῆς τῶν ἀνδρῶν καλοκἀγαθίας γενόμενοι καθάπερ αὐτονὸμοις καὶ ἐλευθέροις οὖσιν ἐκ φύσεως προσηνέχθησαν, ᾄδοντες αὐτῶν τὰ συσσίτια καὶ τὴν παντὸς λόγου κρείττονα κοινωνίαν, ἢ βίου τελείου καὶ σφόδρα εὐδαίμονός ἐστι σαφέστατον δεῖγμα.

[321] Jos, *Ant.* 18:20.

[322] Pliny. *Nat.Hist.* 5:14.73. Tam fecunda illis aliorum vitae paenitentia est.

literature, to which both philosophers and religious teachers contributed, idealising the simple country life or life in utopia.[323]

In an article entitled "The Essenes in Philo and Josephus", Per Bilde takes further this line of thought with the suggestion that both writers by describing the Essenes as living in actual communities concretised the ethical ideals of the philosophers and religious groups in the Hellenistic-Roman world. It was for this reason that the example of the Essene way of life deserved the praise given to it by Philo, Josephus and Pliny.[324] Bilde goes on to write that both Philo and Josephus in presenting the case for the Essenes to a Hellenistic-Roman audience sought to indicate that they "had in an optimal way realized some of the ideals and utopias of the same Hellenistic –Roman world."[325]

The characteristics of this ideal way of life, which emerge from the writings of these commentators, are those which traditionally have been associated with some form of ascetical life style. It was marked by the following practices:

voluntary acceptance of the lifestyle;

respect for authority and status within the groups;

simplicity of living;

common possession of wealth and resources;

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[323] Doron Mendels in an article entitled, "Hellenistic Utopia and the Essenes," *HTR.* 72 (1979), 207-222, gives an account of the relationship between the Hellenistic utopia and the Essene way of life. He points out that only two 'complete' utopias, epitomised by Diodorus Siculus, have been preserved from the Hellenistic era, that of Iambulus and that of Euhemerus (208). The summary of the utopian writings of Iambulus appear in Book 2 (55-60) of Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica,* and the substance of Euhemerus' travel novel is known from fragments in Diodorus Siculus *Bibl. Hist.*6 (1) and from an epitome in Eusebius, *p.e.* 2 (48-62). Mendels concentrates on the epitome of Iambulus and attempts to relate it to the narratives in Philo and Josephus and the sectarian writings discovered in Qumran. See also L. Schiffman, "Utopia and Reality: Political Leadership and Organization in the Dead Sea Scrolls Community," in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in honor of Emanuel Tov,* (edd.) S.M Paul et al, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003), 413-427. In his conclusion Schiffman writes: "The authors of the Qumran sectarian documents and related texts...saw their community as the ideal Israel, structured and organized politically and religiously in a way that mirrored their utopian views of the ideal world of the end of days." (427)

[324] Bilde, P. "The Essenes in Philo and Josephus," in *Qumran between the Old Testament and New Testament,* (edd.) F.H. Cryer and T.L. Thompson, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 32-68.

[325] Bilde, "Essenes," 64.

attention to prayer and study;

exercise of self-restraint in sexual matters and in behaviour towards others;

relationship with others, both inside and outside the groups.

The discovery of the Dead Sea documents has provided us with primary evidence of an "insider" nature with which to test what the classical authors, Philo, Josephus and Pliny, wrote since some of the documents which have come to light contain descriptions of the life and organisation of communities generally considered to be Essene in character. The documents with which this chapter will be concerned are the Community Rule (CR.-1QS), the Damascus Document[326] (CD.), together with the fragments of this document found in Qumran (4Q 266-273), and the Messianic Rule (1QSa).[327] The content of these documents are concerned with groups whose beliefs and practices ran counter to those of the established hierarchy.[328] For the purpose of this study the assumption is made that there existed a commonality of practice in certain aspects of behaviour and belief between Essene groups including the community established at Qumran.

There has been a general assumption among commentators on the Dead Sea documents that the Damascus Document referred to those Essenes who lived in the towns and villages of Palestine[329] and who constituted that group to whom Josephus referred in *BJ.* 2:160-161 as being married. Always with this assumption there has been the implication that these Essenes were not members of the celibate Qumran community, to which the Community Rule applied. However for the purpose of what follows both documents will be considered as dealing with the Essenes generally. It has to be pointed out, nevertheless, that there is no mention of celibacy in the Rule. Moreover J.J. Collins in an article on the forms of community in the Dead Sea Scrolls suggests that "there is some evidence that the Damascus

[326] Two incomplete copies of the Damascus Document were discovered in 1896-7 in the Geniza of a Cairo synagogue. On the discovery of these copies of the Damascus Document and for an analysis of the document see Charlotte Hempel, *The Damascus Texts,* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

[327] The translations of these documents are to be found in G.Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English,* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1997).

[328] See above p.82. n. 318 on the characteristics of sects.

[329] Both Philo and Josephus commented on the location of the Essene groups. See Philo, *Quod omnis probus,* 76; *Hyp (Eus.p.e.* 8.5.) 11:1, Vol. 9. LCL, and Jos, *BJ.* 2:124.

Document envisions two distinct orders."[330] Referring to column VII: 4-8 in that document he comments on a possible interpretation that those who lived in camps were being contrasted with "all who walk in these (precepts) in perfect holiness."[331]

> For all who walk in these (precepts) in perfect holiness, according to all the teaching of God, the Covenant of God shall be an assurance that they shall live for thousands of generations...
>
> And if they live in camps according to the rule of the land... marrying... and begetting children, they shall walk according to the Law and according to the statute concerning binding vows...[332]

However the redactive process to which such documents would probably have been subject makes it difficult to state clearly whether the Damascus Document, the Community Rule and the Messianic Rule relate to one or other of the groups or to both.[333] Nevertheless the fact that in the writings of Philo, Josephus and Pliny there exist clear parallels with what is written in the sectarian documents it is possible to make some assumptions about the life style practised in these groups. For this purpose it is necessary to refer to the characteristics listed on pp. 84-85 above which marked this way of life.

The Voluntary Acceptance of the Life style.

An important aspect of the decision of someone seeking an ascetical life style is that it should be entered into voluntarily. Josephus seemed to be indicating the voluntary nature of participation in the Essene communities in his use of the Greek term τοῖς ζηλοῦσιν to refer to those zealous to join.[334] Since it appears that this zeal was tested over a three year period it might be assumed that at any time during that period before candidates took the

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[330] Collins, J.J. "Forms of Community in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Emanuel* 97-111 (101).
[331] Collins, "Forms of Community," 101, refers to J.M. Baumgarten, "Qumran-Essene Restraints on Marriage," in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls,* (ed.) L.H. Schiffman, (Sheffield: JSOT,1990) 3-24, and also to his article, "Celibacy," in *The Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls,* 1. 122-124.
[332] CD, VII in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 132.
[333] On this see Collins, "Forms of Community," 101 n.19.
[334] Jos, *BJ.* 2:137. See also Philo, *Hyp.* 11:2 , "family ties are not spoken of with reference to acts voluntarily performed; but it is adopted because of their admiration for virtue and love of gentleness and humanity."

aweful oaths (τούς φρικώδεις ὄρκους) they might be allowed to leave.[335] The Community Rule describes a similar procedure; candidates, having freely pledged themselves to join the Council of the Community, should be examined by the Guardian at the head of the Congregation to discover their fitness to be admitted into the Community. This was seen as the first step in the process of their conversion to the truth and their departing from all injustice.[336] Subject to the decision of the Council of the Congregation candidates either entered the Council of the Community or departed.

Respect for Authority and Status.

In commenting on the nature of the authority exercised in the groups Josephus stated that members did nothing without the orders of those who were their superiors.[337] Obedience was seen as matter of principle when decisions were made by the elders or by a majority.

> Therefore if ten men sit down together no one will speak against the wishes of the nine.[338]

The sectarian rulebooks – the Community Rule and the Damascus Document – also laid great importance on obedience to those in authority. And so in accordance with the rules of the Community those seeking admission were required to "unite ...under the authority of the sons of Zadok, the Priests who keep the Covenant, and of the multitude of the men of the Community who hold fast to the Covenant."[339] Murmuring against the authority of the Community was punishable by permanent exclusion. "Whoever has murmured against the authority of the Community shall be expelled and shall not return."[340]

According to the Damascus Document the exercise of authority was vested in the Guardian of the camp who was responsible for the admission of new members to his camp. Without his consent no trading association

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[335] Jos, *BJ.* 2:139.
[336] CR, (1QS), V:1, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 103. "And this is the Rule for the men of the Community who have freely pledged themselves to be converted from all evil..."
[337] Jos, *BJ.* 2:134. Only in two areas were matters left to the discretion of the individual: helping those in need and supplying food for those who were destitute.
[338] Jos, *BJ.*2:146. δέκα γοῦν συγκαθεζομένων οὐκ ἄν λαλήσειέν τις ἀκόντων τῶν ἐννέα.
[339] CR, V:2-3, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 103.
[340] CR, VII:17, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 108.

could be established and no marriage or divorce could take place. It was his responsibility also to instruct the children "in a spirit of humility and in loving kindness."[341] To the Guardian belonged the pastoral concern and instruction of those in his camp.

> He shall instruct the Congregation in the works of God...He shall love them as a father loves his children, and shall carry them in all their distress like a shepherd his sheep. He shall loosen all the fetters which bind them that in his Congregation there may be none that are oppressed or broken.[342]

Although there appeared to be this tight hierarchical structure in the organisation of the communities both Philo and Josephus stated that there were no slaves since the Essenes were opposed to the institution of slavery as being unjust and contrary to the law of equality.[343] The sectarian documents make no specific comments about the place of slaves in the camps. However in the Damascus Document there are two references about the treatment of slaves: one relating to the observance of Šabbāt, and the other to relations with the Gentiles.

> No man shall chide his manservant or maidservant or labourer on the Sabbath.[344]

> ...he shall not sell them (the Gentiles) his manservant or maidservant inasmuch as they have been brought by him into the Covenant of Abraham.[345]

Both statements suggest that there were slaves present in the camps. There are no references to the presence of slaves in the Community Rule.

The difference between these two documents might have arisen either because they represent different periods in the development of the Essene communities or because they are documents relating to two types of Essene communities. If it is the latter case then it might be that in the Damascus Document we have the rules which were in operation in Essene groups scattered throughout Palestine and still living in wider communities, owning

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[341]CD, XIII:15-19, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 142.
[342]CD, XIII:9-10. See *Lk.* 4:18-19; 15:5-6, and among the Dead Sea documents 11Q13 which refer to Melchizedek. See also Brooke, *Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament,* 131 and n. 49.
[343] Philo, *Quod omnis probus,* 79; Jos, *Ant,* 18:21. Cf. Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa,* 70-71 Vol. 9. LCL.
[344] CD, XI: 11-12, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 140.
[345] CD, XI: 11-12, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 141.

slaves and having dealings with Gentiles, and consequently bound by Jewish laws and customs. The lack of any reference to slaves in the Community Rule is not sufficient evidence that slavery did not exist in the group or groups of which it was the rulebook.

Simplicity of Living.

The frugality with which the Essenes were said to have lived is vividly expressed in Josephus' statement that they did not replace their garments or footwear until they were threadbare or torn to shreds through age.[346] Philo referred to their frugal life style as a manifestation of their love of God [347] and to their perception of frugal living and the contentment which it brought as an abundance of wealth.[348]

Both Philo and Josephus commented on the simplicity of their meals. Josephus described them as consisting of bread and a single course, the baker providing their bread in turn and the cook setting before each man one plate consisting of a single course.[349] In his treatise, *De Vita Contemplativa*, Philo provided a similar picture of frugality in his description of the meal which the Therapeutae ate, only allowing some seasoning of salt, and for those with a delicate taste, some hyssop. The only drink to accompany the meal was spring water.[350]

From the sectarian documents we learn that there were common meals taken by the members of the communities.

> They shall eat in common and bless in common and deliberate in common.[351]

We also learn that the meal consisted of at least two elements, bread and wine, which were blessed by a priest.

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[346]Jos.*BJ.*2:126, οὔτε δὲ ἐσθῆτας οὔτε ὑποδήματα ἀμείβουσι πρὶν διαρραγῆναι τὸ πρότερον παντάπασιν ἢ δαπανηθῆναι τῷ χρόνῳ.
[347]Philo,*Quod omnis probus,* 84,
τοῦ μὲν οὖν φιλοθέου δείγματα παρέχονται μυρία...ὀλιγοδεῖαν, ἀφέλεαιαν.
[348]Philo, *Quod omnis probus,* 77, πλουσιώτατοι νομίζονται, τὴν ὀλιγοδεῖαν καὶ εὐκολίαν, ὅπερ ἐστι, κρίνοντες περιουσίαν.
Cf. Philo, *Hyp.* 11:11, where extravagance is described as "a disease of both body and soul."
[349] Jos, *BJ.* 2:130,
ὁ μὲν σιτοποιὸς ἐν τάξει παρατίθησι τοὺς ἄρτους, ὁ δὲ μάγειρος ἕν ἀγγεῖν ἐξ ἑνὸς ἐδέσματος ἑκάστῳ παρατίθησιν.
[350] Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa*, 37.
[351] CR, VI: 2-3, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 105.

> And when the table has been prepared for eating, and the new wine for drinking, the Priest shall be the first to stretch out his hand to bless the firstfruits of the bread and new wine blessed by a priest.[352]

Closely associated with this simplicity of living were the attitudes of the Essenes to pleasure and riches which they considered sources of evil. Josephus wrote that they shunned pleasure as a vice and regarded temperance (ἡ ἐγκράτεια) and the control of the passions as a virtue.[353] They despised riches; Josephus as proof of this pointed to the fact that no one could be found amongst the Essenes whose reputation depended on his greater abundance of wealth than any other members of the groups.[354] Consequently there was found among them an emphasis on the common ownership of possessions so that no one suffered the degradation associated with poverty or achieved the prominence which came from wealth.[355] Philo also depicted the Essenes as shunning extravagant luxury[356] suggesting that this lack of desire for possessions and wealth was the basis of real freedom.

> [N]o one among them ventures at all to acquire any property whatever of his own, neither house, nor slave, nor farm, nor flocks and herds, nor anything of any sort which can be looked upon as the fountain or provision of riches; but they bring them together into the middle as a common stock, and enjoy one common general benefit from it.[357]

Common Possession of Wealth and Resources.

The common possession of wealth and resources was a feature of the life of the Essenes which figures prominently in the writings of both Philo and Josephus. Philo wrote that they were taught by the scriptures to abstain from covetousness of money and from ambition. As a result no one was in absolute possession of his own home but in some sense it belonged to everyone. All things were held in common, even clothes and food.

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[352] CR, VI: 2-3, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 105. Cf. the description of the meal in 1QSa II:17-22, with the specification that in accordance with this statute "they shall proceed at every me[al at which] at least ten men are gathered together."
[353] Jos,*BJ,* 2:120, οὗτοι τὰς μὲν ἡδονὰς ὡς κακίαν ἀποστρέφονται, τὴν δὲ ἐγκράτειαν καὶτὸ μὴ τοῖς πάθεσιν ὑποπίπτειν ἀρετὴν ὑπολαμβάνουσιν.
[354] Jos, *BJ,* 2:120.
[355] Jos, *BJ,* 2: 122.
[356] Philo, *Quod omnis probus,* 84.
[357] Philo, *Hyp.* 11:4.

> They have one treasury to serve all and common expenditure; their clothes are held in common as is their food because of their system of public meals. For you would not find among any other groups of people the custom of sharing the same house, adopting the same way of life and eating at the same table more firmly established.[358]

As a result of this shared possession of wealth and resources they were able to relieve the necessities of those who were in need. To eliminate both poverty and excessive wealth those joining the sect handed over their property to the order, thus ensuring that,

> when the possessions of each member have been pooled together, then the property belongs to all as if they were brothers.[359]

In his later work, the *Jewish Antquities,* Josephus commented on the psychological effect which the commonality of wealth produced in the members of the groups.

> They have all things in common, and the rich man has no greater pleasure in what is his than the man who possesses nothing whatsoever.[360]

The sectarian documents also placed great emphasis on the impact of riches and the ownership of property on the behaviour of the people.[361] In the pesher on Isaiah 24:17 – *Terror and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the land* – the author of the Damascus Document wrote:

> These are the three nets of Belial with which Levi the son of Jacob said that he catches Israel by setting them up as three

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[358] Philo, *Quod omnis probus,* 86,
συσσίτια πεποιημένων. τὸ γὰρ ὁμωρόφιον ἢ ὁμοδίαιτον ἢ ὁμοτράπεζον οὐκ ἂν τις εὕροι παρ' ἑτέροις εἶτ' ἐστὶ ταμεῖον ἓν πάντων και δαπάναι κοιναί, καὶ κοιναὶ μὲν ἐσθῆτες, κοιναὶ δὲ τροφὰι μᾶλλον ἔργῳ Βεβαιούμενον.

[359] Jos, *BJ,* 2:122.
τῶν δ'ἑκάστου κτημάτων ἀναμεμιγμένων μίαν ὥσπερ ἀδελφοῖς ἅπασιν οὐσίαν εἶναι. Cf. *Acts.* 4: 32, οὐδὲ εἷς τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ ἐλεγεν εἶναι ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτοῖς ἅπαντα κοινά.

[360] Jos, *Ant,* 18:20
τὰ χρήματά τε κοινά ἐστιν αὐτοῖς, ἀπολαύει δὲ οὐδὲν ὁ πλούσιος τῶν οἰκείων μειζόνως ἢ ὁ μηδ'ὁτιοῦν κεκτημένος.

[361] Beall, T.S, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls.* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 43. Beall writes that "Qumran literature is replete with references to riches." On p.140 n.47 he refers to K.G. Kuhn, *Konkordanz zu den Qumrantexten,* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck &Ruprecht, 1960) on the use of the Hebrew word *hwn* (riches/property). Of the 50 references to this word in Qumran literature, in 22 instances "the connotation of *hwn* is clearly negative; while 27 times the meaning is neutral."

> kinds of righteousness. The first is fornication, the second is riches, and the third is profanation of the Temple.[362]

Those who entered the covenant were called to "separate from the sons of the Pit" and to "keep away from the unclean riches of wickedness acquired by vow or anathema or from the Temple treasury." They were not to "rob the poor of His people, to make widows their prey and of the fatherless their victims."[363] The rules for the observance of Šabbāt also contained the prohibition of dealing with money matters and of profaning Šabbāt for the sake of riches and gain.[364]

According to the Community Rule the Master was required to hate "the men of perdition" and to "leave to them wealth and earnings like a slave to his lord and like a poor man to his master" for apart from the will of God nothing should be a matter of desire for him.[365] In his hymn the Master equated those who were "zealous for wealth" with the unjust and those "who speak of iniquity."[366] The strictures on wealth and the emphasis placed on the commonality of possessions found in the sectarian documents and in other writings[367] from Qumran provide evidence that the Essene groups laid great stress on the corrupting nature of the ownership of wealth and property and that their complete abandonment by some communities, as evidenced in the Community Rule, and their strict control in others were an essential element in the lifestyle of these groups.

Attention to Prayer and Study.

In his description of the daily routine of the Essenes Josephus wrote about the worship practised by the community. He described in some detail their morning ritual. "They show their reverence to the deity in an idiosyncratic manner."[368] He went on to write that they offered their prayers to the Sun as though beseeching it to rise. These prayers had been handed

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[362]CD, IV:15, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 130.
[363]CD, VI:15, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 132. Cf. CD, VIII:7, (133) on those who behaved arrogantly for the sake of riches and gain.
[364] CD, X:18, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 139, see CD, XI:15, (142).
[365] CR, IX:21-24, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 111.
[366] CR, XI:1, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 114.
[367] See the Commentary on Habakkuk, VIII:5-14; IX:4-5; and the Thanksgiving Psalms, XVIII:24, 30; VI:20; VII:22, in Vermes, *Scrolls.*
[368] Jos, *BJ,* 2:128. πρός γε μὴν τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβεῖς ἰδίως.

down to them from their ancestors. While there is no reference to sun worship in the sectarian literature found in Qumran the Community Rule clearly refers to prayers at morning and evening.

> He (the Master) shall bless Him [with the offering] of the lips at the times ordained by Him: at the beginning of the dominion of light, and at its end when it retires to its appointed place; at the beginning of the watches of darkness when he unlocks their storehouse and spreads them out, and also at their end when they retire before the light; when the heavenly lights shine out from the dwelling-place of Holiness, and also when they retire to the place of Glory.[369]

Josephus also mentioned prayers offered by a priest before and after their common meals together.[370] This role of the priest is confirmed in the Community Rule.

> And when the table has been prepared for eating, and the new wine for drinking, the Priest shall be the first to stretch out his hand to bless the first-fruits of the bread and new wine.[371]

All three literary sources indicate the importance of study amongst the Essenes. In an attack on those who paid too much attention to certain aspects of Greek philosophy, such as logic and natural philosophy, Philo wrote that the Essenes devoted themselves to the contemplation of the existence of God and of the creation of the universe and to moral considerations "using as mentors the ancestral laws which it would not have been possible for the human soul to have conceived without divine inspiration."[372] Instruction in these laws took place when they met in their synagogues on Šabbāt. In these laws were defined the three standards which determined every action in their religious, domestic and civic life. They were the love of God, the love of goodness and the love of mankind.[373]

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[369]CR, X:1-3, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 111-112. Pliny the Younger in a letter to the Emperor Trajan (10: 96) recorded the fact that Christians whom he had examined said that they had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day to sing hymns in honour of Christ.

[370] Jos, *BJ,* 2:131.

[371] CR, VI:5, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 105. Cf. CR, X: 14-16, (113) and 1QSa, II:16-21, (159-160).

[372] Philo, *Quod omnis probus,* 80,
τὸ ἠθικὸν εὖ μάλα διαπονοῦσιν ἀλείπταις χρώμενοι τοῖς πατρίοις νόμοις, οὓς ἀμήχανον ἀνθρωπίνην ἐπινοῆσαι ψυχὴν ἀνευ κατοκωχῆς ἐνθέου.

[373] Philo *Quod omnis probus,* 83, ὁρίοις καὶ κανόσι τριττοῖς χρώμενοι, τῷ τε φιλοθέῳ καὶ φιλαρετῳ και φιλανθρώπῳ.

This study of the writings of the ancients, especially of those which concerned the wellbeing of the soul and body, was a matter for comment by Josephus who remarked on the "extraordinary enthusiasm" of the Essenes in their pursuit of this learning.[374] He also noted that as part of the oath taken on admission to the sect a candidate swore "carefully to preserve the books of the sect" and to "transmit their rules exactly as he himself received them."[375]

Evidence of the importance of books and their study as part of the disciplined life in the Essene groups is to found in the sectarian literature from Qumran.

> And where the ten (men of the Council of the Community) are, there shall never lack a man among them who shall study the Law continually, day and night, concerning the right conduct of a man with his companion. And the Congregation shall watch in community for a third of every night of the year, to read the Book and to study the Law and to bless together.[376]

The Damascus Document similarly referred to the Law as an object of study[377] as well as to other writings such as *The Book of Jubilees*[378]. Among these other writings there is mentioned *The Book of Meditation* in which the judges of the Congregation must be expert.[379] Although various attempts have been made to identify this book there is no agreement as to what writing it referred or to its origin.[380]

It is obvious from Josephus that the study of ancient writings was put to other uses including the treatment of disease.[381] Although there are no direct references in the Qumran writings to the study of the ancient books for this purpose, the presence of many fragments from such books as *Jubilees* and *Enoch,* in which there are references to healing, might imply

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[374] Jos, *BJ,* 2:136. σπουδάζουσι δ' ἐκτόπως περὶ τὰ τῶν παλαιῶν συντάγματα...
[375] Jos, *BJ,* 2:142.
[376] CR, VI:6-7, in Vermes, *Scrolls,*105.
[377] CD, VI:4-5, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 131.
[378] CD, XVI:4-5,in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 137.
[379] CD, X:6, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 139. Cf. CD, XIII:2, (141) and 1QSa, I:7, (158).
[380] Beall, T.S, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes,* 71-72.
[381] Jos, *BJ,* 2:136.

that they too were used to improve the medicinal knowledge of the Essenes.[382]

Exercise of Self-restraint in Sexual Matters and in Behaviour towards Others.

Mention has already been made of the restraint (ἐγκράτεια) exercised by the Essenes in sexual matters. Both Philo and Josephus recognised that celibacy was part of the lifestyle of the Essenes,[383] although Josephus indicated that he knew of the existence of Essene groups in which marriage was permitted, but in which, nevertheless, it was seen as necessary for the continuance of the race and not as a means to satisfy self-indulgence.[384]

In the sectarian documents there appears nothing as categorical as Philo's statement in *Hyp.* 11:14 that "no Essene gets married" ('Εσσαίων γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἀγεται γυναῖκα). In the Community Rule, which some scholars consider to be the rulebook of the celibate community living in Qumran, no mention is made of marriage or the presence of women.[385] However the Damascus Document contains many definite references to women and to marriage, again raising the issue about the possibility of the existence of two types of community among the Essenes and in line with Josephus' comments in the *Bellum Judaicum.*

> groups in which marriage was permitted, but in which, nevertheless, it was seen as necessary for the continuance of the race and not as a means to satisfy self-indulgence.

The condemnation in the Damascus Document of a man who married twice during his life-time implies the existence of marriage in some Essene

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[382] In *The Book of Jubilees,* 10:10-14, Noah was taught the medicinal use of herbs which he wrote down in a book and passed the knowledge to his son Shem. See also 1 *Enoch,*10:4-8 and the note of E. Isaac on the meaning of the name Raphael in *OTP,* Vol.1, (ed.) J. H. Charlesworth, 17. For references to healing in other writings associated with Qumran see Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes,* 72-73 and 153-154, n.175.

[383] Philo, *Hyp.* 11:14; Jos, *BJ,* 2:120-121.

[384] Jos, *BJ,* 2:161-162.

[385] The archaeological evidence available from the excavations at Qumran does not provide a definite answer about the presence of women in that community. Roland de Vaux who was responsible for much of the excavations at Qumran commented that in the main cemetery "all the skeletons in that part of the cemetery which is carefully planned are male," while the skeletons of women and children were only found in the surrounding areas. (*Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls,*(London: OUP, 1973) 47.

groups.[386] The document also contains a specific reference to those who lived in camps "according to the rule of the land...marrying...and begetting children" and who "shall walk according to the Law and according to the statute concerning binding vows."[387] Amongst the laws regarding purity contained in the Document are those prohibiting sexual relations with menstruating women and prohibiting sexual relations within the city of the Sanctuary.[388]

Of interest concerning the place of women in the camps is a fragment of the Damascus Document which appears to indicate not only their presence in Essene groups but also that there were women who were accorded some status with the title of "Mothers", albeit a status which did not equate with that given to the "Fathers". In a fragment containing the penances to be imposed for violating the rules; there is a reference to the rules concerned with those who murmured against members of the camp.

> [If he has murmured] against the Fathers, he shall leave and shall not return [again. But if has murmured] against the Mothers, he shall do penance for ten days. For the Mothers have no *rwqmb* (distinction?) within the Congregation.[389]

The Messianic Rule provides further indication that women along with children were present in the camps and that they were to be taught "the precepts of the covenant" and all the "statutes so that they may no longer stray in their [errors]."[390] This suggests that women and children were to be instructed in a similar way to men. It thus provides some credibility to what Josephus wrote that women were given a three year probationary period and

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[386]CD, IV:19, in Vermes, *Scrolls,*130. "The 'builders of the wall' (Ezek. xiii:10) who have followed after 'Precept'...shall be caught in fornication twice by taking a second wife while the first is alive..."

[387]CD, VII:6-7, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 132. The distinction between those who lived in the camps and those who "walk in these (precepts) in perfect holiness" has already been discussed as the distinction between those Essenes who married and those who remained celibate.

[388]The prohibition against sexual relations with a menstruating woman is contained in fragment 4Q266 in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 148, and that referring to sexual relations in the city of the Sanctuary is to be found in CD, XIII:1, in Vermes, *Scrolls*, 140.

[389]4Q270 frg. 7, 14-15, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 152. For comment on this passage see Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls,* 199-206.

[390] 1QSa, 1:4-5, in Vermes, *Scrolls*, 157.

that it was only after a successful completion of three periods of purification as proof of their fecundity that they were allowed to marry.[391]

The exercise of self-restraint was not confined to sexual relations but was also evident in their behaviour towards others. They were described by Josephus as those who only showed anger when justified, kept their tempers under control, and who were champions of fidelity and servants of peace-

> ὀργῆς ταμίαι δίκαιοι, θυμοῦ καθεκτικοί, πίστεως προστάται, εἰρήνης ὑπουργοι.[392]

In the writings of Philo also the concept of ἐγκράτεια pervades every aspect of the behaviour and attitudes shown by the Essenes. It informed their attitude to the commonality of wealth and their belief in the equality of all men. They considered that it was excessive greed which threw into confusion the kinship which existed between humans, causing alienation instead of affinity and enmity instead of friendship.[393]

The exercise of self-restraint in relation to their behaviour towards others is best exemplified in the sectarian documents by reference to the rules governing how members of the groups should treat each other and to the penance which they would incur in breaching them. These rules governed every aspect of their common life together: the courtesy to be observed in their daily discourse which eschewed obstinacy, impatience, malice and anger, the care to be shown to companions, and the appropriate behaviour to be followed in the Assembly of the Congregation.[394]

Relationship with Others, both inside and outside the Groups.

From the descriptions contained in the writings of Philo and Josephus it is possible to see the relationship which plainly existed between members within the Essene groups and also to extrapolate evidence of their relationship with those in the wider communities in which the groups were living.

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[391] Jos, *BJ*, 2:161.
[392] *Jos, BJ*, 2:135.
[393] Philo, *Quod omnis probus*, 7,
ὧν τὴν συγγένειαν ἡ ἐπίβουλος πλεονεξία παρευημερήσασα διέσεισεν, ἀντ'οἰκειότητος ἀλλοτριότητα καὶ ἀντὶ φιλίας ἐχθραν ἐργασαμένη.
[394] CR, VI: 25-VII:25, in Vermes, *Scrolls*, 107-108.

Josephus in his account in the *Bellum Iudaicum* emphasised the Jewishness of the Essenes, Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν γένος ὄντες, stating that they showed a greater sense of community than did members of the other sects.[395] The sense of belonging was shared by all Essenes from whatever group they came. Both Philo and Josephus commented on the hospitality which was extended to all Essenes.

> The door is open even for those who arrive from elsewhere if they share their conviction.[396]
>
> When members of the sect come from elsewhere, all their resources are open to them as if they are their own, and they go into the homes of those whom they have not seen before as if they were the closest of friends.[397]

Likewise both writers referred to the reciprocity of welfare amongst the Essenes with each giving of his resources to an Essene in need and receiving from him in exchange something of use to himself.[398] Philo commented on their reciprocity in respect of clothing.

> Not only do they have a common table but their clothing is also held in common. In winter there are substantial garments for their use and in summer cheap tunics, so that it is possible for anyone who wants one to take any garment, since it was assumed that what one person has belongs to all and conversely that what all have one has.[399]

Charity was the hallmark of their common life together. Those who worked did not keep what they earned but placed it at the disposal of the group to be shared with those in need. In this way they were able to care for the sick and the elderly.

> All that they get as wages for their daily work they do not keep as their own, but placing them in a common fund they make available the profit from them for those wishing to use it. [400]

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[395]Jos, *BJ,* 2:120.

[396]Philo, *Quod omnis probus,* 85.
ἀναπέπταται καὶ τοῖς ἑτέρωθεν ἀφικνουμένοις τῶν ὁμοζήλων.

[397]Jos, *BJ,* 2:124-125. καὶ τοῖς ἑτέρωθεν ἥκουσιν αἱρετισταῖς πάντ' ἀναπέπταται τὰ παρ' αὐτοῖς ὁμοίως ὥσπερ ἴδια, καὶ πρὸς οὓς οὐ πρότερον εἶδον εἰσίασιν ὡς συνηθεστάτους.
Cf. Jesus' instructions to his disciples in *Lk.* 10: 5- 10; *Mt.* 10:40-42..

[398]Jos,*BJ,* 2:127.

[399]Philo, *Hyp,*11:12. κοινὴ δ' οὐ τράπεζα μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐσθὴς αὐτοῖς ἐστι.

[400]Philo, *Quod omnis probus,* 86.
ὅσα γὰρ ἂν μεθ'ἡμέραν ἐργασάμενοι λάβωσιν ἐπὶ μισθῷ, ταῦτ'οὐκ ἴδια φυλάττουσιν, ἀλλ' εἰς μέσον προτιθέντες κοινὴν τοῖς ἐθέλουσι χρῆσθαι τὴν ἀπ'αὐτῶν παρασευάζουσιν

The specific information which both Philo and Josephus provide about the relationship between Essenes is lacking in the sectarian documents under discussion, but the general description in the Damascus Document of the relationship which existed between fellow Essenes serves as an overview of more specific attitudes.

> They shall love each man his brother as himself; they shall succour the poor, the needy, and the stranger. A man shall seek his brother's well-being and shall not sin against his near kin. [401]

The rule for the Congregation requiring that the earnings of at least two days out of every month be given to the Guardian and the Judges to meet its needs concerned the alleviation of the distress of those in need.

> From it they shall give to the fatherless, and from it they shall succour the poor and the needy, the aged sick and the man who is stricken (with disease), the captive taken by a foreign people, the virgin with no near kin, and the ma[id for] whom no man cares.[402]

Both the Community Rule and the Damascus Document provide evidence that justice was of great concern to the members of the groups. In the section of the Community Rule relating to the behaviour of the men of the Community there are frequent references to justice,

> Every decision concerning doctrine, property, and justice shall be determined by them. They shall practise truth and humility in common, and justice and uprightness and charity and modesty in all their ways.

And among the functions performed by the twelve men and three priests, who formed the Council of the Community, was the exercise of justice.

> (Their) works shall be truth, righteousness, justice, loving-kindness and humility. They shall preserve the faith in the Land with steadfastness and shall atone for sin by the practice of

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ὠφέλειαν.

[401] CD, VI:20-VII:1, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 132. Cf.1QS, II:25, (100). "For according to the holy design, they shall all of them be in a Community of truth and virtuous humility, of loving-kindness and good intent one towards the other, and (they shall all of them be) sons of the everlasting Company."

[402]CD, XIV:12-15, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 143. Cf. Tertullian, *Apologia,* 39:1-6. "Every man once a month brings some modest coin – or whenever he wishes, and only if he does wish and if he can; for nobody is compelled; it is a voluntary offering. You might call them the trust funds of piety. They are spent...to feed the poor and to bury them, for boys and girls who lack property and parents, and then for slaves grown old and ship-wrecked mariners; and any who may be in mines, islands or prisons..."

> justice and by suffering the sorrow of affliction. They shall walk with all men according to the standard of truth and the rule of the time. [403]

The practice of justice, however, does not seem to have been restricted to their dealings with other Essenes. Although both Philo and Josephus were concerned to describe how the Essenes interacted with each other they illustrated that they were not isolated from the wider communities in which they lived and that the relationship which existed between them was extended to those outside. As part of the oath which he swore on admission to an Essene group a candidate pledged himself to observe justice, to do no harm either of his own accord or in compliance with an order and to hate the unjust and fight on the same side as the just.[404] Philo observed that they underwent training in justice and in domestic and civic conduct.[405] The use of the Greek term, πολιτεία, (the basic meaning of which has to do with the rights of citizens and the constitution of the city) seems to imply recognition of their belonging to the wider community and that their relationship with the members of that wider community was encapsulated in their concern for justice for all men.[406]

Evidence of the sectarian nature of these Essene groups can be seen in the dominant theme of separation which is strongly represented in their documents. The tradition that the early adherents of the sect "went out of the land of Judah to sojourn in the land of Damascus" is a metaphor for this separation.[407] In the Community Rule the admission of candidates into the Community is associated with their separation from "the habitation of the unjust" and with their going into the wilderness to prepare a way for God. In the pesher on Isaiah 40:3, which follows this instruction, the "highway for

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[403] CR, VIII:1-4, in Vermes *Scrolls.*109. Cf. CR, I:5-6, (98).

[404]Josephus, *BJ,* 2:139, τὰ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους δίκαια φυλάξειν καὶ μήτε κατὰ γνώμην βλάψειν τινὰ μήτε ἐξ ἐπιτάγματος, μισήσειν δ'ἀει`τοὺς ἀδίκους καὶ συναγωνιεῖσθαι τοῖς δικαίοις.

[405] Philo, *Quod omnis probus,* 83. παιδεύονται δὲ...δικαιοσύνην, οἰκονομίαν, πολιτείαν...

[406] Josephus was probably alluding to the responsibilities of the Essenes in the wider community when he wrote that the candidate for admission into an Essene group had to swear to keep faith with all men, "especially with those in power, for the rule of no man survives without God." *BJ.* 2:140. Cf. Paul's advice to members of the churches in Rome (Romans, 13:1).

[407] CD, VI:5, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 131. On the discussions concerning 'Damascus' in the history of the Essenes and the Qumran community see, P.R. Davies, *Behind the Essenes: History and Ideology in the Dead Sea Scrolls,* (Atlanta:Scholars Press, 1987), and Davies, "The Birthplace of the Essenes: Where is 'Damascus'?" in *Rev.Q,* 56 (14) 1990, 503-519.

our God" is interpreted as "the study of the Law, which He commanded by the hand of Moses."[408]

A similar instruction is found in the Damascus Document for those who were brought into the Covenant. They were to "take care to act according to the exact interpretation of the Law during the age of wickedness"; they were to separate from the "sons of the pit" and to "keep away from the unclean riches of wickedness acquired by vow or anathema or from the Temple treasure."[409] The injunction for the men of the Community to whom the Community Rule was addressed was to "separate from the congregation of the men of injustice" and to "unite ...under the authority of the sons of Zadok, the Priests who keep the Covenant, and of the multitude of the men of the Community who hold fast to the Covenant."[410] The Messianic Rule applied to those among the congregation of Israel in the last days[411] who had "turned aside [from the] way of the people." Such a separation from practices which appear to be essential elements in Jewish religion, for example, participation in the temple cult,[412] together with an emphasis on Torah and its study and on the Covenant is indicative of the sectarian nature of the communities to which these documents refer.[413]

Conclusion.

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the evidence for the existence of Essene groups referred to in the writings of Philo, Josephus and of Pliny, in the light of the sectarian writings discovered in Qumran. Despite some discrepancies, which probably arose from the lack of actual close contact with Essene groups on the part of these commentators, the comparison has shown that their evidence is for the most part corroborated

[408] CR, VIII:14-15, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 109.
[409] CD, VI:15, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 132.
[410] CR, V:1, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 103.
[411] Stegemann, H. "Some Remarks to 1QSa, to 1QSb, and to Qumran Messianism." *Rev.Q* 17 (1996) 497-505. See CR, 1:1 in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 157.
[412] Jos, *Ant,* 18:19. Josephus wrote that the Essenes were excluded from the Temple and performed their rites separately.
[413] In the Hebrew Scriptures the emphasis on the study of the Law to be found in some psalms, for example, psalm 119, points to a return to obedience to the Covenant. It was suggested that the psalm represented the view of those who were opposed to the corruption of the Temple priests.

by the Qumran documents. Of importance to the further pursuit of studying the life style of the followers of Jesus is the evidence, found in both Philo and Josephus, of the existence of Essene groups in many parts of Palestine. The Damascus Document with its references to camps and with its nuanced statements about Essenes living in wider communities provides some credibility to the claims made in the writings of Philo and Josephus.[414]

Also of further interest to this study is the evidence of the extent of ascetical practices which these commentators and the Qumran documents reveal in the life style of the Essenes. Mention may also be made that in some of the pseudepigraphal writings, such as *Jubilees*[415] and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,*[416] evidence suggests that there existed in Judea groups whose life styles exhibited ascetical practices - a tendency which some commentators question since they consider that such practices did not exist in Jewish religious circles.[417] While these commentators might be right about the established religious cult of Judea, in the case of sects which move on the periphery of such a cult the tendency is to create a counter culture. In the case of the Essenes the writings of Philo, Josephus and Pliny, together with the documents from the caves around Qumran, provide evidence which points to the existence of a counter culture of which ascetical practices examined in this chapter are a manifestation.

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[414] Such statements refer to the Essenes as marrying, having children and working for a living. The problem of the relationship of these groups with Qumran is one which is not of immediate concern to this study.

[415] Wintermute, O.S, "Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction," in *OTP,* Vol. 2, (ed.) J.H. Charlesworth, 35-142. See also J.C. VanderKam , "The Origins and Purposes of the Book of Jubilees," in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees,* (edd.) M. Albani, J. Frey, and A. Lange, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 3-24.

[416] de Jonge, M, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs:A Study of their Text, Composition and Origin,* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1953). See also de Jonge *Studies on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: Text and Interpretation,* (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

[417] See the discussion in chapter two on whether there existed a concept of askesis in Jewish religious practice.

Part Two

Chapter Four

The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain.

Introduction.

Central to any attempt to ascertain whether Jesus and his early disciples followed an ascetical life style is an examination of those discourses, commonly known as "sermons", which appear in Matthew's gospel (chaps. 5-7) and in Luke's gospel (chap. 6:20-49). They contain many sayings of Jesus which were relevant to the way his followers should live their lives in the situations in which they found themselves, particularly in relationships with those who might be considered enemies. The scholarly attention which has been given to these discourses, especially to the one in *Matthew,* indicates the importance placed upon them. For this reason this chapter will discuss their impact on the development of an ethical formation for Christian living. That such counter cultural teaching as that contained in these discourses has exercised the thinking not only of scholars concerned with the history of the Christian religion, but also of those whose interest is concerned with the development of ethical/ moral behaviour, is indicative of the fact that some of the early church fathers described it as revolutionary (καινός).[418]

In order to preserve a link with the perceptions of some of the earlier commentators on the nature and intention of these discourses and what I consider to be the centrality of the teaching contained in them relating to the formation[419] of the followers of Jesus, this chapter will include two parts. The first part will provide a brief overview of the trends which have emerged in the scholarship concerning these discourses. The second part will consider the way in which their content related to the (re)formation of the followers of Jesus in keeping with the description of askesis which has

[418] See chapter seven on the reception of the sayings in these discourses in the writings of the apostolic fathers and the apologists.

[419] The use of the term "formation" is taken from its use for the instruction of novitiates in monastic establishments. Where sometimes the bracketed (re) is used it is an attempt to indicate that through such instruction the creation of a new subjectivity for those who had been rejected by their communities as a result of their adherence to Jesus is being suggested..

been discussed in the earlier chapters. It will conclude with a discussion on the teaching in both discourses on loving one's enemy as the principal element in the ascetic life style of Jesus' followers.

Part One: An Overview of Literature referring to the Sermons on the Mount and on the Plain.

Despite the titles given to these collections of sayings, neither can be said to have the characteristics of a sermon and hence to belong to that particular literary genre. The term, "sermon", first appears as a title of the discourse in Matthew in the commentary of Augustine, entitled *De Sermone Domini in Monte.*[420] In the literature which these discourses have engendered the Matthean account has received the greater attention of commentators and scholars. From the patristic era until quite recently the overwhelming number of studies have been devoted to the Gospel of Matthew and the Sermon on the Mount,[421] with many echoing the comment of Bernhard Weiss that "the sequence of sayings in Luke 6:27-36 is of a secondary character."[422]

As with the Synoptic Gospels much has been written about the origin of these discourses and about their literary relationship with each other. Both discourses are located early in the account of the ministry of Jesus in the gospels of Matthew and Luke and in both accounts Jesus is portrayed as a teacher delivering his teachings to his disciples (οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ). The introduction to both discourses consists of a collection of makarisms (*Mt.* 5:3-11; *Lk.* 6: 20b.-22), and they both conclude with the parable of the two builders (*Mt.* 7:24-27; *Lk.* 6:47-49). Such common features suggest that they shared a common origin. However what that common origin was has

[420] *Sancti Aurelii Augustini De Sermone Domini in monte libros duos,* CChr, series latina 35, (Turnholt: Brepols 1967), E.T. *St Augustine: The Lord's Sermon on the Mount,* ACW 5, (trans.) J.J. Jepson, (London: Longman & Green, 1948). M.D. Goulder in *Midrash and Lection in Matthew,* (London: SPCK, 1974) considers that the SM was composed by a Christian scribe to be read in a synagogue at Pentecost, 3-27.

[421] See H.D.Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3-7:27 and Luke 6:20-49),* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), on the literary history of the SM and SP, 10-49.

[422] Weiss, B. "Die Redestücke des apostolischen Matthäus," *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* 9 (1864), 49-14 0 (55). "Die Spruchreihe Luk. 6:27-36 trägt nach allen kritischen Indicien einen secundären Character."

occupied the attention of scholars and commentators over a long period of time.

A single source for both discourses was posited as early as the fifth century CE by Augustine.[423] However he argued that they had been delivered separately, the one on the mountain to the disciples only and the other on the plain before all the people. Evidence of an audience for the first discourse is to be found in its introduction in *Mt.*5:1-2:

> Seeing the crowd he went up into the mountain. And after he had sat down his disciples approached him and opening his mouth he taught them...[424]

The opening description in the Lukan version of the discourse would seem to corroborate the evidence found in the Matthean account.

> And looking up at his disciples he said ...[425]

Both these narratives make clear that Jesus addressed these sayings to his disciples. However evidence that crowds also heard the teaching of Jesus on this / these occasion(s) might be sought in the words with which the narrators ended the description of the scene. In the Matthean account we read:

> When Jesus had finished speaking these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching.[426]

In Luke's gospel the discourse ended with the words:

> When he had finished all his sayings within the hearing of the people he entered Capernaum.[427]

Whatever conclusion is reached about the composition of the audience which heard these discourses, it is possible to say that these sayings were

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[423] Augustine, *De consensu evangelistarum,* 2.19. 43, (P.L. 34.1098). Because of the perceived similarities and differences between the SM and SP from the early period the church fathers debated whether the two discourses reflected the content of one source or two separate sources. Origen and John Chrysostom were of the view that there were two versions of the discourse.

[424] *Mt.* 5:1-2.
ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς το ὄρος, και καθίσαντος αὐτου προσῆλθαν αὐτῳ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἀνοίξας το στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς...

[425] *Lk.* 6:20a. καὶ ἐπάρας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἔλεγεν...

[426] *Mt.* 7:28.
καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς λόγους τούτους, ἐξεπλήσσοντο οἱ ὄχλοι ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ·

[427] *Lk.* 7:1.
ἐπειδὴ ἐπλήρωσεν πάντα τὰ ῥήματα αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς ἀκοὰς τοῦ λαοῦ, εἰσῆλθεν εἰς Καφαρναούμ.

significant teachings in their application to the lives of the followers of Jesus. An examination of the formulation of these discourses within their respective gospels and a comparison with similar formulations found in the writings of near contemporary authors might indicate their importance in setting out teachings which formed part of the ascetic formation of the followers of Jesus. But before proceeding with this examination it is necessary to consider how these discourses have been received by commentators.

How the Sermons have been perceived by Commentators.

Augustine, who wrote the first commentary on the *Sermon on the Mount*, described it as having been composed in such a way as "to make it apparent that it embraces all the directives we need for life."[428] Erasmus (1469-1536) seemed to have regarded the sermon as a compendium which it was necessary to know,[429] a view of the discourse which was shared by two leaders of the Reformation, Jean Calvin and Martin Luther. Calvin wrote in his commentary on *Mt.* 5:1, "[H]ere they have placed before them a short summary of the teaching of Christ, collected from many diverse discourses."[430] Luther described the SM as "a little bundle" (ein klein Bündlein) in which all the teaching of Jesus and that which Moses and the prophets had taught were to be found.

> I [Jesus] will tell you in brief and put it in such words that you do not have to complain about it being too long and too difficult to keep in mind.[431]

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[428] Augustine, *De Sermone Domini in Monte* 1. 1.9-10. ut appareat in eo praecepta esse omnia quae ad informandam vitam pertinent. On Augustine's commentary as an "ascetic" interpretation of the SM as well as an allegory in a Neoplatonic vein, that is, asceticism as a means to ascend to God, see F. van Fletven, "De Sermone Domini in monte," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia,* (ed.) A.D. Fitzgerald, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 771-772.

[429] Erasmus, D. In Evangelium Matthaei Paraphrasis in *Opera Omnia,* Vol.7, Col. 23, (Lugduni Batavorum : P.van der Aa,1706). Betz in *Sermon* attributes the use of the word "compendium" to Erasmus and from his use probably arose the German term "Zusammenfassung" which has often been used by later scholars to categorise the collection of sayings in both the SM and SP. 71.

[430] Calvin, J. *In Novum Testamentum Commentarii,* 1, (ed.) A. Tholuck, (2nd ed. Berlin: Thome, 1835) 134. "hic ante oculos positam habeant brevem summam doctrinae Christi, collectam ex pluribus et diversis eius concionibus."

[431] Luther, M. *Wochenpredigten über Matth. 5-7. 1530-1532,* (WA 32; Vienna:Böhlau,1906) 494. "...ich wil ichs euch wol kurtz sagen und so fassen, das jr nicht durffet klagen es sey zu lang odder zu schweer zubenhalten."

The concept of these discourses as a collection or compendium of the teachings of Jesus persisted into the modern era. In 1788 David Julius Pott described the SM as a

> "collection of sententiae and longer speech sections only held together loosely by the association of ideas."[432]

In his Shaffer Lecture of 1937 Martin Dibelius expressed virtually identical views when he stated that the SM was a collection of diverse maxims composed by the Evangelist linking them to groups of sayings in order to provide a characteristic summary of the preaching of Jesus.[433] Later in the same lecture Dibelius stated that the summary of Jesus' teaching, like that contained in the SM, was a response to the request from the early communities for a code to guide their living.[434]

In 1941 Emanuel Hirsch added two new elements to the discussion with his theory that both sermons were summaries of the teaching of Jesus but that they were the product of the redactional work carried out in the presynoptic period by two disciples who held differing views about that teaching.[435] The recognition by Hirsch of redactional activity at the presynoptic stage was followed in the research of Dieter Lührmann with an attempt to illustrate the effect of redaction at the presynoptic level of Q.[436] However, despite important developments in the methodology which he employed Lührmann, according to Hans Dieter Betz, "failed to apply the method to identify collections of sayings within Q."[437] Nevertheless, despite this failure to analyse the SM and SP further, his recognition of the collective nature of these sayings was of importance in the discussion of

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[432] Pott, D.J. *Dissertatio theologica inauguralis de natura atque indole orationis montanae et de nonnullis hujus orationis explicandae praeceptis,* (Helmstadii: Literis M.G. Leuckart, 1788), cited in Betz, *The Sermon,* 47.

[433] Dibelius, M. "Die Bergpredigt," in *Botschaft und Geschichte,* vol.1, (ed.) G. Bornkamm, (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1953) 79-174. "...können wir feststellen, dass die Bergpredigt eine Zusammenstellung verschiedenartiger Sprüche ist. aber der Evangelist fügte diese Sprüche und Spruchgruppen aneinander, um eine charakteristische Übersicht über Jesu Predigt zu geben." (92-93).

[434] Dibelius, "Die Bergpredigt," 97. "Die ersten Gemeinden, sagen wir um 50 n. Chr., verlangten eine Zusammenfassung der Lehre des Herrn, um ein Gesetz für ihre Lebensführung zu haben."

[435] Hirsch, E. *Frühgeschichte des Evangeliums,* vol. 2: *Die Vorlagen des Lukas und das Sondergut des Matthäus,* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1941) 86-88, cited in Betz, *Sermon,* 41.

[436] Lührmann, D. *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle* WMANT 33, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), cited in Betz, *Sermon,* 41.

[437] Betz, *Sermon,* 42.

their genre.[438] It was left to later scholars to examine the possibility of redactional activity in relation to the SM and SP in the presynoptic period.[439]

In a series of essays,[440] dating from 1975 to 1984, Betz challenged the received views of many of the commentators concerning the origin, purpose and genre of the SM.[441] His hypothesis maintains that the SM was a pre-Matthean composition having its origin in the presynoptic period. Its provenance was a Jewish Christian group, the work of a redactor of the sayings of Jesus writing in the middle of the first century CE. "The SM as found in Matthew's gospel is a presynoptic source ... from Jewish Christian groups residing in Jerusalem sometime around the middle of the first century AD."[442] In developing this hypothesis Betz adds that "it does not simply derive from the historical Jesus, in the sense that Jesus is the author of all the sayings in the present form and context. Rather the SM represents a pre-Matthean composition of a redactional nature."[443] The purpose of this composition was twofold:

> (a) to show Jesus as the true interpreter of Torah: "The significance of his coming (that is the aim and result of his historical existence) was his interpretation of the Torah – and nothing more.[444]

and

> (b) to equip the disciple to become "a Jesus theologian"; "'Hearing and doing the sayings of Jesus,' therefore, means enabling the disciple to theologize creatively along the lines of the theology of the master. To say it pointedly: The SM is not law to be obeyed, but theology to be intellectually appropriated and internalised, in order then to be creatively implemented in concrete situations of life."[445]

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[438] Ref. Lührmann, see Betz, *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount,* (trans.) L.L. Welborn, (Phil.: Fortress Press, 1985) 39 n.8.

[439] For discussion of this question see G. Strecker, "Die Makarismen der Bergpredigt," *NTS* 17 (1970/71), 255-275; Strecker, *Die Bergpredigt: Ein exegetischer Kommentar,* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), E.T. *The Sermon on the Mount,* (trans.) O.C. Dean, Jr.; (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988) 11-13; J.S. Kloppenborg, "The Formation of Q and Antique Instructional Genres," *JBL* 105 (1986), 443-462; Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections,* SAC 1, (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press Int., 1999) 89-102, 171-187; H.D. Betz, *Essays.*

[440] See n.438 above.

[441] Allison D.C. *The Jesus Tradition in Q,* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press Int. 1997) 67 ff.

[442] Betz, *Essays,* 90.

[443] Betz, *Essays,* 18-19.

[444] Betz, *Essays,* 42.

[445] Betz, Essays, 15-16. The view of Betz on the equipping of the disciple to become "a Jesus theologian" can be interpreted as a disciplined process by which that disciple was 'reformed' to live ascetically.

If the theory of Betz is sustainable, then the SM can be seen as an attempt on the part of the presynoptic redactor to meet the needs of the followers of Jesus by providing a summary of his sayings and teachings which illustrated how a group of Jesus' followers might fulfil Torah.[446] In putting forward the theory, that the SM provided a summary of the teachings of Jesus, Betz is following in a tradition dating from the time of Augustine.

This summary Betz compares to epitomai, such as those found among the writings of Hellenistic schools of philosophy, where they served as philosophers' guides to their followers on how to do philosophy for themselves. Examples of such epitomai are the *Kyriai Doxai* of Epicurus and the *Encheiridion* of Epictetus. In comparing the SM with these epitomai Betz is analysing its genre in the light of Hellenistic rhetoric and ethical theory.[447]

The epitome as literary genre.

The *Encheiridion* of Epictetus is a collection of his sayings made by his student Arrianus from his *Dissertations (διατριβαί).* These sayings Arrianus considered to have been necessary for the understanding of Epictetus' philosophy and to have exercised the greatest influence on his hearers.[448] They constitute the canons or rules (κανόνες) which a philosopher should always have at hand (πρόχειρον) for his training (μελετάω).[449] While the *Encheiridion* provides an analogy with the SM, its compilation, probably in the second century CE, postdates that of the SM. It

[446] Carlston, C.E, "Betz on the Sermon on the Mount: A Critique," *CBQ* 50 (1988) 47-57, (50). Carlston writes, "This document [the SM] was intended, he [Betz] asserts, to show Jesus as the true (or authoritative) interpreter of the Law and to provide the disciples not so much with answers to all legal questions as with a summary that would point a way of *doing* the Law in a Christian community."

[447] Betz, *Essays,*7. For his argument see in *Essays*, 2-7.

[448] See the preface of Simplicius' commentary on the Encheiridion of Epictetus for a comment on the usefulness of such a document in *Commentarius in Epicteti enchiridion* in *Theophrasti characteris,* (ed.) F. Dübner, (Paris: Didot, 1842)

[449] Epictetus, *Encheiridion,* 1.5. (trans.) W.A. Oldfather, Vol. 2. LCL, (Cambridge, Mass. London: HUP, 1928). "Straightway practice (μελέτα) saying to every harsh unreality, 'You are unreal and not at all what you appear to be.' Then examine it and test it in accordance to these rules (τοῖς κανόσι τούτοις) which you have, of which this is the first and most important, whether it concerns those things which are under our control or those which are not. If it concerns something not under our control, let there be ready at hand (πρόχειρον) the answer, 'It is nothing to me.'"

is Betz's view that the prototype of this epitome can be found in the *Kyriai Doxai (Κύριαι Δόξαι)* of Epicurus.[450]

The pedagogical purpose of the epitome is set out in another writing of Epicurus known as *The Letter to Herodotus,* in which he wrote that the letter was an epitome for advanced students who were unable to study his larger works.

> For those who are unable ...to work in detail through all that I have written about nature, or to peruse the larger books which I have composed, I have already prepared at sufficient length an epitome of the whole system, that they may keep adequately in mind at least the most general principles in each department, in order that as occasion arises they may be able to assist themselves on the most important points, in so far as they undertake the study of nature. But those also who have made considerable progress in the survey of the main principles ought to bear in mind the scheme of the whole system set forth in essentials. For we have frequent need of the general view, but not so often of the detailed exposition.[451]

Betz comments that the goal of such a learning process is "to keep a vision of the entire system as well as seminal formulations of doctrinal positions constantly ready in the mind of the philosopher."[452]

> For it is not possible for any one to abbreviate the complete course through the whole system, if he cannot embrace in his own mind by means of short formulae all that might be set out with accuracy in detail.[453]

In a letter to Menoeceus, another of his students, Epicurus explained the practical nature and purpose of the epitome.

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[450] Betz is cautious in attributing to Epicurus the origin of the epitome. In his *Essays*, 11, he writes: "Epicurus ...*may* well have been the creator of this particular type of epitome." (my italics).

[451] Diogenes Laertius, 10:35. The text and translation from C. Bailey, *Epicurus,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1926),18-19.
Τοῖς μὴ δυναμένοις, ὦ Ἡρόδοτε, ἕκαστα τῶν περὶ φύσεως ἀναγεγραμμένων ἡμῖν ἐξακριβοῦν μηδὲ τὰς μείζους τῶν συντεταγμένων βίβλους διαθρεῖν ἐπιτομὴν τῆς ὅλης πραγματείας εἰς τὸ κατασχεῖν τῶν ὁλοσχερωτάτων γε δοξῶν τὴν μνήμην ἱκανῶς αὐτοῖς παρεσκεύασα, ἵνα παρ' ἑκάστους τῶν καιρῶνἐν τοῖς κυριωτάτοις βοηθεῖν αὐτοῖς δύνωνται, καθ' ὅσον ἂν ἐφάπτωνται τῆς περι φύσεως θεωρίας. καὶτοὺς προβεβηκότας δὲ ἱκανῶς ἐν τῇ τῶν ὅλων ἐπιβλέψει τὸν τύπον τῆς ὅλης πραγματείας τὸν κατεστοιχειωμένον δεῖ μνημυονεύειν. τῆς γὰρ ἀθρόας ἐπιβολῆς πυκνὸν δεόμεθα, τῆς δὲ κατὰ μέρος οὐχ' ὁμοίως.

[452] Betz, *Essays,* 14.

[453] D L, 10:36 in Bailey, 18-21.
οὐ γὰρ οἷον τε τὸ πύκνωμα τῆς συνεχοῦς τῶν ὅλων περιοδείας εἶναι μὴ δυναμένου διὰ βραχεῶν φωνῶν ἅπαν ἐμπεριλαβεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ καὶ κατὰ μέρος ἄν ἐξακριβωθέν.

> The things which I used unceasingly to commend to you, these do and practise, considering them to be the first principles of life.[454]

According to Epicurus, to be a follower of his did not require a scheme worked out in minute detail, but rather it meant having within one's grasp (πρόχειρον) that which is essential for the doing of philosophy. In keeping with the view of the Hellenistic period Epicurus saw philosophy as a practice (ars vivendi et moriendi - the art of living and dying). It is Betz's view that the *Kyriai Doxai* was Epicurus' attempt to facilitate his students' pursuit of doing philosophy and that similarly the SM might be seen as a summary of the teachings of Jesus composed in order to help his followers to put his precepts into practice (μελετάω). But he emphasises that in describing the SM as an epitome his concern is to establish its literary genre and he maintains that its content is different from that of the *Kyriai Doxai,* "although not totally unrelated".[455]

The Reaction to the theory of Betz.

Betz's theory concerning the provenance and literary genre of the SM has met with criticism from other scholars in the field. Their criticism is levelled at two aspects of his hypothesis, namely, that the SM belonged to the presynoptic period and was not the redacted work of the evangelist, and that its literary genre was that of a philosophical epitome.

In a review of Betz's *Essays* in 1986 and in a later article which originally appeared in a Festschrift in honour of E. Earle Ellis,[456] G.N. Stanton criticises this "bold new theory" of Betz arguing that it "challenges or ignores all other scholarly work on the SM."[457] In his later work Stanton goes on to state that although the SM might have been treated separately for

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[454]DL, 10:123, in Bailey, 82-83, ἁ δὲ συνεχῶς παρήγγελλον, ταῦτα και πρᾶττε καὶ μελέτα, στοιχεῖα τοῦ καλῶς ζῆν ταῦτ' εἶναι διαλαμβάνων. Cf. D L, 10:135. in Bailey 92-93, where Epicurus urged the practice of these precepts which would make Menoeceus "a god amongst mortals."

[455] Betz, *Essays,* 15.

[456] Stanton, G.N. Review of *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount,* by H.D. Betz, in *JTS*, ns. 37 (1986), 521-523; Stanton, "The Origin and Purpose of the Sermon on the Mount," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of E. Earle Ellis,* (edd.) G.F. Hawthorne and O. Betz, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 181-192; reprinted in *A Gospel for a New People,* (Edinburgh:T&T. Clark, 1992) 307-325.

[457] Stanton, Review, 521.

the convenience of study, no commentator had suggested that the chapters which constitute the SM had had a "quite distinctive origin or purpose which sets them apart from the rest of Matthew's gospel and from Mark and Luke."[458]

Despite an acknowledgment of Betz's work on the importance of literary genre, Stanton is dismissive of his claim that the SM is similar in genre to the epitomes found in the tradition of Graeco-Roman rhetoric. He argues that there are differences in form between the SM and the *Kyriai Doxai* of Epicurus. Amongst these differences he includes the following: (a) The SM contains only the ethical teaching of Jesus, while the *Kyriai Doxai* is a synopsis of the whole of the philosophical system of Epicurus. (b) The SM includes sections, for example, 5:21-48, which cannot be described as of "primary importance"[459] in the teaching of Jesus and, therefore are inappropriate in a summary. (c) The *Kyriai Doxai* lacks literary structure, whereas the SM has been carefully composed.[460]

Similar criticisms of the Betz hypothesis are to be found in an article by Charles Carlston.[461] He expresses doubts whether evidence existed concerning knowledge of the epitome as a literary genre in "Jewish-Christian circles within a generation of Jesus' death" asserting that there is a lack of such epitomai in Jewish literature at that time. Associated with this criticism is his doubt whether the SM performed a similar function to that of the philosophical epitome.[462]

Basic to Carlston's questioning of Betz's implied similarity in function between the SM and the philosophical epitome is the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. This relationship prompts him to ask the

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[458]Stanton, *Gospel,* 307. The only other reference to the possibility of a difference in the origin and purpose of the SM, according to Stanton, is a suggestion in W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount,* (Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne: CUP, 1964) 315, "that one fruitful way of dealing with the *SM* is to regard it as the Christian answer to Jamnia. Using terms very loosely, the *SM* is a kind of Christian, mishnaic counterpart to the formulation taking place there [Jamnia]." However Stanton maintains (*Gospel,* 309) that Davies does not claim that the SM "contains theological emphases which are quite distinct from the rest of the gospel," which is part of Betz's thesis (Betz, *Essays,* 90, 92, 152-153.)

[459] Betz, *Essays,* 15, "The epitome is a composition carefully designed out of sayings of Jesus grouped according to thematic points of doctrine considered to be of primary importance."

[460]Stanton, Review. 522; *Gospel,* 311. For a view on the structure of the SM see U. Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Continental Commentary,* (trans.) W.C. Linss, (Minn.: Fortress Press, 1985) 211-213.

[461] Carlston, C.E. "Betz on the Sermon on the Mount: A Critique," *CBQ* 50 (1988) 47-57.

[462] Carlston, 50-51. Cf. Stanton, Review, passim.

question, "Is Jesus understood in this purported *epitome* in exactly the same *primus inter pares* way that a philosopher- or a good rabbinic teacher- was?"[463] He answers this question in the negative stating that during that period "every philosopher (and every rabbi) ...was understood by his disciples as to some degree correctible." In Carlston's view the SM does not suggest this but moves "in a different direction" and such a difference might be perceived in a statement made by Betz concerning the binding nature of Jesus' interpretation of Torah.[464] In the light of these considerations concerning its form and function Carlston comes to the conclusion that "the Sermon on the Mount differs substantially from its purported parallels."[465]

On the question of the presynoptic source of the SM Carlston draws on a statistical study which he and Dennis Norton carried out to assess the level of agreement between *Mt* and *Lk* in both the double and triple tradition in order to make a judgement about the nature of Q.[466] On the basis of the findings of this study Carlston calls into question the view expressed by Betz concerning the presynoptic source of the SM.[467]

Carlston's main criticism of Betz's literary analysis of the SM is that he excludes "any specific Matthean redactional activity,"[468] and that he never makes clear "the relationship between the document (the Sermon) and Matthew [the author]."[469] According to Carlston Betz assumes that the language and theology of the SM "differs fundamentally" from that which is found elsewhere in the gospel.[470]

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[463] Carlston, 50-51.

[464] Betz, *Essays,* 50. Commenting of *Mt.* 5:19, Betz states that "it is probable that v.19 seeks to establish the binding force of Jesus' interpretation of the Torah for teachers in the community of the SM." See Carlston 51, n. 21.

[465] Carlston, 51. While Carlston's observation raises an important theological point it does not detract from the value of Betz's hypothesis on the function of the SM that like epitomai, and, if Jacob Neusner's comment is correct, like the practice in rabbinical schools, "you should teach students the basic principles and the students will be able to apply them." Private letter from Neusner to Carlston, 5 Dec. 1986.

[466] Carlston, 48-49. Carlston refers to the article in *HTR* 64 (1971) entitled "Once More – Statistics and Q." The study produced two results: that "*their common non-Marcan source was written,*" and that the source was used by Matthew and Luke "*in approximately the same form.*"

[467] For Carlston's argument for his criticism of Betz's view see Carlston 49.

[468] Carlston, 53.

[469] Carlston, 55.

[470] Carlston, 55, writes, "[I]t can be shown that the connection between the Sermon and Matthew's own practices and concerns are very substantial...The obvious conclusion from literary analysis is that Matthew has not taken over a document essentially unchanged but has revised his materials in

The criticisms levelled against the hypothesis proposed by Betz in his *Essays* would seem to result from the innovation of his approach to a subject which has occupied the attention of many New Testament scholars and commentators and on which the literature is copious as can be seen in the bibliographies contained in Betz's commentary on *The Sermon on the Mount.*[471] An hypothesis which challenges the received traditions of such a well-known and extensively commented-upon section of the *Gospel of Matthew* is inevitably subject to criticism.[472] Generally Betz has been criticised because his hypothesis "either challenges or ignores almost all other current scholarly work on the SM."[473] His views have been subject to criticism on two particular counts: the presynoptic provenance of the SM[474] and the similarity of the SM to the philosophical epitome in function.[475]

The Response of Betz to the Criticisms of Stanton and Carlston.

In his commentary Betz makes little attempt to answer the criticism of Carlston and Stanton relating to the presynoptic source of the SM apart from stating the assumption that

> Both the SM and SP are works of presynoptic authors or redactors and not the evangelists Matthew and Luke. The sources that these presynoptic authors or redactors used consist of smaller sayings compositions (λόγοι) and, in the case of the SM, the larger units (e.g., SM/*Mt.* 6:1-18).[476]

He also reiterates the position which he adopted in the *Essays* by repeating that the theology of the SM is different from that in other sections of the Matthean gospel.

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the Sermon, just as elsewhere throughout the Gospel, so that both the Sermon and the Gospel as a whole bear his imprint." (56).

[471] Betz, *Sermon,* passim.

[472] For a detailed critique of Betz's rejection of the Matthean origin of the SM see Allison, "The Sermon on the Plain, Q 6:20- 49: Its Plan and Its Sources," in *The Jesus Tradition in Q,* 69-77. In a defence of the advocacy of a new hypothesis see R.Bauckham, *The Gospel for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences,*(Edinburgh:T&T. Clark, 1998) 12.

[473] Stanton, Review 521. Cf. Allison, *The Jesus Tradition in Q.* "To challenge a scholarly consensus is inevitably and understandably to encounter resistance from readers immersed in the consensus. Such readers are naturally disposed to think that a consensus which not only is so universally accepted but which has proved so fruitful in generating exciting and interesting work on the Gospels must be right." 67.

[474] Stanton, Review, 522. Cf. Stanton, "Origin and Purpose" 310; Carlston, "Betz," passim.

[475] Carlston, "Betz," 50. Cf. Stanton, Review, 522; Stanton, "Origin and Purpose" 310.

[476] Betz, *Sermon,* 45.

> The SM contains a consistent Jewish-Christian theology of a period earlier than Matthew, a theology remaining in the context of Judaism.[477]

Betz is more expansive in answering the criticisms about the lack of evidence concerning the epitome as a literary genre in Jewish-Christian circles in the period following the death of Jesus. He lists a number of Judaeo-Hellenistic literary works which can be compared to literary genres of Greek origin and which contain elements which might be described as epitomai, such as *Ben Sirach, Pseudo-Phocylides,* Philo's *Hypothetica,* and the *Wisdom of Solomon.* He also expresses the view that of the writings in the Qumran corpus of secular texts both the Manual of Discipline (1QS) and the Damascus Document (CD), which contain the rules of the community and its doctrines might be compared to epitomai.[478] While acknowledging the inconclusive nature of the evidence about their genre he considers that similarities to the epitome might be found in such rabbinic literature as the *Pirqe 'Abot* and the *'Abot de Rabbi Nathan.*[479] In the light of this survey of the literature Betz posits the idea that in the Hellenistic era "the literary genre of the epitome was transcultural."[480]

Birger Gerhardsson's observation on the use of notebooks as aide-memoire in the learning of the oral Torah and his supposition that the use of these reflected the influence of the Hellenistic philosophical and rhetorical

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[477] Betz, *Sermon,* 44.
[478] Betz, *Sermon,* 73.
[479] Betz, *Sermon,* 73.
[480] Betz, *Sermon,* 74. In his book *Memory and Manuscript,* originally published as Vol. 23 in *Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici,* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, & Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1961) and republished in 1998 jointly by Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, and Dove Booksellers, Livonia, Birger Gerhardsson comments on the traditions in the rabbinic schools of using notebooks (τό ὑπόμνημα) in which students took down notes to facilitate their repetition in the memorising of the oral Torah. The written notes would contain "key words, catchwords and summarizing memory texts." Gerhardsson points out that similar notebooks could be found in use in the rhetorical and philosophical schools in the Hellenised areas and indicates that their use was more widely in evidence in Palestine than in Babylon. "The influence from Hellenistic schools of rhetoric and philosophy was presumably stronger in Eres Yisrael than in Mesopotamia and it is known that pupils in Hellenistic schools made good use of their skills in writing, copying down their ὑπομνήματα, ὑποσημειώσεις, σχολαί, χρεῖαι, προγυμνάσματα." 161-162. See also L. Alexander, "Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels," in Bauckham, *Gospel,* on the use of the codex for note-taking by students in Hellenistic and Jewish schools, 71-111, passim. On the transcultural nature of the epitome in the cultures of the eastern Mediterranean, see P.S. Alexander on transcultural exchange in his article, "Hellenism and Hellenization" cited in chapter two of this study, p.45-46 nn. 172-174.

schools [481] might be seen as supporting Betz's hypothesis that the SM and SP are summaries of the teaching of Jesus, epitomai which were derived from the intention of Jesus' followers to make notes of his teachings. Betz himself does not make this claim but he does state that

> [t]he SM and the SP were originally conceived as oral texts. Their content was to be delivered orally, that is, spoken aloud, repeated and memorized.[482]

However he cites from the *Apocryphon of James* what might be an indication of the process adopted in those early communities for preserving the sayings of Jesus.

> Now... the twelve disciples [were] all sitting together, recalling what the Saviour had said to each one of them, whether in secret or openly, and putting it in books.[483]

Betz accepts the criticism made by Stanton that there "are substantial differences in form between the *Kyriai Doxai* and the SM," but he questions accuracy of the conclusions drawn from it.[484] In response to Stanton's first"criticism that the *Kyriai Doxai* represents a synopsis of the whole of Epicurus' philosophical system while the SM includes only the ethical teachings of Jesus, Betz states:

> In all likelihood the SM as well as the SP are designed to sum up the whole of Jesus' teaching, each in a different way for different audiences.[485]

He dismisses as speculation Stanton's claim that some of the material contained in the SM is not of such "primary importance" to justify "inclusion in a concise synopsis"[486] and he refutes his criticism of the lack

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[481] See previous note.
[482] Betz, *Sermon,* 83.
[483] *Apoc. Jas., 2.* cited in Betz, *Sermon,* 83 n.576. D. Kirchner, "The Apocryphon of James," (trans. E. Thomassen) in *New Testament Apocrypha,* (ed.) W. Schneemelcher, (trans) R. McL. Wilson, Vol.1, (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co./ Louisville: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1991) 291.
[484] Betz, *Sermon,* 73.
[485] Betz, Sermon, 73. In this assertion Betz reflects the views of Augustine, Erasmus, Luther and Calvin on this issue. (see above p. 100). He also refers to other material besides that concerning ethics contained in both the SM and SP. See also Betz, *Sermon,* 71 nn. 460, 461, 462 and 463
[486]Betz, *Sermon,* 73. See also Bailey, *Epicurus,* on the *Kyriai Doxai.* "The *ΚύριαιΔόξαι* are a series of brief aphorisms dealing with Epicurus' ethical theory, and in particular with the conditions requisite for the tranquil life of the Epicurean philosopher." (344). Note also Hermann Usener in *Epicurea* (Teubner, 1887) xliii ff. on the omission in the *KD* of important elements of

of careful composition in the *Kyriai Doxai* when compared with that of the SM.[487]

Criticism of Betz continued after the publication of his impressive commentary in 1995. Dale C. Allison writing in 1997 provides a detailed critique of Betz's rejection of the Matthean origin of the SM.[488] He draws attention to the arrangement of materials into triads which he recognises as a typical feature of the writings of Matthew.[489] He states that Betz also recognises this triadic pattern in the SM in the composition of 5:17-7:12, which deals with the interpretation of Torah (5:17-48), cultic practices (6:1-18) and the conduct of daily life (6:19-7:12).[490] Allison points to the use of this triadic pattern in other sections of Matthew's gospel.[491] He considers that the use of this pattern may be adduced as evidence that the author of Matthew was responsible for the SM.

Allison points to another indication that the SM and other sections of the gospel might have been written or redacted by the same author in "hortatory subsections ...which draw their life from eschatological expectation"[492] This pattern is first observed in the SM in 7:13-14 (the two ways), 7:15-23 (false prophets), and 7:24-27 (the two builders), but appears in other passages in the gospel, such as, the sending out of the twelve disciples, the parables of the kingdom and the eschatological discourse.[493] The examination carried out by Allison of the use of words and phrases

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Epicurean philosophy and on the inclusion of issues of secondary importance, cited in Bailey, 344. It is interesting to note that Stanton makes no reference to Usener's attack on *KD* or to Bailey's views. Neither does Betz use Bailey as a defence against the criticism of Stanton although he acknowledges the use of Bailey's translation in his *Essays,* 12, n.63.

[487] Betz, *Essays,* 13. See also his comment in *Sermon,* 73. "Like many such claims made at the time about texts having no recognizable structure, Usener was also wrong. There are, however, definite indications, which need a detailed investigation, that the *KD* does contain a literary structure. There is also evidence of heavy use of catchword connections and association of ideas."

[488] Allison, *Jesus Tradition,* 69-77.

[489] Allison, "The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount," *JBL,* 106 (1987), 423-445. See Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount,* (New York: Crossroad, 1999). See also C.H. Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount: Character Formation and Decision Making in Matthew 5-7,* (Columbia, S. Carolina: University of S. Carolina Press, 2004) 23.

[490] Betz, *Sermon,* 51-57.

[491] Allison, *Jesus Tradition,* 70-71. See *Mt.* 1-2; 8-9; 13:24-33, 44-50.

[492] Allison, *Jesus Tradition,* 70-71.

[493] *Mt.* 10:32-33, 34-39, 40-42; 13:44, 45-46, 47-50. 24:1-25:46. Cf. also *Mt.* 18:23-25 on the fate of those who fail to forgive their brothers.

found in the SM and in other sections of the gospel led him to the conclusion that "the SM is thoroughly Matthean."[494]

With regard to the claim, made by Betz, that the SM "contains a consistent Jewish-Christian theology of a period earlier than Matthew, a theology remaining in the context of Judaism,"[495] Allison maintains that it does not hold up to examination.[496] Throughout his discussion of Betz's theory of the presynoptic source of the SM, Allison is firmly of the view that the parallels which he has identified between the SM and the rest of the gospel are the work of the same author or redactor.[497]

Some Conclusions on Part One in respect of the scholarship relating to the SM and SP.

An hypothesis which challenges the received traditions concerning such a well-known and frequently commented-upon section of the Gospel of Matthew is inevitably subject to close scrutiny, as Allison's detailed critique indicates.[498] However the detailed examination of the SM and SP in Betz's wide ranging commentary[499] serves as a reminder of the centrality of the contents of those discourses in the discussion of the nature and content of ethical teaching contained in the philosophical literature of the Hellenistic culture of the eastern Mediterranean.[500] Betz is persuasive in his view that both the SM and SP are epitomai (summaries) of the teaching of Jesus setting out the way in which his earliest followers should conduct their lives.

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[494] Allison, *Jesus Tradition,* 72-74.
[495] Betz, *Sermon,* 44.
[496] Allison, *Jesus Tradition,* 75.
[497] Allison, *Jesus Tradition,* 77.
[498] See Allison's comment, "The SM is without question Matthew's premier discourse." 72. Cf. the comment of K. Syreeni in *The Making of the Sermon on the Mount: A Procedural Analysis of Matthew's Redactoral Activity,* pt.1, *Methodology and Compositional Analysis,*(Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia, 1987), "When Dibelius contended that Matthew in his Sermon gave 'the best example' of Jesus' teaching, or when Hoffmann considered this section 'the hidden centre' of the Gospel, or when practically oriented Christians have felt that Christianity means to live according to the Sermon on the Mount, they have recognized that Mt 5-7 is more than one discourse among others in Mt." 101, cited in Allison, *Jesus Tradition,* 72.
[499] Catchpole, D. "Review of Betz's *Sermon on the Mount",* in *JTS.*49 (1998), 219-225. "...this commentary is almost overwhelming in the monumental thoroughness of its exegesis and the magisterial command it demonstrates in respect of the whole range of the debates which currently rage around Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (SM) and Luke's Sermon on the Plain (SP) - methodological issues, the history of interpretation, the *Umwelt,* the internal evidence,..." (219-220).
[500] See the references to the views of P.S. Alexander on the "permeable" nature of "cultural exchange" in the eastern Mediterranean in chapter two of this study.

However he finds difficulty in relating his view that the SM is a presynoptic redaction of an earlier source to the generally accepted theory that the SP more nearly represents Q.[501] He seeks to overcome the difficulty which this presents with the suggestion that the SP is also based on a presynoptic Vorlage, but one which differed from that of Matthew as a result of earlier developments.[502]

In his essay on cosmogony and ethics Betz makes a very pertinent point about the relationship of those early Jewish-Christian groups living in Jerusalem in the middle of the first century to the historical Jesus.

> Chronologically, and in respect to its cultural and religious milieu, the community of the SM stood nearer to the historical Jesus than most other early Christian groups.[503]

Betz goes on to suggest that in any debate with "non Christian Judaism ...and with nascent Gentile Christianity ...the SM would represent a contribution to the subject, 'What did Jesus really teach?'"[504] However he warns against thinking that it would be possible to trace "every part of the SM to the historical Jesus." While a caveat of this nature is needful in dealing with such a subject it ought not to be seen as precluding any discussion about what was said by whom to whom and in what circumstances such sayings were made because of their impact.

For the purpose of this study of the way of life of the followers of Jesus Betz's comparison of the SM and SP with the philosophical epitomai found in Hellenistic-Roman literature allows for the possibility of examining that way of life in the light of the use of the term ἄσκησις in the writings of earlier and near contemporary philosophers. Such an examination is more likely to provide a differently nuanced view of the concept of asceticism and its practices than that which results from retrojecting the meaning which the term acquired in late antiquity as a consequence of the practices found among the desert fathers and in early monastic institutions.

In the following discussion an attempt will be made to examine to what extent it is possible to state that the teachings of Jesus in the SM and

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[501] Betz, *Sermon,* 42-44.
[502] Betz, *Sermon,* 44.
[503] Betz, "Cosmogony and Ethics in the Sermon on the Mount," in *Essays,* 89-123,
[504] Betz, *Essays,* 90.

the SP can be related to the use of concepts, such as ἄσκησις, ἐγκράτεια and μελέτη, which are found in Hellenistic writings.[505] It is necessary before discussing the role of the SM and SP in the formation of the followers of Jesus to indicate in what way the element of discipline, which the use of these terms imply, was inculcated in them in the course of their learning. The following section on learning as disciplined attentiveness will suggest that the concept of discipline, as understood in the ancient world, and the use of grammatical forms would have served this purpose.

Listening (τὸ ἀκούειν) as an Ascetic Discipline.

In his *Confessions* Augustine commented on Ambrose's custom of reading silently.

> When he was reading his eyes ran over the pages and his heart searched out the sense but his voice and tongue were silent...Often when we came in we saw him reading to himself, and never otherwise.[506]

That Augustine should comment thus is a clear indication that the method of reading used by Ambrose was not common. For in the ancient world the act of reading was for the most part an oral activity, and consequently listening to a teacher would have been the primary element in the instruction of a student. In both the Hellenistic and the Jewish traditions learning involved the hearing of great texts, - in the Greek-speaking tradition the works of Homer, and in the Jewish tradition the Hebrew Scriptures particularly the Pentateuch. Birger Gerhardsson points to a further significance about the nature of listening when he states that in the process of learning "most literary products were not intended to be heard with half one's mind or to be skimmed through, but were to be read and listened to, time and time again,

[505] In W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament,* 2nd edn, (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1979) reference is made to *Mk.* 13-11in the *Textus Receptus* where the reading μηδὲ μελετᾶτε is evidenced. Bauer translates it, "and do not rack your brains."

[506] Augustine, *Confessions,* 6:4. This translation appears in the Folio Society edition of the *Confessions* based on the translation by J.G. Pilkington first published in 1876 by T&T. Clark of Edinburgh. The Folio edition is edited by J. Lovell and printed in 1993 at the Bath Press, Avon.

with attention and reflection."[507] The essence of this form of instruction is repetition as the saying of Hillel indicates.

> The man who repeats his chapter one hundred times is not to be compared with the man who repeats it one hundred and one times.[508]

Gerhardsson is of the view that "the rabbinic pedagogic system" might be summed up in the following text from Mek. ad Ex. 21.1

> "R. Aqiba says: *And These Are the Ordinances,* etc. Why is this said? Since it says: 'Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them' (Lev. 1:2), I know only that he was to *tell them once.* How do we know that he was to *repeat* it to them a second, a third and a fourth time until they *learned* it? Scripture says: 'And teach thou it the children of Israel' (Deut. 31.19). This might mean that they need only *learn* it but not *repeat* it. But Scripture says: 'Put it in their mouths' *(ibid).* Still this might mean that they need only *repeat* it but need not *understand* it. Therefore it says: 'And these are the ordinances which thou shalt set before them.' Arrange them in proper order before them like a set table, just as it is said: 'Unto thee it was shown that thou mightest know' (*ibid* 4.35)."[509]

It is these aspects of repetition and understanding, which were implied in the act of listening in the ancient world, and to which Betz is referring when he writes that the verb, ἀκούω in its use in both the SM and the SP refers "not only to the physiological act of hearing but also to the wide range of notions describing the understanding of what one has heard."[510]

In Mark's gospel the failure of the disciples to move beyond the physiological act of hearing to an understanding of what had been heard prompted the criticism of Jesus.

> Do you not perceive and understand? Do you have hearts which have become hardened? Having eyes, do you not see and having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?[511]
>
> οὔπω νοεῖτε οὐδὲ συνίετε; πεπωρωμένην ἔχετε τὴν καρδίαν ὑμῶν; ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες οὐ βλέπετε και ὦτα ἔχοντες οὐκ

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[507] Gerhardsson, B. *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity, with Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity,* combined edition, (Grand Rapids / Livonia: Eerdmans / Dove Booksellers, 1998.) 164.
[508] b. Hag. 9b. cited in Gerhardsson, *Memory,* 134.
[509] Cited in Gerhardsson, *Memory,* 135.
[510] Betz, *Essays,* 4. See also the comments of Betz on the use of ἀκούω in *Lk.* (SP) 6:27, 47, 49; in *Sermon,* 592, 637, 639.
[511] *Mk.* 8:17b-18.

ἀκούετε; καὶ οὐ μνημονεύετε;

The outcome of listening, reflecting and understanding had always to be action of some kind. Hence Jesus characterised the good disciple as the one who listened to his words and carried them out.

> Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and carries them out, I shall show you to whom he is like.[512]
> πᾶς ὁ ἐρχόμενος πρός με καὶ ἀκούων μου τῶν λόγων καὶ ποιῶν αὐτοὺς, ὑποδείξω ὑμῖν τίνι ἐστὶν ὅμοιος·

But the person who only heard what Jesus said but did not advance beyond the physiological act and so did not put into practice what he/she had heard was described in the SM as foolish (μωρός).[513]

In writings of Hellenistic philosophers of that period there was a similar perception as to a meaning of the verb ἀκούω which extended beyond the physical act of hearing and that extension of meaning has a resonance in the use of the Greek verb μελετάω (to practise) and its cognates. Its use implies assiduous attention to every aspect of undertaking a task, that is, reflecting upon, and understanding the nature of the task as well as refining expertise in carrying it out. Its use summed up the disciplined approach expected of students of philosophy. Philo, the first century CE Judaeo-Hellenistic philosopher, stressed the importance of continuous study, practice and meditation (τό προπαίδευμα) in the acquisition of all the preliminary branches of education. He wrote of the man who, "having determined on perseveringly enduring labours in the cause of virtue, devotes himself to continued study, practising and meditating without intermission."[514] Epictetus, writing in the 2nd century CE, had much to say about the discipline of such an approach in his philosophical discourses.

> For who is the man in training? He is the man who practises not employing his desire, and practises employing his aversion only upon the things that are within the sphere of his moral purpose, yes, and practises particularly in the things that are difficult to master.

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[512] *Lk.* SP. 6:47.
[513] *Mt.* SM. 7:26.
[514] Philo, *De Congressu Quaerendae Eruditionis Gratia,* 24. *The Works of Philo.* (trans) C.D. Yonge, (USA: Hendrickson, 1993) 306.

τίς γάρ ἐστιν ἀσκητής; ὁ μελετῶν ὀρέξει μὲν μὴ χρῆσθαι, ἐκκλίσει δὲ πρὸς μόνα τὰ προαιρετικὰ χρῆσθαι, καὶ μελετῶν μᾶλλον ἐν τοῖς δυσκαταπονήτοις.[515]

It will be observed that in this passage Epictetus used both the verb μελετάω and the noun ἀσκητής to indicate a disciplined approach to the task in hand. However neither their use nor that of their cognates is found in the Synoptic Gospels.[516]

To maintain an hypothesis that the sayings contained in the instructions in both the SP and SM posits a disciplined approach to the formation of those early followers it is necessary to find other evidence in the texts. Evidence to be found in the iterative function of the present imperative of a Greek verb can convey a similar sense of painstaking and assiduous attention to the task in hand.[517] Therefore it seems feasible to suggest that, in those sayings in the SM and SP where present imperatives are used, it is possible that they convey meanings similar to those found in the use of μελετάω and ἄσκησις in the philosophical writings of the period. If this has any substance as an hypothesis then the saying of Jesus in *Mt.* (SM) 7:7:

αἰτεῖτε καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν, ζητεῖτε καὶ εὑρήσετε, κρούετε καὶ ἀνοιγήσεται ὑμιν.

would have conveyed to the early followers of Jesus a sense of having to apply themselves to anything which they undertook.

Keep on asking and it will be granted to you. Keep on seeking and you will find. Keep on knocking and a door will be opened for you. [518]

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[515] Epictetus, *Discourses,* 3. 12. 8, (trans.) W.A. Oldfather, Vol.2. LCL, 82-83.

[516] See. p.112. n.506.

[517] On the iterative use of the present imperative of the Greek verb see *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature,* (trans. & ed.) R.W. Funk, (Chicago / London: University of Chicago Press, 1961) 318 (3), 335-337.

[518] A comparison of two sayings of Jesus, one from the SM. 5:11 and the other from the SP. 6:23 might serve to indicate the difference between the present imperative and the aorist imperative of a Greek verb. The present imperatives in the SM - χαίρετε καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε- have an iterative force suggesting persistent activity and pointing to some eschatological event when they will have their reward. In the SP the aorist imperatives - χάρητε καὶ σκιρτήσατε- and the presence of the temporal phrase - ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ - refer to a particular point in time (Was it the time when the disciples were suffering persecution?) when their reward in heaven was secured.

A nuanced use of the Greek verb ἀκούω provided a shift of meaning beyond the physiological act of hearing and embraced reflection and comprehension of what was heard leading to the performance of an act (ποιέω). This shift in meaning and the recognition of the iterative force of present imperatives found in both the SM and the SP allow consideration of the sayings of Jesus as providing a disciplined trajectory of learning which his early disciples might follow. The absence of the use of terms such as μελετάω and ἄσκησις in the Synoptic Gospels does not necessarily imply that the concepts premised in their use were absent from the conduct, training and teaching of the early disciples of Jesus.

In the light of what has been discussed above it would be possible to translate the saying of Jesus - ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν - as "Keep on loving your enemies *howsoever that enmity may be manifested.*"

Two Part: The Sermons and the Formation of the Followers of Jesus.

The paradoxical nature of the makarisms contained in the discourses in both *Mt.* and *Lk.* sets the tone for what can be described as the element of the absurd to be found in many of the sayings of Jesus contained in these discourses.[519] That those who were poor, hungry and persecuted and in mourning should be considered worthy of honour would have been as absurd in the ancient world, as it would in western societies today. The counter cultural content of many of the subsequent sayings[520] and the exaggerated language contained in many of the metaphors[521] might be viewed as providing a decidedly ascetic tone to the discourses as well as to the implementation of the sayings within them.

The predicament of the early followers of Jesus described in the makarisms facilitated the task of delivering the teachings of Jesus to those who in contemporary Galilean/Jewish society considered themselves to be alienated from the beliefs and practices of their communities. But their

[519] The term 'absurd' is used with a similar meaning to that used of the sayings of clowns and, in ancient world, of cynic philosophers.
[520] See the Antitheses, *Mt.* SM. 5:21-48; the commandment to love one's enemies in *Mt.* SM. 5:44 / *Lk.* SP. 6:28; the criticism of cultic practices, *Mt.* SM.6:1-18
[521] See *Lk.* SP. 6:39; 41-42; 48-49.

marginalisation has to be seen as a result not only of their rejection by their communities but also in the demographic and economic changes taking place in the Galilee, and in the control exercised over their lives by a foreign power. Consequently the sayings attributed to Jesus in the SM and SP are seen to have been relevant to every aspect of their lives at that time and intended to provide coping strategies for overcoming every situation which might be encountered. All these strategies can be described as ascetic in execution that is, being carried out by those who have experienced in their alienation and marginalisation some lifestyle changes. These changes described as "becoming like little children" in the Gospels[522] and as "the shrinking of the self" in Bruce Malina's article[523] will be discussed in chapter five.

In the SP following the makarisms there is a warning to those who claimed "an honoured place" as they continued to enjoy in their lives what they still possessed. Such a warning does not appear in the SM, but rather there is an exhortation for the followers of Jesus to recognise their potential which is described as 'salt' and 'light'

> You are the salt of the earth....You are the light of the world.[524]

Both these metaphors are used in *Matthew* and *Luke* in relation to the early disciples of Jesus. The reference to salt in *Luke* follows a passage in which Jesus set out the conditions of discipleship as a challenge to his followers.[525]

Salt as a Metaphor.

In his book on the symbolism of salt in the ancient world James E. Latham writes about the properties of salt and about its significance as that

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[522] *Mt.* 18:1-5; *Mk.* 9:33-37; *Lk.* 9: 46-48.
[523] Malina, B. "Pain, Power and Personhood: Ascetic Behavior in the Ancient Mediterranean," in *Asceticism,* (edd.) Wimbush and Valantasis, 162-177.
[524] *Mt.* SM. 5:13-16.
[525] *Lk.* 14:34-35. The metaphor of light and its strategic placing appears in *Lk.* 8:16; 11:33. In the *GTh.* sayings 32 and 33 have the same pairing of the images of light and of a city built on a hill. (32) Jesus said, "A city built on a high hill and fortified cannot fall, nor can it be hidden." (33) Jesus said, "What you will hear in your ear, proclaim from your rooftops. After all, no one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, nor does one put it in a hidden place. Rather, one puts it on a lampstand so that all who come and go will see its light."

element which bonded people together as friends.[526] In texts relating to the culture of the Near East and the Mediterranean salt was seen as "the element of a meal which symbolises 'table fellowship.'"[527] It was this practice to which the writers of a letter to Artaxerxes were referring when they wrote complaining of the behaviour of the Jews who having rebuilt the city of Jerusalem refused to contribute tolls. The authors of this letter took this action because they had shared "the salt of the palace," and so did not think it "fitting to witness the king's dishonor."[528] Elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures we read of salt as a symbol of the covenant between Yahweh and the people of Israel.

> Every offering of yours which is a grain-offering shall be salted; you shall not fail to put the salt of your covenant with God in your grain-offering. Salt shall accompany all offerings.[529]

In the literature of both Greece and Rome there appear many examples of times when the unity of friends signified by salt was betrayed. Archilochus, the Greek iambic and elegiac poet writing in the seventh century BCE, seemed to have been a victim of such a betrayal.

> You have turned your back on a solemn oath, betraying both the salt and table.[530]

Aristotle recognising that the establishment of deep friendships necessitated a long period of contact wrote:

> [I]t is between good men that affection and friendship exist in their fullest and best form. Such friendships are of course rare, because such men are few. Moreover they require time and intimacy: as the saying goes, you cannot get to know a man until

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[526]Latham, J.E, *The Religious Symbolism of Salt,* (Théologie Historique 64), (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1982).
[527] Latham, *Salt, see* "Salt as meal" 50ff.
[528] *Ezra,* 4:7-16.
[529] *Lev.* 2:13.
[530] Archilochus in *Elegy and Iambus.* (trans.) J.M.Edmonds, Vol. 2. LCL, (London : Heinemann / New York : Putnam's, 1931) 148. This verse is quoted by Origen in *Contra Celsum* 2. 21. (ed.) P. Koetschau, Vol.1, (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899) 151.
τίς γὰρ οὐκ οἶδεν ὅτι πολλοὶ κοινωνήσαντες ἁλῶν καὶ τραπέζης ἐπεβούλευσαν τοῖς συνεστίοις; καὶ πλήρης ἐστὶν ἡ Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων ἱστορία τοιούτων παραδειγμάτων καὶ ὀνειδίζων γε ὁ Πάριος ἰαμβοποιὸς τὸν Λυκάβην μετα ἁλας καὶ τράπεζαν συνθήκαι ἀθετησαντα, φησι πρὸς αὐτόν, ὅρκον δ' ἐνοσφισθης μεγαν ἁλας τε και τράπεζαν.

> *you have consumed the proverbial amount of salt in his company.*[531] (my italics)

This sentiment of Aristotle was echoed by Cicero when he wrote that " Men must eat many a peck of salt together before the claims of friendship are fulfilled."[532]

Amongst the Judaeo-Hellenistic writers Philo also indicated his awareness of the significance of salt as a symbol of unity between people when he described the meeting of Joseph and his brothers in Egypt.

> Instead of being subjected to accusation they [the brothers] had been made partakers in the board and salt, which men have devised as symbols of true friendship.[533]

In the account of the Therapeutai, a mixed celibate community of Hellenised Jews living near the Mareotic Lake in Egypt, Philo contrasted their assemblies and their symposia with the banquets of those who under the influence of unmixed wine behaved "like wild dogs" in the presence of the symbols of unity.

> ...they attack those living with them and their friends and sometimes even their own kin, while having the salt and the dinner-table before them, at a time of peace performing actions inconsistent with peace, like the actions of those in gymnastic exercises, debasing the true coin of training as wretches rather than wrestlers. [534] (adapted)

Although the natural qualities of salt, seemingly essential to the existence of human life, are important as metaphors for the presence of the early followers of Jesus in the life of their communities, it might be argued that in keeping with its use in the ancient world as a symbol of friendship the prime significance of the analogy in the SM rests in its indication of their role as peacemakers in the world. In the ancient world salt friendship can be viewed as part of the reciprocity which resulted from what the fifth century CE

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[531] Aristotle, *E.N,* 8.3.8, (trans.) H. Rackham, Vol. 19. LCL.
σπανίας δ' εἰκὸς τὰς τοιαύτας εἶναι· ὀλίγοι γὰρ οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἔτι δὲ προσδεῖται χρόνου καὶ συνηθείας· κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν εἰδῆσαι ἀλλήλους πρὶν τοὺς λεγομένου ἅλας συναναλῶσαι.

[532] Cicero, *De Amicitia,*, (trans.) W.A. Falconer, Vol. 19. LCL, (London: Heinemann / New York: Putnam's, 1922) 67.

[533] Philo, *De Iosepho,* (trans.) F.H. Colson, Vol. 6. LCL, (London: Heinemann/ Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1935, (1950^2) 210.

[534] Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa,*. (trans.) F.H. Colson, Vol.9. LCL, (London: Heinemann/ Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1941) 41. Cf. Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 3, (trans.) F.H. Colson, Vol.7. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1937 (1950^2)) 96.

lexicographer, Hesychius, called "the ξένος relationship."[535] It is of interest to indicate that in none of the evidence examined relating to the symbolism of salt as a bond of friendship is there any indication of Jews sharing in this practice with non-Jews.

Of the three instances in the synoptic gospels in which salt is mentioned its use in the *Gospel of Mark* would appear to have come nearest to the concept of friendship and the peace which symbolised that relationship.

> For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good, but if salt is deprived of its saltiness with what will you season it? Have salt within yourselves, and be at peace with one another.[536]

The use of the metaphor in Mark's gospel with its conclusion of living in peace with one another prompts the question whether the metaphor in the SM points to the most radical of the sayings of Jesus in it and in the SP, namely, *love your enemies.*

The Metaphor of Light.

With the use of the metaphor of light to describe his followers as *the light of the world,* and with its emphasis on their place in the world, Jesus was reminding them of a role peculiar to the people of Israel as those who aspired to "being the intellectual leaders of the world." Betz, from whose commentary on the SM the previous quotation has been taken, goes on to write of the importance which such self-understanding on the part of the Jews as being "the light of the world" had in New Testament times. It was, he argues, "all the more remarkable" at a time when Judea was an occupied country.[537] The image of light recalls the words found in the prophecy of Isaiah:

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[535] The LSJ definition of ξένος includes "a guest friend," i.e. any citizen of a foreign state, with whom one has a treaty of hospitality for oneself and heirs, confirmed by mutual presents (ξένια) and an appeal to Ζεύς ξένιος. The OCD states that one's guest friend was someone from another country or state, for example, the relationship established between "Athenian and Spartan, or Thessalian and Persian." (612).

[536] *Mk.*9:49-50.
Πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἁλισθήσεται. καλὸν τὸ ἅλας· ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας ἄναλον γένηται, ἐν τίνι αὐτὸ ἀρτύσετε; ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἅλα καὶ εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις.

[537] Betz, *Sermon.* This "self-understanding as 'light of the world' does not make claims in the sense of political power; rather it aspires to enlightenment of the world in a religious or cultural

> I have given you as a covenant to the nation, a light to the Gentiles.[538]

But Levi in *T12P* prophesied that among the impieties of the people of Israel was their failure to be "the lights of Israel."

> ...and you should be the lights of Israel as the sun and moon. For what will all the nations do if you become darkened with impiety? You will bring a curse on our nation, because you want to destroy the light of the Law which was granted to you for the enlightenment of every man...[539]

Light like a city built on a hill was to be seen; hidden it had no purpose. The task of the disciples was to let the light shine before men "so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father in heaven."[540]

These metaphors of salt and light imply some degree of possible failure; in the case of salt it is the loss of its essential saltiness and in the case of the lamp it is the inexplicable behaviour of someone who having lit it obscures its light. But these are parables and, as has already been seen, there is a large element of the absurd in both the SM and the SP. Much has been written and said about both images. However it is perhaps sufficient to say that they imply recognition on the part of Jesus of weakness in some of his followers and foolishness in others, conditions which his teachings were aimed to eradicate.

This awareness of the possibility that some disciples might fail is probably responsible for the sayings of Jesus in the SP which formulate a course of instruction for his followers. The aims for their (re)formation are set out in *Lk.*6:39-45. It might be argued that the contents of both the SM and SP in toto relate to the formation of these disciples. However, a case might be made out for the specific concern with instruction in *Lk.* SP.6: 39-45 by examining some of the sayings in the *GTh.* which support a

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sense. This conviction of the Jews that they represent the enlightened avant-garde of the world was also behind the movements of Jewish apologetics and proselytism in the first century. In the SM, the metaphor is neither merely cultural (cf. *Isa.* 42:6; 49:6; 60:1-3) nor dualistic-cosmic (cf. Qumran) but clearly emphasizes ethics." 160-161.

[538] *Isa.* 42:7. εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν. Cf. *Lk.* 2:32, φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν καὶ δόξαν λαοῦ σου Ἰσραήλ.

[539] "The Testament of Levi," in *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* in *OTP,* 1. 793. See Paul's *Letter to the Romans,* 2:19-20 for a self-definition of the Jews, "a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness, a corrector of the foolish and a teacher of children."

[540] *Mt.* SM. 5:16.

connection between *Mt.* SM. 5: 13-15 with their reference to salt and light and *Lk.* SP. 6: 39ff. Saying 32 of the *GTh.* concerning "a city built on a high mountain which could not be hidden" was followed in saying 33 with "no one lights a lamp and places it under a basket, nor does one put it in a hidden place, but rather one puts it on a lamp stand so that everyone who comes and goes will see its light." Saying 34 then relates the words of Jesus, "If a blind person leads another blind person, they will both fall into a pit." If this suggestion is feasible, and can be applied in linking together SM. 5:13-15 and SP. 6: 39ff. then it would bring together what the teaching of Jesus said about the potential of the early disciples and about the formation necessary to realise it.

Betz in his comments on a hermeneutic of the sayings of Jesus in SP 6:39-45 suggests that they present the basic rules necessary for a student to achieve the goal of self-recognition. He describes them as rules for the learning community and categorises them in the development of the student as: (a) his/her relationship with the teacher (6:40), (b) the relationship between students (6:41-42) and (c) the student's relationship with his/her own self (43-45). But to those who taught there was a word of warning about the consequences of inadequate teaching. The saying in 6:39, with that characteristic element of the absurd which marked the sayings of Jesus, sums up the fate of the student as a result of the inadequacy of the teacher.

> Surely a blind man cannot lead a blind man, can he? Will not both of them fall into a pit? [541]

The metaphor found in this saying is one which had common currency in the philosophical and educational writings in the ancient world. Plato used the image in the *Republic.* In a discussion about the qualities necessary for those who were to be guardians he argued as follows:

> "Is this then...clear whether the guardian who is to keep watch over anything ought to be blind or keen of sight?" "Of course it is clear." "Do you think, then, that there is any appreciable

[541] *Lk.* SP. 6:39. μήτι δύναται τυφλὸς ὁδηγεῖν; οὐχὶ ἀμφότεροι εἰς Βόθυνον ἐμπεσοῦνται. In two places in Matthew's gospel (15:14 and 23:16, 17, 24) the Pharisees are described as "blind" guides or fools or hypocrites.

> difference between the blind and those who are veritably deprived of the knowledge of the veritable being of things?[542]

Cicero in the first century BCE wrote about those clients who, unable to settle their own affairs, sought the guidance of those who were in no position to assist them.

> C. Drusus, we are told, had his house continually filled by clients unable to see for themselves their way to settle their rights and ready to call in a blind man to guide them.[543]

In a treatise on the education of children, once attributed to Plutarch,[544] the writer who saw that the attainment of virtue necessitated the "concurrence of nature (φύσις), reason (λόγος) and habit or constant practice (ἔθος or ἄσκησις)," stated that,

> nature without learning is a blind thing, and learning apart from nature is an imperfect thing, and practice without both is an ineffective thing.[545]

Plutarch, in a work concerning the ill-educated leader, indicated some acquaintance with this metaphor of the blind man when he wrote about the inability of a person who was falling to sustain others.

> For one who is falling cannot hold others up, nor can one who is ignorant teach, nor the uncultivated impart culture, nor the disorderly make order, nor can he rule who is under no rule.[546]

Philo in a treatise on the virtues wrote that knowledge was true courage and in attacking those who thought of courage as anger or madness or a display of strength he criticised those who in their ignorance disregarded the wealth of nature.

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[542] Plato, *Republic,* 6:484c, (trans.) P. Shorey, Vol.2. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1935 (1963[5])).

[543] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations,* 5, (trans.) J.E. King, LCL, (London: Heinemann / New York: Putnam, 1927) 112. C. Drusi domum compleri a consultoribus solitum accepimus; cum quorum res esset sua ipsi non videbant, caecum adhibebant ducem.

[544] Albini, F. "The Family and the Formation of Character: Aspects of Plutarch's Thought," in *Plutarch and His Intellectual World,* (ed.) J. Mossman, (London: Duckworth in association with the Classical Press of Wales, 1997) 59.

[545] Plutarch, *De Liberis Educandis,* 2B, (trans.) F.C. Babbitt, Vol.1. LCL, (London: Heinemann/ New York:Putnam's,1927), 9,
ἡ μὲν γὰρ φύσις ἄνευ μαθήσεως τυφλόν ἡ δὲ μάθησις δίχα φύσεως ἐλλιπές ἡ δ'ἄσκησις χωρὶς ἀμφοῖν ἀτελές.

[546]Plutarch, *Προς Ἡγεμονα Ἀπαιδευτον,* (trans.) H.N. Fowler, Vol.10. LCL, (London:Heinemann/ Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1936) 57.

> But some taking no account of the wealth of nature pursue the wealth of vain opinions. They choose to lean on one who lacks rather than on one who has the gift of sight, and with this defective guidance to the steps must of necessity fall.[547]

It is assumed that the questions in *Lk.* SP. 6:39 were addressed to those followers of Jesus who were to be teachers. But their (re)formation had to be secured before they gave instruction to others. Hence there was the emphasis on the importance of clear-sightedness on the part of those who taught so that a situation would not arise which might be compared to "the blind leading the blind."[548] Clear vision was essential for the practice of education which is found in this section of the SP. As Betz states it was not about the "development of innate faculties of mind" as in the classical tradition of Greece and Rome, but about the "prevention of ignorance, both intellectual and moral."[549] The rules in SP. 6:40-45 might then be viewed as the progression from "blindness to enlightenment."

Verse 40 provides a picture of the educational stages through which a disciple must pass, firstly as a student under instruction (μαθητής), at which point he/she was not better than the teacher, then as a graduate (Betz uses the Greek word κατηρτισμένος[550]), when the training had been completed, and finally as a teacher (διδάσκαλος) entrusted with the training of disciples.

A student's need to develop a sense of self-criticism is exemplified in vv 41-42 in the metaphor about the relationship between two students (brothers), one of whom had a speck of dust in his eye, and the other had a log (plank) in his eye. The attempt of the latter to remove the dust from the eye of the former was frustrated by his inability to recognise his own

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[547] Philo, *De Virtutibus,* (trans) F.H. Colson, Vol.8. LCL, (London: Heinemann/ Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1939) 118.

[548] Betz, *Sermon,* 621, compares the need for this clear-sightedness with what happened in the miracle accounts concerned with the healing of blind people in the gospels (*Mk.* 10:46-52; *Jn.* 9:1-41;10-21; 11-37; 12:40.

[549] Betz, *Sermon,* 621. See also "Excursus: Rules for Teachers and Students," (621-622), which illustrate the rules which existed within the classical tradition, the early Christian tradition and Rabbinic Judaism.

[550] κατηρτισμένος is the perfect participle passive of the verb καταρτίζω - to restore, to put in order. See Betz, *Sermon,* 624 n.304 for synonyms of καταρτίζω. The use of this verb with its connotation of restoring, putting in order, lends substance to Betz's theory concerning the preventive role of education in the SP. All education is remedial.

disability. His failure was summed up in the term "hypocrite," but the word has currency in this instance only in the absurdity of the situation, the image coming from playacting. Its importance in the metaphor rests in the recognition of one's own shortcomings and of the need to remove them before it is possible to help others to correct theirs. The correction of another's shortcoming can only be achieved when one has a clear perspective (the Greek term is διαβλέπω-to see clearly), after having amended one's own limitation.[551] On the value of mutual recognition for self-criticism within communities Richard Valantasis makes the very important observation.

> Ethical formation ...does not revolve about a system of measuring up to an externally imposed ideal equally applied to all members of the community, but rather it revolves about individuals working on themselves among others who are also working on their problems in a mutual self-formation and corporate transformation.[552]

Being able to correct oneself by removing the obstacles which stand in the way of helping a brother is part of the discipline necessary for achieving a knowledge of one's self.

In order to illustrate the way in which such self-knowledge was gained Jesus based his teaching on an assumption that people and plants manifested certain common attributes.[553] The teaching proceeded with the use of a series of proverbs.

> No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit. (SP. 6:43).
>
> Every tree is known by its own fruit. (44a.).
>
> Figs are not gathered from thorns nor grapes picked from brambles. (44b.).

What was learned from the plant world in the natural order was then applied to humans.

> The good human being out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces

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[551] Betz, *Sermon,* 627.
[552] Valantasis, R, *The Gospel of Thomas,* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) 100.
[553] Betz, *Sermon,* p.628 n.342. "This assumption is fundamental to much of ancient moral and ethical thought, according to which animals play the more important role, while plants are regarded as a lower form of life." See also **Betz,** *Essays,* 89-123.

> evil. For it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks. (45).

Betz sees in this verse an attempt to reinterpret the Greek concept of the good man in accordance with the theology of the SP. It "constitutes an attempt to formulate a Christian answer to the question, 'Who is a good man?'" In support of this reinterpretation he points to the use in the Greek text of the term ἄνθρωπος (a human being) instead of the more usual word ἀνήρ (a man), instancing Socrates' response to the question, "Who is a good man?"; the answer to the question should be sought not in the idea of manliness (ἀνδρεία) but in the concept of humanity.[554] According to Socrates and Plato the quality which marked out the human being depended on "the nature of the soul." In the SP it was the condition of the heart which determined the quality of the human being.

> The good person is thus good because his or her heart is a treasure of goodness...which "produces"...the goodness characteristic of the person. Goodness ...can neither be achieved nor imposed on one; plainly and simply goodness is the external manifestation of the internal quality of the heart.[555]

Betz goes on to suggest that the language in SP. 6:45 is "the language of biblical tradition in which the innermost life of the human being concerns the mortal heart rather than the immortal soul."[556] Commenting on what this saying implies about human behaviour he writes:

> The most important evidence of a person's constitution, - one's 'goodness' or 'badness' – rests on one's words; not deeds but words reveal one's true nature.

He sees SP. 6:45 as presenting "a theory concerning human language and its relation to the individual. Every individual has a distinctive language, the character and quality of which are determined by the heart, the centre of human identity."

In the *GTh.* we find similar thoughts contained in saying 45, although they are expressed in negative terms.

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[554] Betz, *Sermon,* 633.
[555] Betz, *Sermon,* 633-634.
[556] Betz, *Sermon,* 634.

> Jesus said, "Grapes are not harvested from thorn trees, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they yield no fruit. Good persons produce good from what they've stored up; bad persons produce evil from the wickedness they've stored up in their hearts, and say evil things. For from the overflow of the heart they produce evil."[557]

Valantasis in his commentary on this saying states that there is a link between "the exterior activity and the interior disposition of a person." Like Betz, he remarks that the place in which "the storing" takes place is the heart and that "the fruit is speaking evil things."

For Betz SP. 6:43-45 epitomise what it is to be a "good human being," which should be the aim of the disciple. In this he maintains that it is necessary to evaluate the language which one uses because "careful attention to language is related to self-inspection and self-knowledge."[558]

To view SP. 6:39-45 as a disciplined approach to the (re)formation of the followers of Jesus allows for an interpretation of these verses in the light of the use of the term ἄσκησις in pre-first century CE classical Greek, Hellenistic and Judaeo-Hellenistic literature and philosophy. In this way it might be possible to construe them as describing an ascetic practice because involved in ἄσκησις there was a disciplinary approach to the undertaking, both physically and mentally, of a task which entailed training. In the course of the (re)formation of the followers of Jesus, SP. 6:39-45 suggested precepts which led to:

1. a discipline for those who taught so that they might be adequate guides;
2. a discipline for students in order that they might achieve their potential;
3. the discipline of self-criticism and self-correction before attempting to rectify another's short-comings.

It was in the practice of these disciplines that the disciple grew in knowledge of self, the basis of which was to know what was good and what was bad. The concluding verses of the SP, 6:46-49, and those of the SM, 7:21-28 deal with what it was to be a good or bad disciple.

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[557] Valantasis, *Gospel,* 121-122. For a view concerning the primacy of language, which differs from that of Betz and Valantasis, see I*Eph.* 14;2. "'The tree is known by its fruit'": so they who profess to be of Christ shall be seen by their deeds.

[558] Betz, *Sermon,* 635.

The words of Jesus in SP. 6:46 are about the inadequacy of the repetition of the word "lord" as a term of devotion when unaccompanied by action.

> Why do you call me "Lord, Lord" and do not do what I say?[559]

This saying of Jesus is amplified in the SM where it is stated that it is those who did "the will of my father in heaven" who would enter the kingdom of heaven, and not those who were able to say:

> Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name did we not cast out demons, and in your name did many deeds of power?

To these the response was, "I never knew you. Away with you, workers of iniquity."[560] The consistency, displayed in both these sayings, between what is learnt and what is done in one's daily life was a central tenet in the concept of ancient educational practice (paideia). That this consistency might not exhibit itself in the case of all disciples was the basis of the two parables with which the discourses were concluded.

The comparison of these sayings with those above stating that it was what a person said rather than what he/she did which revealed the nature of that person[561] would suggest that they were at odds with one another and prompts the question as to whom they were addressed. Betz considers that these harsh words in SP 6:46 were addressed to immature students.[562] The

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[559] *Lk.* SP. 6:46. τί δέ με καλεῖτε κύριε κύριε, καὶ οὐ ποιεῖτε ἃ λέγω;

[560] *Mt.* SM. 7: 22-23.
κύριε, κύριε, οὐ τῷ σῷ ὀνόματι ἐπροφητεύσαμεν, καὶ τῷ σῷ ὀνόματι δαιμόνια ἐξεβάλομεν, καὶ τῷ σῷ ὀνόματι δυνάμεις πολλὰς ἐποιήσαμεν; καὶ τότε ὁμολογήσω αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὐδέποτε ἔγνων ὑμᾶς. *ἀποχωρεῖτε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν.*

[561] *Lk.* SP 6:45; *Mt.* SM 6:20-21.

[562] Betz, *Sermon,* 636-637. "The teacher observes with amusement and indignation that this display of subservience is accompanied by the failure of the same students to act on what he tells them to do,...Any discrepancy between an external display of loyalty and an internal disloyalty through ignorance of or contempt for the curriculum destroys any meaningful concept of discipleship and renders it farcical. The rhetorical question of vs 46 thus discloses two essential facts: (1) the description is typical of the behavior of immature students; (2) such behavior is actually, though regrettably, found among the disciples of Jesus ...The question reveals that the disciples envisioned in the SP are still in a state of general, not to mention specifically Christian, immaturity, and that the road toward 'graduation' is lengthy." In a footnote on 637 Betz refers to the version of vs 45 found in *P. Egerton* 2, frg. 2 recto (cited in Aland, *Synopsis* 111, lines 26-27.) The translation into English is from *NTA.* 1. 99. "*But Jesus saw through* their <in)tention, *became* <*angry*> and said to them: *'Why call ye me* with yo<ur mou>th Master and *yet* <*do*> *not what I say?'*"

following saying, SP 6:47 spelled out the steps which were necessary in the progress from immaturity to "graduation."

> Everyone who comes to me, listens to my words and carries them out, I shall show you to what he is likened.[563]

That person and his/her opposite become the subjects of the two parables which conclude both the SP and SM.

The good disciple was likened to the man who in building a house took care to construct deeply dug foundations into the rock so that the house withstood whatever flood and tempest hurled against it.[564] By contrast the disciple who heard what Jesus said but did not carry it out was likened to the man who built his house on the ground without foundations so that in the time of flood it collapsed.

In the SM the parables are substantially the same although the emphasis is placed on the shrewdness of the man, who built on rock, and on the foolishness of the man who built on sand.[565] In the SP it is the reaction of the builders to the situation in which they found themselves which is emphasised.

To use the metaphor of digging deep foundations in the formation of a disciple speaks clearly of the purpose and goals of education as envisaged in the discourses. While pointing on the one hand to the preventative nature of

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[563] Betz sees the three steps in this saying – the initiative exercised by the disciple, his/her listening to, and acting upon, the words of Jesus - as the mark of a good disciple. *Sermon,* 637.

[564] Cf. *ARN* 24. "Rabbi Elisha ben Abuyah says 'One in whom there are good works, who has studied much Torah, to what may he be likened? To a person who builds first with stones and afterward with bricks: even when much water comes and collects by their side, it does not dislodge them. But the one in whom there are no good works, though he studied Torah, to what may he be likened? To a person who builds first with bricks, and afterward with stones: even when a little water gathers, it overthrows them immediately.'" Cf. Seneca, *Epistle* 52, "Suppose that two buildings have been erected, unlike as to their foundations, but equal in height and grandeur. One is built on faultless ground, and the process of erection goes right ahead. In the other case, the foundations have exhausted the building materials, for they have sunk into soft and shifting ground and much labour has been wasted in reaching solid rock." On the use of the verb σκάπτω in SP 6:48 see *Lk.* 16: 3 in which the "unjust steward" complained that he was not strong enough to dig. P.W. Van der Horst in a comment on line 158 in Pseudo-Phocylides in *OTP,* Vol.1 578, states "that digging was regarded as the hardest kind of work, mostly reserved for slaves and the uneducated." On the use of the verb, βαθύνω, to give the sense of the depth of the foundations see Philo, *De posteritate Caini,* (trans.) F.H. Colson & G.H. Whitaker, Vol. 2. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1929 (1950[2])) 396-397. ὁ δὲ τῆς διανοίας ὀφθαλμὸς εἴσω προελθὼν καὶ βαθύνας τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς σπλάγχνοις ἐγκεκρυμμένα κατεῖδει. The eye of the mind penetrates within, and going deeply down surveys all the interior and hidden things.

[565] In the SM it is the difference between ὁ ἀνήρ φρόνιμος and ὁ ἀνήρ μῶρος. It is interesting to note that in the SP the term used is ὁ ἄνθρωπος.

education it is also a strong assertion of the success of a disciple who was thoroughly prepared.[566] It speaks of discipline which, it has been demonstrated, has been at the basis of the meaning of ἀσκέω and its cognates, of which ἄσκησις is one, since the time of Homer.

The careful preparation and hard work of the man who built his house on the solid foundation of rock represent the approach which is conveyed in the use of the term ἄσκησις in early Greek literature where it implied a disciplined approach to the task being undertaken.[567] The (re)formation of the followers of Jesus, seen in the SP and SM, continued in that tradition.

The Ethical Conduct which the Followers of Jesus were taught to follow and to teach.

In the SP the code of conduct which the disciples were called to follow and teach is succinctly formulated in 6:27-38. In it prominence is given to the relationship which should exist between the disciples and those who lived in the world outside their new communities.[568] In a discussion of this section (SP 6:27-38) it is necessary to keep in mind the implication of the metaphors of salt and light used in SM 5: 13-14 in relation to the conduct of the disciples. These metaphors were about the role of those disciples in the world outside their new communities. They carried with it a warning about the possibility of failure if the salt were to lose its saltiness and the transmission of the light were to be obliterated by foolish actions on the part of the disciples.

The conduct which was expected from the disciples and the message which they were to teach are summed up in the command, "Love your enemies." [569] Betz describes this saying of Jesus as "the fundamental ethical doctrine of Christian behavior."[570] Indicative of the weight given to this

[566] Betz, *Sermon,* 637, "The idea that education assures success in discipleship underlies the whole of the SP." In the SM that success can be summed up in the description of the man who built his house on rock as φρόνιμος.
[567] See chapter one above on the use of term ἄσκησις in Greek, and in the same chapter, p.43, for K. Ware on discipline.
[568] See Betz, *Sermon,* 591, on the division of this section of the SP, 6:27- 49.
[569] SP 6:27, ἀλλὰ ὑμῖν λέγω τοῖς ἀκούουσιν· ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν.
[570] Betz, *Sermon,* 592. See Betz on the authoritative tradition of the saying, "The SP regards this doctrine as authoritative tradition and thus as well known to the Christian community. Hence the

command are the words used to introduce this saying. "But I say to you who are listening."[571]

reason for citing it here [6:20] is not to introduce it for the first time but to interpret it appropriately." 592.

[571] See above pp.120-124 on listening as an ascetic discipline.

Chapter Five

The Marginalised in Galilean Society at the time of Jesus.

Introduction.

The evidence considered in chapter two suggests that Galilee/Palestine was not immune from influences emanating from the spread of Hellenism (both Greek and Roman) in the eastern Mediterranean and that that transmission of cultural and religious ideas was facilitated by the existence of a set of cultures, the permeability of whose borders allowed for a constant interchange of ideas and practices.[572] The increase in urbanisation was one of the phenomena which had an effect on the lives of the inhabitants of the region.

Jesus and his followers lived at that period in the history of the Galilee when its inhabitants were undergoing changes in their life style. The growth of cities such as Sepphoris and Tiberias had been responsible for changes in agricultural practices which led to the dispossession of small farmers engaged in subsistence farming. The marginalisation of those small farmers resulted from economic changes; in the gospel accounts we are presented with other reasons for the marginalisation of people. In them we are made aware of people who had been marginalised because of their decision to become followers of Jesus. As Jesus was subject to the same condition he was able to bring to his ministry a perception of what it was to be marginalised in one's own environment. The gospel accounts record his separation from family,[573] from community[574] and from the religious culture of his day.[575] His teaching springing from his own experience was to provide his followers with a strategy to meet the conditions in which they

[572] See reference to P.S. Alexander's article "Hellenism," in chapter two pp. 48-49. Alexander writes that the eastern Mediterranean had been over a period of nearly a thousand years subject to unification by Persians, Greeks and Romans; as a result "we should think of a broadly uniform culture pervading the whole region, within which various groups adapted the dominant cultural patterns and structures in order to create subcultures and establish ethnic identities." (70).
[573] *Mk.* 2:21; *Mt.* 12:46-50.
[574] *Mk.* 6:1-6; *Lk.* 4:29-30; *Mt.* 13:53-58.
[575] *Mk.* 2:5-7, 18-20; 7;1-15; 8:15.

would find themselves. It involved a system whereby they would be included in communities not based on kinship but on a new kind of ethic.[576]

From the evidence which we have in the gospels and in the writings of Josephus it is possible to discern broadly two groups of people who might be described as marginalised: those who suffered as a result of economic and social oppression (for example, subsistence farmers), and those who were described as the disciples of Jesus who, like Jesus, chose to follow a particular way of living. This latter group can be said to have given up voluntarily a settled life style in response to the "call" of Jesus to follow him.

Since in many descriptions of an ascetic life style there is an assumption that it results from a decision which is freely taken, it is intended in this chapter to consider marginalisation as a contribution to an ascetic way of life for those who voluntarily gave up their former life style in response to the call of Jesus. (Such a response has to be differentiated from that of those people whom Jesus invited to come to him to alleviate their anxieties resulting from illness and/or economic oppression.[577]) In order to develop the discussion on marginalisation and its consequences for the early followers of Jesus it is proposed:

- To consider what is implied in the use of the terms *involuntary* and *voluntary marginality* in the case of Galileans in the first century CE,
- To look at the implications for the early followers of Jesus of their decision to abandon their families in the light of the honour and shame culture of the eastern Mediterranean in the Hellenic-Roman period,
- To examine what Jesus said about family relationships which led to the marginalisation and persecution of his followers, and to consider the deviant nature of his sayings and the subsequent actions of his followers in the first century CE,
- To assess the evidence of marginalisation and persecution which is contained in the sayings gospel Q.

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[576] *Mt.* 12:48b-50.

[577] Theissen, G. *Social Reality and the Early Christians,* 64. Theissen neatly expresses the difference between the call of Jesus to his would-be disciples in *Mk.* 1:17 and his invitation in *Mt.* 11:28 by reference to the Greek in *Mark* δεῦτε οπίσω μου, in *Matthew* δεῦτε πρός με.

Involuntary and Voluntary Marginality

In an article on "Matthew and Marginality" Dennis Duling uses the phrases *involuntary marginality* and *voluntary marginality*[578] to describe the situations of those who for various reasons, some through no fault of their own and others on their own volition, were excluded from participation in their expected role in their communities, This exclusion has been described by Gino Germani as lack of participation in the communal life of a society, which he sees as the *normative scheme* which delineates:

> the set of values and norms which define the categories (status), the legitimate, expected, or tolerated areas of participation and the assignment mechanisms of individuals to each category.[579]

In first century Galilee it is possible to detect a change in the *normative scheme* as a result of the urbanisation which took place during the rule of Herod Antipas.

In summary the rebuilding of Sepphoris after the riots which marked the death of Herod in 4BCE and the establishment of the new city of Tiberias c.17-20 CE led to a change in the relationship of the small freehold farmer and the land. Jonathan Reed comments on the consequences of this change.

> The impact of so many people in Sepphoris and Tiberias on the entire Galilee, especially when they are viewed as consumer cities, must be taken seriously. After their founding as major centers by Herod Antipas, the agricultural practices of the Galilee were not only completely realigned, but were also stretched. Lower Galilee could no longer be considered a series of villages, hamlets and farms. The entire agricultural focus turned to feeding Sepphoris and Tiberias;...now entrepreneurial farmers and landowners, who grew a single cash crop on a larger scale for the granaries at Sepphoris, became necessary.[580]

The changes from subsistence farming on smallholdings to the cultivation of crops on a large scale led to the dispossession of the small farmer with the

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[578] Duling, D. "Matthew and Marginality," *SBL Seminar Papers* 1993, 642-671, (644).
[579] Germani, G. *Marginality,* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1979) 50, cited in Duling, "Matthew" 645.
[580] Reed, J.L, "Population Numbers, Urbanization, and Economics: Galilean Archaeology and the Historical Jesus," *SBLASP* (1994) 203-219 (214-215).

consequent loss of status. Thus his relationship with his family and with members of his community changed.

> The new relationship replaces the ideal of economic self-sufficiency with the ideal of maximum productivity. At the same time the relationship of reciprocity that governed the family circle gave way to the relationship of redistribution that placed the control of productivity in the hands of a few through the market and tax system.[581]

From the writings of Josephus we learn of the consequences in the rest of Palestine of similar changes which manifested themselves in the resistance of disaffected members of communities against those who were in authority.[582] Further a reading of many of the stories and sayings of Jesus provides glimpses of events which affected the lives of people living in the Galilee; farmers fell into debt and, when they failed to pay their debt, were dispossessed of their land, lost their status in the community and were reduced to being hired servants or slaves, while the big landowners grew ever richer and the hostility shown by the poor toward the rich increased.[583]

If the reading of the beatitudes in Luke's gospel, to be considered later, is credible, then it can be argued that the followers of Jesus experienced a similar marginalisation to those who were dispossessed of their smallholdings. For the most part they belonged to the same economic group.[584] But the circumstances which led to their situation were different in that it resulted from a deliberate choice on their part. The decision which they took was summed up in the words of Peter. "Look, we have left everything and followed you." But the full implication of their decision can be gauged in Jesus' response.

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[581] Guijarro, S. "The Family in First-Century Galilee," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor,* (ed.) H. Moxnes, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) 42-65, 62.

[582] For a summary of the events related to the resistance of the Jews against the Romans and the Herodians see Theissen, *Social Reality,* 77-78. Theissen also comments on the fact that Josephus provides no record of disturbances between 10 CE and 35 CE. He suggests that that period was one of peace. Tacitus in *Histories,* 5:9 writes of the situation in Palestine during the reign of Tiberius (14 CE-37 CE),"sub Tiberio quies". On the situation in the Galilee during the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas see S Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian,* 68 and 191.

[583] *Mt.* 18:23-34; 20:1-16; *Mk.* 12:1-9; *Lk.* 12:17-21; *GTh.* 65; 57; 98.

[584] Stegemann, E.W.& W. *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century,* (trans.) O.C. Dean, (Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1999) 71, 135, 232.

> Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age – houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life.[585]

The decision taken by those followers of Jesus was freely chosen; hence their marginalisation can be described as voluntary. However, as Duling asserts, they would "eventually share in some of the same conditions as involuntary marginals."[586]

The Implication of Marginality for the Followers of Jesus.

Implied in the marginalisation of the followers of Jesus was a loss of status which can be equated with that suffered by the dispossessed farmers of the Galilee. The evidence presented in the synoptic gospels is that those followers did not originally belong to the destitute poor (οἱ πτωχοὶ), although destitution appeared to become their fate. They were men of some substance who worked for a living (οἱ πένητες). This evidence can be found in the account of the call of some of those early disciples. Simon and Andrew owned the nets with which they were able to ply their trade, while it is recorded that James and John were working with their father who owned the boat and who hired men.[587] Matthew /Levi, a tax collector, gave up his job to follow Jesus.[588] The emphasis on what those disciples left, in the case of Simon and Andrew the tools of their trade, in the case of James and John the boat and their father, and in the case of Matthew /Levi everything, points to the significance of the totality of the change in the lives of those men and of the loss of status which accompanied their actions.

Honour and Shame in Ancient Mediterranean Society.

In order to appreciate fully the reason for the marginalisation of the followers of Jesus in Galilean society it is necessary to consider the concepts

[585] *Mk.* 10: 28-30. Both the gospel of Luke (18:29-30) and that of Matthew (19:27-29) contain this Markan passage in redacted forms but both retain the serious consequences of the decision made by those early disciples.
[586] Duling, "Matthew and Marginality," 648.
[587] *Mk.* 1:16-20. Cf. *Mt.* 4:18-20; *Lk.* 5:1-11.
[588] *Mt.* 9:9. Cf. the call of Levi in *Mk.* 2:14; *Lk.* 5: 5:27.

of behaviour which were to be found in the code of honour and shame in the ancient world and which conditioned the responses of members of eastern Mediterranean society to their families and communities. In the world-view of that society the family was "the depository of 'honour'" and "the channel through which" a person "was inserted into social life."[589]

Bruce Malina describes honour in ancient Mediterranean society as "the value of a person in his or her own eyes (that is, one's own claim to worth) plus that person's value in the eyes of his or her social group."[590] Honouring a person would have been the result of an examination of his/her actions in the light of particular societal norms. To honour a person was the acknowledgement on the part of society of the rightness of that person's action in relation to those norms. Dishonour resulted from the failure to gain that approbation if the action and the person were deemed objects of ridicule and contempt.

The honour of a person was ultimately the honour which was vested in the family in that the name and honour of the family gave purpose to the lives of its members. A family was seen to possess a collective honour in which every member shared. Consequently the dishonourable behaviour of one member reflected upon the honour of all.[591] Within the family the responsibility for the honour of all members was embodied in the head of the family, the patriarch or father. It was he who defined the allegiance of members. Malina writes that

> These sacred persons or sacred post-holders themselves symbol both sacred honor - they have precedence relative to others in the group – and ethical honor – they are perceived to be implicitly good and noble.[592]

Thus the patriarch was not to be dishonoured within the family.[593] Such dishonouring would be considered a violation of the honour code and the consequence of such behaviour was rejection from the family and

[589] Guijarro, S. "The Family." 62.
[590] Malina, B. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology,* (Atlanta, CA: John Knox / London: SCM, 1983) 27. Cf. J. Pitt Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," in *Honour and Shame: Values of Mediterranean Society,* (ed.) J.G. Peristiany, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1965) 21.
[591] Pitt Rivers, J. "Honour and Status." 35.
[592] Malina, *New Testament,* 42.
[593] Malina, *New Testament,* 42.

condemnation to destitution and beggary. The relevance of the position and the prestige of the patriarch in relation to the action of the early disciples will be discussed in this chapter in the context of the anti-familial sayings of Jesus.

What did Jesus say about family relationships which led to the marginalistion and persecution of his early disciples?

> "To be a disciple includes imitation of the pattern of Jesus to separate from family."[594] (Osiek)

It is apparent from the gospels that Jesus had an uneasy relationship with his family, a relationship which probably resulted not only from their failure to understand the nature of his work and ministry but also from his lack of regard for the honour/shame code. Mark related how his family, concerned about his sanity, attempted to take charge of him "for people were saying, 'He has gone out of his mind.'"[595] Later when told that his mother and brother had come to see him he appeared to dismiss them, saying,

> "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."[596]

Jesus warned those who adopted his way of life of the consequences of their action when, in response to Peter's claim that the disciples had given up everything, he said that their reward would be accompanied by persecutions.[597] Those persecutions arose because the breach with family life, which was witnessed in the behaviour of Jesus towards his family and which was being asked of his followers, was viewed as an act of deviance from the norms and mores common in the world-view of the eastern Mediterranean in the Hellenistic-Roman period.[598] Since deviance from the accepted norms and practices contributed to the marginalisation of the early

[594] Osiek, C. "The Family in Early Christianity," in *CBQ.* 58 (1996) 6.
[595] *Mk.* 3:21.
[596] *Mk.* 3:33-35.
[597] *Mk.* 10:30.
[598] Difficulties occur in any attempt to use the gospels to describe the life style of the early followers of Jesus because they might well be descriptions of a later period, possibly post 70 CE. However, the Stegemanns write in *The Jesus Movement* that it is difficult not "to take into account a certain 'career of deviance' of the followers of Jesus before 70 CE in the land of Israel." (190).

followers of Jesus it is necessary for the purpose of this study to indicate in what ways the term "deviance" will be used in relation to their behaviour in their ambient communities.

In an article on deviance and apostasy John Barclay considers the phenomenon of deviance in early Christianity. He adopts as his "angle of inquiry" the "interactionist" or "social reaction" perspective whereby deviance is defined as being "radically dependent on the societal reaction which behavior evokes."[599] In support of this view he cites Howard Becker, who states that the central fact about deviance is that it is created by society, but not in the way in which such an assumption is usually understood, namely that it is the social situation of the deviant or social factors which cause deviance;

> rather... *social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance,* and by applying these rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is *not* a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender." [600] (author's italics)

The impact of this definition, according to Barclay, rests on the fact that acts are only considered deviant "if they receive a negative response or reaction." However the response or reaction to such acts results not because "in any given society norms and laws define what is or is not deviant" but because "societies apply their own norms differentially, selecting and stereotyping those they choose to mark as deviant so that only some norm-breakers are actually treated as deviant."[601] Jack T. Sanders adapts this theory of deviance because he considers that it can be applied to explain the reaction of the Jewish authorities to the early Christians in the first century CE.[602]

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[599] Barclay, J. "Deviance and Apostasy: Some Applications of Deviance Theory to First Century Judaism and Christianity," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context,* (ed.) P.F.Esler, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 114-127, (118).
[600] Becker, H.S. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance,* (New York: Free Press, 1963, pb.1964) 8-9.
[601] Barclay, "Deviance and Apostasy," 115. Cf. H. Becker, *Outsiders,* 9-14.
[602] Sanders, J.T. *Schismatics, Sectarians, Dissidents, Deviants: The First One Hundred Years of Jewish-Christian Relations,* (London: SCM, 1993) 125ff.

Sanders asks the question, "Why did the leadership of Roman-period Judaism, normally tolerant of diversity, reject and even persecute the various manifestations of Christianity that it encounters?" He attempts to answer the question by applying a functionalist approach to the theory.[603] Despite Barclay's opinion that Sanders' analysis is in need of "much closer definition,"[604] it might be possible to use Sanders' question in an attempt to probe why at the time when "mainstream" Judaism seemed to have been tolerating other forms of deviance it took extreme measures against the followers of Jesus.

Why were the followers of Jesus persecuted?

In attempting to discover reasons for the persecution of the early followers of Jesus by the Jewish authorities it is necessary to look beyond the charges of neglect of Torah and other religious observances brought against them.[605] Rather the reason for their persecution might be associated with the charge brought against Jesus by the Jewish authorities that he was subverting the people.

> They insisted saying that he stirred up the people by teaching throughout the whole of Judea, having started in the Galilee and reaching even this place.[606]

It can be argued that the charge of subversion concerned his views on the family.

Mention has already been made of Jesus' relationship with his family and of the implication that to follow him entailed a similar response to those familial ties which were seen to hamper an unequivocal answer to his call. A

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[603] The functionalist approach to deviance was developed by K.T. Erikson in "Notes on the Sociology of Deviance," *Social Problems* 9 (1962), 307-314 and in *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance,* (New York: J. Wiley, 1966). This approach suggests that the identification of deviants helps to clarify and enforce the boundaries of an insecure community. In the present case that would have been the Jewish community.

[604] Barclay, "Deviance and Apostasy," 121. Barclay criticises three facets of Sanders' analysis. He questioned whether the social identity crisis in Judea, about which Sanders wrote (135), was as severe as he suggests in the pre-70 CE period. He considers that there is no clear picture of what behaviour, actions or beliefs constituted deviance on the part of the early followers of Jesus. There is no attempt on the part of Sanders to illustrate any move by the Jewish authorities against other forms of deviance in the pre-70 CE period, although he cites Philo, the Essenes, John the Baptist and the Pharisaic party as examples of deviance.

[605] Sanders, J.T. *Schismatics,* 99,139.

[606] *Lk.*23:5.
οἱ δὲ ἐπίσχυον λέγοντες ὅτι ἀνασείει τὸν λαὸν διδάσκων καθ' ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας, καὶ ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἕως ὧδε.

close reading of those sayings of Jesus, which scholars designate as the sayings gospel Q, provides us with a picture which is at variance with the accepted view of the family. It contains many sayings which are contrary to concepts of behaviour expected of members of a family.

These hard sayings of Jesus represented the basic requirements to be his follower or disciple. The demands of discipleship were unambiguously stated in terms which sound uncomfortable even to modern ears.

> [T]he one who does not hate father and mother cannot be my disciple and the one who does not hate son and daughter cannot be my disciple.[607]

With these demands taking precedence over the obligations to the family Jesus warned his followers of the violent disruption which would occur in their lives.

> Do you think that I have come to hurl [bring] peace on the earth? I did not come to hurl [bring] peace, but a sword [division]. For I have come to divide son against father, daughter against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.[608]

Not even the most sacred duty which family honour demanded, that a son should bury his father, was to be placed above the demands of discipleship.

> But another said to him: Master, permit me first to go and bury my father. But he said: Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.[609]

The reward for accepting the harsh conditions of discipleship and abandoning the biological family was inclusion in the fictive family about which Mark wrote recording Jesus' reply when told that his mother and brothers were wishing to see him.

> [L]ooking around at those who were sitting in a circle around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister and my mother."[610]

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[607] *Lk.* 14:26. Cf. *GTh.* 55, Jesus says: Whoever will not hate one's father and one's mother will not be able to become a disciple of mine. And whoever will not hate one's brother and one's sister and will not take up one's cross as I do, will not be worthy of me.

[608] *Lk.* 12:51,53. Cf. *GTh.* 16. The translation of the Luke passage is taken from *The Critical Edition of Q,* (edd.) J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S. Kloppenborg, (Minn.: Fortress Press / Leuven: Peeters, 2000) 380, 386.

[609] *Lk.* 9:59-60.

[610] *Mk.*3:34-35,
καὶ περιβλεψάμενος τοὺς περὶ αὐτὸν κύκλῳ καθημένους λέγει· ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ μου καὶ οἱ

In another context Luke recorded a saying of Jesus which might be interpreted as his separating himself from his biological family.

> [A] woman in the crowd raising her voice said to him, "Blessed is the womb which carried you and the breasts which you sucked." But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and observe it."[611]

The effect of the conditions which were laid on his followers by Jesus has to be considered in the light of the honour/shame code. For separating oneself from the biological family and entering a fictive family group, which did not conform to societal norms, had repercussions far beyond the family. The rejection of family implied a rejection of the social order because the family represented the primary element in the world-view of those communities which were part of the honour/shame culture. The dissident action of a family member was construed as an attack on the head of the family who epitomised the honour of the family within the community. The questioning of the position of an authority figure within a family seems to be implied in Jesus' reply to Peter in *Mk.* 10:29-30 where there is no reference to fathers as part of the hundredfold reward which his followers would receive in this life. From this it has to be assumed that that reward was about inclusion in some new family grouping in which there was no place for a patriarchal figure.[612]

Evidence for the Marginalisation and Persecution of the Early Followers of Jesus.

In the sayings of Jesus contained in the sayings gospel Q there is evidence to indicate that some people were being marginalised and subjected to persecution. The fourth makarism in the Lucan list refers to insults, persecution and defamation being meted out to people.

ἀδελφοί μου. ὅς [γὰρ] ἄν ποιήσῃ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἀδελφός μου καὶ ἀδελφὴ καὶ μήτηρ ἐστίν.

[611] *Lk.* 11:27-28. Cf. *G Th.* 79: 1-2.

[612] We have no evidence in the New Testament canon of how long these new forms of family lasted. The later writings in the New Testament seem to emphasise the old pattern of the family under the authority of a patriarchal figure. See the letters to Timothy and Titus. However the Apocryphal Acts include accounts of the tensions which existed in households where old patterns of family life were being questioned. See the story of Thecla in *Acts of Paul and Thecla* in *New Testament Apocrypha,* Vol. 2, (ed.) W. Schneemelcher, (trans.) R. McL. Wilson, (Cambridge: J. Clarke, 1992) 239-246

> Blessed are you when they insult and persecute you and say every kind of evil against you because of the son of humanity.[613]

In the first three makarisms the state of blessing was for those who were poor, those who were hungry and for those who mourned.[614] To what extent these four makarisms are to be taken as a unit has been a matter of discussion amongst commentators, some of whom make a distinction between the first three and the fourth.

John Kloppenborg commenting on what he terms "the inaugural sermon" in the sayings gospel Q states that "it is generally agreed that the first three beatitudes, Q. 6:20b, 21a-b, and the fourth did not form an original unity."[615] He bases this view on a comparison of various features of the makarisms, namely, the difference of the formula used in the first three from that in the fourth, the dependence in the first three on "a logic of eschatological reversal," while the fourth uses "the motif of eschatological reward," and the presupposition in *Lk.* 6; 20b-21 of "the general human condition of poverty and suffering," while 6:22-23 "is oriented towards the specific situation of persecution of the Christian community." He concludes from his examination of these verses that the makarisms in *Lk.* 6:20b-21 addressed "a rather wide group of socially and economically disadvantaged persons," while the fourth makarism, 6:22-23, referred to a group "which is not simply 'poor' but also persecuted, i.e. to a group of early Christian preachers."

John Meier similarly sees the first three makarisms as referring to "people in a state of socio-economic distress that they had not chosen, that has nothing to do with commitment to Jesus and about which they can do nothing," while the fourth makarism "speaks of those who have voluntarily undergone persecution because of their freely chosen commitment to the Son of Man."[616]

The supposition that these makarisms in the sayings gospel Q were addressed to different groups of people can be more easily sustained in the

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[613] *Lk.* 6:22. Cf. *GTh.* 68, 69a. The translation of *Lk.* 6:22 is from *The Critical Edition of Q,* 50.
[614] *Lk. (Q.)* 6:20b-21. On the meaning of μακάριος see *TDNT*, Vol. 3 (1967), 362-370.
[615] Kloppenborg, J.S. *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections,* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 172-173.
[616] Meier, J.P. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking The Historical Jesus:* Vol. 2. *Mentor, Message, and Miracles,* (New York, London, Toronto, Sidney, Auckland: ABRL, Doubleday, 1994), 322.

Matthean version (Mt.5:3-11) with its longer list of makarisms; in vv 3-10 the people addressed are in the third person plural, while in v 11 those addressed are in the second person plural. In the passage, found in Luke, the address is in the second person plural in all four makarisms. Since there is a general consensus amongst Q scholars that the Lukan version more nearly represents the original sayings of Jesus, some of the arguments based on the Matthean version, where the distinction between groups is made by reference to the grammatical change from the third to the second person are not convincing. Meier accepts the argument that the original sayings tradition contained four makarisms but expresses a preference for the Matthean version

Happy are the poor	for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy the mourners	for they shall be comforted.
Happy the hungry	for they shall be satisfied.
Happy are you	when [people] revile you and persecute [you] and say every kind of evil against you on account of the Son of Man.[617]

A discussion on the makarisms inevitably leads to a consideration of those to whom Jesus was addressing these words of encouragement and hope as well as the other sayings found in the "sermons" in both *Mt.* and *Lk.*

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[617] Maier, *Marginal Jew*, Vol. 2. 323. Meier's preference for the third person plural form of the beatitudes finds support from several scholars in the field. J. Fitzmyer provides three arguments in support of the third person plural as the original form: (a) this form has better Old Testament antecedents, (b) it is more likely that Luke changed the third person to the second person to match the second person form natural to the woes (Lk. 6:24-26) which were added to make a parallel to the beatitudes, (c) Luke's style shows a preference for the second person plural. J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, AB 28, (New York: Doubleday, 1981) 631-632. Cf. F.Bovon, *L'évangile selon saint Luc 1-9*, (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1991) 290. Meier, 379, n.119, quotes extensively the view of J. Dupont on the issue of the persons addressed in the beatitudes (J. Dupont, *Les béatitudes1: Le problème littéraire – Les deux versions du Sermon sur la montagne et des béatitudes*, EBib. (Bruges: Abbaye de Saint André, 1958; repr. Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969), 1: 274 –282). Dupont does not find the argument put forward by Fitzmyer and supported by Bovon about the form of the beatitudes in the Old Testament and later literature to be conclusive since the use of the second person plural, while rare, is not impossible. His support for the third person plural is based on the ground that the first part of the three beatitudes in Q gives no indication for the use of a second person plural, the second person only being indicated in the ὁτι clause. Dupont finds this unusual, arguing that in the case of a beatitude in which a second person is the subject it would be indicated in the first part of the beatitude, as is the case in the fourth beatitude. Dupont, according to Meier, reinforces his argument with an appeal to a hypothetical Aramaic original. However it is possible to argue for the Q version on two grounds. The verb εἶναι is frequently omitted in Greek where there is no possibility of confusion about its subject. None of the beatitudes in the Matthean includes a verb form in the first part (except Mt. 5:11) because it is possible to infer it from the subject of the ὅτι clause. In Matthew the verb understood is a third person plural; in Q (Luke) it is a second person plural. The presence of the verb in the first part of the fourth beatitude in Q (Luke) and in Meier's version of it is because the subject of the ὅταν clause is different from that of the main clause. *Lk.*(Q) 6:22, Cf. *Mt.* 5:11.

To Whom did Jesus address the Beatitudes?

Any doubt about the identity of those to whom Jesus spoke the words contained in the makarisms can be removed by reference to the context in which these words appear. The author of Matthew's gospel records that Jesus went into the mountain, that his disciples came to him and that he directed his teaching to them.

> Seeing the crowd he went up into the mountain, and when he had sat down, his disciples came to him. Then opening his mouth he taught them...[618]

In Luke's account it is recorded that Jesus looked at his disciples and spoke to them.[619]

If, as these passages suggest, Jesus was speaking to his disciples, it would seem reasonable to suppose that he addressed them in the second person and to conclude that all four makarisms, found in *Lk.*(Q) were addressed to one particular group of people and that they spoke to their peculiar circumstances. The reference in these makarisms to insults, persecutions, "bad-mouthing," poverty, hunger and grief can be viewed as the summation of the fate of those who had been ejected from a community. They were desperately poor, rather than "poor in spirit"; they were literally starving, not "hungering and thirsting after righteousness"; and their grieving was for loss of family and community.

These makarisms are considered to be amongst the earliest sayings of Jesus, and so it can be argued that they refer to the circumstances of his followers.[620] This being the case, it is necessary to inquire into the reason for their poverty, hunger, sadness and persecution.

Jerome Neyrey in an article on the cultural background of the original makarisms in Q defends their unity with the suggestion that they referred to "someone" who had lost both material wealth, with the result that he was poor and hungry, as well as his social standing, which resulted in loss of

[618] *Mt.* 5:1. For a discussion on the composition of the audience to whom Jesus addressed these words see above chapter four.
[619] *Lk.* 6:20a. In the passage leading up to the beatitudes (6:17-19) a distinction is made between the great crowd of Jesus' disciples and the great multitude of people who had come from all parts of Judea and from the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon to hear him and be healed. If the words of Jesus were being addressed to all, then the distinction between the disciples and the rest need not have been made and 6:20a would be superfluous.
[620] Meier, *Marginal Jew,* 319.

honour and subsequent ostracism.[621] That "someone", he states, was the "rebellious son" and the purpose of the makarisms was to point to the consequences of his rebellion. They described:

> [t]he composite fate of a disciple who has been ostracized as a "rebellious son" by his family for his loyalty to Jesus. This ostracism entails the total loss of all economic support from his family (food, clothing, shelter), as well as total loss of honour and stature in the eyes of the village (a good name, marriage prospects, etc.).Such a person would be "shameful" in the eyes of the family and the village...[622]

Neyrey's grounding of these makarisms in his perception of the social reality of the lives of the destitute, οἱ πτωχοὶ, in the first century CE gives discipleship (following Jesus) a coherence and strength which are lacking in those attempts to put forward the proposition that the beatitudes in Q speak of two different groups of people, and also in the Matthean redaction of them with its tendency to spiritualise the words of Jesus in order to give them a universal application. Those who were being addressed in these makarisms were the followers of Jesus who had responded to his hard sayings about separation from families and communities and were suffering the consequences of their action. Throughout the sayings gospel Jesus referred to the consequences in real terms resulting from the decisions taken by his followers. He spoke about the divisions which arose from their questioning of the "social debt of obedience owed by sons to their fathers and families."[623] The strife in families arose from his coming.

> *I have come* to divide son against father, [and] daughter against her mother, [and] daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.[624] (my italics)

The extent of the desperate straits to which his followers had been reduced as a result of their answering his call is apparent in Jesus' words encouraging them not to be anxious about their lack of such basic necessities of life as food and clothing.[625] Rejected by their families and ejected from

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[621] Neyrey, J.H. "Loss of Wealth, Loss of Family and Loss of Honour: The Cultural Context of the Original Makarisms in Q." in *Modelling Early Christianity,* (ed.) P. F. Esler , 139-158. Cf. A. Milavec, "The Social setting of 'Turning the Other Cheek' and 'Loving One's Enemies' in the light of the Didache," *BTB* 25 (1995), 131-143.
[622] Neyrey, "Loss of Wealth," 145.
[623] Neyrey, "Loss of Wealth," 149.
[624] *Lk.* 12:53.
[625] *Lk.* 12: 22b-31. Cf. *GTh.* 36.1 (P. Oxy. 655).

their communities they would have been deprived of every means of support and association. A passage in the Jewish rabbinical source, the Tosefta, encapsulates the situation of those who were ostracised from their communities.

> One does not sell to them or receive from them or take from them or give to them. One does not teach their sons a trade, and does not obtain healing from them.[626]

In the Gospel of John when many of his followers had lost their enthusiasm and were leaving the mission Jesus asked those who remained whether they too wished to leave. Peter's answer to his question not only indicated their absolute reliance on him but also implied that they had nowhere to go.

> ...many of his disciples went back and no longer went about with him. Therefore Jesus said to the twelve. "Do you also wish to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." [627]

The makarisms in *Lk.* (Q) 6:20-22 reveal a picture of the persecution, poverty and grief of the followers of Jesus, a fate which might have befallen members of any eastern Mediterranean community who in choosing to adopt a different way of life were perceived to have rejected the mores and customs of their respective community. In the Synoptic Gospels the record of other sayings of Jesus shows how his followers were affected by the decisions which they had made. To be rejected by one's family, and ultimately by the community, meant among other consequences that the basic necessities of life, such as food and clothing, would be lacking. Jesus recognised their straitened circumstances when he exhorted them not to be concerned about such things.

> Do not be concerned with reference to your life about what you should eat, or with reference to your body what you should wear. For life consists of more than food and the body of more than clothing.[628]

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[626] *t Hullin*, 2:20

[627] *Jn.* 6: 66-68.

[628] *Lk.*(Q) 12:22b-23.
μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ τί φάγητε, μηδὲ τῷ σώματι τί ἐνδύσησθε. ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ πλεῖον ἐστιν τῆς τροφῆς καὶ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ ἐνδύματος. Cf. *Mt.* 6:25; *GTh.* 36. See also *P. Oxy.* 655, col. I 1-17.

Despite their desperate position he urged them to seek God's kingdom in the knowledge that he knew of what they were in need.

> Do not be afraid, little flock, because your father will be well pleased to give you the kingdom.[629]

And Jesus paradoxically addressed them as "blessed"[630] The reason for the use of this salutation is to be found in the first of the four makarisms, "for God's reign is for you."[631]

Marginalisation was an essential process in their being stripped of everything which precluded their clear perception of the "kingdom." Its voluntary acceptance as part of the process of change in the life style of these followers of Jesus might be considered to be an ascetic practice if there is included in the description of askesis the concept of a change in the direction of a person's way of living. Valantasis describes this change as "intended to inaugurate a new subjectivity".[632]

Reference has been made to the effects on Jesus' followers of their marginalisation in Galilean society. The evidence for this marginalisation can be adduced from the Lukan (Q) makarisms (6: 20b-23b). They contained words of encouragement for those whose actual condition was one of suffering resulting from their decision to follow Jesus. The appearance of these makarisms in the gospels of Matthew and Luke indicates that they served to encourage later post-Easter followers of Jesus.[633] They pointed to the imminence of the kingdom, the coming of which would bring about "a radical transformation of human life,"[634] but such a transformation was

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[629] *Lk.* 12:32. Cf. *Mt.* 6:33. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice and all things will be provided for you."

[630] Other translations of the Greek term, μακάριος, have been suggested; 'happy' (Meier in *Marginal Jew,* vol. 2, 322), 'honourable' (Kloppenborg in *Excavating Q,* 126, and 'congratulations' (Valantasis in *The Gospel of Thomas,* 147-148).

[631] *Lk.* 6:20. The translation is taken from *The Critical Edition of Q,*46.

[632] Valantasis, R. "Constructions of Power in Asceticism," 797.

[633] Kloppenborg. *The Formation of Q. K*loppenborg places these makarisms in the earliest layer of Q, in what he describes as "sapiential instruction" although he appears to doubt whether Q 6:22, "the persecution makarism" is to be considered as part of that layer. "The cluster of beatitudes in 6:20b-23...contains (at least) three components: 6:20b-21, a *Grundwort,* which was expanded and reinterpreted by vv.22-23b. Verse 23c is a further expansion of vv.22-23b, introducing the deuteronomistic motif of Israel's persecution of the prophets." (173).

[634] Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q,* 189. On the composition of "the Q sermon" see Kloppenborg, 187-189.

accompanied by "the pain of social formation"[635] which, we have seen, affected the relationship of the followers of Jesus with their families as well as their lives (and livelihoods) in their communities.

Consideration will now be given to the way in which this "radical transformation" in the lives of those who voluntarily chose to follow Jesus might be interpreted. On the assumption that the "new subjectivity," of which Valantasis writes;[636] is about a reformation in life style; it is to a way of living which can be described as ascetic. For this purpose it is intended to compare the condition in which those followers of Jesus found themselves to a model of behaviour which its author claims to be ascetic. The model to be used is that which Bruce Malina describes in an essay entitled, "Pain, Power and Personhood: Ascetic Behaviour in the Ancient Mediterranean."[637]

Malina's view is that

> [a]sceticism...is about what people did or do to get away from the self, whatever type of self existed or exists in a given society...In antiquity this meant essentially no more ethnic boundaries or kinship boundaries to define the prevailing social self.[638]

In the light of this examination the sayings of Jesus will be used as a source for evidence which might suggest that his demands for discipleship implied the need for a type of ascetic life style. The rigour which Jesus demanded of his followers is everywhere apparent in the Synoptic Gospels and can be summed up in an answer to the question addressed to him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, are eager to enter and are not able to do so."[639]

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[635] Mack, B.L. "Q and the Gospel of Mark: Revising Christian Origins," in *Early Christianity, Q and Jesus*, Semeia 55, (edd.) J.S. Kloppenborg and L.E. Vaage , (Atlanta: Scholars Press,1991) 17.

[636] See Valantasis, "Constructions of Power," 797.

[637] Malina, B. "Pain, Power and Personhood: Ascetic Behaviour in the Ancient Mediterranean," in *Asceticism,* (edd.) V.L. Wimbush and R. Valantasis, 62-177. For a criticism of Malina's thesis see E. Castelli "Asceticism: Audience and Resistance," in *Asceticism,* 178-187.

[638] Malina, "Pain," 168.

[639] *Lk. (Q)* 13:24.
ἀγωνίζεσθε εἰσελθεῖν διὰ τῆς στενῆς θύρας, ὅτι πολλοί, λέγω ὑμῖν, ζητήσουσιν εἰσελθεῖν καὶ οὐκ ἰσχύσουσιν.

The Shrinking of the Self.

When Jesus spoke to his disciples of what it meant to follow him the phrase used in the Synoptic Gospels is about the denial of self (ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν).[640] Malina describes the process of the surrender of one's personality as the shrinking of the social self. He states that in the ancient Mediterranean world "the self is always culturally defined as a member of a human group."[641] The shrinking of that self, therefore, "involves the dissociation and elimination of the social self with its identity, roles, statuses, skills and attributes from individual awareness."[642] The burden of Malina's contribution to the discussion on asceticism is a description of the process by which the self freed itself from the norms and customs of its ambient society, in this case the ancient world of the eastern Mediterranean. In that culture the only self available was one which was "socially embedded or group enmeshed; historically the group always had precedence over the self."[643] Consequently since the awareness of the self was formed by the norms established by familial patterns and social structures the shrinkage of the self had to be viewed as the "shrinkage of the group self."[644] To escape from the control exercised by strict adherence to a group ethos with its absolute demands was a necessity for the re-formation of the self. In the context of this new formation the shrinkage of the self involved "an escape from concern for group esteem and group honor."[645] It was the cost of the process of such a re-formation, undertaken by the earliest disciples of Jesus, which was celebrated in the four makarisms found in the Gospel of Luke (Q). These were the followers to whom Jesus was referring when he spoke about those who suffered persecution, expulsion from their communities and bad mouthing, and who endured long-term consequences of poverty, hunger and a sense of loss.[646]

[640] *Mk.* 8:34; *Mt.* 16: 24. Cf. *Lk.* 9: 23.
[641] Malina, "Pain," 163.
[642] Malina, "Pain," 163.
[643] Malina, "Pain," 164.
[644] Malina, "Pain,"167.
[645] Malina, "Pain," 168. See in this chapter reference to the concept of honour and shame in ancient Mediterranean society.
[646] *Lk. (Q)*:6:20b-22. Neyrey's view that the first three makarisms describe the consequences of the disciples' fate described in the fourth provides a more coherent picture than the attempts of some

In the Synoptic Gospels the concept of the shrinkage of the social self received concrete expression in the words of Jesus when he set out the terms of discipleship.

> If anyone wishes to follow after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.[647]

And in the accounts in *Mark* and *Matthew* these words are linked to a narrative in which Jesus spoke of his own death. In *Mk.* 8:31 we read that Jesus began to tell his disciples

> that the Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be put to death and after three days rise again .[648]

Although an analogy might be drawn between the death of Jesus by crucifixion and the fate of his disciples, it seems reasonable to state that the taking up of the cross on the part of those disciples represented a metaphor for the situation in which they found themselves in relation to their families and communities as a result of their denial of their social self. It was the coming of Jesus and the response of those early disciples to his teaching which was responsible for their isolation.

In *Mt.* 10:34-39 Jesus set out clearly what his coming implied for those who followed him and for their relationship with their families.

> I did not come to bring peace upon the earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I came to turn a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies are to found amongst members of his own household. Whoever loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me and whoever loves a son or a daughter more than me is not worthy of me.[649]

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commentators to dissociate the fourth makarism from the three earlier ones. See the discussion above on this issue, p.148.

[647] *Mk.* 8:34;
εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι. Cf. *Mt.* 16:24; *Lk(Q).* 14:27. See also *GTh.* 55.2. In the *NEB* the Greek phrase ἀπαρνησάσθαι ἑαυτὸν is translated as 'to leave self behind.'

[648] ὅτι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶτῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστῆναι. Cf. *Mt.* 16;21. In Luke's account, 18:31-34 Jesus spoke of his coming death as he journeyed to Jerusalem with his disciples.

[649] Cf. *Lk.* 12:51. See *Mk.* 7:5-6.

Luke's inclusion of the words of Jesus about taking up the cross identified the metaphorical nature of the action by reference to the individual in the use of 'his own' cross (τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ),[650] and to the regularity by which that cross was taken up with the use of the term 'daily' (καθ' ἡμέραν).[651]

It was in the denial of self, (Malina's 'shrinkage of the social self), and in the daily taking up of his/her own cross, that is, in confronting the difficulties and dangers of abandoning one's family and community, that a disciple replicated (μιμέομαι) in his/her life the life of Jesus and, for those who became his followers in the Post-Easter experience, his death. For those disciples to whom Jesus addressed his words that μίμησις was lived out in the experiences described in the four makarisms recorded in *Lk.* (Q) 6: 20b-23b; poverty, hunger, grief, persecution, exclusion and "bad mouthing."[652] The mark of the true follower of Jesus was to accept these hardships. The suffering and the achievement of those who chose to be followers of Jesus is summed up in the saying of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas:

> Happy is the man who has suffered and found life.[653]

From the discussion of the makarisms contained in *Lk.* (Q) 6:20b-22 we see that that life was not without its measure of suffering The experience of those who chose that way can be summed up in the word 'isolation,' – isolation from family and community. It was probably to those people to which the term 'passers-by' in *GTh.* 42[654] and the Coptic form of the Greek word μοναχός in *GTh.* 49 and 75 referred.[655] They were those whose encounter with the world was that of strangers.[656] Richard Valantasis

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[650] *Lk.* 14:27.
[651] *Lk.* 9:23.
[652] See above the discussion concerning the integrity of the four makarisms in Luke (Q). On μιμησις see J. Duyndam on "Hermeneutics of Imitation: A Philosophical Approach to Sainthood and Exemplariness," in *Saints and Role Models in Judaism and Christianity,* (edd.) M. Poorthuis & J. Schwartz, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004) 7-21.
[653] *GTh.* 58.
[654] *GTh.* 42. "Jesus said, 'Become passers-by.'"
[655] *GTh.* 49. "Jesus said, 'Blessed are those who are solitary and elect. For you will find the kingdom. For you are from it, and to it you will return.'" *GTh.* 75, "Jesus said, 'Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber.'"
[656] Cf. *Jn.* 17-17. "They are strangers in the world." Valantasis in *The Gospel of Thomas* commenting on *GTh.* 42, writes, "The saying advocates a form of engagement that recognises the world as present, but chooses to bypass it, to move in another direction, to operate in another mode

commenting on *GTh.* 42 does not think that the saying represented a complete abandonment of the world. The freedom of which Valantasis writes might be construed as the shrinking of the self which released it from the constraints of family and community. But the price of disengagement was the suffering about which the makarisms in *Lk.* (Q) and in *GTh.* speak.[657]

On Becoming a Child: An Ascetic Precept.

Malina's shrinking of the self involved a process of eliminating "the social self with its identity, roles, statuses, skills and attributes from one's awareness." In the Synoptic Gospels and in the Gospel of Thomas Jesus employed another analogy to describe the reformation which his followers had to undergo. He likened it to becoming a child. The three Synoptic Gospels record the saying of Jesus that unless his followers became like little children they would not enter the kingdom of heaven/God. In *Mt.* 18:1-5[658] in answer to his disciples' question about a place of pre-eminence in the kingdom[659] Jesus replied:

> Unless you turn around and become like the children you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. [660]

Coupled with that reply was Jesus' call for humility (that shown by children) as a mark of pre-eminence in the kingdom.[661]

However it is in the *GTh.* that we find extended sayings of Jesus about the way his followers should live their lives based on the analogy of the

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of existence. This posture with respect to the world mandates a freedom from it while maintaining a relationship to it." 118. For a different perception of the ascetic in late antiquity see P. Brown, "The Rise and Fall of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," in idem, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity,* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: 1982) 130-131. "In late Roman society, the holy man was deliberately not human, He was the stranger *par excellence*...the deep social significance of asceticism as a long drawn out ritual of disassociation – of becoming the total stranger."

[657] Commenting on the effect of suffering of this kind Ernst Haenchen in " Literatur zum Thomasevangelium," *Theologische Rundschau* 27 (1967), 321, writes: "Whoever fits contentedly into the world and finds it enjoyable is thereby part of the world and will pass away like the world. Only the one who suffers from the world is truly distinguished from it and thereby begins to be free of it." cited in Kloppenborg, "Blessing and Marginality" 53.

[658] For a record of a similar incident see *Mk.* 9:33-37 and *Lk.* 9:46-48.

[659] τίς ἄρα μείζων ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν;

[660] ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ στραφῆτε καὶ γένησθε ὡς τὰ παιδία, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.

[661] *Mt.* 18:4.

behaviour of children. In several of the sayings[662] the image of the child is employed and is related to other major themes in the gospel, such as singularity,[663] life,[664] the beginning and the end,[665] the first and the last,[666] the throwing off of clothes [667]and the kingdom.[668] Within that kingdom the child took precedence over John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets.

> Jesus said, "Among those born of women, from Adam until John the Baptist, there is no one superior to John the Baptist that his eyes should not be lowered (before him). Yet I have said, whichever one of you comes to be a child will be acquainted with the kingdom and will be superior to him."[669]

The concept of becoming like a child can plausibly be compared to the shrinking of the social self because entailed in it is the reversal of what was perceived as the normal order of things within the community ethos of the eastern Mediterranean world. It is a matter of conjecture whether behind Nicodemus' question about a man who was old being born again was his recognition not only of a physiological impossibility but also of its implication for the ordering of society.[670] However conjectural might be the background for Nicodemus' question, the *GTh.* provides evidence that even among the disciples there was not a little resentment about Jesus' recognition of the characteristics of the child as necessary for entry into the kingdom. In saying 22 the disciples reacted to the comment of Jesus, that infants at the breast were like those who entered the kingdom, with a question which gave Jesus the opportunity to describe the complete revolution which had to take place in the way they lived their lives before they could enter the kingdom.

> Jesus saw infants being suckled. He said to his disciples, "These infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom." They said to him, "Shall we then, as children, enter the kingdom." Jesus said to them, "When you make the two one,

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[662]*GTh.* 4, 18, 21, 22, 37, 46, and 50. See M. Franzmann, *Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Writings,* (Edinburgh: T&T.Clark, 1996), on the various activities related to being a child in *GTh.* (196-197).
[663]*GTh.* 4, 22.
[664]*GTh.* 4.
[665]*GTh.* 4, 18, 50.
[666]*GTh.* 4.
[667]*GTh.* 21, 37.
[668]*GTh.* 22, 46.
[669]*GTh.* 46.
[670]*Jn.* 3 4-5.

> and when you make the inside like the outside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and you fashion eyes in place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness; then will you enter [the kingdom]."[671]

Other sayings in the *GTh.* indicate that there was constant tension between Jesus and his disciples about the nature of the changes which his coming entailed and about their failure to recognise him in what he said and did. Jesus attempted to remove that tension by calling them to become like children who had no compunction about acting in a manner which adults would consider anti-social behaviour.[672]

> His disciples said, "When will you become revealed to us and when shall we see you?" Jesus said, "When you disrobe without being ashamed and take up your garments and place them under your feet like little children and tread on them, then [will you see] the son of the living one, and you will not be afraid." [673]

Moreover in the sayings in the Gospel of Thomas the reversal of roles, envisaged in the words of Jesus as the mark of the new communities, is encapsulated in the prominence given to the child.

> Jesus said, "The man old in days will not hesitate to ask a small child seven days old about the place of life, and he will live. For many who are first will become last, and they will become the one and the same.[674]

This saying of Jesus envisages the end of the patriarchal system and its replacement by one, represented by a child, which was the source of enlightenment; the old, "who were the first, became the last, but in so doing arrived at oneness (unity)."[675]

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[671]*GTh.* 22.
[672]See Malina, "Pain," on the role of childrearing in the socialisation of children in ancient Mediterranean culture. 166-167.
[673]*GTh.* 37.
[674]*GTh.* 4. See also H.W. Attridge "Appendix: The Greek Fragments," in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7, together with XIII, 2*, Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1), and P.Oxy. 1, 654, 655,* Nag Hammadi Studies 20, (ed.) B. Layton, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1989) 96-128 (115).
[675]On becoming a child and related themes in the Gospel of Thomas see M. Harl, "À Propos des Logia de Jésus: Le Sens du Mot Monachos," in *Revue des Études Grecques* 73 (1960) 464-474; A.F.J. Klijn, " The 'Single One' in the Gospel of Thomas," in *JBL* 81 (1962)), 271-278; H.C. Kee, "'Becoming a Child' in the Gospel of Thomas," in *JBL* 82 (1963), 307-314; J.Z. Smith, "The

Conclusion.

The use of Malina's model of the shrinking of the social self throws light on the sayings of Jesus about denying oneself as part of the discipline of discipleship. In the case of the early followers of Jesus it was a necessary prelude to the finding of their true selves which initiated their discipleship; without that discovery they could not have become his disciples. The model also helped to give meaning to the paradoxical nature of the makarisms found in Luke (Q). These paradoxes become significant if they are considered within a hermeneutic which pertains to a rejection of ambient community values on the part of the early followers of Jesus and to their present recompense rather than to some sense of eschatological fulfilment. Some two thousand years separates the theory of Malina from the sayings of Jesus about children taking off their clothes and stamping on them. But it provides a vivid metaphor for the change about which Malina writes.

The most important outcome of employing Malina's model of shrinking of the social self is that it allows the possibility of an ascetic model of behaviour which does not have to do with the body and sexuality but is primarily concerned with the re-formation (re-identification?) of the person. It is a re-formation which involves the undertaking of the commandment to love their enemies, thus turning upside down the normative cultural response to one's enemies in the eastern Mediterranean

Chapter four outlined the curriculum laid out in the SP as the preparation necessary for the role of these followers as teachers. It necessitated a disciplined approach to what was undertaken as essential in this preparation. This chapter sets out the difficulties which these followers encountered as a consequence of their decision to become followers of Jesus. That decision resulted in their rejection by their families and in their being marginalised and persecuted by their communities. The hardships which they endured are summed up in the paradox of the makarisms found

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Garments of Shame," in *HR* 5 (1965-1966), 217-238; M. Meyer, "Making Mary Male: The Categories of 'Male' and 'Female' in the Gospel of Thomas," in *NTS* 31 (1985), 554-570; H.S.Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutic of Early Syrian Monasticism," in *Asceticism,* 220-245; R. Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas,* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), passim.

in the SP (*Lk.* 6:20b-22). Chapter six discusses Jesus' commandment to love one's enemies, which Betz describes as "the fundamental ethical rule of Christian behaviour,"[676] in a cultural tradition in which social relationships were for the most part governed by two criteria, the exercise of the ius talionis and the demands of reciprocity.

[676] Betz, *Sermon,* 591.

Chapter Six

On the Love of one's Enemies: SM. 5:43-48; SP. 6:27-35.

I say to you who are listening, 'Love your enemies.' SP. 6:27.

Ulrich Luz in his commentary on the Sermon of the Mount has described the commandment of Jesus to love one's enemies as

> ...one of the central of Christian texts. It is not only quoted frequently in early Christian parenesis and in most Christian areas but is considered *the* Christian distinction in which the Gentiles marvel. The central position of love of enemies in the early church agrees with the intention of the Sayings Source and particularly Matthew who gave it a priority position in his last concluding antithesis. With that, he presents the love commandment as the center of the "higher" righteousness of the Christians which he summarized in v. 48 with "perfection."[677]
>
> "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

In the SM the saying of Jesus, "Love your enemies,"[678] is preceded by a section criticising the ancient prescription relating to the law of equal retribution, the ius talionis, and providing in its place a new commandment not to resist evil. "But I tell you not to resist evil."[679] This is followed by the ways in which a disciple should react to an injury or insult. In the SP there is no specific mention of the working of the ius talionis but in SP. 6:27-30 there are included instructions, some of which are to be found in the SM, about the way in which disciples should be seen to obey the commandment to love one's enemies. It will be the version of the sayings of Jesus in the SP

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[677] Luz, U, *Matthew 1-7: A Continental Commentary,* (trans.) W.C. Linss, (Minn: Fortress Press, 1989) 340. The importance of the command to love one's neighbour (first found in Lev. 19:18) is a common trait in early Christianity. Besides its inclusion in the SM and SP it appears in *Mt.* 19:19, 22:39; *Mk.*12:31; *Lk.*10:27. See also *Jn.* 13:34-35; 15:12-13, in the Pauline writings *Rom.* 12:9-10; 13:9-10; *Gal.* 5:14; *Col.*3:14; 1 *Thess* 4:9, in other NT writings *Jas.* 2:8; 1 *Pet.*1:22; 2:17; 4:8, and in the works of the Apostolic Fathers 1 *Clem.*49. See also the following comments: in J. Piper. '*Love your enemies,*' (Cambridge/ London/ New York/ New Rochelle/ Melbourne/ Sydney: CUP, 1979), "[T]his command is crucial in understanding what the earthly Jesus wanted to accomplish." (1); in J. Lambrecht, *The Sermon on the Mount: Proclamation and Exhortation,* (Wilmington., Del.: M. Glazier, 1985), "[I]n the New Testament, love is correctly called the central, the principal, new commandment." (221); in Betz, *Sermon,* "Jesus' love-command ...the fundamental ethical rule of Christian behavior." (591). D. Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship,* (trans.) R.H. Fuller & I Booth, (London: SCM, 1959) wrote that:"Here [*Mt.* 5:44] for the first time in the Sermon on the Mount, we meet the word which sums up the whole of its message, the word 'love'" (131). On the reception of this saying in the writings of the early church fathers see chapter seven.

[678] *Mt.* 5:44.

[679] *Mt.* 5: 38-42.

which will form the basis of the following discussion, although it will be necessary to refer to the relevant material found in the SM.

In essence the commandment to love one's enemies called into question three aspects of the behaviour of ancient communities which conditioned the relationships existing between those who lived in these communities and between communities. These aspects were the operation of the law of equal retribution, the ius talionis, the concept of what constituted being a neighbour/friend (associated with this was the exercise of a system of reciprocity to ensure the maintenance of right relationships between members of different communities), and the treatment of those considered to be enemies, that is, for the most part, those who were not members of a particular community. Although in several respects these aspects are interrelated it is intended to consider them separately.

The literature dealing with these topics is extensive; therefore, it is necessary to be selective in its use. For this reason in referring to the cultural, social and religious mores which conditioned common perceptions of these phenomena in the Classical Greek and Hellenistic periods evidence for the most part will be considered from the philosophical writings. In the case of Jewish sources the search for evidence will be restricted to the Hebrew Scriptures, the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings and the works of the Judaeo-Hellenistic philosopher, Philo.

Law of Equal Retribution – Ius Talionis.

An examination of the implementation of the ius talionis in the law codes operating in the ancient communities of the Mediterranean reveals that the law was an attempt to establish the proportionality which should exist between an offence committed and the retribution to be exacted from an offender. As such it represented an advance on indiscriminate retaliation. From the time of Hammurabi (c. 1792-1750 or c. 1711-1669 BCE) there is evidence of the existence in his code of the ius talionis.

> If a seignior has destroyed the eye of a member of the aristocracy, they shall destroy his eye. (196).[680]

[680] Cited in Betz, *Sermon,* 276.

As Betz states "both formula and principle belong to the most ancient stock of legal rules in Western culture including the Old Testament and Judaism."[681]

Evidence for the existence of the law in the Athenian law code operating in the fifth century BCE can be found in the Aeschylean tragedy, the *Choephoroi.* The Chorus in acclaiming the decision of Orontes to avenge the murder of his father Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra described the workings of the law in highly charged language.

> Hear now, you powerful Fates!
> Receive our prayer and send
> By Zeus our Father's hands
> Fulfilment of that end
> Which fervent hope awaits
> And our just cause demands.
> Justice exacts her death;
> The voice of Justice cries
> Let word pay word, let hatred get
> Hatred in turn, let murderous blow
> Meet blow that murdered; for the prize
> Of sin is death; of pride to be controlled
> A law three ages old
> Tells man this must be so.

ἀλλ' ὦ μεγάλαι Μοῖραι, Διόθεν
τῇδε τελευτᾶν,
  ἦ τὸ δίκαιον μεταβαίνει.
ἀντὶ μὲν ἐχθρᾶς γλώσσης ἐχθρὰ
γλῶσσα τελείσθω· τοὐφειλόμενον
  πράσσουσα Δίκη μέγ' ἀυτεῖ·
ἀντὶ δὲ πληγῆς φονίας φονίαν
πληγὴν τινέτο. δράσαντι παθεῖν,
  τριγέρων μῦθος τάδε φωνεῖ.[682]

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[681] Betz, *Sermon,* 275.

[682] Aeschylus, "The Choephori", in *The Oresteian Trilogy,* (trans.) P. Vellacott, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1956) 114-115. The Greek text is taken from *Aeschyli Tragoediae,* (ed.) G. Murray, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952) 306-316. M.W. Blundell, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies: A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics,* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989) provides a useful discussion of the social conditions in which the law of equal retribution operated in Athens and of perceptions of friendship and enmity. L.G. Mitchell in "New for Old: Friendship Networks in Athenian Policy", *G&R,* 43 (1996) writes: "The dictum 'help friends and harm enemies' pervades

In ancient Rome the ius talionis was incorporated into the laws of the Twelve Tables c. 451-450 BCE. In these Tables customary law was enacted by statute and given a legislative basis.[683] Amongst the Jews the law appeared in the Pentateuch in both *Exodus*[684] and *Leviticus*.[685] In other writings we find evidence that the Jews believed that the ius talionis was God's way of meting out justice to those who were guilty.

> Woe to the guilty! How unfortunate they are, for what their hands have done shall be done to them.[686]

That the law of equal retribution still continued to be relevant in the law codes of some Jewish groups is to be seen in documents and writings which appeared in the intertestamental period. Among the laws recorded in the Temple Scroll discovered at Qumran the law referring to witnesses not only alludes to the ius talionis in describing the punishment to be meted out to false witnesses and to its deterrent value but also quotes its provisions.

> ...and if the witness is a false witness who has testified falsely against his brother, you shall do to him as he proposed to do to his brother. You shall rid yourselves of evil. The rest shall hear of it and shall be awe-striken and never again shall such a thing be done in your midst. You shall have no mercy on him: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.[687]

In *Jubilees*, a pseudepigraphal writing (c.161-141 BCE) which is believed to have influenced the sectaries of Qumran, the description of the death of Cain was used to reinforce the concept of equal retribution.

> And his [Cain's] house fell upon him and he died in the midst of his house. And he was killed by its stones because he killed Abel with a stone, and with a stone he was killed by righteous judgment. Therefore it is ordained in the heavenly tablets: "With

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the whole of Greek literature from Homer to Alexander, and was a basic moral principle for determining behaviour." (11).

[683] *OCD*, (Oxford/New York: OUP, 1996) 1565-1566.

[684] *Ex.* 21:23-23. "If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."

[685] *Lev.* 24:17, 19-20, 22. "Anyone who kills a human being shall be put to death...Anyone who maims another shall suffer the same injury in return: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: the injury inflicted is the injury to be suffered...You shall have one law for alien and for the citizen: for I am the Lord your God."

[686] *Is.*3:11 Cf. *Jer.* 17:10; 50:15; *Ezek.* 7:8; *Obad.* 15.

[687] "The Temple Scroll", (11QT= 11Q 19, 20, 4Q365a) in Vermes, *Scrolls*, 216.

> the weapons with which a man kills his fellow, he shall be killed, just as he wounded him thus shall they do to him."[688]

Philo justified the implementation of the ius talionis as an assurance of equality within a community.

> And our law being an interpreter and teacher of equality commands that the offenders shall undergo a punishment similar to the offence which they have committed... For to exact a different and wholly unequal punishment which has no connection with, or resemblance to, the offence, but which is wholly at variance with it in all its characteristics, is the conduct of those who violate the laws rather than those who would establish them.[689]

The evidence above points to the fact that the concept of the ius talionis was influential in the law codes of communities in the ancient Mediterranean world over a long period of time. However, its continued existence was not without its critics both in the classical and Hellenistic periods. As early as the fifth century BCE the view expressed by Socrates in Plato's dialogue *Crito* presented the summation of the opposition not only to the ius talionis but also to popular approval of its provisions.

> We ought neither to requite wrong with wrong, nor do evil to anyone, no matter what he may have done to us.[690]

Some eight centuries later Iamblichus, a Neoplatonist philosopher (c.245-c.325 CE), quoted a saying attributed to Pythagoras, which, if authentic, predated that of Socrates.

> It is more pious to suffer injustice than to kill a person; for judgment is ordained in Hades.[691]

That judgment and retribution for an offence committed against a person were the prerogative of the deity, as the saying ascribed to Pythagoras suggests, can also be found in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the writings of

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[688] Jubilees, 4:31-32, in Charlesworth, *OTP,* Vol.2, 64.

[689] Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus*, 3. 182 in *The Works of Philo,* (trans.) C.D. Yonge, 612. See also Jos. *Ant.* 4:280, in which Josephus indicates the substitution of damages for the injury incurred. That the discussion of talio continued amongst the rabbis see *Baba Kamma* 83b, in *The Talmud, Nezikim* 1, *Baba Kamma,* (trans.) I. Epstein, (London: Soncino Press, 1935) 473-481.

[690] Plato, *Crito* 49d, (trans.) H.N. Fowler, LCL, (London: Heinemann/Cambridge, Mass: HUP, 1914 (1960^{12})).
οὔτε ἄρα ἀνταδικεῖν δεῖ οὔτε κακῶς ποιεῖν οὐδένα ἀνθρωπῶν οὐδ' ἄν ὁτιοῦν πασχῃ ὑπ' αὐτῶν.

[691] Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica,*, 155,17, (ed.) L. Deubner, editionem addendis et corrigendis adiunctis curavit Udalricus Klein, (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1975).

the intertestamental period where the adequacy of the ius talionis was being called into question. In *Proverbs* the author's advice to his readers was:

> Do not say, "I will repay evil"; wait for the Lord and he will help you.[692]

And later in a paraphrase of the law the author's advice was not to resort to retaliation for a wrong committed.

> Do not say, "I will do to him as he has done to me. I will pay him back for what he has done." [693]

The rules of conduct to which the Master of the community at Qumran was expected to adhere with respect to his loving and hating contained the following promise:

> I will not pay an evil reward to a man; I will pursue him with goodness, for the judgment of all the living is with God and He will repay man his reward.[694]

Other writings in this period provide evidence of the reluctance to implement the terms of the ius talionis in full. The elaboration of the Joseph story in *Joseph and Aseneth* illustrates this in the incident when Levi while restraining his brother Simeon in his eagerness to avenge the arrogance of Pharaoh's son said to him, "Why are you furious with anger with this man? And we are men who worship God, and it does not befit us to repay evil with evil."[695] The author of *2 Enoch* also seemed to have had in mind the justice of God when he wrote:

> Every assault and every persecution and every evil word endure for the sake of the Lord. If the injury and persecution happen to you on account of the Lord, then endure them all for the sake of the Lord. And if you are able to take vengeance with a hundredfold revenge do not take vengeance, neither on one who is close to you nor on one who is distant from you. For the Lord is the one who takes vengeance and he will be the avenger for you on the day of the great judgment, so that there may be no act of retribution here from human beings, but only from the Lord.[696]

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[692] *Proverbs,* 20: 22. Cf. *Deut.* 32:35, "Vengeance is mine, and recompense."
[693] *Proverbs,* 24:29.
[694] CR, (4QSd = 4Q258), in Vermes *Scrolls,* 123.
[695] "Joseph and Aseneth", (23:9) in Charlesworth *OTP,* Vol.2, 234.
[696] "2 Enoch", (50) in Charlesworth, *OTP*, Vol.1, 489.

The ius talionis is evidence of an attempt on the part of people to rectify excesses in the exaction of restitution for offences committed by asserting the further principle that a person should be measured by the measure which he/she measures, a principle which in its application might be equated with the ancient and widespread practice commonly known as the Golden Rule. Advocacy of this practice is to be found in the writings of many of the great religions and in the writings of philosophers.[697] This awareness in ancient societies of the need for rules patterned on the Golden Rule and on the law of equal retribution can be seen as an attempt to order relationships between members of communities. One of the questions which inevitably arose in the development of communities and in the relationships which existed within them was that addressed to Jesus by the lawyer in *Lk.* 10:29, "And who is my neighbour?" (καὶ τίς ἐστίν μου πλησίον;)

"Who is my neighbour?"

In ancient societies the answer to this question was sought in the relationships existing between people and conditioning much of their social and working lives. They were formed from patterns of association based on natural ties and friendship. It was within such bonds that one did good (ἀγαθοποιέω) to another and on them were established reciprocal relationships. On the everyday practicality of such relationships Hesiod gave the following advice:

> Invite to dinner him who is friendly and leave your enemy be, and invite above all him who lives near you...Get good measure from your neighbour and give good measure back, with the measure itself and better if you can, so that in need another time you can find something to rely on. Seek no evil gains: evil gains are no better than losses.[698]

Aristotle defined the relationship more philosophically.

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[697] In Buddhism, "UdanaVarga", 5:18; in Confucianism, "Analects", 15:23; in Hinduism, "Mahabharata",5:1517; in ancient Egyptian;"The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant", 109-110; in Hebrew Scriptures, Lev. 19:18; in later Judaism Shabbat 31a, and in the philosophical writings of Plato, the Stoics, Seneca and Epictetus.

[698] Hesiod, *Works and Days,* 342-343,349-355. 9, in *Hesiod: The Homeric Hymns and Homerica,* (trans.) H.G. Evelyn-White, LCL, (London:Heinemann /Cambridge. Mass.:HUP, 1914, new revised edn.1936, (1964^2).

> Let loving, then, be defined as wishing for anyone the things that we believe good, for his own sake but not for our own, and procuring them for him as far as it lies in our power. A friend is one who loves and is loved in return and those who think their relationship is of this character consider themselves friends.[699]

For Aristotle, as indeed for Hesiod, ties of friendship had their origins in the utilitarian benefits to be derived from such relationships.[700] Paul Millett commenting on this concept of reciprocity, as observed in the Greek view of friendship, writes that "in choosing friends primary considerations were willingness and ability to repay services in full."[701] David Konstan in his comments on friendship in Greece asserts that friends were "defined by good will rather than by a pre-existing tie of blood or ethnicity; good will is manifested in beneficial actions, failure to help, like active animosity, may be a sign of enmity."[702] In these reciprocal arrangements the giving and receiving of gifts played an important part.

> The function of the gift is above all to create or to reinforce ties of obligation and the counter-gift is the recipient's acknowledgment of the obligation incurred.[703]

Some three centuries after Aristotle Cicero, in an altered political culture, but one which owed much to Greek ethical thought, employed virtually the same ideas as Aristotle in his definition of friendship. He wrote of friendship as

> a desire to do good to some one simply for the benefit of the person whom one loves, with the requital of the feeling on his part.[704]

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[699] Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric,*(trans. & ed.) J.H. Freese, LCL, (Cambridge, Mass: HUP, /London: Heinemann, 1926) 192-193.
ἔστω δὴ τὸ φιλεῖν τὸ βούλεσθαί τινι ἃ οἴεται ἀγαθά, ἐκείνου ἕνεκα ἀλλὰ μὴ αὑτοῦ, καὶ τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν πρακτικὸν εἶναι τούτων. φίλος δ' ἐστὶν ὁ φιλῶν καὶ ἀντιφιλούμενος. οἴονται δὲ φίλοι εἶναι οἱ οὕτως ἔχειν οἰόμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους.
For a discussion on Aristotle's definition of 'loving' see C. Gill, "Altruism or Reciprocity in Greek Philosophy?" in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece,* (edd.) C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite, R. Seaford, (Oxford: OUP, 1998) 303-328 (317-323).

[700] Seaford, R. Introduction to *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece,* "Reciprocity is the principle and practice of voluntary requital, of benefit for benefit (positive reciprocity) or harm for harm (negative reciprocity)." 1.

[701] Millett, P. *Lending and Borrowing in Ancient Athens,* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991) 118, cited in D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World,* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997) 57. Konstan describes Millett's view as "encapsulating the popular Greek conception which places emphasis squarely on the utility of friends."

[702] Konstan, D. *Friendship,* 58.

[703] Reiser, M. "Love of Enemies in the Context of Antiquity", in *NTS* 47 (2001) 411-427, (414).

The basis of friendship in both Greek and Roman society has been shown to rest on the reciprocity developed through a utilitarian approach to the mutual benefit of its participants. This perception of the role of friends within a society can also be observed within Jewish life. It can be identified in the commands of Torah with the love of one's neighbour.

> You shall love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord. [705]

The chapter in which this commandment is found, deals with aspects of a person's behaviour towards those in his/her community, such as not defrauding one's neighbour, not rendering an unjust judgment, but judging one's neighbour justly and not profiting by the blood of one's neighbour. Thus loving one's neighbour might be viewed as anticipating the version of the Golden Rule found in the SM and SP.[706]

In the SP the version of the Golden Rule appears at the conclusion of the section dealing with the love of one's enemies. At that point it also serves to draw the attention of the listeners to challenges of common (mis)representations of it. They criticise the commonly accepted association of the Golden Rule with the utilitarian concept of reciprocity as a basis for friendship, which has been discussed above. In the SP 6:32-35 the translation of the Greek word χάρις as credit in the frequently occurring saying - ποία ὑμῖν χάρις ἐστίν; - what sort of gain is it for you? – suggests a utilitarian return/favour for some action taken as a result of reciprocal arrangements.

> If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to

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[704] Cicero, *De Inventione,* 2.166, (trans.) H.M. Hubbell, LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1949). See also 2. 167-168. See also, J. Gould, *Give and Take in Herodotus: The Fifteenth J.L. Myers Memorial Lecture,* (Oxford: 1991) 11.

[705] *Lev.* 19:18. For discussion on this command see articles by Serge Ruzer published in *Rev. Bib.* "From 'Love your Neighbour' to 'Love your Enemy': Trajectories in Early Jewish Exegesis," in *Rev. Bib.*109. 3. (2002), 371-389, and in "'Love your Enemy' Precept in the Sermon on the Mount in the Context of Early Jewish Exegesis: A New Perspective," *Rev. Bib,* 111. 2. (2004), 193-208.

[706] SM. *Mt.*7:12, SP. *Lk.*6:31. The emphasis in the SM that "this is the law and the prophets" is evidence of the place of the command to love one's neighbour in Torah.

receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.[707]

The critical comments of the Golden Rule contained in the SP 6:32c, 33c, and 34c and also in the SM 5:46c and 47c, are observations on everyday occurrences. Of interest is the fact that in the SP those who were criticised were described as sinners (ἁμαρτωλοὶ), while in the SM the criticism was directed to two groups – the tax collectors (τελῶναι) and the Gentiles (ἐθνικοὶ). It is pertinent to consider why the SM was specific about those who in the SP were described by the generalised term sinners. It might be suggested that in the record of the saying of Jesus in the SM there was a recognition that in the Jewish eyes tax collectors, normally the agents of a foreign power, and Gentiles were the enemies of the people and as such represented a threat to their culture and beliefs.[708]

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[707] SP.*Lk.* 6:32-34. Cf *Didache* 1:3, and 2 *Clem.*13:4. On the use of the Greek words χάρις and μίσθος see F. Bovon, *L'Évangile Selon Saint Luc (1,1 –9,50),* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1991) 310-311 and Betz, *Sermon,* 600-601, who states that "the term χάρις ...belongs to the common ancient understanding of personal relationships as exchanges of favors that built credit in the eyes of the partner." (600). Aristotle in *EN.* 1133 a 2-4 wrote that men gave "a prominent place to the shrine of the Charites so that there will be a return of benefits received. For this is what is special to χάρις: when someone has shown χάρις to us, we must do the same for him in return, and also ourselves take a lead in showing χάρις again."

[708] Gerd Theissen in *Social Reality and the Early Christians: Theology, Ethics, and the World of the New Testament,* (trans.) M.Kohl, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993) suggests that the reference to tax gatherers, who were in the pay of Rome, and to Gentiles, as a designation for the Romans themselves, indicated a period after the first Jewish Revolt and that the addressees were the radical itinerant preachers amongst the communities of the early disciples of Jesus in Palestine. He considers that the reference in the SM 5:41 to the angaria (τό ἀγγαρεύειν) as service rendered to the state or occupying power lends support to his thesis. He attributes the difference between the SM and the SP on this issue to the fact that the SP was directed towards communities which were settled and contained wealthy members; hence the emphasis in SP 6:34 on financial issues, such as lending without thought of return. When the saying about loving one's enemies is repeated in the SP 6: 35 it is accompanied by a further exhortation to lend expecting nothing in return. A similar emphasis on lending is to be found in the *Didache* 1:5. Aaron Milavec in "The Social Setting of 'Turning the Other Cheek' and 'Loving One's Enemies' in Light of the Didache", *BTB* 25 (1995), 131-143, provides a contrary view to that of Theissen. His principal argument is that "[p]eacemaking" and "enemies...may have little to do with soldier-civilian affairs and much to do with the deep divisions in families occasioned not by war or other factors within Judean society, but with the very promotion of the gospel." (136). For Milavec the radical call to discipleship led to dissension within families and led to the description in *Mt.* 10: 34-36 of the effect of the influence of Jesus on the lives of members of such families. "Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in –law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household." See Bovon , *L'Évangile* , 305-306 on the Sitz im Leben of the versions of the sayings of Jesus in *Matthew* and *Luke.* Cf. the introduction in Betz, *Sermon,* 1-88. On interfamilial disputes arising from adherence to Jesus see chapter five in this thesis on the marginalised in Judean society.

In the discussion above the criterion for acknowledging who were one's friends /neighbours was based on a relationship which came into existence with the exchange of favours and which built credit for the person who bestowed the favour. The existence of the institution of the host /guest relationship in both the classical and Hellenistic periods indicates that a reciprocal association was not restricted by national or cultural boundaries.[709] That this relationship was confirmed by an exchange of favours shows that it too conformed to an established code of reciprocity. The creation of these relationships prompts a question about their fate if the code was violated. Did this violation turn an erstwhile friend into an enemy? The perceived reaction in the ancient world was that those who violated the beliefs and customs of the group put themselves outside their communities and consequently were to be treated as enemies.

Who is my enemy?

It is possible to speak of one's enemies as belonging to particular groups who can be categorised as national enemies (external enemies of the state) or as those who, because of their opposition to the generally accepted mores and ethos of a society, attempt to overturn that society, or as those who express hostility on a personal level.[710]

As is seen above in the discussion concerning the implementation of the ius talionis and the treatment of one's friends/neighbours ancient societies by and large deemed it proper to hate one's enemies.[711] And so Menon in Plato's dialogue of the same name, when asked to define virtue, answered:

[709] The *LSJ* translation of the Greek term ξένος includes "a guest-friend, i.e. any citizen of a foreign state with whom one has a treaty of hospitality for oneself and heirs, confirmed by mutual presents (ξένια) and an appeal to Ζεὺς ξένιος."

[710] Ancient Greek had two words - ὁ πολέμιος and ὁ ἐχθρός - to express the English word enemy. The word πολέμιος, a cognate of ὁ πόλεμος meaning war, is not found in the Gospels; the word ἐχθρός is used and is generally applied to a personal enemy. This word is also used in the LXX in *Ex.* 23:4-5, where the Vulgate uses the Latin word inimicus.

[711] See Reiser, "Love of Enemies", 416, n. 36.

> A man's virtue is this, that he be competent to manage the affairs of his city and to manage them so as to benefit his friends and harm his enemies.[712]

and Xenophon wrote that Cyrus on his death bed urged those around him,

> Take note of my last words: If you do good to your friends you will also be able to punish your enemies.[713]

From some of his writings it is apparent that Aristotle accepted the maxim that one should do good to one's friends and harm to one's enemies.

> It is noble to avenge oneself on one's enemies and not to come to terms with them: for retaliation (το ἀνταποδιδόναι) is just (δίκαιον) and what is just is noble and not to put up with defeat is courage.[714]

In another of his works Aristotle appeared to place doing good to one's friends and doing harm to one's enemies in the same equation when he stated:

> Doing good to friends and evil to enemies are not contraries: for both are decisions of choice and belong to the same disposition.[715]

Reiser in a comment on the maxim, "help your friends and hate your enemies," emphasises that no reminder was necessary in an ancient society to hate one's enemy.

> In antiquity it was hardly necessary to tell people expressly to harm their enemies. The desire to take revenge was regarded as self-evident. Revenge was seen as a matter of honour.[716]

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[712] Plato, *Menon,* 71e, (trans.) W.R.M. Lamb, Vol.11. LCL, (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP / London: Heinemann, 1924, (1967[5])). Cf. Xenophon, *Memorabilia,* 2.6.35, (trans.) E.C. Marchant, Vol.4. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1923 (1968[6])).

[713] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia,* 8.7.28, (trans.) W. Miller, Vol.2. LCL, (London: Heinemann/ New York: Macmillan, 1914).

[714] Aristotle, *The 'Art' of Rhetoric,* 1367a 19-20, (trans.) J.H. Freese, LCL.

[715] Aristotle, *Topica,* 113a2-3, (trans.) E.S. Forster, LCL, (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP / London: Heinemann, 1960 (1966[2])). Gregory Vlastos in *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher,* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991). comments that although the quotations "do not come from his ethical writings and do not express moral insights of his own...they do show that his creative moral thought does not transcend the traditional sentiment in which the justice of the *talio* is enshrined. Great moralist though he is, Aristotle has not yet got it through his head that *if someone has done a nasty thing to me this does not give me the slightest moral justification for doing the same nasty thing, or any nasty thing, to him.*" (190).

[716] Reiser, "Love of Enemies", 413. For a discussion on the difference between punishment and revenge see Plato, *Protagoras.* 324a-b. (trans.) W.R.M. Lamb, Vol. 2. LCL, (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP / London: Heinemann 1924 (1967[5])).

Blundell expresses the maxim similarly, but with a slightly different emphasis, when she writes: "Harm Enemies tends towards the descriptive and Help Friends to the prescriptive."[717]

It is the perceived view amongst commentators that in the Greek tradition where one's enemies were concerned one neither returned evil with good[718] nor exercised an act of forgiveness.[719] Even where exceptions to this view might be found, for example, in the writings of later Greek philosophers, emphasis was placed on the possibility of the gain which might accrue from turning enemies into friends. This was the case in Plutarch's *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate,* in which he illustrated the benefits to be gained from turning enemies into friends.[720] It is obvious from what Plutarch wrote that his thinking on this issue was influenced to some degree by the Golden Rule. But, as Reiser stresses, the application of that rule might not necessarily provide a "direct route to the ethics of loving one's enemies, as Albrecht Dihle declared, because the golden rule 'evaluates all actions from the principle of reciprocity.'" [721]

However, from Socrates onwards in the writings of Greek philosophers there is evidence of an ethical tradition which runs contrary to that of the generally accepted behaviour towards one's enemy. Plato's dialogue, *Crito,* is an account of the discussion which Socrates had with Crito to explain his decision not to attempt to escape and avoid the punishment which the court had decided. Gregory Vlastos in his analysis of Socrates' decision highlights five principles on which Socrates based his argument.[722]

1. One should never do injustice - οὐδαμῶς δεῖ ἀδικεῖν.
2. One should never return an injustice - οὐδαμῶς δεῖ ἀνταδικεῖν.
3. One should never do evil (κακουργεῖν) to anyone.

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[717] Blundell, *Helping Friends,* 57.
[718] Reiser, "Love of Enemies", 415.
[719] Blundell, *Helping Friends,* 243.
[720] For benefits which might be gained from treating enemies as friends see Plutarch, *Moralia,* 86D-E, 90E-F, 91A, 91B-E, 92B, (trans.) F.C. Babbitt, Vol. 2. LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1928 (1962[3])).
[721] Reiser, "Love of Enemies", 416-417. Reiser cites A. Dihle, *Die Goldene Regel. Eine Einführung in die Geschichte der antiken und frühchristlichen Vulgärethik,* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,1962) 116.
[722] Plato, *Crito,* 48b-49c, (trans.) H.N. Fowler, Vol. 1. LCL. For Vlastos' analysis see his *Socrates,* 194-197.

4. One should never do evil to anyone in retaliation (ἀντικακουργεῖν).
5. There is no difference between injuring people and doing an injustice to them-
   τὸ γάρ κακῶς ποιεῖν ἀνθρώπους τοῦ ἀδικεῖν οὐδὲν διαφέρει.

From these principles it follows that one ought not to return a wrong or an injury to anyone whatever the provocation. In coming to this conclusion Socrates was fully aware that there was likely to be no common agreement on its rightness between those who accepted it and those who did not.[723] Socrates' principles represented a challenge to the accepted practice of the Athenian people in relation to their enemies. However, as Vlastos asserts, "they do not account for the break [with the 'established morality'] by themselves."[724] Socrates provides us with a logical argument premised on his first principle.

It might be argued that reference to Vlastos' analysis of Socrates' argument would be better placed in the discussion on the ius talionis above; however, it is possible to justify its inclusion at this point by suggesting that to call into play all the malign behaviour against one's enemies which hatred evoked was to do an injustice.[725]

In the continuing history of Greek philosophical thought the dictum drawn from Socrates' five principles, that to return a wrong or injury on any human being was wrong, was found in the writings of the Stoics. The ethical dimension envisaged in this philosophy sought to benefit any human being, to quote from an anonymous commentary on Plato's dialogue *Theatetus*, "even the most distant Mysian" - καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος Μυσῶν.[726] This commentary is an attack on the Stoic ethical theory, probably by a member of the Academy, and considers the basis of its dictum concerning the inclusivity of the human race.

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[723] Plato, *Crito,* 49d. Vol. 1. LCL
ὃς οὖν οὕτω δέδοκται καὶ οἷς μή, τούτοις οὐκ ἔστι κοινὴ βουλή.
[724] Vlastos, *Socrates,* 195.
[725] See Pindar, *2 Pyth.* 83-85, "Let me love him who loves me, but on a foe as foe I will descend, wolf-like, in ever varying ways by crooked paths." The common attitude in the ancient world towards one's enemies might be summed up in the words of the slave sent to carry out Creusa's order to poison her son in Euripides *Ion,* 1046-1047, "When one wants to do evil to one's enemies, no moral code bars the way."
[726] The phrase πρὸς τὸν ἔσχατον Μυσῶν is an allusion to a phrase in Plato's dialogue *Theatetus* 209b.

> We have an affinitive relationship to members of the same species, but a man's relationship to his own fellow-citizens results from a closer affinity.[727] For affinity varies in its intensification. The assumption then of these people [the Stoics] who derive justice from a concept of affinity preserves justice if they are saying that a man's affinity in relation to his own is equal to his affinity to the most distant Mysian; however, there is no agreement that it is equal.[728]

The outcome of such a concept on the part of the Stoic was to strive to be of benefit to any human being, because, as Gill states "all human beings share the same fundamental rationality."[729] In practice it meant that the Stoic in his/her dealings with other human beings would not have acted unjustly. But it has to be stressed that the motivation to act justly towards all people would not have stemmed from love but from the recognition of that shared "fundamental rationality" which constituted humanity.[730]

Musonius Rufus, writing in the first century CE visualised the philosopher, the epitome of rationality, as the one who did not act unjustly. Although suffering injustice a philosopher would not be disturbed for he would not think "that disgrace lies in enduring injustices but rather in doing them."[731] To retaliate against a wrong inflicted was the mark of a "wild beast" not of a human being.

> ...to accept injury not in a spirit of savage resentment but to show ourselves not implacable towards those who wrong us, but rather to be the source of good hope to them, is characteristic of a benevolent and civilized way of life.[732]

Epictetus in the second century CE urged his students to consider the reason for a person's hurtful actions or words, suggesting that his/her

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[727] The use of the English word, *affinity*, is an attempt to translate the Greek word, οἰκείωσις, a word which has its origin in the context of the household. Gill in his article, "Altruism or Reciprocity in Greek Philosophy?," translates the Greek term by the English words, *appropriation* or *familiarization* stating that "[t]he dominant idea here is that ethical development enlarges one's sense of the category of persons whom one sees as, in some sense, 'one's own' (οἰκεῖος), and whom one is, correspondingly, disposed to benefit, until this category includes, in principle, any human being." 327.

[728] Long, A.A. & D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers.* Vol.1, (Cambridge: CUP, 1987) 350.

[729] Gill, "Altruism or Reciprocity," 326.

[730] Gill, "Altruism or Reciprocity," 327.

[731] Lutz, C.E. (ed. & trans.), *Musonius Rufus: "The Roman Socrates"*, (Newhaven: Yale, 1947) 79, οὐδ'οἴεται τὸ πάσχειν αὐτὰ αἰσχρόν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ποιεῖν μᾶλλον.

[732] Lutz, *Musonius Rufus,* 79,
τὸ δὲ δέχεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας μὴ ἀγρίως, μηδὲ ἀνήκεστον εἶναι τοῖς πλημμελήσασιν, ἀλλ'αἴτιον εἶναι αὐτοῖς ἐλπίδος χρηστῆς, ἡμέρου τρόπου καὶ φιλανθρώπου ἐστίν.

behaviour resulted from a wrong view of things and that the one who suffered most was the doer of the action. In the light of this the advice of Epictetus was to be "gentle with the one who reviles you. For you should say on each occasion, 'He thought that way about it.'"[733] Epictetus compared a victim who adopted such an attitude towards ill treatment to "the true cynic" who, when being beaten like a donkey, would not cease loving the person beating him as if he were his father or brother.[734]

Similar principles both in the Hebrew Scriptures and in other writings in the Jewish tradition appear to have governed the reaction of the people to their enemies. In commenting on this similarity Reiser remarks that "the divisions of one's fellow men into friends and enemies is as self-evident in the OT as in the Greco-Roman tradition. And we encounter much the same maxims and attitudes on the subject."[735] The words of Joab as he rebuked David's grief at the death of his son Absalom revealed the deep-seated effect of a culture in which honour and shame played a large part in decisions affecting attitudes governing who was a friend and who was an enemy.

> Today you [David] have covered with shame the faces of all your officers who have saved your life today... for love of those who hate you and hatred of those who love you. You have made it clear today that commanders and officers are nothing to you; for I perceive that if Absalom were alive and all of us dead today, then you would be pleased. So go out at once and speak kindly to your servants; for I swear by the Lord, if you do not go, not a man will stay with you this night.[736]

Not even the grief of a father for his son was allowed expression when that son had become his father's enemy and the enemy of the people.

When Jeremiah's goodness to his enemies had been repaid by their plotting against him his prayer was that their evil should be avenged.

> Therefore give their children over to famine; hurl them out to the power of the sword, let their wives become childless and

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[733] Epictetus, *Encheiridion,* 42, (trans.), W.A. Oldfather, Vol.2. LCL, (London: Heinemann/ New York; Putnam's, 1928), ἐπιφθέγγου γὰρ ἐφ'ἑκάστῳ ὅτι'ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ.'

[734] Epictetus, *Discourses* 3:22, Vol.2. LCL,
δέρεσθαι αὐτὸν δεῖ ὡς ὄνον και δερόμενον φιλεῖν αὐτοὺς τοὺς δέροντας ὡς πατέρα πάντων, ὡς ἀδελφόν.

[735] Reiser, "Love of Enemies", 418.

[736] 2 *Sam.*19:5-6.

> widowed. May their men meet death by pestilence, their youth be slain by the sword in battle. May a cry be heard from their houses when they bring the marauder suddenly upon them.[737]

The psalms which portrayed so many of the reactions to events with which the lives of the people were filled reiterate feelings akin to those expressed by Jeremiah whether they be against political/national or personal enemies. In Ps. 83 the plea was that God should act towards their enemies, who had conspired against them, as he had acted in the past.

> Do to them as you did to Midian, as to Sisera and Jabin at the Wadi Kishon who were destroyed at En-dor, who became dung for the ground... O my God, make them like whirling dust, like chaff before the wind.[738]

Ps.55 is a complaint about an enemy of a different kind, one who had betrayed a friend.

> It is not enemies who taunt me – I could bear that; it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me – I could hide from them. But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend with whom I kept pleasant company; we walked in the house of God with the throng... But my companion laid hands on a friend and violated a covenant with me with speech smoother than butter but with a heart set on war; with words that were softer than oil but in fact were drawn swords.

The culmination of this tally of ill use by a friend is a plea to God trusting in him to exact punishment.

> But you, O God, will cast them down into the lowest pit; the bloodthirsty and the treacherous shall not live out half their days.[739]

Throughout the psaltery the psalmists expressed satisfaction and joy at the misfortunes of their enemies.

> Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire let the wicked perish before God. But let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy.[740]

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[737] *Jer.* 18:21-22.
[738] *Ps.* 83:9-10, 13.
[739] Cf. *Ps.* 63-9-11; 143:12.
[740] *Ps.* 68:1-3, Cf. *Ps.* 68: 21-23; *Ps.*137:7-9.

However, despite the hostility towards one's enemies expressed in many of the passages in the Hebrew Scriptures there are sections which speak in different tones about attitudes towards, and relations with, one's enemies. Amongst the social laws which laid responsibility on people to observe certain codes of behaviour there is a softer picture of the obligations which people were expected to observe in relation to their enemies.

> When you come upon your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, you shall bring it back. When you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden and you would hold back from setting it free, you must help to set it free.[741]

It might be argued that the reference in the commandment to the animals of one's enemy is a recognition of the value of the animals and of the obligation not to damage the property of another rather than of regard for the person of the enemy. Philo interpreted this commandment in very much the same vein as Plutarch who saw the utilitarian value in assisting one's enemy. Philo wrote that a man by restoring the animal to its owner would be benefiting himself more than the owner because by his action he would receive "the greatest and most precious treasure in the whole world, true goodness."[742]

This concept of benefits to be obtained from "loving" one's enemies might be implied from the passage in *Proverbs* where the commandment is to attend to the needs of enemies.

> If your enemy is hungry feed him, if he is thirsty give him drink. In doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head and the lord will reward you with good things.[743]

The saying "to heap coals of fire upon his head" has been interpreted to suggest that the reaction of an enemy for food and water was one of remorse as he viewed what he had done to the donor of the gifts. When there is

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[741] *Ex.* 23:4-5. Cf. *Deut.* 22: 1-4 where the reference is to the animals belonging to one's neighbour.
[742] Philo, *De Virtutibus,* 117-118; (trans.) F.H. Colson, Vol.8. LCL, (London; Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1939).
[743] *Proverbs,* 25:21-22. Cf. *Rom.* 12:20.

added to this the promise of a reward from the Lord it is difficult to view the action as a disinterested one arising from love of one's enemies.[744]

In his article Reiser, however, points to one passage in the Hebrew Scriptures which, he suggests, is differently nuanced in meaning both from those which asserted the traditional view of enemies and from those in which concern for enemies arose from the possibility of some utilitarian advantage accruing to the benefactor. He refers to *Lev.* 19:17-18.

> You will not hate in your heart your brother; you will reprove your neighbour so that you will not incur guilt because of him. Your hand will not take vengeance nor will you vent your wrath against the children of your people; but you will love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.

In these two verses in the Septuagint version the negative form of the verbs to hate (οὐ μισήσεις), to avenge (οὐκ ἐκδικᾶται) and to vent one's anger (οὐ μηνιεῖς), appears, (in their affirmative forms they are found in expressions of hatred towards one's enemies). The only affirmative forms in these verses refer to the reproving of one's neighbour (ἐλέγξεις) and to the loving of one's neighbour as oneself (ἀγαπήσεις). It is Reiser's view that these instructions "comprise the ethical foundation of the community,"[745] coming as they do at the end of the passage in *Lev.* 19 which begins with the words of God spoken to Moses.

> Speak to all the congregation of the people and say to them, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

How far these commandments in vv. 17-18 challenge the traditional attitude of the Jews in dealing with their enemies, whether personal or national, is, as Reiser admits, difficult to assess. However, he makes one salient point; that the halakhic midrash found in the *Sifra Lev.*19:18 added an explanation. Having quoted the negative instructions, "it [the midrash] limits their relevance with a short comment: 'You may take revenge and harbour resentment against other people.'"[746] Reiser bases his reservation about the applicability of these commandments to behaviour towards one's

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[744] Brewer, E.C. *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable,* (first pub. 1870), (Millennium Edition, rev. A. Room), (London: Cassell & Co, 1999) 557.
[745] Reiser, "Love of Enemies," 420.
[746] Reiser, "Love of Enemies," 421.

enemies on the fact that the citing of the above comment from the midrash isolates the command to love one's neighbour from the other commandments.[747]

While Reiser might be justified in his view that the interpretation of this commandment cannot be found in the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures he is able to point to the fact that in the haggadic tradition there existed a trajectory towards "refraining from revenge and ...being prepared for reconciliation."[748] The various writings from the intertestamental period included accounts of the concern of people for the needs of those who had been their enemies and of the necessity to forgive those who had sought to wrong or injure them.

4 *Maccabees,* a work which its author described as "highly philosophical," is a justification of the belief that "devout reason is absolute master of the passions."[749] Its supremacy extended to the application of Torah to every aspect of life. And so the writer could state that

> You should not think it paradoxical that reason is able through the Law to master enmity so that a man will not cut down the trees in his enemy's orchard and will save the property of his adversary from marauders and raise up his beast when it has fallen.[750]

There is no indication in this passage of any utilitarian gain accruing from one's actions, but rather it indicated the reaction of the philosopher to a situation which he might meet.[751]

Another genre of literature, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* which Elias Bickerman describes as a "primitive historical novel," set out the stories of "characters and happenings that indirectly inculcated in the

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[747] Reiser, "Love of Enemies," 421 "Only after this comment does the midrash continue, citing the rest of the biblical verse with the commandment of loving one's neighbour. Thus this commandment is isolated and an interpretation in terms of loving one's enemies becomes impossible." In Luke's gospel (10:28-29) we read that the lawyer who asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life was able to quote as part of Torah that he should love his neighbour as himself – a direct quotation from *Lev.* 19:18. However his further question, "Who is my neighbour?" would suggest that the significance of the verse had not been fully understood.

[748] Reiser, "Love of Enemies," 421.

[749] 4 *Macc.* 1:1. For a discussion on the supremacy of reason in the opening chapters of the work see H. Anderson in "4 Maccabees: A New Translation and Introduction," in Charlesworth, *OTP.* Vol. 2, 532-542.

[750] 4 *Macc.* 2:14.

[751] Cf. the views of the Stoic philosophers, Musonius Rufus and Epictetus, discussed above.

reader proper notions concerning pious men and right behavior." Bickerman points to the popularity of this type of story amongst ancient readers proving "that it was primarily a good story that entertained its readers."[752] The twelve patriarchs were the sons of Jacob and their testaments were their words of advice and warning to their children gathered around their deathbed. These testaments provided opportunities for an explanation of various ethical issues which had exercised the minds and affected the behaviour of the patriarchs.[753] Gad urged his children not to behave as he had towards his brother Joseph but rather to show love to one another from the heart.

> If anyone sins against you, speak to him in peace. Expel the venom of hatred and do not harbour deceit in your heart. If anyone confesses and repents, forgive him. If anyone denies his guilt, do not be contentious with him, otherwise he may start cursing and you would be sinning doubly.[754]

Among the qualities of the good man which Benjamin recommended to his children was a love for those who wronged them similar to the love which they had for themselves.[755]

It is, however, in Joseph's advice to his children that we see what was implied in the concept of loving one's neighbour, first seen in *Lev.*19:18. Joseph urged his children to behave in a similar way to that in which he behaved towards his brothers when they came to Egypt. He told them that his concern was not to disgrace his brothers but rather to conceal the way in which they had treated him. Therefore he pleaded with his children that they too should love one another "and in patient endurance conceal one another's shortcomings," for "God is delighted by harmony among brothers and by the intention of a kind heart that takes pleasure in goodness."[756]

The novelistic element which Bickerman recognises in the *Testaments* is also in evidence in other Jewish narratives which appeared in the period

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[752]Bickerman, E.J, *The Jews in the Greek Age,* (Cambridge, Mass. /London: HUP, 1988) 210.
[753]In citing the *T12P* it is necessary to point out that there are some later Christian interpolations in the text probably dating from the second century CE. Kee in his introduction to the Testaments in Charlesworth, *OTP,* Vol.1. 777 writes that "the basic writing gives no evidence of having been composed by anyone other than a hellenized Jew."
[754]TGad. 6:3-5, *OTP.* 816.
[755] TBen. 4:3, *OTP,* 826.
[756] TJos. 17: 2-3 in *OTP.* 823.

between c.200 BCE and 100 CE.[757] The evidence which we have from the number of different narratives and of variant versions of each would lead to the assumption that they formed part of the popular literature of the period.[758]

The story of Joseph and Aseneth, written sometime between the first century BCE and the second century CE, is composed of two parts. The second part is an account of the happenings which took place after Jacob and his sons had settled in Goshen in Egypt.[759] Two incidents occurred in the story at this point which involved decisions about those who were considered enemies. In the first Pharaoh's son attempted to recruit the help of Simeon and Levi to kill Joseph so that he might marry Aseneth. Simeon's reaction to that suggestion was to draw his sword in order to kill Pharaoh's son, but Levi realising his brother's intention prevented him, saying "Why are you furious with anger with this man? And we are men who worship God and it does not befit us to repay evil for evil." Later Pharaoh's son secured the support of the sons of Bilhah and of Zilpah[760] to carry out a plan to kill Aseneth , but he was thwarted when the sons of Leah[761] defeated their half-brothers. Simeon sought to avenge their misdeeds but Aseneth intervened.

> Simeon said to her, "Why does our mistress speak good things on behalf of her enemies? No, let us cut them down with our swords, because they were first to plan evil things against us and against our father Israel and against our brother Joseph, this already twice, and against you, our mistress and queen, today." And Aseneth stretched out her right hand and touched Simeon's beard and kissed him and said, "By no means, brother, will you

[757] These narratives include Greek additions to the Septuagint version of Daniel, the stories of Tobit and of Judith, the Greek additions to the story of Esther and the story of Joseph and Aseneth.
[758] On these Jewish "novels" see L.M. Wills, "Ascetic Theology," 907. See also E. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism,* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1998) passim, on the use of fiction to reinvent a sense of the Jewish past. Of interest in relation to the assumed popularity of these texts is the discovery which J.T. Milik made in his examination of fragments of texts found in cave 4 in Qumran, namely that fragments of texts of these "Jewish" novels were copied in smaller scrolls than others. Milik writes in "Les Modèles Araméens du Livre D' Esther dans la Grotte 4 de Qumrân", in *Rev.Q* 59 (1992), "De toute évidence sur des rouleaux si petits on copiait les écrits de faible étendue, le format de nos 'nouvelles', par opposition à des 'romans' comme le livre de *Tobie* ou des 'chroniques' comme le livre des *Jubilés*....Ils [nouvelles] méritent bien l' appellation d' 'éditions de poche' de l' antiquité." (364-365).
[759] *Gen.* 47:27.
[760] Dan, Gad, Naphtali and Asher.
[761] Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulum.

> do evil for evil to your neighbour. To the Lord will you give the right to punish the insult done by them."[762]

Aseneth's words to Simeon restraining his desire to avenge the wrongs committed by his half-brothers did not represent an unconditional love of enemies since she acknowledged that the meting out of justice was the prerogative of God.[763]

The use of the word neighbour in the above quotation brings to mind again the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbour?" If there is a breach in a neighbourly relationship so that wrong or injury is perpetrated against an erstwhile neighbour, does the perpetrator remain a neighbour? If so, are the commandments contained in *Lev.* 19:17-18 still applicable in the changed situation and is this what loving one's enemy means? The argument of Socrates in the *Crito* seemed to have implied this. And the sayings of Jesus in SP 6: 27-30 enjoined such conduct on his followers. However, it might be argued that *Lev.* 19:17-18 and the references in the *Testaments* and other intertestamental writings were directed to those who were members of the Jewish community while it is argued that the sayings of Jesus had wider application to those outside.[764]

In summary, the foregoing section on the love of one's enemies has been an attempt to indicate and evaluate cultural, social and religious factors which conditioned attitudes of members of groups in the ancient Eastern Mediterranean to the way in which they related to each other and to those who belonged to other groups.

It is apparent that over a long period of time the observance of the ius talionis exercised a considerable influence on the concept of justice between members of communities and also between communities. The influence which it had on some of the thinking at the time can be judged by the view expressed by Philo in the first century CE that the implementation of the ius talionis was an assurance of equality within a community. However, it has

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[762] "Joseph and Aseneth", in Charlesworth, *OTP* Vol. 2, 246.
[763] *Deut.* 32:35.
[764] Konradt, M. "The Love Command in Matthew, James, and the Didache," in *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Settings,* (edd.) H. van de Sandt and J.K. Zangenberg, (Atlanta: SBL, 2008) 271- 288 (274).

been shown that there were attempts to alleviate what some people considered the harsh terms of the law by substituting financial compensation as a form of retribution. It is significant that in the SM. 5:38 the phrase of the ius talionis which encapsulated the law in the popular psyche heralded the sayings of Jesus concerning the taking of a non-retaliatory stance with those who committed evil deeds.

The description in the sayings of Jesus of the way in which reciprocity worked was an attack on a widely used method of establishing ties of friendship in communities. In both the SM and SP the clear message was that friendship based on reciprocal practices could not be used to make a clear distinction between the followers of Jesus and those who were seen as sinners in the SP and categorised as taxgatherers and Gentiles in the SM.[765]

What did "loving one's enemies" mean to the followers of Jesus?

In the previous section the survey of prevailing cultural mores, such as the implementation of the ius talionis in law codes, the use of reciprocity as a means of establishing and cementing ties of friendship and neighbourliness and the treatment of enemies, was an attempt to locate certain key factors which contributed to the attitudes and behaviour of people towards those who were perceived to be enemies. John Piper in his extensive study of this subject dealt with what might be termed the global situation existing in the eastern Mediterranean before turning his attention to the contemporary situation in Judaism in order to locate the saying of Jesus in its historical setting. His overall view was that "[t]he situation into which Jesus spoke his command was one in which love was a very limited affair."[766] Having focused the attention on this lack of love he briefly categorised the factors which determined his view.

The existence of sectarian divisions within Judaism at this time made it easy to fuel hatred of those who were not of a particular persuasion. Consequently the Pharisees were traditionally viewed as excluding those

[765] See SP. 6:32-34, and SM. 5:46-47.
[766] Piper, '*Love Your Enemies;*' 91.

who did not share their beliefs on such issues as the laws of purity and of tithing.[767]

The presence of the Romans provided the Jews with an enemy on whom it would be possible to vent their anger and hatred. Josephus in his account of the first rebellion of the Jews against the Romans described the motivation for their attack on the city of Ascalon as being fuelled by hatred.

> [Ascalon] is an ancient city, five hundred and twenty furlongs from Jerusalem, but the hatred with which the Jews had always regarded it made the distance of this, the first objective selected for attack, seem less.[768]

In accordance with the rules which governed the conduct of the members of the Qumran community there was enjoined upon them hatred of the sons of darkness, a hatred which is in marked contrast with the description of the Essenes found in the account of them contained in the writings of Josephus.[769] From the War Scroll, in which is described the final war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness, we read that the sons of darkness are referred to as "the army of Kittim", a term adopted from the Hebrew Scriptures and used to refer to the Romans.

> The dominion of the Kittim shall come to an end and iniquity shall be vanquished, leaving no remnant; [for the sons] of darkness there shall be no escape.[770]

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[767] Much of the evidence which gave rise to this perception of the Pharisees is derived from the writings of the early Christians, and thus would not have been wholly unbiased because it is possible that the two groups were in competition since they shared similar views in the sectarian spectrum which reflected the Judaisms of that period.

[768] Jos. *BJ.* 3: 9-12.
πόλις ἐστὶν ἀρχαία τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων εἴκοσι πρὸς τοῖς πεντακοσίοις ἀπέχουσα σταδίους, ἀεὶ διὰ μίσους Ἰουδαίοις γεγενημένη, διὸ καὶ τότε ταῖς πρώταις ὁρμαῖς ἐγγίων ἔδοξεν. Cf. the view of Philo expressed in *Legatio ad Gaium,* (trans.) E.M Smallwood, (Leiden: Brill, 1961). "So the scorpion-like slave Helicon injected his Egyptian poison into the Jews, and Apelles his poison from Ascalon. He came from Ascalon, and its inhabitants cherish an implacable and irreconcilable hatred for the Jews who live in the Holy Land and with whom they have a common frontier." (205).

[769] The Community Rule, (1QS, 1:10) in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 99. See Jos. *BJ.* 2: 139-142 on the oath which a man was expected to swear before entering joining the sect.

[770] The War Scroll, (1QM, 1:6) in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 163. In the Septuagint version of the Scriptures the term Kittim under various Greek form appear in Gen. 10:4 (Κίτιοι), Num. 24:24 (Κιτιάιοι), 1 Chron. 1:7 (Κίτιοι), Is. 23:1 (Κιτιαίοι), Jer. 2:10 (Χεττιεὶμ), Dan. 11:30 (Κίτιοι). A midrash on Balaam's prophecy in Num. 24;24 identifies the term Kittim with the Romans. See Vermes in *Scrolls,* 162-163 on the identification of the Kittim as the Romans from the description in the War Scroll of weapons and tactics used "which seem to be characteristically Roman." From these details and others contained on p.163 Vermes considers that the composition of the War Scroll should be dated in the "last decades of the first century BCE or at the beginning of the first century CE. See also J.T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea,* (trans.) J. Strugnell, (London: SCM, 1959) 122ff.

Among the generals who led the Jewish troops in the attempted capture of Ascalon, mentioned above, Josephus named John the Essene, a presence which seems to point to the active participation of Essenes/members of the Qumran community in hostility against the Romans.[771]

To what extent and in what ways the hatred of enemies expressed in the writings of Josephus and in the documents from Qumran represented the attitudes of ordinary Jews it is difficult to assess. Perhaps the saying of Jesus, which introduced the sixth antithesis in the SM, "You have heard the saying...", and the version in the SP, "but I say to you who are listening", are pertinent to the question where and in what circumstances they would have heard the saying, "Hate your enemies." There is no record of its existence among the commandments in Torah, although it might be inferred from the saying, "Love your neighbour," that those who were not one's neighbours were of necessity one's enemies. Such a perception might have seemed natural to Jews in their relationship with those who lacked the status of Israel granted by the covenant,

> The election of Israel, the covenant made with her, and the fact of the Law determine the concept of "neighbour."[772]

That they had heard the saying would suggest either it was a common view among the general population or that it was part of the message to which they would have listened in the synagogue or it was assumed to be the natural corollary of the Leviticus commandment, "Love your neighbour". From whatever source this arose hatred had always been regarded as the natural reaction to the perception of who was one's enemy.

In turning to the saying of Jesus in which he impressed upon his early followers the need to love one's enemies it is necessary to re-emphasise the iterative element of the present tense of a Greek verb which conveys the disciplinary or ascetic nature of the activity by its persistence.[773] And so the

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[771] Jos. *BJ.* 2:567 on the appointment of John the Essene as a general. See *BJ.* 3: 11 on his appointment as one of the leaders of the expedition against Ascalon, and *BJ.* 3:19 on his death at Ascalon. See Seitz, "Love Your Enemies," 50.

[772] Michel, O. "Das Gebot der Nächstenliebe in der Verkündigung Jesu," in *Zur sozialen Entscheidung: Vier Vorträge,* (Tübingen:1947) 53-101 (63), cited in Piper, *Love your Enemies,* 48.

[773] See the section on Listening (τό ἀκούειν) as an Ascetic Discipline in chapter four.

implications of loving one's enemies, which are found in the SM and the SP, need to be viewed in this light.

> Be persistent in praying for those who are persecuting you. Continue to do good to those who hate you. Keep on blessing those who put you under a curse, and do not cease to pray for those who abuse you[774].

To these were added the strategies for meeting the contingencies which arose in daily living, coping with such happenings as assault, robbery or a court case, response to those who were destitute and to those who took away one's goods.

> To the one who strikes you on the cheek offer the other also as a present; from the one who takes your coat do not withhold your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; from one who takes away your possessions do not demand their return.[775]

Along with the command in the SM. 5:44 to pray for those who persecute (διώκω) you, the commands in the SP. 6:27-28 can be seen as recalling the situation in which the disciples found themselves because of their following Jesus.[776] They were victims of hatred (μισέω), of exclusion (ἀφορίζω) from their natural communities, probably under a curse (καταράομαι), and subject to physical and/or verbal abuse (ἐπηρεάζω).[777] These commands were being addressed to those who had experienced, and were probably still experiencing, the harsh repercussions of the anger which their decision to follow Jesus had elicited.[778]

It is necessary to stress again that these demands were directed towards the followers of Jesus as precepts to enable them not only to inform their conduct in their own living but also to instruct others how to live their lives in accordance with the new ethics which following Jesus implied. Within the circumstances in which they found themselves to live that life

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[774] SM. 5:44, SP. 6:27-28.
[775] SP. 6:29-30.
[776] SP, 6:22
[777] See the discussion on marginalisation in chapter five, pp. 137-140.
[778] On the constituency to which these commands were directed and what was implied in fulfilling them, see R.A. Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis: 'love your Enemies' and the Doctrine of Non-Violence," *JAAR,* 54/1 (1986), 3-31, and A. Milavec, "The Social Setting of 'Turning the Other Cheek' and 'Loving One's Enemies' in Light of the Didache." *BTB,* 25 (1995), 131-143. The views expressed in both these articles will be discussed later in this chapter.

and to teach others to do so called for a disciplined approach which can be described as ascetic. To return good in the face of hatred, blessing as an answer to cursing, and prayer as a response to physical/mental abuse in a culture, in which the ius talionis and hatred of one's enemies still exercised an influence on people's ethical conduct, would not have been perceived as a normal, or a right, reaction. Indeed such behaviour would have been viewed as deviance.[779]

When we turn to the practicalities in which this new ethical conduct was encapsulated it is possible to see that both the SM and the SP were concerned with everyday living. Offering the other cheek, handing over one's shirt, giving to those in need and not demanding the return of (misappropriated?) goods can be viewed as actions taking place within a community. And so the 'enemies' could well have been former friends, even family members, with whom there had been a breach of relationships.[780] These sayings are reflections on a real situation in which the early followers of Jesus found themselves.

It is along such a trajectory that I wish to consider what the phrase "love of enemies" conveyed to the early disciples of Jesus. In an article, written in 1986, Richard Horsley questioned whether the saying "Love your enemies" and the sayings associated with it in both the SM and SP related to external/political enemies and to issues of non-violence and non-resistance. He questioned the traditional assumption that "whatever Jesus said (or did) is universally and absolutely valid;"[781] he argued that there was a need to locate the ethical response of people within a social context.[782] Consequently he questioned and attempted to address the issues which assumptions, made by scholars (pre 1986), raised in the interpretation of the

[779] See the discussion on deviance in chapter five.
[780] See the complaint of a broken friendship in Ps. 55.
[781] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis," 4. Luise Schottroff in her essay, "Non-Violence and the Love of One's Enemies," in *Essays on the Love Commandment,*, (trans. R.H. & I. Fuller), (Phil: Fortress Press,1978), criticised this interpretation in the case of Rudolf Bultmann in *Jesus and the Word,* (New York: 1958) 112, and of Herbert Braun in *Spätjüdisch-häretischer und frühchristlicher Radikalismus 11,* (Tübingen: 1957) 91.
[782] See Deal's view on the need to consider the "historio-cultural" background of a group in an assessment of its ascetic behaviour in "Toward a Politics of Asceticism," in *Asceticism,* (edd.) Wimbush & Valantasis, 428. See the discussion of Deal's view in chapter one of this study pp.41-42.

saying "Love your enemies" and the related sayings, by asserting that those sayings had "a context and implications very different from what is assumed in most of the recent scholarly discussion."[783] He questioned the common assumption that the term, enemy (ἐχθρός), implied a political/foreign enemy,[784] stating that in the LXX ἐχθρός was also used to designate someone with whom one had fallen out or had disagreed.[785] If one's enemy was seen in the context of the falling out of erstwhile friends or of strained relationship within a community then the physical reaction to such a situation typified in the SP as a response to violence provided a picture of hostile relationships on a small stage. To see the saying of Jesus in this light does not detract from the behaviour of the injured party as a peacemaker; rather it puts the injured person in a stronger position of influence in that he/she has by such a reaction removed from the offender the further exercise of power. In the SM the reaction to aggression is separated from the command to love one's enemies and forms part of the antithesis which refutes the ius talionis.[786] In this connection the aggression and the reaction to it can be interpreted as a quarrel or disagreement at a personal level. However, by separating the non-violent reaction to violence from the commandment to love one's enemy it might be inferred that the enemy referred to in SM. 5:43-44 represent foreign/political foes. Such an inference gains some strength from the further commandment, "Pray for those who persecute (διώκω) you" with its reminder of the ninth makarism, "Blessed are you whenever they revile you and persecute (διώκω) you," where the persecutors are assumed to be the Romans.

Horsley also questioned the assumption that the saying "Love your enemies" was a response on the part of the followers of Jesus to the hatred of the Zealots towards the Romans. He argued that the existence of such a group was "a modern scholarly construct without basis in historical evidence."[787] He could find no evidence in Josephus or in rabbinical texts or

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[783] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis," 5.
[784] Seitz, O.J.F, "Love Your Enemies," *NTS* 16 (1969), 39-54, (44).
[785] See Ex. 23: 4-5, Ps. 55:13. In both these cases the Vulgate uses the Latin term inimicus to translate the term ἐχθρός. See *TDNT* 2, 811-815 on the use of ἐχθρός.
[786] On the use of the antithetical structure in the SM see Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis," 8-9, 11.
[787] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis,"10.

in the New Testament of the existence of "an organized movement of armed opposition of Roman rule."[788] Horsley acknowledged that there might have been confusion in the sources between two groups, the Zealots and the Sicarii, as the successors of what Josephus in his discussion of the three "ancient Jewish philosophies" called the "fourth philosophy"[789] founded by Judas of Galilee in 6 CE. The Sicarii were active in the middle decades of the first century CE.[790] However, the appearance of the Zealots as a military group can be dated to the period during the Jewish revolt in 67-68 CE.[791] In his criticism of the emphasis which commentators and scholars placed on the sayings in the SP 6: 27- 36 and in the SM 5: 38-48 as issues of violence and non-violence Horsley pointed to the fact that such an emphasis presupposed that these sayings were shaped "in conscious opposition to the Zealots." [792]

Horsley's argument has substance in his assertion that the term enemies should not necessarily imply foreign domination but it lacks cogency when he suggests that there is no evidence of the use of violence in the sayings. Violence is about the relationship between people whether of one's own nationality or about the interrelationship between members of different nationalities. The whole catalogue of actions and words to which the followers of Jesus were urged not to retaliate involved violence, whether physical or otherwise; persecution, hatred, cursing and verbal abuse are manifestations of violence.[793]

Horsley is probably correct when he points out that the persecution of which the SM. 6:44 speaks has to be seen in the context of interpersonal relations between members of the same community. But he does not relate

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[788]Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis," For a contrary view see K. Kohler, "The Zealots" in *The Jewish Encyclopedia;* M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten,* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), idem, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?,* (Phil: Fortress Press, 1971), idem, *Victory Over Violence,* (Phil: Fortress Press, 1973).

[789] Jos, *Ant,*18, 23.

[790] Jos, *BJ,* 2. 254-257.

[791] Jos, *BJ,* 2.651.

[792] Horsley, *Ethics and Exegesis,* 13. As evidence of the interpretation of these sayings as issues of violence and non-violence Horsley cites the titles of the following books and articles: M. Hengel, *Victory over Violence,* L. Schottroff, "Non-Violence and Love of One's Enemies, R.J. Daly, "The New Testament and the Early Church ," in *Non-Violence – Central to Christian Spirituality: Perspectives from Scripture to the Present,* (ed.) J.T. Culliton, (Toronto: Edwin Mellen,1982). See also K. Stendahl, "Hate, Non-Retaliation and Love: 1QS 10, 17-20 and Romans 12: 19-21," in *HTR* 55 (1962).

[793] Horsley seems partially to acknowledge this in his footnote 12 on page 13.

this specifically to the fate of those who were marginalised as a result of their decision to follow Jesus. Moreover, his translation of the Greek phrase, μή ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ (SM. 5:39), as "to protest or testify against maltreatment" seems to miss the point of the response of the injured party. The offering of the other cheek – to use this as a paradigm of the reaction to injury or insult – has to be seen as the excess (τι περισσόν) which was expected of the early followers of Jesus in their relationship with others.[794] The significance of the call of Jesus to his followers to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees has been subsumed into the discussion which has taken place as to whether it was the intention of Jesus to annul the Mosaic Torah in direct contravention of his previous saying that he had not come to abolish Torah.

> Do not think that I come to abolish the law and the prophets. I am not come to abolish but to fulfil them.[795]

Horsley noting the above quotation from the SM states that these sayings of Jesus about loving one's enemies and refusing to retaliate did not establish new law "in the broad sense, certainly not to the point of abolishing the old Mosaic Law."[796] They pointed rather to the need for a change of heart towards those who caused suffering to those to whom they were opposed. Earlier attention has been drawn to the probability that the sayings of Jesus in the SP 6:27-36 related to the experiences of the followers of Jesus as a result of their decision to follow Jesus.

In toto those experiences manifested their exclusion from their natural communities. As Horsley states, it is easy to understand the "enemies,

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[794] SM. 5:20 "For I say to you that unless your righteousness goes further than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you may not enter the kingdom of heaven."
λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλεῖον τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων,οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.
On the concept of το περισσόν see Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship,* 136-138.

[795] *Mt.* SM. 5:17,
μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφήτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι.

[796] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis," 15. Cf. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount,* 102, "The point is that in none of the antitheses is there an intention to annul the provisions of the Law but only to carry them to their ultimate meaning." See also Piper, *Love your Enemies,* 89,90,95 on the interpretation of these in a way similar to that in which Jesus dealt with the question of divorce in *Mk.* 10:2-9. Moses in his law on divorce took into consideration the "hardness of men's hearts", Jesus presented a much more rigorous response to divorce.

haters, cursers, abusers" in the context of local interaction.[797] However, his interpretation of these sayings presents them as a comment on the socio-economic condition existing in the Galilee in the early decades of the first century CE.[798] He appears to have passed over with very little emphasis the peculiar fate of those who were the first recipients of these sayings either as the followers of Jesus or as members of the Matthean or Lukan communities. In so doing he blurs the distinction between those Galileans who for no fault of their own suffered as a result of those socio-economic conditions, and the followers of Jesus who voluntarily accepted the consequences of their decision, of which the SP 6:20-22 are a record. The voluntary acceptance of the consequences of one's decisions and actions is a mark of ascetic practice.[799]

Horsley states that his reading of the "love your enemies" passages involves a clear shift of focus towards the concrete situation in which Jesus and his followers found themselves.[800] However, such a shift of focus represents a challenge to a consensus view that the commandment of Jesus to love one's enemies reflected the political situation in Palestine under Roman rule. This consensus view has been supported by Tom Wright in his comments that the antitheses in the SM demonstrated the changes which Jesus' teaching would bring.

> The antitheses would be received, within Jesus' ministry, as a challenge to a new way of being Israel, a way which faced *the present situation of national tension* and tackled it in an astonishing and radical new way.[801] (my italics)

His (Wright's) reference to *national tension* as well as his reading of the Greek term ἀντιστῆναι in SM 5:39, which, he maintains, does not refer to "hostilities or village-level animosity" but rather to "revolutionary resistance of a specifically military variety"[802] is a criticism of Horsley's thesis. Horsley's position has also received criticism from another direction in that

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[797] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis," 20.
[798] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis, 22. "These sayings of Jesus appear to be addressed to people caught in precisely such a situation."
[799] See Kaelber's definition of asceticism in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion,* 441.
[800] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis," 23.
[801] N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God,* (Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996) 290.
[802] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God,* 290.

it failed to recognise the reason for the already marginalised condition of the followers of Jesus to whom both the SM and SP were addressed. Notwithstanding this, Horsley's contribution to a hermeneutic of the sayings of Jesus in SP 6:27-36 and SM 5:38-48 has been valuable to the discussion. The location of the constituency, to which the sayings referred, in the local village community is important, although as a clear shift of focus toward Jesus and his followers it does not go far enough to relate to their peculiar circumstances as members of alienated and marginalised groups within communities. However, Horsley's recognition that "the movement gathered around Jesus" posed a threat to the ruling groups provides a thesis of the counter cultural nature of that group.[803]

From Horsley's article it has been possible to extrapolate a *Sitz im Leben* for the sayings of Jesus associated with love of one's enemies and non-retaliation. They refer to the social conditions of a particular group/s in its/their peculiar local situation. Aaron Milavec's purpose in a paper published in 1995 was to analyse further the concept of a community as the setting in which attempts were made to resolve the tensions so obviously contained in the sayings.[804] He comments on the fact that the sayings had "meant different things to different people," and consequently it was necessary to reconstruct the social setting in which they might be interpreted. This, he considers, was true not only about the setting in which the wandering charismatic prophets of the first century CE had been called to observe the sayings of Jesus but also for the groups of Jesus' followers to whom the sayings were addressed in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and for those Gentiles for whom the *Didache* was written.[805]

As a basis for his exploration of the social situation of these groups Milavec adopts a critical approach to writings of Gerd Theissen.[806] Theissen's thesis according to Milavec is that the *Sitz im Leben* of the hostile actions described in the SP 6:29 was the behaviour to which the

[803] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis," 23.
[804] Milavec, A. "The Social setting of 'Turning the Other Cheek' and 'Loving One's Enemies' in the light of the Didache," 131-143.
[805] Milavec, "Social Setting," 131. See Betz, *Sermon*, 294-328, for an extended discussion on the interpretation of these sayings.
[806] Theissen, G, *Social Reality and the Early Christians,* 115-156.

wandering charismatics were subjected as "wayfarers and travellers."[807] Theissen, however, aware of the varying interpretations placed on these sayings had made an attempt to explain them as follows:

> Jesus formulated the commandment that we should love our enemies and renounce violence at a time when his demands could fall on fruitful ground, since non-violent conflict strategies had proved effective against the Romans.[808] But Jesus' demand goes far beyond every specific situation. It is general. It takes no account of effectiveness or non- effectiveness. It does not merely demand the renunciation of violence. It demands that the enemy be loved, without any reservation. Just because it was formulated generally and apodictically, it could continually be brought up to date. Jesus'disciples – roving itinerant charismatics – were able to relate his commandment to their situation; the persecuted prophets were thus able to free themselves from hate for their persecutors. The congregations behind the Gospel of Matthew bring the commandment up to date in the period following the crushing of the Jewish revolt, in order – as people outwardly defeated - to meet the victors as inwardly sovereign. The Lukan congregations associate love of enemies with conflicts between the people who lend money and their debtors. In the second century, the commandment became the apologetic argument which was intended to assure a mistrustful public that the Christians were free of sectarian misanthropy...[809]

It is apparent from this conclusion with its reference to the effects of the Jewish rebellion and the persecution suffered by the followers of Jesus, whether at the hands of highway robbers or of the Romans, that Theissen would not have agreed with Horsley's thesis that "the cluster of sayings keynoted by 'love your enemies' pertains neither to external, political enemies nor to the question of non-violence or non-retaliation."[810] Milavec in the analysis of Theissen's thesis goes further than the views expressed by Horsley and locates the hostility to which these sayings refer to familial quarrels. It was the hostility to which Peter was referring when he said to

[807] Theissen, *Social Reality,* 142. See Milavec, "Social Setting," 132. "... the original context of 'turning the other cheek' and 'loving one's enemies' can be seen as representing the working rules governing the transient life of the wandering charismatic 'prophets within the Jesus movement.'"
[808] Theissen refers to two events which took place concerning relationships between the Jews and the Romans which suggest that peaceful protests by Jews against what they considered violations of Jewish religious practices had proved successful. These occurred in 26/27 CE and 39 CE. For an account of these incidents see Theissen *Social Reality,* 150-153 and Jos. *BJ.* 2:169-174; 184-203.
[809] Theissen, *Social Reality,* 154.
[810] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis,"3.

Jesus that the disciples had left everything to follow him.[811] In the Gospels of Matthew and of Luke the division in families was more starkly depicted.

> Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household.[812]

In *Lk.* and in the *GTh.* the relationship which existed in families is described as one of hatred as a result of the adherence of some members to Jesus.

> Whoever comes to me and does not hate (μισέω) father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, even life itself, cannot be my disciple.[813]

These sayings indicate that the enmity was present within households and that it was intergenerational. Having established as the basis of his thesis this scenario of domestic discord, Milavec is probably correct to suggest that the enmity represented the opposition of an older generation to the decision of a younger generation to follow Jesus. He sees the enmity manifested in the violent reaction of the older generation[814] to be the result of the likely effect which the decision of members of the younger generation might have on the fortune of the family and on its prestige as part of the community. In a tightly ordered patriarchal community any challenge by members of the younger generation to the authority of the head of the family would have been considered as bringing shame on that family.[815] Hence the ultimate fate of members of the younger generation who became followers of Jesus was expulsion from the family and from the community.

> Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.[816]

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[811] *Mk.*. 10; 28.
[812] *Mt.*, 10:34-36. Cf. *Lk.* 12: 51-53; *GTh.* 16.
[813] *Lk.* 14: 26; cf. *GTh.* 55, Jesus said, "Whoever does not hate father and mother cannot be my disciple, and whoever does not hate brothers and sisters, and carry the cross as I do, will not be worthy of me," In *Mt.* 10: 37 this saying of Jesus is expressed more delicately, but with the same implication; "Whoever loves (φιλέω) father and mother more than me is not worthy of me,..."
[814] See Milavec, "The Social Setting," 138-142 for his interpretation of the ways in which a father might thwart the attempts of a son to follow Jesus.
[815] See chapter five pp. 139-140 above on the operation of the honour/ shame code in ancient Mediterranean societies,
[816] *Lk.* 6: 22.

Conclusion.

In chapter four I expressed the view that those who heard and responded to the sayings of Jesus contained in the SM and SP were his disciples, the members of the early band of followers rather than the generality of the crowd. The texts of both *Mt.* 5:1b-2 and *Lk.*6:20 provide support for this view. In the light of this textual evidence I argued that it was to the condition of these followers that Jesus spoke, that is, to those who by choosing to follow him had adopted a style of living which was contrary to established cultural norms. However, the nature and importance of these sayings led early on to their adoption as definitive statements for universal application which all followers of Jesus should adopt in the face of persecution and aggression. Among very many commentators and scholars such has been the position in relation to living in accordance with these sayings of Jesus.

This consensus has centred around the view that the cluster of sayings attempted to set out a method of counteracting possible hostility from a military force of a foreign country.[817] This view has been challenged in the writings of Horsley and Milavec whose aim is to establish the *Sitz im Leben* of these sayings in a local situation. From the very nature of the injuries/offences inflicted, both of them illustrated how the reaction of an injured party not to retaliate in any way to an injury or offence represented a response on a small scale that is, in the social environment of a small community.

Horsley contends that these sayings contained strategies to combat/defuse disputes/quarrels at a local level between members of the same community, that is in a community which would have been found in rural Galilee in the early decades of the first century CE. The weaknesses in Horsley's thesis are his view that the sayings were not concerned with

[817] The promotion of this view is helped by the mention in the SM. 5:41 of the angaria which was a means employed by forces of occupation to commandeer from inhabitants of an occupied country assistance especially in matters of transportation. See *Mt.* 27: 32; *Mk.* 15: 21; *Did.* 1:4. However, Clancy in *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* questions this view asserting that "[i]n the time of Jesus, there were no army units, no colonists, and probably few, if any Roman administrators in Galilee. Jesus did not frequently interact with Roman soldiers there, nor did Galilee suffer the political and economic consequences of actual occupation." (69).

violence, and his failure to consider the peculiar circumstances of the followers of Jesus to whom the sayings were addressed.

Milavec restricts the environment in which the reactions envisaged in these sayings took place to that of a family dispute. The enemies were members of one's own family.[818] Those who were subject to abuse and injury were those who had decided to become followers of Jesus and it was they who were called upon to love, and not retaliate against, those who were opposed to their decision. The sayings provided coping strategies for these members, who were probably from amongst the younger generation of a family. In closely-knit family circles the decisions of these members would have had economic and social repercussions against which it was the role of the older generation, especially the patriarch, to safeguard; in that situation conflict was inevitable between the generations.[819]

From the texts as we have them it is obvious that the origin of these sayings has to be located within the group/s of Jesus' followers. If this is the case, then Milavec's thesis that they had their origin in the dissension in a family situation is the more probable. These sayings then can be seen as an attempt to diffuse tension which might have arisen when efforts were made to thwart the intentions of some members, possibly of a younger generation, to become followers of Jesus. The discipline which these members were called upon to exercise in carrying out these commandments can be seen as examples of ascetic practice. That ascetic element in their behaviour is further accentuated in that what they were called to do ran counter to the prevalent cultural ethos, an ethos which was still largely influenced by the observance of the ius talionis[820] and the concept of reciprocity.[821]

The radical approach posited in these sayings introduced a new style in dealing with those who were considered one's enemies. Betz describes the commandment to love one's enemies as "the fundamental ethical rule of

[818] *Mt.* 10: 36. "...one's foes will be members of one's own household."
[819] *Mt.* 10: 35,
[820] *Mt.* SM. 5:38.
[821] *Lk.* SP. 6:31-34.

Christian behavior"[822] and Horsley, although applying the commandment generally to social conditions in rural communities in Galilee at the time of Jesus writes that "the teachings of Jesus and other biblical paradigms are not simply 'spiritual' counsels, but are concerned with the whole of communal and personal life, including concrete economic and community relations."[823] It is possible to extrapolate from his thesis, without necessarily agreeing wholly with it, an ascetic angle relating to the influence of counter-cultural activities of communities when, in the pursuit of the "supreme values of life," they threaten the ruling groups. Such a group, he avers, was the Jesus movement.[824]

[822] Betz, *Sermon,* 591. Cf. Luz, *Matthew 1-7,* 340, "the most central of Christian texts," cited at the beginning of this chapter, and Bovon, *L' Évangile Selon Saint Luc (1,1-9,50),* 308, "L' amour des enemis n' est pas une règle générale de conduite, mais une attitude caractéristique des disiples de Jésus – The love of enemies is not a general rule of conduct but a characteristic attitude of the disciples of Jesus."

[823] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis," 24.

[824] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis," 23. "When people have achieved such solidarity with regard to the supreme values of life focused on concrete social-economic relations, however, it has usually been highly threatening to the ruling groups. *The movement gathered around Jesus appears to have been no exception.*" (my italics).

Chapter Seven

The Reception of the saying of Jesus, "Love your Enemies" in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists.

The discussion of the reception of this saying of Jesus, together with those sayings associated with it in the SM and the SP, presents problems resulting from the direction in which scholars have taken the meaning of the term, reception. Since the middle of last century the attention of those who have dealt with this topic has been focussed on textual issues. This emphasis can be traced to the impressive work of Édouard Massaux on the influence of Matthew's gospel on the writings of the early Church Fathers in the first and second centuries of the present era.[825] In the preface to a reprint of Massaux's work in 1986 Franz Neirynck wrote:

> Since its appearance, Massaux's book was destined to become one of the classical works on the acceptance of New Testament writings in primitive Christianity.[826]

Massaux's approach is based on his perception that Matthew's gospel was used in all the writings of the Apostolic Fathers whom he had studied. Neirynck described this approach as having been guided by a "principle of simplicity" adding that "a source which is 'unknown' does not attract him [Massaux]."[827] Massaux himself wrote that his approach was based on his recognition of a "literary contact" between Matthew's gospel and the later writings which were the subject of his study. He stated that he would use the term;

> in a rather strict sense of the word, requiring, when speaking of contact, sufficiently striking verbal occurrence that puts the discussion in a context that already points towards the gospel of Mt. These literary contacts do not exhaust the literary influence of the gospel; one can expect, without a properly so-called

[825] Massaux, É. *The Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew on Christian Literature before Saint Irenaeus,* New Gospel Series 5/1-3, (ed.) A.J. Bellinzoni, (trans.) N.J. Belval & S. Hecht, (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1990-1993), original text, *Influence de l'Évangile de saint Matthieu sur la littérature chrétienne avant saint Irénée,* (Louvain: PublicationsUniversitaires de Louvain, 1950, réimpression anastatique, BETL 65, (Leuven: Peeters, 1986).
[826] Massaux, *Influence,* 1986, xiv.
[827] Massaux, *Influence,* 1986, xix.

literary contact, the use of typically Matthean vocabulary, themes and ideas.[828]

However, in the light of the later publication of the texts discovered at Nag Hammadi and of the omission in his study of the apocryphal writings of the first and second centuries CE, Massaux's reliance on the Gospel of Matthew has been seen as a weakness in his approach.

In the mid fifties Helmut Köster's work on Justin Martyr and the synoptic tradition pointed to the importance of the oral tradition and to the many avenues which such a tradition opened for the transmission of the sayings of Jesus. The burden of Köster's view was that it was possible to look to many other sources apart from a written gospel account.[829]

Massaux's reliance on a written gospel as the basis for the reception of the sayings of Jesus in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers and Köster's emphasis on the role of an oral tradition as a vehicle for their transmission have provided the bases for the expression of opposing views in the scholarly discussion of the reception of these sayings.[830]

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[828] Massaux, *Influence,* 1986, xxi-xxii.

[829] Köster (Koester), H. *Septuaginta und Synoptischer Erzählungsstoff im Schriftbeweis Justins des Märtyrers.* Habilitationsscrift,Heidelberg, 1956; Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur,* BD 65, (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957). Köster was unaware of Massaux's work when he was writing in 1956-1957.

[830] In this discussion major contributions have been made by English-speaking scholars: A.J. Bellinzoni, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Writings of Justin Martyr,* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), Bellinzoni, "Approaching the Synoptic Problem from the Second Century: A Prolegomenon," *SBLSP* 461-465 (1976), Bellinzoni, "Extra –Canonical Literature and the Synoptic Problem," in *Jesus , the Gospels and the Church: Essays in Honor of William R. Farmer,* (ed.) E.P. Sanders, (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1987), Bellinzoni, "The Gospel of Matthew in the Second Century," *SC* 9 (1992), 197-258, Bellinzoni, "The Gospel of Luke in the Second Century CE," in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts,* (edd.) R.E. Thompson & T.E. Phillips, (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998); A. Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the period before Ireneaus,* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); C. Tuckett, "Synoptic Tradition in some Nag Hammadi and Related Texts," *VC* 36 (1982), 173-190, Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel Tradition: Synoptic Tradition in the Nag Hammadi Library: Studies of the New Testament and its World,* (Edinburgh: T&T.Clark, 1986),Tuckett, "Thomas and the Synoptics," *NovT.*30 (1988) 132-157, Tuckett, "Synoptic Tradition in the Didache," in *The New Testament in Early Christianity: La Réception des Écrits Néotestamentaires dans le Christianisme Primitif,* (ed.) J.M. Sevrin, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989); A. Gregory & C. Tuckett (edd.), *Trajectories through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers, (*Oxford: OUP, 2005), Gregory & Tuckett, *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers,* (Oxford: OUP, 2005); G.N. Stanton, " Matthew: BIBLOS, EUAGGELION OR BIOS?, in *The Four Gospels 1992,* (ed.) F. v. Segbroeck, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), Stanton, "The Early Reception of Matthew's Gospel: New Evidence from Papyri?", in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study,* (ed.) D.E. Aune, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), Stanton, "Jesus Traditions and Gospels in Justin Martyr and Ireneaus," in *The Biblical Canons,* (edd.) J-M. Auwers & J.H. de Longe, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003). For fuller bibliographies see Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts,* 361-392: Massaux, *The Influence of Saint Matthew,* 1. 122-162; 3. 232-245; Gregory & Tuckett (edd.) *Trajectories,* 433-465;Gregory & Tuckett, *Reception,* 331-346; Betz, *Sermon* , passim.

The major concern of scholars in their consideration of this issue appears to be with the means whereby the sayings of Jesus were transmitted, that is with the transmission of the texts rather than with the import of the sayings in the lives of the followers of Jesus in those early centuries. However Andrew Gregory in his work on the reception of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts[831] refers to the work of Oskar Skarsaune on Justin Martyr.[832] He points out that "Skarsaune's primary interest is in the content of the tradition rather than the means of its transmission."[833] Skarsaune recognises that it was possible for the tradition to be transmitted in many ways. He writes:

> Justin, like every exegete, has had several teachers. He is drawing on an exegetical tradition, perhaps on several distinct traditions. One can conceive of several channels of transmission. (1) Justin could have learnt much by reading. Regrettably, we are not in a position to map his library. But we can be sure he had read several NT writings, and certainly other Christian writings containing OT exegesis. (2) He may have picked up some exegesis simply by listening to the homily preached each Sunday. (3) He may have been instructed in some kind of "school". He himself tried to win new converts to Christianity and strengthen the faith of intelligent Christians by lecturing[834]...(4) Justin indicates that the debate with Trypho was not his only debate with a Jew, (*Dial.* 50:1).[835]

One of the conclusions to which Skarsaune comes in his study of Justin's writings concerns "the striking similarities of idea" between Luke and Justin, which, he considers, "cannot be satisfactorily explained by simple literary dependence...Justin's tradition quotes Matthew, but thinks like Luke." He concludes that "this points to a common, living tradition, which cannot be explained on a purely literary level."[836] How that "common, living tradition" in relation to a saying like, "Love your enemies"

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[831] Gregory, *Reception of Luke,* 218-222.
[832] Skarsaune, O. *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition: Text Type, Provenance, Theological Profile,* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987).
[833] Gregory, *Reception of Luke,* 219.
[834] On Justin's role as a teacher see his response to the prefect Rusticus at his trial in Rome. "Anyone who wished could come to my house and I would impart to him the words of truth", in H. Musurillo, *Acts of Christian Martyrs,* (Oxford: OUP, 1972) 44.
[835] Skarsaune, *Proof,* 2-3.
[836] Skarsaune, *Proof,* 386. Gregory, in *Reception of Luke,* endorses the view of Skarsaune of "the existence of significant parallels between both authors," that is, between Luke and Justin, without the presupposition of "some form of direct dependence," (220).

manifested itself in the lives of the followers of Jesus in the first two centuries of the common era is not obvious from the writings of the early church fathers.

Reference to the writings of those who are described as the Apostolic Fathers [837] indicates that those sayings of Jesus which include "Love your enemies" were not frequently quoted. In his letter to the Magnesians Ignatius urged everyone not to "regard his neighbours according to the flesh, but in everything love one another in Jesus Christ." adding "Let there be nothing in you which can divide you."[838] The use of the phrase "according to the flesh" - κατὰ σάρκα- suggests a neighbour who was closely connected, a member of the family. Thus Ignatius' words would seem to suggest that love should be extended beyond that sphere. If so, it suggests a nuanced use of Jesus' saying, "Love your enemies." [839] When writing to Polycarp Ignatius stressed the need for him to care for those who caused him trouble (οἱ λοιμότεροι).

> If you love good disciples, it is no credit to you; rather bring to subjection by your gentleness the more troublesome.[840]

These words are reminiscent of the saying of Jesus, "If you love those who love you what credit is it to you?"[841] However they cannot be considered a

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[837] The name is given to those whose writings appear in the two volumes of the LCL, entitled *The Apostolic Fathers: 1 Clement, 2 Clement, the Epistles of Ignatius, The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, The Didache,, the Epistle of Barnabas, The Shepherd of Hermas, The Martyrdom of Polycarp,* and *The Epistle to Diognetus.* As Kirsopp Lake indicated in this edition the relationship of the authors to the Apostles or to those who had known them makes their dating a problem. In a new edition of *The Apostolic Fathers* in the LCL (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003) Bart Ehrman includes the nine in the Kirsopp Lake edition together with fragments of Papias and Quadratus, preserved in Eusebius.

[838] IMg. 6:2.
καὶ μηδεὶς κατὰ σάρκα βλεπέτω τὸν πλησίον, ἀλλ' ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ ἀλλήλους διὰ παντὸς ἀγαπᾶτε. μηδὲν ἔστω ἐν ὑμιν, ὁ δυνήσεται ὑμᾶς μερίσαι...

[839] Cf. the use of κατὰ σάρκα referring to the human side of the nature of Christ in *Rom.* 1:3 and Paul's description of the Jews as my kindred according to the flesh - οἱ συγγενεῖς μου κατὰ σάρκα- *Rom.* 9:3 and my fellow countrymen – μου τὴν σάρκα - *Rom.* 11:14.

[840] IPol.2:1.
καλοὺς μαθητὰς ἐὰν φιλῇς, χάρις σοι οὐκ ἐστίν. μᾶλλον τοὺς λοιμοτέρους ἐν πραότητι ὑπότασσε.

[841] *Lk.* 6:32. εἰ ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς, ποία ὑμῖν χάρις ἐστίν; Evidence that this saying of Jesus was part of the ethical teaching in those early groups of the followers of Jesus might be instanced in its use in 2 *Clem.* 13:4 : "It is no credit to you' if you love them that love you, but it is a credit to you if you love your enemies, and those who hate you."
οὐ χάρις ὑμιν, εἰ ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς, ἀλλὰ χάρις ὑμῖν, εἰ ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς καὶτοὺς μισοῦντας ὑμας.

direct quotation from the gospel. The situations are different. Jesus' words in the gospel are the expression of a critical view of the concept of reciprocity in personal relationships within communities.[842] Ignatius in his concern for the care of weaker members in Polycarp's community offers advice on how to deal with a specific situation. But Polycarp shows himself to be aware of the sayings of Jesus when in his letter to the Philippians he urges them to act with moderation in their treatment of Valens and his wife.

> Therefore, my brothers, I am deeply sorry for him and for his wife, and may the Lord grant them true repentance. Therefore be yourselves also moderate in this matter and do not regard such as enemies, but recall them as fallible and straying members, that you may make whole the body of you all.[843]

The letter written to Diognetus, although contained in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers is considered to be a late witness, but as a witness it is suffused with the ethical teachings contained in the SM and SP as the following quotations show: [844]

Diog. 5:10, They obey the appointed laws and they surpass the laws in their own lives; cf. *Mt.*5:20, If your righteousness does not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees...

5:11, They love all people and are persecuted by all; cf. *Mt.* 5:44, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

5:15, They are abused and give blessing, they are insulted and render honour; cf. *Lk.* 6:28, Bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

5:16, When they do good, they are buffeted as evil-doers; cf. *Lk.* 6::27, Do good to those who hate you.

What becomes clear in these quotations from the Apostolic Fathers was their facility to use the sayings of Jesus, albeit in different situations and

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[842] See Gregory, *The Reception of Luke,* 139.

[843] Pol. 11:4.Valde ergo, fratres, contristior pro illo et pro coniuge eius, quibus det dominus paenitentiam veram. Sobrii ergo estote et vos in hoc; et non sicut inimicos tales existimetis...

[844] See the remarks of Bart Ehrman in the general introduction to the new edition of the *Apostolic Fathers*, p.11. and also in his introduction to the Letter to Diognetus, pp. 122-129, where he discusses views concerning the authorship of the letter and its dating. He points to "an inordinate number of conjectures, most of them fantastic." Amongst them he cites "Apollos, Clement of Rome, Quadratus, the heretic Marcion, his follower Apelles, the apologists Aristides of Athens or Theophilus of Antioch, the heresiologist Hippolytus of Rome, the Alexandrian scholar Pantaenus, the martyr Lucian of Antioch, Ambrosius and others." The only manuscript which preserved the text, but now lost, attributed the work to Justin Martyr. As to its dating his tentative suggestion is that it "should be regarded as one of the earlier apologies, written during the second half of the second century, possibly closer to the beginning than the end of that period. (127).

places, whether acquired from written sources or from the use of memorisation which formed part of the learning process in a predominantly oral culture. The similarities in the writers' reminiscences of the sayings found in the SM and the SP might well indicate a reliance on a common source, but it is difficult to adduce a theory of a common text at this stage in the transmission of the gospels. However, of relevance to the purpose of this study is the question whether the followers of Jesus in the second century showed a similar facility in their implementing the teachings contained in these sayings in the conduct of their lives. From the paucity of reference to the saying about loving one's enemies in these writings it might be possible to infer that it played little part in the lives of the early followers of Jesus. However such an inference might not take into consideration how far and in what way the message was spread.

Amongst the writings attributed to the Apostolic Fathers there is included the *Didache,* a work which purports to be the teaching of Jesus to the Gentiles by the twelve apostles.[845] The dating of its composition and the complexity of the text present problems in its study. Consequently its appearance in what might be seen as a chronological approach to these writings should not be taken as an indication of its dating.

Speculation concerning its dating ranges from the middle of the first century CE,[846] that is to a period which predates the composition of the Synoptic Gospels, to the early part of the third century.[847] That the contents of this work contain writings from an earlier Jewish text adds to the

[845] Διδαχὴ κυρίου διὰ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.
[846] For a discussion on the dating of the *Didache* see M. Slee *The Church in Antioch in the First Century CE: Communion and Conflict,* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003) 57-76. Slee posits a date as early as the mid-first century CE.
[847] Massaux, in *The Influence of the Gospel,* vol.3, 160-161 dates the *Didache* after 150 CE. H. Köster in *Synoptische Überlieferung,* 159 suggested a date in the middle of the second century but in his later book, *An Introduction to the New Testament,* vol. 2, 159 posits a date towards the end of the first century. Niederwimmer in his commentary, *The Didache,* (trans.) L.M. Maloney, (Minn: Fortress Press, 1998), provides a date c.110-120 CE but considers this to be "hypothetical" (53, see also 53 n.71 on other possible dates).

difficulty of its dating[848]. Kurt Niederwimmer in his analysis of the structure of the text recognises four separate sections;

- Baptismal catachesis (1:1.- 6:3).[849]
- The Liturgy (7:1 -10:7).
- Church order (11:1 – 15:4).
- Eschatological conclusion (16:1 – 8).

In reading the text no particular literary genre, to which it might belong, is apparent. Consequently Niederwimmer states that "this writing was composed by a compiler or redactor using very diverse extant material."[850] It is his view that it was not a "theological" work but "a rule for ecclesiastical praxis, a handbook of church morals, ritual, and discipline."[851] Jonathan Draper sees the *Didache* as "a composite work which evolved over a considerable period of time from its beginning as a Jewish catechetical work, and was taken up and developed by the Church into a manual of Church life and order."[852] This development was marked by the modification of the text as the practices of the communities which used it changed.[853] Like the Two Way material in the present text, the earlier Jewish work was a catechesis for proselytes. Its use can be found in the sectarian literature discovered at Qumran relating to the admission of new members into the community and later in Christian writings.[854] It is this continuous working of ancient concepts in various documents which leads Draper to the view that *Didache* 11, for example, is "a patchwork of differing redactional stages," a view which might well sum up the content of the text of the

[848] Bammel, E. "Pattern and Prototype of Didache 16," in *The Didache in Modern Research,* (ed.) J.A. Draper, (Leiden, NewYork, Köln: E.J. Brill, 1996) 364-372. "The first complex dates back...to a particular textual pattern or schema and in the end back to a Jewish prototype (*Vorlage).*" 364.

[849] Slee in *Church in Antioch* writes: "The Two Ways tradition ...is a body of teachings providing ethical instruction and direction." (77) As such it was probably used as pre-baptismal instructions for Gentiles entering the Church

[850] Niederwimmer, *Didache,* 2. See also H. van de Sandt and D. Flusser in *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity,* (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2002). "Each individual part belongs to a different literary genre, has evolved over a period of time, and makes up a coherent unity." 28.

[851] Niederwimmer, *Didache,* 2

[852] Draper, J.A. "The Jesus Tradition in the *Didache,*" in Draper, *Didache,* 74-75.

[853] Draper, "Jesus Tradition," 74.

[854] *The Manual of Discipline* discovered in Qumran contains instructions similar in structure and content to those found in the *Epistle of Barnabas,* and the *Didache.* See 1QS, 3:13-14, 26 in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 101.

Didache as a whole.[855] Despite this appearance of the "patchwork" nature of the work Sandt and Flusser express the view that the *Didache* should not be treated as a "fragmented collage of materials," but that the entirety of the work, considered as a community rule, should be seen as "a coherent systematic unity."[856] Niederwimmer in his commentary on the *Didache* appears to be aware of the problem of this seeming lack of coherence and subsequently he attributes the redaction of the text to the work of a single author, to whom he refers as the Didachist.[857] Although mindful of Draper's criticism of Niederwimmer (see n.858), for ease of reference in these comments on the sayings of Jesus concerning love of enemies the term Didachist will be used for the source of any redactional activity in the text.

The complexity of the *Didache* makes any comment on it problematic. For the purpose of this part of my study discussion will be limited to the first of the four sections "The Two Ways" (1:1 – 5:2 and the epilogue (6:1-3). They have been described as a christianised version of an earlier Jewish tractate, of which mention has already been made in connection with its use in the sectarian writings of the Qumran community.[858] Carolyn Osiek in her commentary on *The Shepherd of Hermas* writes that "[t]wo way paraenetic theology has roots in both Greek and Jewish moral traditions,"[859] the topos appearing in passages in the Old Testament,[860] in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,[861] and Judaeo-Hellenistic writings,[862] in the authors of the classical and Hellenistic periods of Greek literature,[863] in rabbinical literature[864] and in early Christian writings.[865]

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[855] Draper, J.A, "Torah and Troublesome Apostles in the *Didache* Community," in Draper, *Didache,* 341.
[856] Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache,* 31.
[857] Niederwimmer, *Didache,* 42-52. Draper in *Didache,* 341, while commending Niederwimmer for setting " a redactional analysis at the centre of the interpretation " of the *Didache,* criticises him for his view that the redaction was the work of a single author. He writes of his (Niederwimmer's) failure to envisage "the way a community rule evolves by trial and error, by erasing phrases above the line or in the margin, which are later incorporated into the text."
[858] See above n.856.
[859] Osiek, C. "*The Shepherd of Hermas,*" (Minn.: Fortress, 1999) 123.
[860] *Ps.* 1:1-6; *Ps.*139:23-24; *Ps.* 119: 30; *Prov.* 11:20, 12:28; *Jer.* 21:8 . See also *Deut.* 11:26-28, 30:15-20.
[861] 2 *Enoch* 30:15; *T.Ash.* 1:3.
[862] *Sir.* 21:10.
[863] Xenophon, *Memorabilia,* 1:20-34, (trans.) E.C. Marchant, Vol. 4. LCL. (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1923 (1968^6)).
[864] m 'Abot 2:9, in *The Mishnah,* (trans.) H. Danby, (London: OUP, 1933 (1958^7)) 2:9.

The opening statement about the way to life is, "First you shall love God who created you; second your neighbour as yourself."[866] There follows teaching arising from these commandments:

τούτων δὲ τῶν λόγων ἡ διδαχή ἐστιν αὕτη.

That teaching is expressed in the commandments of love for one's enemies, 1:3b-c, and of the renunciation of violence.

> Bless those who put you under a curse, pray on behalf of your enemies and fast on behalf of those who persecute you. For what kind of credit is it for you if you love those who love you. Do not the Gentiles also do the same? But as far as you are concerned love those who hate you and you will not have an enemy (1:3b-c)... If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek also, and you shall be perfect. If someone forces you to go one mile with him, go with him two. If someone appropriates your coat, give him your shirt also. If someone will take from you what is yours, do not demand it back, for you are unable to do so. (1:4b-5a).

The latter section of these sayings is introduced in 1:4a by ἀπέχου τῶν σαρκικῶν καὶ σωματικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν. This saying has no parallel in the sayings tradition of Jesus. Niederwimmer translates it as "Avoid the fleshly and bodily passions," pointing out that the directive contained in it is out of context and is possibly an interpolation at this point.[867] However, if the adjectives σαρκικός and σωματικός are liberated from the sexual connotation usually associated with them it might possibly be the case that they refer to the natural aggressive instincts of people and might be paraphrased as: "Avoid naturally aggressive desires to retaliate when dealing with someone intent on using violence."[868] It is by controlling these natural instincts and by reacting to violence in the ways suggested in

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[865] *Mt.*7:13-14; *Barnabas,* 18:1; *Hermas, Man.* 6, 1:2-5.

[866] Cf. *Mt.* 22: 38-39; *Mk.*12: 30-31; *Lk.* 10: 27; *Barn.* 19: 2; *T Iss.*5: 2; *T Zeb.*5: 1; *T Ben.* 3: 3,10; 3. See also Jos. *BJ.* 2: 139, *Ant.* 15: 375; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 2. 63, (trans.) F.H. Colson, Vol. 7. LCL. (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1937 (1950^2)),

[867] Niederwimmer, *Didache,* 75.

[868] See G. Theissen in *Social Reality,* 128-129. In a comment on some aspects of the philosophy of Epictetus concerning the Stoic's independence of outward suffering Theissen writes "that it depends on ourselves whether we feel humiliated by the scorn of another person or not and that if someone ill-treats us we should view this as a chance to practice inner detachment. This motive of arriving at a sovereign inward control can be found only twice in early Christian writings [*Did.* 1: 4 and Justin *Apol.*1. 16. 1]. Renunciation of self-defense presupposes control of inward aggressive impulses."

1:4b-5a, that perfection would be achieved; "you will be perfect"- καὶ ἔσῃ τέλειος.

The next pericope in this Two Ways section (1:5a-d), which deals with giving, presents further evidence of the use which the Didachist made of the sayings of Jesus. It begins with a saying to be found in SP, *Lk.* 6:30, "Give to everyone who asks you and do not demand a return."[869], whilst 5d illustrates the Didachist's use of a sentence from the section of the SM, *Mt.*5:26, dealing with anger, "you will not come out of there [prison] until you have paid back the last penny"[870], to condemn the person who receives help, although under no pressure of need. In 5b the reason for not demanding the return of what is given is that it is the Father's will that "we give to all from his own gifts [freely bestowed on us]."[871] This saying appears to allude to the saying found in the SM of God's gift of sun and rain for the good and the evil.[872] The passage continues with a makarism, "Blessed is he who gives in accordance with the mandate."[873]

From an examination of this pericope two points may be made about its composition. First, despite the similarity between the sayings and those found in the Synoptic Gospels, it is clear that the Didachist was using a source other than that found in those gospels. Second, the Didachist used the sayings in the context of rules concerning almsgiving in order to point out the abuse to which such unrestrained generosity as that taught in the

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[869] *Lk.* 6:30. παντὶ αἰτοῦντι σε δίδου, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ αἴποντος τὰ σὰ μὴ ἀπαίτει.
[870] *Mt.* 5:26. οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃς ἐκεῖθεν, ἕως ἂν ἀποδῷς τὸν ἔσχατον κοδράντην.
[871] *Did,* 1:5b. πᾶσι γὰρ θέλει δίδοσθαι ὁ πατὴρ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων χαρισμάτων.
[872] *Mt.* 5:45.
[873] *Did.* 1:5b. μακάριος ὁ διδοὺς κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν. On the use of the Greek term ἐντολή see the letters of Ignatius. Writing to the Ephesians Ignatius used the phrase "the commandments of Christ," "You are then all fellow travellers,...and are in all ways adorned by the commandments of Christ,"κατὰ πάντα κεκοσμημένοι ἐντολαῖς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, (IEph.9:2).These commandments are explicated in the following chapter where Ignatius urged his readers "to pray unceasingly" for others in terms which resonate with those found in the SM and SP. However Ignatius did not restrict the use of ἐντολή to the commandments of Christ but wrote elsewhere, in IMagn. 4:1, in a criticism of some members about their failure "to hold valid meetings, according to the commandments," διὰ τὸ μὴ βεβαιῶς κατ' ἐντολὴν συναθροίζεσθαι.To the Trallians (ITr.13:2) he wrote urging them to submit themselves to the bishop as "to the commandment" (ὡς τῇ ἐντολῇ). In his letter to the church at Philadelphia (IPhld. 1:2) he described their bishop as being "attuned to the commandments as a harp to its strings" συνευρύθμισται ταῖς ἐντολαῖς ὡς χορδαῖς κιθάρα. While some of these uses of ἐντολή might reflect use we associate with the sayings of Jesus, others seem to refer to the instructions about order in the church body, "certainly neither the verb (see, IRom.1:4. 1) nor the noun may be pinned down firmly to its origin in any particular body of instructions."

Sermons was subject in the community for which he/she was formulating the rules.[874]

The concluding pericope of the Two Ways section, 6: 1-3, contains a warning to the catechumen not to be misled by false teaching and expresses the need for a person to be able "to bear the whole yoke of the lord," for in this is perfection to be found.

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ δύνασαι βαστάσαι ὅλον τὸν ζυγὸν τοῦ κυρίου,τέλειος ἔσῃ.[875]

However the Didachist in the concluding part of the sentence expresses the possibility that not everyone was able to bear that yoke, "but if you are unable to do this, do what you can." εἰ δ'οὐ δύνασαι, ὁ δύνῃ, τοῦτο ποίει. The discussion which has developed concerning the phrase "the whole yoke of the Lord" and its relationship to the concept of what it was to be perfect, has relevance for this present study of the ascetic practices of the followers of Jesus.

In a Ps-Cyprian treatise, written in the third/fourth century,[876] the writer distinguished three types of Christians in his interpretation of the parable in *Mt.* 13:3-23. As support for this interpretation the author seems to have been alluding to the *Didache* when he wrote:

> If, my son, you are able to carry out all the teachings of the Lord, you will be perfect, if not, at least, carry out two, to love the Lord with all your being and the one who is to you [your neighbour] as yourself.[877]

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[874] See Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache,* 48. "The Didache community apparently experienced the saying of the Lord as too difficult a burden to be observed in their time and region. Unscrupulous charlatans could easily take advantage of the precept of indiscriminate generosity. And indeed, a central concern of the Didachist in the altered circumstances of his time was to protect the community against frauds and swindlers."

[875] From the early writings of theChristian era what it was to be perfect was an object of much discussion. Such a concern might be illustrated in the letters of Ignatius. In Ism 4:2 by way of encouragement of his readers he wrote that his suffering of all ills, death, fire, the sword and wild beasts resulted from faith in Jesus Christ, the perfect man, ὁ τέλειος ἄνθρωπος. In the same letter he illustrated that their perfection had to do with their expression of concern for the members of the church in Antioch, which he (Ignatius) had not yet attained. The achievement of that perfection resulted from their being imitators of God (IEph. 1:1-2).

[876] Ps-Cyprian, *De centesima, de sexagesima, de tricesima.* On the dating of the treatise see Niederwimmer, *The Didache,* 10, n.52.

[877] Si potes quidem, fili, omnia praecepta Domini facere, eris consummatus; sin autem, vel duo praecepta, amare Dominum ex praecordiis et similem tibi quasi te ipsum, cited in W. Rordorf & A. Tuilier, *La Doctrine des douze Apôtres (Didaché),* SC 248 (bis), (Paris:1998) 33. Sandt and

For Adolf von Harnack, writing in the nineteenth century, the "whole yoke" represented the teaching of complete sexual abstinence, which separated the "perfect" followers of Jesus from those unable to attain that perfection.[878] Draper points out that evidence for such an interpretation might be found in the introduction of encratite practices into Antioch by Tatian. However he goes on to write that there is no evidence that that was its original meaning, since the *Didache* does not contain reference to forms of asceticism, apart from the implied possibility of its existence in the life style of the prophets.[879] Sandt and Flusser also question whether "the text of *Did,* 6:2-3 itself ... reflects an ascetic tradition."[880] Whilst one might accept this theory it is still necessary to consider the use of the statement concerning perfection in two places in the text of the *Didache* (1:4 and 6:2) and to ask the question what the term, perfection, signifies in these contexts.

The similarity between these two statements would suggest that they were the work of the same author, and since *Did.*1:4 is part of the *sectio evangelica,* and is considered to be the redaction of the Didachist, it is highly likely that *Did.*6:2 is from the same hand. Therefore it has to be assumed that it is part of the christianisation of the original Two Ways tractate.[881] In the repetition of the call to perfection in *Did.* 6:2 Niederwimmer envisages the Didachist as recalling the teaching of Jesus contained in *Did.* 1:3b-2.1. "They are for him [the Didachist] 'the yoke of

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Flusser, referring to this quotation from Ps-Cyprian, indicates that it is introduced as scripture: "et alio in loco scriptura haec testatur et admonet dicens: 'Si potes quidem....'" 239 n.2.

[878] Harnack, A. von, *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel nebst Untersuchuungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts,* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1884; repr. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1991) 19-21, cited in Niederwimmer, *The Didache,* 122. Cf. Knopf, R. *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel: Die zwei Clemensbriefe,* HNT.E. Die apostolischen Väter 1, (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1920) 21, also cited by Niederwimmer, 122.

[879] Draper, J.A. "Torah and Troublesome Apostles," in Draper, *Didache,* 353.

[880] Sandt & Flusser, *The Didache,* "... although these verses came to be used in this way in a later document, it does not follow that this was their original meaning. First of all, the remainder of the Didache does not focus any attention on an austere life-style. Moreover, the exhortation concerning 'food' in Did 6:2-3, which the reader is challenged to accept to whatever degree he is able, does not refer to fasting but to Jewish dietary laws. Finally, however there is no example in other Christian sources associating the clause 'yoke of the Lord' with asceticism." 239-240.

[881] Sandt & Flusser, *The Didache,* 240.

the Lord' (for which he takes up a traditional Jewish way of speaking), and so the new law of Christ."[882]

However, the recognition that the phrase "the yoke of the Lord" has its provenance in Jewish religious thought has led some commentators to posit a Jewish origin to *Did.*6:2-3 maintaining that it refers to the strict observance of Torah. Alfred Stuiber sees these sayings as "a Jewish supplement to the Jewish teaching about the two ways" [883] and as an appeal to God-fearers in the Jewish diaspora who did not observe the whole of Torah.

> Because the Law was given only to Israel, it is only the people of Israel who are obligated to observe it. For God-fearing Gentiles the moral law is sufficient. But it is still highly welcome when these Gentiles also observe the ritual laws insofar as that is possible, for that can prepare for complete conversion.[884]

A reading of *Acts* 15:10, however, would seem to suggest that it was not only God-fearers but also Jews who could not bear the whole weight of the yoke of Torah.

> ...why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples [Gentiles] a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear?

Evidence for the close relationship between the concept of perfection and the strict observance of Torah is to be found in the rules of the sectarian community in Qumran in which perfection was clearly seen to be observance of Torah in accordance with these rules.

> He [the Master] shall admit into the Covenant of Grace all those who freely devoted themselves to the observance of God's precepts, that they may be joined to the counsel of God and may live *perfectly* before Him in accordance with all that has been revealed concerning their appointed times. (my italics)[885]

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[882] Niederwimmer, *The Didache,* 123. For the use of the term, "the new law of Christ," see *Barn.* 2:6. "These things [ie, Jewish sacrifices] then he abolished in order that the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is without the yoke of necessity, might have its oblation not made by man."

[883] Stuiber, A. "'Das ganze Joch des Herrn' (Didache 6:2-3)", in *Studia Patristica* 4, (ed.) F.L. Cross, (TU 79) (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961) 323-329 (327), cited in Niederwimmer, *The Didache,* 122.

[884] Stuiber, "Das ganz," 328 (trans.) Niederwimmer, 122. See also Sandt & Flusser, *The Didache,* 240, "Because the Tora was given to Israel, only Jews were strictly charged to keep the Law, while for the God-fearing gentiles, only some (Noachide) commandments were sufficient."

[885] 1QS 1:8ff, in Vermes, *Scrolls,* 98-99. Cf. also 1QS 2:2; 3:9.

It is apparent that the topos of the yoke had a place in Jewish writings and that its reference was to the observance of Torah.[886] Therefore it is possible for it to have been part of the original Two Ways tractate. If so, then it is necessary to take into consideration the retention of the phrase in what has become a Christian document. Stuiber is of the opinion that the retention of the phrase results from the "carelessness (Sorglosigkeit) of the Christian compilers."[887] Niederwimmer rejects Stuiber's charge as a "last-ditch solution,"[888] basing his view that the phrase was retained in the *Didache* because the Didachist interpreted it as referring to the new law contained in the teaching of Jesus.[889] Niederwimmer regards the repetition of the clause, "and you will be perfect" as the Didachist recalling "the commandments of the Lord quoted in 1:3b-2:1. They are for him the "yoke of the Lord,..and so the 'new law of Christ.'" [890] But the Didachist, although implying by the use of the term 'the whole yoke of the Lord' the burden of fulfilling the new law, was realistic enough to recognise that not everyone would be able to fulfil the commandments completely; "if you cannot [bear the whole yoke of the Lord], do what you are able."[891]

When we turn to the writings of the Apologists it is possible to detect an increased level in the number of references to these particular sayings of Jesus. That they appear at a later period in the second century would suggest that by that time the message of the gospel had spread and that increasingly the genre of these writings was cast in the apologetic strain.[892] Although it

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[886] Str-B 1:608-10.
[887] Stuiber, "Das ganze Joch," 328, cited in Niederwimmer, *The Didache*, 122, n.28.
[888] Niederwimmer, *The Didache,* 122.
[889] Niederwimmer,*The Didache,* 123, attributes this view to the work of Willy Rordorf and André Tuilier in *La Doctrine des douze apôtres (Didachè): Introduction, Texte, Traduction, Notes, Appendices et Index,* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cer,f, 1978), 32-33. They rest this interpretation on the fact that the clause "you will be perfect found" in *Did.* 6:2 "betrays the hand of the redactor who previously had used this expression in the 'section évangélique' of the text [1:4]. Il est donc sûr que ce passage assimile la perfection morale à l'accomplissement des commandements du Sermon sur la montagne."
[890]Niederwimmer, *The Didache,* 123.
[891] Sandt & Flusser, *The Didache,* 241, "In accordance with other early Christian authors (cf. *Mt.*11:29-30; *1 Clem.* 16:17; *Odes Sol.* 42:7.8; *Gos.Thom.* 90; Justin, *Dialogue* 53:1), he [the Didachist] probably interpreted the 'yoke of the Lord' as the yoke of Christ and understood this expression as referring to Christian duties in general."
[892] Justin Martyr writing in Rome c.150-160 CE addressed his *Apology* to Antoninus Pius, emperor, 138-161 CE; Theophilus wrote his *Ad Autolycum* in Antioch post 180 CE; Tertullian was born in Carthage c. 160 CE; Athenagoras, an Athenian, addresses his *Legatio: A Plea for the*

would be possible to cite other writers who were part of this apologetic tradition, it is intended to consider briefly the impact of the sayings of Jesus referring to the love of enemies in the writings of Justin, Theophilus, Athenagoras and Tertullian. The essential task of the apologist was to defend the position of followers of Jesus in the Roman world by attempting to justify their beliefs and practices.[893] Thus Justin Martyr wrote,

> It is our task, therefore, to afford all an opportunity of inspecting our life and teachings, lest, on account of those who are accustomed to be ignorant of our affairs, we should incur the penalty due to them for mental blindness.[894]

The apology was an attempt to give a reasoned account of the position which followers of Jesus took on issues impinging on the way in which they saw their relationship to the wider community. In this scheme the perception on the part of these writers that the SM and SP played a foundational part in the moral training of the followers of Jesus led them to attribute importance to the sayings of Jesus which formed the teachings of the new "laws." It was this perception which probably led Justin to make the following comments on those sections in the SM and SP in which Jesus made his statements about loving one's enemies and about one's reaction to hostility and violence.

> Now concerning love of all people he taught as follows: "If you love those who love you, what are you doing which is extraordinary (revolutionary)? For even fornicators do this. But I say to you, Pray for your enemies and love those who hate you and bless those who curse you and pray for those who abuse you."[895]

Justin in another obvious reference to the saying of Jesus about lending used the same phrase to describe the extraordinary nature of what he demanded from a follower.

Christians to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus as co-emperors (176-180 CE), See the article in *OCD,* 128-129 on the "Christian Apologists."

[893] For this reason the apologies were addressed to those in authority. See previous note.

[894] Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol.*3.
ἡμέτερον οὖν ἔργον καὶ βίου καὶ μαθημάτων τὴν ἐπίσκεψιν πᾶσι παρέχειν,
ὅπως (μὴ) ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀγνοεῖν τὰ ἡμέτερα νομιζόντων τὴν τιμωρίαν ὧν ἂν πλημμελῶσι τυφλώττοντες αὐτοὶ (ἑ)αυτοῖς ὀφλήσωμεν.

[895] JustinMartyr,1*Apol.*15:9.
περὶ δὲ τοῦ στέργειν ἅπαντας ταῦτα ἐδίδαξεν Εἰ ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς, τί καινὸν ποιεῖτε; καὶ γὰρ οἱ πόρνοι τοῦτο ποιοῦσιν. Ἐγὼ δὲ ὑμιν λέγω Εὔχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὑμῶν καὶ ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς μισοῦντας ὑμᾶς καὶ εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς καταρωμένους ὑμῖν καὶ εὔχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐπηρεαζόντων ὑμᾶς.
On the use of καινός to mean "extraordinary" with the connotation of the "marvellous or unheard of" see Plato *Apol.* 24c, (trans.) H.N. Fisher, LCL, (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1914 (1960[12])), and *Mk.* 1: 27.

> Give to him who asks and do not turn away from him who would borrow; for if you lend to them from whom you hope to receive, what extraordinary thing are you doing? [896]

In a previous section, when warning those who would read his apology not to be led astray by those who attempted to distort the teachings of Jesus, Justin described the extraordinary changes which had taken place in the lives of those who were followers of Jesus.

> We who hated and killed one another and would not associate with those of different tribes because of their customs, now after the coming of Christ live together and pray for our enemies and try to persuade those who unjustly hate us to live in accordance with good teachings of Christ so that they may share with us the good hopes of receiving the same things [that we will] from God, the master of all.[897]

Such attitudes to enemies did not always meet with success. Nevertheless, it behoved the followers of Jesus to persist in applying the teachings found in the SM and the SP to the situations in which they found themselves.

Justin wrote in his *Dialogue with Trypho* that, despite the hostility of the Jews, the followers of Jesus should continue to love those who hated them, to bless those who cursed them and to pray for their enemies.[898] How far these words of Justin reflect the behaviour of the community in which he lived is difficult to assess. But they might be seen as an indication that these precepts were part of the ethical teachings within the community. That this was not always the case might be gleaned from what we read in 2 *Clement* where the author related the impression which the behaviour of members in a community of the followers of Jesus left in the minds of those who were not members.

> For when they hear from us that God says: "It is no credit to you, if you love those who love you, but it is a credit to you, if you love your enemies, and those who hate you" – when they hear this they marvel at the extraordinary nature of the goodness; but when they see that we not only do not love those who hate us, but not even

[896] Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol.* 15:9

[897] Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol.* 14:3.
οἱ μισάλληλοι δὲ καὶ ἀλληλοφόνοι καὶ πρὸς τοὺς οὐχ ὁμοφύλους διὰ τὰ ἔθη καὶ ἑστιὰς κοινὰς μὴ ποιούμενοι, νῦν μετὰ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁμοδίαιτοι γινόμενοι, καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐχθρῶν εὐχόμενοι, καὶ τοὺς ἀδίκως μισοῦντας πείθειν πειρώμενοι, ὅπως οἱ κατὰ τὰς τοῦ Χριστοῦ καλὰς ὑποθημοσύνας βιώσαντες εὐέλπιδες ὦσι σὺν ἡμῖν τῶν αὐτῶν παρὰ τοῦ πάντων δεσπόζοντος θεοῦ τυχεῖν.

[898] Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 133:6.

> those who love us, they ridicule us, and the name is blasphemed.[899]

In the third book of his apology addressed to Autolycus, "an idolater and scorner of Christians," Theophilus of Antioch attempted to counter what he perceived to be the false views commonly held by opponents who considered Christian doctrine to be foolishness. After his criticism of the views of pagan philosophers Theophilus set out the principal teachings of Jesus. Amongst them he quoted first what Isaiah the prophet wrote: "Say to those who hate you and cast you out, 'You are our brothers,' that the name of the Lord may be glorified, and be apparent in their joy." Then he quoted the Gospel, "Love your enemies, and pray for them who despitefully use you. For if you love them who love you, what reward do you have? The robbers and tax collectors do this also." [900]

Athenagoras, an Athenian philosopher, addressed his defence of Christianity to the emperors, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, sometime between 176 – 180 CE. [901] In it he criticised the fact that Christians were persecuted for bearing the name; "Names are not deserving of hatred: it is the unjust act that calls for penalty and punishment."[902] Whereas most of those living under the authority of the emperors possessed equal rights and enjoyed a peaceful existence, it was only those called Christians who were "harassed, plundered and persecuted" on account of their name. However, Athenagoras was able to write that, despite this hostile attitude towards them – an attitude which they held in contempt – they had learned:

> not only not to return blow for blow, nor to go to law with those who plunder and rob us, but to those who smite us on one side of the face to offer the other side also, and to those who take away our coat to give likewise our cloak.[903]

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[899] 2 *Clement* 13:4.
ὅταν γὰρ ἀκούσωσιν παρ' ἡμῶν, ὅτι λέγει ὁ θεός· Οὐ χάρις ὑμῖν, εἰ ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς, ἀλλὰ χάρις ὑμῖν, εἰ ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς καὶ τοὺς μισοῦντας ὑμᾶς ταῦτα ὅταν ἀκούσωσιν, θαυμάζουσιν τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῆς ἀγαθότητος· ὅταν δὲ ἴδωσιν, ὅτι οὐ μόνον τοὺς μισοῦντας οὐκ ἀγαπῶμεν, ἀλλ' ὅτι οὐδὲ τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας, καταγελῶσιν ἡμῶν, καὶ βλασφημεῖται τὸ ὄνομα.
[900] Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum,* 14.
[901] M. Aurelius and Commodus were co-emperors from 176 – 180 CE.
[902] Athenagoras, *Legatio,* chap. 1.
[903] Athenagoras, *Legatio,* 1.

In the face of such hostility those whom Athenagoras defended behaved in accordance with their understanding of the words of Jesus found in the SM and SP.[904]

In order to dissuade the emperors from thinking that Christians were atheists, a charge frequently brought against them, Athenagoras spoke of these sayings of Jesus as being taught by God.

> What then are those teachings in which we are brought up? "I say to you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; pray for those that persecute you; that you may be the sons of your Father who is in heaven, who causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust."[905]

As a philosopher pleading his case before "philosophic princes," Athenagoras attacked the views of philosophers in the light of the beliefs and practices of those early Christians.

> For who of those who reduce syllogisms, and clear up ambiguities, and explain etymologies, or of those who teach homonyms and synonyms, and predicaments and axioms, and what is the subject and what the predicate, and who promise their disciples by these and such like instructions to make them happy: who of them have so purged their souls as, instead of hating their enemies, to love them; and, instead of speaking ill of those who have reviled them (to abstain from which is of itself an evidence of no mean forbearance), to bless them; and to pray for those who plot against their lives? [906]

This criticism of the teachings of philosophers Athenagoras used in order to provide a picture of the effect which the reception of the teachings of Jesus had on the lives of "uneducated persons, artisans and old women."

> [A]mong us you will find uneducated persons, and artisans, and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth: they do not rehearse speeches,

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[904] See SM, *Mt.* 5:39-40; SP, *Lk.* 6: 29. See also the further allusion to the sayings of Jesus in chap. 34 of the *Legatio* where Athenagoras criticised the paucity and lack of experience of those governors dealing with complaints against Christians "to whom it even is not lawful, when they are struck, not to offer themselves for more blows, nor when defamed not to bless, for it is not enough to be just (and justice is to return like for like) but it is incumbent on us to be good and patient with evil." This latter remark is an apparent criticism of the reciprocity ethic practised in the ancient world. See also chap. 35 on the detestation of Christians for all types of cruelty.

[905] Athenagoras, *Legatio,* chap. 11.

[906] Athenagoras, *Legatio,* 11.

> but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to those who ask of them, and love their neighbours as themselves. [907]

But it was not only love for neighbours which those early Christians showed but in response to the words of Jesus ("For if you love those," He says, " who love you and lend to them who lend to you, what reward will you have?") their concern extended to the well-being of those who hated them.[908]

As the sayings of Jesus were communicated throughout the Mediterranean area so they appear to have been taken into the belief system of those who became his followers and to have been seen as foundational sayings as Christian communities sought to establish themselves within the prevalent culture of their areas. Tertullian (c.160-240 CE), an advocate in North Africa, in this treatise *De Patientia* described the saying of Jesus concerning the love of one's enemy as the *principale praeceptum* in which "the universal discipline of patience has been succinctly contained, for to do evil, even when it was deserved, was not allowed." [909] For Tertullian argued that faith "illumined by patience" with its basis in the sayings of Jesus added grace to the law, "putting patience as its adiutrix in charge of enlarging and fulfilling the law because it [the law] alone had formerly been lacking in the doctrine of righteousness (iustitia)."[910]

> For in former times they used to demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and they used to repay with interest evil for evil: for not yet was there patience in the world because neither was there faith.[911]

The abuses of the law which such a system allowed were only allayed when

> he [the lord and master of patience] united the grace of faith with patience:...anger was prohibited, tempers restrained, the petulance of the hand checked and the poison of the tongue removed. Then the law found more than it lost in the saying of

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[907] Athenagoras, *Legatio,* 11.
[908] Athenagoras, *Legatio,* 11.
[909] Tertullian, De Patientia, 7:1, *Opera Catholica:Adversus Marcionem,* Pars 1, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, (Turnholt: Brepols, 1954) 299-340. Hoc principali praecepto universa patientia disciplina succincta est, quando nec digne quidem malefacere concessum est.
[910] Tertullian, *De Patientia,* 7:1.
[911] Tertullian, *De Patientia,* 7:1. Nam olim et oculum pro oculo et dentem pro dente repetebant, et malum malo fenerabant: nondum enim patientia in terris, quia nec fides scilicet.

> Christ. "Love your enemies and bless those who put you under a curse and pray for your persecutors so that you may be the sons of your heavenly father."[912]

In a later work (c. 212 CE), addressed to Scapula Tertullus, the proconsul of Africa, Tertullian referred again to the saying of Jesus that one should love one's enemies and pray for one's persecutors as a good (bonitas) which was perfect and peculiar (propria) to Christians and not shared with anyone else (non communis). "For it is characteristic of everyone to love his/her friends, but it is the mark of Christians only to love their enemies."[913]

Conclusion.

For ease of reference the conclusion of this chapter will be divided into three parts: (1) the reception of the sayings of Jesus in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers; (2) their reception in the Didache, and (3) their reception in the writings of the Apologists. The concentration on these sayings of Jesus derives from the importance given to them in the words,.τί καινὸν ποιεῖτε; (what are you doing which is extraordinary (revolutionary)?),[914] used by Justin Martyr and that used in Tertullian's phrase, principale praeceptum (fundamental teaching).[915] The use of these phrases prompts the question of the part which they played in the lives of those who were recipients of the teaching contained in these sayings of Jesus. For if they were as radical in the lives of people, as the phrases suggest, then it might be implied that they were used to indicate behaviour which was counter cultural and hence such behaviour can be described as ascetic. In chapter six the SM and SP are described as containing the ethical teachings of Jesus which embody an approach to a mode of living which

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[912] Tertullian, *De Patientia,*7:1. Qui... supervenit et gratiam fidei patientia composuit,... prohibita ira, restricti animi, compressa petulantia manus, exemptum linguae venenum. Plus lex quam amisit invenit dicente Christo, "Diligite inimicos vestros et maledicentibus benedicite et orate pro persecutoribus vestris ut filii sitis patris vestri caelestis." See also 8:2, "If someone attempts to provoke you by violence, the admonition of the Lord is at hand, 'To the one who strikes you in the face, turn the other cheek also.' Let evil conduct be worn down by your patience... If the tongue's bitterness breaks forth in cursing or in vituperation call to mind the saying, 'When they curse you, rejoice."

[913] Tertullian, Ad Scapulam, 1:3. *Opera Montanistica,* Pars 2. 1125-1132. "Amicos enim diligere omnium est, inimicos autem solorum Christianorum." See also 4:7. "We do not return evil for evil to anyone."

[914] Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol.* 15:9.

[915] Tertullian, *De Patientia,* 7:1.

within the description of askesis discussed in this thesis can be considered ascetic. However, when we turn to the evidence contained in the writings of the succeeding periods, although the sayings of Jesus were recorded, we catch only glimpses of their effect on the lives of those who claimed to be followers of Jesus. This is especially true in the case of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.

(1) The term, Apostolic Fathers, is used of those writers who were amongst the earliest cohort after the apostles to have commented on the sayings of Jesus. It becomes apparent in reading what they wrote that at the time when they were writing there were no fixed texts of the gospels. Consequently what we have in the Fathers are sayings which might have been derived from many and various sources and which were used in circumstances peculiar to the communities in which the Fathers were writing. The letter which Ignatius wrote to Polycarp and the letter which Polycarp wrote to the Philippians provide examples where the words of Jesus found in the sermons are dissociated, as it were, from their original context.[916] But both letters throw some light on the way in which members of Christian groups at that time related to each other. Ignatius wrote about the presence of troublesome members (οἱ λοιμότεροι) among the Smyrnaeans, and Polycarp urged the members of the church at Philippi not to regard Valens and his wife as enemies (inimici). Perhaps the most telling description of the way in which some Christians behaved in relation to the sayings of Jesus was the perception of the writer of the letter, 2 *Clement,* of the reaction of those outside that group to their behaviour.[917]

(2) Niederwimmer describes the *Didache* as "a handbook of Church morals, ritual and discipline."[918] Accessible for this task were a Jewish tractate on the Two Ways and the sayings of Jesus. Therefore we might expect it to contain commands instructing the members of the Didache community how to behave in relation to these sayings. From a reading of the document it is possible to assume that it was to serve the needs of a group composed of Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.[919]

The methodology used by the Didachist in christianising the Jewish tractate was achieved in some instances by decontextualising the sayings of Jesus possibly to reflect the experiences of members of his community. An example of this can be seen in the use made of the saying about giving

[916] See comments on these letters earlier in this chapter.
[917] See the reference to 2 *Clement* on pp. 220- 221.
[918] Niederwimmer, *The Didache,* 2.
[919] Slee, *The Church in Antioch,* 89, suggests that the *Didache* emanated from the "divisions and schisms that took place in the Antioch church."

recorded in the SP. 6:30.[920] In the Didachist's redaction this saying has become the prelude to a warning to believers to beware of those who would attempt to abuse almsgiving and so, in order to stress his/her repugnance at such behaviour, he/she used out of context a saying found in the SM. 5:25-26.[921]

> [H]e who receives it [alms] without need shall be tried as to why he took it and for what reason, and being in prison he will be examined as to his deeds and "he shall not come out of there until he has paid the last farthing." [922]

(3) Justin Martyr set out in his *Apology* the role of the apologist. It was to give to everyone the opportunity of examining the lives of the followers of Jesus and also to defend him/herself against the charge that he/she had failed in that task.[923] The task was made easier for the Apologists by the increasing availability of knowledge of the gospels as a result of access to texts. It is a matter of conjecture whether this situation led to a greater appreciation of the context in which these sayings were purported to have been used. But it gave to the Apologists opportunities to illustrate how these sayings might influence the way in which members of Christian communities lived their lives particularly in hostile environments.[924]

In chapter six on the implications of these sayings for the followers of Jesus consideration was given to the theories expressed respectively by Richard Horsley and Aaron Milavec concerning the *Sitz im Leben* in which these sayings of Jesus operated.[925] In it attention was given to what they (Horsley and Milavec) considered to be the peculiar circumstances in the lives of those who first heard these sayings. According to Horsley those earliest followers of Jesus understood the sayings to refer to "local social-economic relations, largely within the village community." The teachings contained in them were not "simply 'spiritual' counsels, but were concerned with the whole of communal and personal life, including concrete economic and community relations."[926]

Milavec sets these sayings in the context of the breakdown of family relationships as a result of the adherence of some members (probably the younger members of the family) to the teachings and commands of Jesus. He states that loving one's enemies had "very little to do with soldier-

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[920] "Give to everyone who begs from you, and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again."
[921] [A]nd you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.
[922] *Did.* 1:5.
[923] Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol*.3.
[924] See Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol.* 14:3, *Dial.* 133; Theophilus, *Autol,* 14; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 11; Tertullian, *De Patientia* 7:1; *Ad Scapulam,* 1:3.
[925] See chapter six, pp. 194-201.
[926] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis." 24.

civilian affairs and much to do with the deep divisions in families occasioned, not by war or other factors within Judean society, but by the very promotion of the gospel."[927]

However, as Horsley maintains, a position which Milavec appears to support in his views, the sayings should not be understood as universal ethical principles in the early stages of the gospel tradition or in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. "Yet already by early in the second century Christians were not only widely acquainted with the 'love your enemy' teaching (Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den apostolischen Vätern:* 44, 75-76, 220-30, 263-65) but understood it as a general ethical principle."[928] The evidence of the extent of the acquaintance of Christian communities with the sayings of Jesus has been attested in their use in the writings discussed in this chapter.

[927] Milavec, "The Social Setting of 'Turning the Other Cheek.'" 136.
[928] Horsley, "Ethics and Exegesis." 26.

Conclusion

The genesis of this study comes from my perception that in the modern literature which discusses the concept of askesis there is little or no attempt to relate it to the life style of Jesus and his followers. Such an approach might find some justification in the fact that both in the primary sources (the Synoptic Gospels) and in secondary sources there is little attempt to describe that life style in terms of askesis.

In the Synoptic Gospels there is a lack of overt references to concepts which might be used to describe a life style which showed ascetic tendencies such as enkrateia (ἐγκράτεια). We find references in the gospels to Jesus' call to his followers to deny themselves and to take up their cross.[929] Such a call can be deemed ascetic, but in the eyes of their contemporaries Jesus and his followers were seen as loose livers whose behaviour was an affront to their opponents.[930] That even John the Baptiser expressed some concern about Jesus might be ascertained from the question which he posed to Jesus through his messengers. "Are you the one who is to come or do we wait for another?"[931] In the secondary sources some writers have worked on the supposition that by following Jesus a person lives a life in a way which can be described as ascetic.

The premiss on which I have based my argument is that where scholars have attributed to Jesus and his followers some form of ascetical living they tend to discuss it in terms of a concept of askesis which derives from the behaviour of hermits and monks in the third and fourth centuries CE. It is for this reason that I turned to the teachings of Jesus contained in the sermons on the mount and on the plain for evidence to substantiate my claim that what we have in the Synoptic Gospels is a curriculum for the ascetic life style of his followers. Furthermore, it has enabled me to consider the possibility of an ascetic life style in accordance with Valantasis' succinct definition, which I repeat here:

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[929] *Mk.* 9:34-35; *Mt.*16:24-28; *Lk.* 9:23-27.
[930] *Lk.* 7:33-34.
[931] *Lk.*7:40.

> Performances within a dominant social environment intended to inaugurate a new subjectivity, different social relations and an alternative symbolic universe.[932]

The promotion of this view of askesis has benefited from the increased interest in the phenomenon not only as a religious practice but also as a secular activity. This interest has led to the broadening of the vista in which to consider its impact on life style generally. Among those whose numerous books and articles have contributed to this increased interest in askesis the following have had a part in stimulating my interest: Geoffrey Harpham,[933] Steven Fraade,[934] Vincent Wimbush,[935] Richard Valantasis,[936] James A. Francis,[937] Kallistos Ware,[938] William E. Deal,[939] Elizabeth Clark,[940] Michael Satlow,[941] Eliezer Diamond,[942] Gavin Flood[943] and Oliver Freiberger, (ed.).[944]

That this renewed interest in askesis has led to the publication of essays, edited by Freiberger, criticising the place of askesis in the culture and behaviour of people, is an indication of the importance which scholars have attached to this question. However, the critique of Christian askesis, contained in this collection of essays, privileges the late antique tradition stemming from the activities of hermits and monks. It scarcely pays any attention to an earlier tradition which has its roots in ancient Greek literature in which askesis and its cognates provide a trajectory in which the concept of discipline in the pursuit of arduous tasks can be utilised. Isabelle Kinnard in the introductory paragraph to her essay writes of the implied relationship

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[932] See Valantasis "Constructions of Power in Asceticism," in *JAAR* 63 (1995) 797.
[933] *Ascetic Imperative,* 1987.
[934] "Ascetical Aspects of Ancient Judaism," 1988.
[935] *Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity,* 1990; "Ascetic Impulse in Early Christianity," 1993, *Asceticism,* 1995, *Asceticism and the New Testament,* 1999.
[936] "Constructions of Power," 1995, *Asceticism,* 1995, *Gospel of Thomas,* 1997.
[937] *Subversive Virtue,* 1995.
[938] "Way of the Ascetics," 1995.
[939] "Politics of Asceticism," 1995.
[940] *Reading Renunciation,* 1999.
[941] "On the Earth You Shall Sleep," 2003.
[942] *Holy Men,* 2004.
[943] *Ascetic Self,* 2004.
[944] *Asceticism and its Critics,* 2006.

of the "daily sufferings" of third century ascetics with the "tortures and bloody deaths" of earlier martyrs. [945]

The genesis of this study and the premiss on which it is based have entailed a consideration of the development of the meaning of askesis and its cognates in early Greek literature and in the writings of the Hellenistic period to 100 CE. Over this period of nearly a millennium certain developments can be detected in its meaning. However what remains constant is the concept that askesis is about the application of a rigorous approach to the completion of a physical task or to a mental process. Although the term askesis does not appear in the Synoptic Gospels the concept of adopting a rigorous and persistent approach to whatever one did is apparent in the Greek of the New Testament in the use of present imperative of the verb to indicate such an approach.[946]

Mindful of Deal's view that the practice of askesis is related to a "historio- cultural" context,[947] I thought it necessary to provide "a local habitation" for this study by an attempt to contextualise the life style of Jesus and his followers within the region of Palestine. The task is fulfilled in chapters two and three. Their study has shown how multifaceted life and the religious ethos in Palestine were between 300 BCE and 100 CE. Despite a cultural tradition and belief system peculiar to the Jews they were not immune to the pervasive nature of Hellenistic culture and the period between 300 BCE and 100 CE can be viewed as one in which tension between the forces of Hellenism and the Jewish people was reflected in their literature. Whether emphasising the need to uphold traditional Jewish adherence to Torah and to their culture, or perceiving in Greek philosophy refinements of Jewish beliefs and culture, the literature of the period quite often expressed those views in ascetic terms. Chapters two and three provide

[945] Kinnard, I. " *Imitatio Christi* in Christian Martyrdom and Asceticism: A Critical Dialogue," in *Asceticism and Its Critics,* (ed.) Freiberger, 131-150, (131). Kinnard notes that the first known association of the two phenomena originates in the third century with the North African bishop Cyprian's distinction between 'red' and 'white' martyrdom." 131.
[946] The use of the present imperative in this way is discussed in chapter four.
[947] See Deal "Toward a Politics of Asceticism," in Wimbush & Valantasis, *Asceticism,* 428.

an overview of the tensions and their attempted solutions which emanated in a society which was experiencing change.[948]

The study of this period also revealed that Judaism was not a monolithic religion but rather consisted of many groups with diverse beliefs, so much so that in modern exegesis the plural form, Judaisms, is quite frequently used in discussing Jewish religious beliefs. The Essenes, scattered throughout the region, together with the community in Qumran, would have constituted one such group. That these people practised an ascetic life style is attested by primary evidence in the form of sectarian literature discovered at Qumran and in secondary evidence in the writings of near contempories, Philo and Josephus, and of the Roman, Pliny the Elder. What we read in the Qumran documents and in Philo, Josephus and Pliny is a positive assertion that the Essenes lived ascetically and would seem to be a contradiction of those who maintain that there was no form of asceticism in Judaism. These facts have been of relevance in assessing whether it is possible to determine whether the life style of Jesus and his followers could also be described as ascetic. It prompts the question as to how far the early group of Jesus' followers might have contained erstwhile Essenes and thus in the (re)formation which they experienced as followers of Jesus they would have been accustomed to a training which was disciplined and rigorous.

Jesus and those who were early attracted by his words and actions were Galileans and thus it was necessary to pose the question of the kind of influences which living in the Galilee exercised on their lives. The evidence suggested that in the eyes of the religious establishment in Jerusalem their ethnicity was a matter for doubt. That doubt arose as a result of the chequered history of the Galilee, its proximity to non-Jews and its seeming remoteness from Jerusalem. However the evidence in the gospels portrayed a people loyal to Jewish religious traditions, especially in their attendance of festivals in Jerusalem and in their observance of the Law. The gospels indicate that in these observances they were stricter than other Jews. Jesus'

[948] *Qoheleth* is an important witness of the tension which existed in Jewish society resulting from the impact of outside influences on the customs and beliefs of the people. This influence may be witnessed in other writings of this period such as, *Jubilees, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Joseph and Aseneth* and 4 *Maccabees.*

views of divorce and adultery were much more stringent than those of the Pharisees.[949] The Galilee was also perceived to be the home of prophets and mystics, groups which in any culture have been, and continue to be, disturbing elements.[950] The examination of the Galilean influences on Jesus and his followers was an element in the search for the motivation of those who attempted to live ascetically.

Chapters two and three examined what elements in the geography, history, religion and culture of Palestine and the Galilee might be seen to have contributed to an ascetical life style on the part of their inhabitants. Moreover the sub-texts of the literature which was studied also had an important role in the development of a climate for ascetical living by holding up for inspection many attitudes and cultural norms which tied an individual to a particular way of life. Of importance to my study, they pointed to elements which bound people to their roles in a particular society or community. The examination of the evidence of these factors in the lives of the followers of Jesus, and their strategies for effecting a change in life style can be seen as important in the development of living ascetically.

The perception of being different resulting from their Galilean origin would already have given the followers of Jesus a feeling of being marginalised and their decision to leave their families and communities would have been seen as an act of deviance. However marginalisation and deviance are crucial for initiation into ascetic living for they allow the individual to stand aside from those elements which hold him/her from the discovery of the new self. This change was described by Jesus as becoming like a child.[951] In the language of contemporary psychology Malina described it as the shrinking of the social self.[952] Despite the gap of nearly two millennia between the saying of Jesus and Malina's description of the stripping of the self they both relate to the same process, namely "the dissociation and the elimination of the social self, with its identity, roles,

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[949] *Mt.* 19:3-9.
[950] In *Mt.*23:29-38 Jesus addressed his charge concerning the killing of the prophets to the Pharisees and scribes in Jerusalem. See also *Lk.* 11: 45-51.
[951] *Mt.* 18:1-5.
[952] Malina, B. "Pain, Power and Personhood," in *Asceticism,* 162-177.

statuses, skills and attributes, from individual self-awareness."[953] In the *GTh.* Jesus described the process as little children unashamedly taking off their clothes and stamping on then.[954] Metaphorically naked without the encumbrances of their former lives, those who of their own volition were now objects of the hostility of their families and communities were ready to be (re)formed as the followers of Jesus.

That (re)formation was perceived as an ascetic exercise demanding discipline in the face of an arduous task, a concept of askesis recalling the original meaning of ἀσκέω (askeo). In the SP. *Lk.* 6:39-49, we learn what the successful negotiation of this (re)formation entailed; it was the knowledge to know how it had to be approached (vv. 39-40), the integrity to acknowledge one's limitation (vv. 41-42) and the recognition of the source of one's strength, namely listening to the words of Jesus and carrying them out (v.47). The language of the final pericope of the SP. 6:48-49 (see also SM. 7:24-27) returns to the language of effort in describing the building of the foundation of a house - σκάπτω, βαθύνω.

The description in the SP of this (re)formation follows the teaching of Jesus that one should love one's enemy. This precept was described by Justin Martyr as revolutionary - τί καινὸν ποιεῖτε; [955] Earlier in this same dialogue he described the changes which he perceived in those who observed this command of Jesus. Those who formerly hated one another and were hostile to those of different tribes now lived together in peace.[956] Tertullian was later to describe this saying of Jesus as his most important teaching – principale praeceptum.[957] The examination of this teaching in chapter six has indicated that, in spite of the ethos of the times (early Greek, Hellenistic and Judaeo-Hellenistic/Roman periods) with their emphasis on the demand for retributary justice through the operation of the ius talionis and on the practice of reciprocity which conditioned the way in which people related to each other, there always existed a

[953] Malina, "Pain, Power and Personhood," 163.
[954] *GTh.* 37. Cf. sayings 4 and 22 which both refer to the behaviour of children as "a signifier of a new identity," (Valantasis' phrase).
[955] Justin Martyr, 1. *Apol.*15:9.
[956] Justin Martyr, 1. *Apol.*14:3.
[957] Tertullian. *De Patientia,* 7:1.

persistent advocacy for a different attitude to one's enemies.[958] The chapter includes an account of two locations in which hostility or animosity might have occurred prompting the sayings of Jesus about the way in which his followers should respond to an hostile act. Horsley was of the view that the Sitz im Leben of Jesus' command to love one's enemies and of the concomitant actions, entailed in its implementation, was a dispute between members of the same community and that it arose from the prevailing socio-economic condition of the region.[959] Milavec's view focused more narrowly on a family quarrel and found its support in the many anti-familial sayings of Jesus contained in the Synoptic Gospels.[960] Both of these situations dismiss the consensus position that these sayings were prompted as a response to the national situation in Palestine at the time. From the evidence at hand it is difficult to assess which was the likely scenario for these sayings. Notwithstanding this these sayings represented a counter cultural stance on the part of Jesus in opposition to the response to acts of violence from any quarter.

It is not the intention of this study to criticise the practices of monks and hermits living in the third and fourth centuries of the present era. There can be no doubt that their life styles exhibited ascetic tendencies. What is problematic, however, is that later descriptions or definitions of askesis have been posited on those practices with very little acknowledgement that there existed a long history of behaviour and practices which have been designated as ascetic by the use of terminology such as, ἀσκέω, ἄσκησις, ἀσκητής in early Greek, Hellenistic and Judaeo-Hellenistic writings. These terms were not an essential part of the rhetoric of the Synoptic Gospels. The ascetic nature of a practice or thought was indicated by other means such as the iterative use of the present imperative of Greek verbs and the emphasis on the importance of the meaning of verbs like ἀκούω, which in ancient Greek

[958] See chapter six, passim.
[959] See references to Horsley's views in chapter six.
[960] See in the same chapter references to Milavec's views.

represented more than a physiological act on the part of a hearer and was employed as part of the discipline of learning, found also in Jewish rabbinical schools. Such a discipline of learning has been diminished in teaching by a heavy emphasis on visual imagery.

In the light of this study of askesis and in keeping with the view of Deal about the necessity of relating ascetic practices to a "historio-cultural context", it is not possible any longer to assert it as a concept to be defined by one tradition only, a tradition restricted to the period of late antiquity. Further, as Wimbush states in his early paper on the ascetic impulse, asceticism can "no longer be argued to be the simple expression of the negative, the shrill response of world-rejecting, anti-social individuals and groups."[961] In a footnote he goes on to suggest that the renewed academic interest in askesis "is influenced by the shift...from the widespread, unquestioned valuation of consumption and desire, to at least a more widespread questioning of such, and a turn toward the valuation of moderation, self control and discipline."[962] In contemporary society, in which there appears to be little understanding of what an ascetic outlook implies beyond the impression that asceticism is taken to mean a body-punishing regime,[963] this study is a contribution to that valuation advocated by Wimbush; it presents a view of askesis which is rational and within the grasp of most people, but devoid of elements of the fantastic, found in the acts of desert fathers and hermits recorded in hagiographical accounts.

[961] Wimbush, V. "Ascetic Impulse," 462.
[962] Wimbush, "Ascetic Impulse," 463, n. 2.
[963] See chapter one, p.37, n.130 which refers to the meaning of "ascetic" given in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* and to Patrick Olivelle's list of meanings found in the *Synonym Finder.*

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