

In 586 B.C.E. the Jerusalem Temple had fallen, but a scant three generations had to pass before it was rebuilt. From that time onward, whatever happened to the Temple building, the cult endured. So the entire history of Israel testified to the Temple's prominence in the world of Israel. If it should again be destroyed, then, following the established pattern, people had every reason to expect it would be rebuilt. Accordingly, the fact of the destruction in 70 C.E., while bearing profound consequences, by itself merely raised a question. The calamity that, three generations later Bar Kokba's armies, intent on retaking the holy city and rebuilding the Temple, suffered total defeat, turned the question into a crisis, the earlier destruction into the decisive turning point. But in what direction? And, more important, with what meaning for the whole of the past of Israel? The answer, stated very briefly, is simple. In the aftermath of the cultic, political, military disaster of 70 and 135 C.E., everything would be reworked, the entire heritage revised and renewed.

So in the later first and second centuries the diverse varieties of Judaic piety present in Israel before 70 C.E. came to bonding in a new and wholly unprecedented way, with each party to the union imposing its logic upon the other constituents of the whole. The ancient categories remained. But they were so profoundly revised and transformed that nothing was preserved intact. Judaism as we know it, the Judaism of Scripture and Mishnah, midrash and Talmud, thereby effected the ultimate transvaluation of all the values, of all the kinds of Judaism that had come before, from remote Israelite times onward. Through the person and figure of the rabbi, the whole burden of Israel's heritage was taken up, renewed, handed on, from late antiquity to the present day.

*Jesus'
Competition*

3

THE PHARISEES

The Pharisees are important for two reasons. First, the Gospels portray them as one of the principal opposition groups to Jesus. Second, Judaism as we know it generally traces its roots back to the Pharisees. How so? The Mishnah, the first great document of Judaism in its normative form, ca. 200 C.E., includes teachings attributed to authorities known to us from other sources to be Pharisees. These are, in particular, Gamaliel and his son, Simeon. The Mishnah, moreover, regards Gamaliel's father, the great rabbi Hillel, as one of the chief authorities for the Mishnah's own traditions. It follows that, long after the period at hand, the Mishnah preserved teachings allegedly belonging to the Pharisees in the time of Jesus.

Describing the Pharisees is not easy. The reason is that when people describe that rather small group, they pass their opinion also on large issues of our own day. Jews tend to praise the Pharisees as the source of wisdom and learning, because, as I said, Jews also claim to trace their religious traditions to the Pharisees. Christians today violently attack Pharisees. Protestants emphasize the legalism of the Pharisees, another way of attacking what they conceive to be the legalism of the Roman Catholic communion. Catholics simply draw upon well-known judgments in the Gospels themselves, which portray the Pharisees as hypocrites. But often many Protestants and Catholics, speaking of the Pharisees of long ago, really mean ("perfidious") Judaism of today. Consequently, it is unusually difficult to take up the Pharisees with that attitude of reasoned curiosity that makes learning a source of light. The best we can do is describe the sources of such information as we have about the group at hand.

THE SOURCES

What do we know about the Pharisees before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.? More important, how do we know anything about them at all?

We have three separate bodies of information: first, the historical narratives of Josephus, a Jewish historian who, between 75 and ca. 100 C.E., wrote the history of the Jews from the beginnings to the destruction of Jerusalem, including the war against Rome which had led to the destruction; second, biographical traditions about, and sayings attributed to, Jesus, assembled in the nascent Christian community between ca. 50 and ca. 90 C.E.; third, the laws and sayings attributed to pre-70 C.E. Pharisees by their successors and heirs, the rabbis of late first- and second-century Palestine.

1. Josephus's narrative requires interpretation in the light of his own life in Roman politics after 70 C.E.

2. The Gospels' traditions about the Pharisees show little interest in the Pharisees, except as a convenient basis for polemic or narrative. Information about the Pharisees which the Gospel narrators had to have known for their own purposes consisted of two significant facts: Pharisaic stress on tithing, and Pharisaic commitment to keeping the purity laws outside of the Temple. But the Gospels' superficial knowledge of the details of what the Pharisees actually did hardly suggests much interest in the Pharisaic set in its own terms.

3. The rabbinical traditions about the Pharisees prove most complex of all. The legal materials, attested shortly after 70 C.E., all are reworked in the forms used after. The rabbinical history of Pharisaism, moreover, turns out to be strikingly relevant to the spiritual crisis in the aftermath of the Bar Kokba War.

These separate sources furthermore are quite different in character. The first is a systematic, coherent historical narrative. The second is a well-edited collection of stories and sayings. The third consists chiefly of laws, arranged by legal categories in codes, and commentaries on those codes. Moreover, the purposes of the authors or compilers of the respective collections differ from one other.

1. Josephus was engaged in explaining to the Jewish world of his day that Rome was not at fault for the destruction of the Temple, and in telling the Roman world that the Jewish people had been misled, and therefore were not to be held responsible for the terrible war.

2. The interest of the Gospels is not in the history of the Jewish

people, but in the life and teachings of Jesus, to which that history supplies background.

3. The rabbinical legislators show no keen interest in narrative, biographical, or historical problems, but take as their task the promulgation of laws for the government and administration of the Jewish community.

The historical question we bring to the sources would have been remote and incomprehensible to all three. We want to know what really happened. How accurate are our sources? Our measure of accuracy is historical reality. To what historical situation does a story testify? What apologetic or polemical purposes are reflected in the narrative? What is the history of a saying or story? Whose interest does it serve? What case does it help to make? We thus begin with a skepticism that does not characterize the ancient sources, and we are not perturbed by fundamentally negative results.

Much that we are told about the Pharisees reflects the situation, interests, and viewpoint of the teller, not of the historical Pharisees. The historical enterprise therefore promises modest results, for all we know about the historical Pharisees consists in what three interested parties have to tell us, which is in turn shaped by their beliefs and concerns. But that is always the difficulty in the study of the history of religious movements and leaders around whose teachings later controversies tend to focus, and to whose authority later disputes are referred. The study of the historical Pharisees therefore serves to illustrate a commonplace methodological difficulty. Consideration of these sometimes difficult sources may provide useful experience in analyzing other historical-religious sources as well.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF DISASTER

The single most important event in the history of Judaism from the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.E. to the conquest of Palestine by the Arabs in ca. 640 C.E. was the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E.

It was decisive not only because the political basis of Jewish community life had rested on the Temple government, but also because the religious life of the people had centered on the sacrificial cult. To be sure, small groups tended to refocus their life away from, and in opposition to, the Temple. But for the mass, the Temple represented the nexus between heaven and earth. God had revealed his will in the Torah—the revelation to Moses at Sinai—which

contained numerous cultic laws. Those laws were kept in the Temple, where the daily sacrifices and the exact sacrificial technology represented a primary means by which Israel served its father in heaven. Destruction of the Second Temple therefore provided the point of contention for all parties who, in the aftermath, claimed to tell the Jews the meaning of the recent unhappy events and the way in which they now should live.

Some of the several sources concerning pre-70 Pharisaic Judaism were shaped in response to the crisis of 70 C.E. With the Temple in ruins it was important to preserve and, especially, to interpret the record of what had gone before. Josephus tells the story of the people and the great war. For their part, the Gospels record the (to the Christians) climactic moment in Israel's supernatural life, without much sustained interest in the destruction of the Temple. But it formed part of the facts to be dealt with. The rabbis describe the party to which they traced their origin, and through which they claimed to reach back to the authority of Moses at Sinai. The issue in all three cases was: What is the meaning of the decisive history just passed—whether in the life of Christ or in the life of Israel?

1. To Josephus the answer is that Israel's welfare depends upon obedience to the laws of the Torah as expounded by the Pharisees and upon peaceful relationships with Rome.

2. The Gospels claim that, with the coming of the Messiah, the Temple ceased to enjoy its former importance, and those who had had charge of Israel's life—chief among them the priests, scribes, and Pharisees—were shown through their disbelief to have ignored the hour of their salvation. Their unbelief is explained in part by the Pharisees' hypocrisy and self-seeking.

3. The rabbis contend that the continuity of the mosaic Torah is unbroken. Destruction of the Temple, while lamentable, does not mean Israel has lost all means of service to the Creator. The way of the Pharisees leads, without break, back to Sinai and forward to the rabbinical circle reforming at Yavneh. The Oral Torah revealed by Moses and handed on from prophet to scribe, sage, and rabbi remains in the hands of Israel. The legal record of pre-70 Pharisaism requires careful preservation because it remains wholly in effect.

THEOLOGY

The theological side to Pharisaic Judaism before 70 C.E., however, is not easily accessible, for the pre-70 beliefs, ideas, and values have been taken over and revised by the rabbinical masters after that time. We therefore cannot reliably claim that an idea first known to us in a

later rabbinical document, from the third century and afterward, was originally both known and understood in the same way. For now, the only reliable information derives from Josephus, the Gospels, and rabbinical literature, beginning with the Mishnah, the law code of Judah the Patriarch. As is clear, none of these gives an accurate account of Pharisaic theology before 70 C.E. Josephus concentrates on political questions, and the theological teachings to which he does allude are primarily of a general philosophical character. The Gospels have no interest in Pharisaic theology, and rabbinical attributions of theological sayings to the Pharisaic masters before 70, which are not likely to be reliable, constitute little more than a collection of sage comments, commonplaces of practical wisdom. We shall see some of these in chapter 4.

POLEMICS

The historical task is made still more complicated by the long history of abuse to which the Pharisees have been subjected in Western civilization. The New Testament's negative picture was widely reproduced in Christian preaching, writing, and scholarship. To the present day one will find the Pharisees described in exactly the polemical spirit of the Gospels, as if the synoptic writers had intended to write an objective, critical history, not a highly partisan caricature. "Pharisee" became a synonym for hypocrite, and "Pharisaic" for formalism or self-righteousness. Thus these definitions (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 3d rev. ed. [Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1955], 1485–86):

Pharisaic: Resembling the Pharisees in being strict in doctrine and ritual, without the spirit of piety; laying stress upon the outward show of religion and morality, and assuming superiority on that account; hypocritical; formal; self-righteous.

Pharisaism: The character and spirit of the Pharisees; hypocrisy; formalism; self-righteousness.

Pharisee: One of an ancient Jewish sect distinguished by their strict observance of the traditional and written law, and by their pretensions to superior sanctity. A person of this disposition; a self-righteous person; a formalist; a hypocrite.

Lexicography in the service of an anti-Judaic Christian theology thus accurately reproduces the polemic of the Gospels.

These definitions of Pharisee and Pharisaic are part of the cultural background of the West, an aspect of the anti-Semitism nurtured by Christian theology of a certain sort. They cannot be allowed to

influence the issues of our inquiry. We want to get behind these cultural artifacts, which are unrelated to the historical task.

Naturally, on the Jewish side, a contrary polemic was not lacking. Since rabbinical traditions contain numerous stories and sayings attributed to Pharisaic masters of the period before 70 C.E., it was easy for Jewish scholarship to demonstrate not only the theological animus, but also the historical incompetence of those Christian scholars of ancient and modern times who ignored important parts of the Pharisaic record. Hillel, a near-contemporary of Jesus, and the most important figure in pre-70 Pharisaism according to the rabbinical traditions, is credited with the aphorism, "What is hateful to yourself, do not do to your neighbor. That is the entire Torah. All the rest is commentary. Now go forth and learn." He is also made to say, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But when I am for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" These and similar sayings are routinely cited as evidence that Pharisees were not hypocrites, formalists, or self-righteous men.

WHO WERE THE PHARISEES? JOSEPHUS'S ANSWER

At the outset of our inquiry it is best that we seek perspective on the Pharisaic sect in its own setting. Josephus tells us that "more than six thousand Pharisees" refused to take an oath of loyalty to Herod:

There was also a group of Jews priding itself on its adherence to ancestral custom and claiming to observe the laws of which the Deity approves, and by these men, called Pharisees, the women of the court [of Herod] were ruled. These men were able to help the king greatly because of their foresight, and yet they were obviously intent upon combating and injuring him. At last when the whole Jewish people affirmed by an oath that it would be loyal to Caesar and to the king's government, these men, over six thousand in number, refused to take this oath, and when the king punished them with a fine, Pheroras' wife paid the fine for them. In return for her friendliness they foretold—for they were believed to have foreknowledge of things through God's appearances to them—that by God's decree Herod's throne would be taken from him, both from himself and his descendants, and the royal power would fall to her and Pherora and to any children that they might have. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 17:41–4, trans. Ralph Marcus [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1963], 391, 393)

What was the position of these six thousand Pharisees in relationship to the mass of the Jewish population?

Morton Smith, the great historian of antiquity, points out that the man who was a Pharisee was not primarily a Pharisee all the time. He presumably played many roles in society. Gamaliel is described in Acts 5:34 as a Pharisee in the council of the Temple. Was he appointed to the council because he was a Pharisee, and thus represented the party or sect there? Or was he a Pharisee who also happened for some other reason, perhaps social distinction or political and economic power, to be appointed in the Temple? Was he then a Temple councilor who also happened to be a Pharisee? What was the meaning of "being a Pharisee" in the lives of various sorts of people? It seems most likely that to be a Pharisee was not a profession, but an avocation. Pharisaism was, in terms of ancient civilization, a sect within the "philosophy" of Judaism. Smith stresses:

Judaism to the ancient world was a philosophy. That world had no general term for *religion*. It could speak of a particular system of rites (a cult or an initiation), or a particular set of beliefs (doctrines or opinions), or a legal code, or a body of national customs or traditions; but for the peculiar synthesis of all these which we call a "religion," the one Hellenistic word which came closest was "philosophy." So when Judaism first took shape and became conscious of itself and its own peculiarity in the Hellenized world of the later Persian Empire, it described itself with the Hellenic term meaning the wisdom of its people (Deut. 4:6). To the success of this concept within Judaism the long roll call of the wisdom literature bears witness. Further, the claim was accepted by the surrounding world. To those who admired Judaism it was "the cult of wisdom" (for so we should translate the word "philosophy" which they used to describe it), and to those who disliked it, it was "atheism," which is simply the other side of the coin, the regular term of abuse applied to philosophy by its opponents. (Morton Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century," in *Israel: Its Role in Civilization*, ed. Moshe David [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956], 67–81)

The Pharisees claimed to be authoritative because they taught a philosophy that derived from Moses at Sinai. They therefore preserved a "chain of tradition" reaching back from their own day to the authority of remote antiquity. Their piety was centered on the revelation of Moses. Smith says:

It is . . . not surprising that Jews living, as Palestinian Jews did, in the Greco-Roman world, and thinking of their religion as the practice of wisdom, should think of the groups in their society which were distinguished by peculiar theories and practices as different schools of the na-

tional philosophy. (Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century," 79-80)

THE PHARISEES AS HELLENISTS

Thus Palestinian Judaism overall, and the Pharisaic sect in particular, are to be seen as Jewish modes of a common, international cultural "style" known as Hellenism. To see Palestinian Judaism outside of its context within world civilization is to misinterpret the meaning of its accomplishments. The Jews were not an isolated or provincial people, and their "philosophy" was not incomprehensible, at least in form, to the rest of civilized humankind. The Jews, on the contrary, responded to the challenge of Hellenism by shaping a uniquely Jewish form of that common culture. Nor was this merely in generalities. The Pharisees, for one, exhibited numerous traits familiar to Hellenistic culture, as Smith points out:

Not only was the theory of the Pharisaic school that of a school of Greek philosophy, but so were its practices. Its teachers taught without pay, like philosophers; they attached to themselves particular disciples who followed them around and served them, like philosophers; they looked to gifts for support, like philosophers; they were exempt from taxation, like philosophers; they were distinguished in the street by their walk, speech, and peculiar clothing, like philosophers; they practiced and praised asceticism, like philosophers; and finally—what is, after all, the meat of the matter—they discussed the questions philosophers discussed and reached the conclusions philosophers reached. . . .

If there was any such thing, then, as an "orthodox Judaism," it must have been that which is now almost unknown to us, the religion of the average "people of the land." But the different parts of the country were so different, such gulfs of feeling and practice separated Idumea, Judea, Caesarea, and Galilee, that even on this level there was probably no more agreement between them than between any one of them and a similar area in the Diaspora. And in addition to the local differences, the country swarmed with special sects, each devoted to its own tradition. Some of these, the followings of particular prophets, may have been spontaneous revivals of Israelite religion as simple as anything in Judges. But even what little we know of these prophets suggests that some of them, at least, taught a complex theology. As for the major philosophic sects—the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes—the largest and ultimately the most influential of them, the Pharisees, numbered only about 6,000, had not real hold either on the government or on the masses of the people, and was, as were the others, profoundly Hellenized.

This period of Palestinian Jewish history, then, is the successor to one marked by great receptivity to outside influences. It is itself characterized by original developments of those influences. These developments, by their variety, vigor, and eventual significance, made this small country during this brief period the seedbed of the subsequent religious history of the Western world. (Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century," 81.)

We learn from Smith's characterization that the Pharisees were a small group within Palestinian Judaism, a philosophical school with a particular set of beliefs and religious practices. They claimed the right to rule all the Jews by virtue of their possessing the "Oral Torah" of Moses, that is, the body of traditions not written in Scriptures, but revealed to Moses at Mount Sinai along with the written Torah. They referred to a list of masters extending back to Moses, whom they later called "our rabbi." In their own setting, however, the Pharisees were much like any other Hellenistic philosophical school or sect.

THE TWO PICTURES OF THE PHARISEES

Let us now return to the sources themselves. The simple fact is that there is a striking discontinuity among the three principal sources which speak of the Pharisees before 70 C.E. To state matters simply: What Josephus thinks characteristic of the Pharisees are matters which play little or no role in what Mark and Matthew regard as significant, and what the later rabbis think the Pharisees said is congruent in theme to the picture of Q, Mark, and Matthew but scarcely intersects with the topics and themes important to Josephus. In this regard, the picture drawn by Matthew and Mark and that drawn by the later rabbis are essentially coherent, and together differ from the portrait left to us by Josephus.

More specifically, if we construct the agenda of Pharisaic traditions we should have expected on the basis of external descriptions of the sect, we discern a remarkable disparity. The traits of Pharisaism emphasized by Josephus, their principal beliefs and practices, nowhere occur in the rabbinic traditions of the Pharisees. The issues important to other sects of the period before 70 C.E., those problems that occupied the attention of the authorities and a central place in the traditions of the Christians and Qumranians, and of the writers of Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic literature and related collections, simply do not come to the surface in the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees.

THE RABBINIC TRADITIONS ABOUT THE PHARISEES

The focus of interest of the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees is the internal affairs of the Pharisaic party itself. The primary partisan issues center upon Shammai's and his House's relationship to Hillel and his House or disciple circle. The competing sects, by contrast, are ignored. Essenes and Christians make no appearance at all. The Romans never occur. The Hasmonean monarchy is reduced to a single name, Yannai the King, for Yohanan the High Priest, who, so far as the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees are concerned, was a good Pharisee. In all, the traditions give the impression of intense concentration on the inner life of the party, or sect, whose intimate affairs take precedence, in the larger scheme of history, over the affairs of state, cult, and country. The state is a shadowy presence at best. The cult is of secondary importance. The country's life and the struggle with Rome as a whole are bypassed in silence. What we have, therefore, are the records of the party chiefly in regard to the life of the party itself.

When we compare what Josephus says about the Pharisees to what the later rabbinic traditions have to say, there is scarcely a point of contact, let alone intersection. Josephus says next to nothing about the predominant issues in the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees. Shammai and Hillel are not explicitly mentioned, let alone their Houses. Above all, we find not the slightest allusion to laws of ritual purity, agricultural taboos, Sabbath and festivals, and the like, which predominate in the traditions of the Houses. We could not, relying upon Josephus, recover a single significant detail of the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees, let alone the main outlines of the whole.

THE GOSPELS' PHARISEES

When we survey the references to Pharisees in the Synoptic Gospels, we observe close correspondences to what the later rabbinic traditions say. While the synoptic writers have no knowledge of the Houses of Shammai and Hillel, which ought to have been important in the period with which they deal, but assuredly were important in the period in which they wrote, they do lay emphasis on matters familiar in the rabbinic traditions. As we review the recurrent themes in the Gospels' accounts of the Pharisees, we find the following: Sabbath observance, in particular, picking food and

healing the sick; cleanness laws, in particular the view that cleanness laws are less important than ethical commandments, and in the same context, eating with people who do not keep either cleanness laws or ethical commandments (tax collectors and the like); consecrating objects to the Temple and oath-taking; stress on tithing little things and (again) neglecting ethical matters; fasting; and lawful divorce.

To the legal agenda, we may add doctrinal questions: the character and power of the Son of Man; the value of baptism; signs as authentication of the Messiah; relations to the Roman government; the resurrection of the dead, tied to a levirate pericope; and the relative value of the respective commandments. The third category consists of the abuse of Pharisees; this is of no concern here. The legal agenda at every point has a counterpart in the rabbinic traditions of the Pharisees. Moreover, the stress of the Gospels seems just about right: cleanness laws, agricultural taboos, Sabbath and festival observance, family laws. We further observed attention to Temple consecration and oaths. Only fasting seems to play no significant part in the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees.

The doctrinal issues are quite another matter. We have no rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees concerning the Messiah, his powers, rights, and obligations. Were we to construct a picture of first-century Palestinian Judaism entirely on the basis of the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees, we should not have known that the Messiah was a significant element. Indeed, we should not have heard of the messianic expectation at all. Baptism in the sense of the Gospels' discussion has not come before us, although baptism in another sense, primarily for the purification of ritual uncleanness, not in relationship to the forgiveness of sin, is of course well-attested. But these look like different baptisms; the one is primarily ritual, the other moral. The Gospels' tendency to ethicize both baptism and purity rules and to set tithing into opposition with moral behavior is polemical; but is not without precedent in biblical prophecy. No echo of that attitude toward ritual comes before us in the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees. As we observed, the Romans nowhere make an appearance. Whether or not one should pay taxes is never raised in materials we have reviewed.

A wide range of issues important in the traditions concerning other groups, and of other groups concerning the Pharisees, is either entirely absent or strikingly subordinated in the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees. Questions to which we find no answers in the rabbinic materials include the following: What was the canon of the

Scriptures? How did the Pharisees view other groups? Did the Pharisees believe in the immortality of the soul? What was the Pharisees' attitude to the Temple? to sacrifice? to the priesthood? What were the interpretations of baptism supplied by Pharisees? How did the Pharisees view heteropraxy and heterodoxy? Was the claim of being the Messiah taken seriously? Was it considered punishable? What were their attitudes to apocalyptic visions, ideas, and personalities? What was the attitude of the party toward Hellenistic society in general? Toward Greek-speaking Jews in particular? To what degree did the Pharisees at various stages in their history before 70 C.E. involve themselves in the politics of the country? When and why did they pursue an independent course, and when did they withdraw entirely from political life? What was the inner institutional structure of the Pharisaic party? How were people admitted and expelled? One could formulate a substantial agenda of questions, problems, and concerns important either to other sects, or to Jewish Palestine and its social and religious life as a whole. That agenda is unattended to by the rabbinic tradents, who, as I said, tell us about what primarily interested them. The shape of those interests, on the one side, and the configuration of the historical Pharisees, on the other, do not seem entirely congruent to one another.

POINTS IN COMMON: THE LAWS

Now that we have gained a measure of perspective upon the emphases of the rabbinical traditions about the Pharisees, we may select the one topic on which these sources are apt to be essentially sound, namely, the laws they impute to the figures before 70 C.E. who we believe were Pharisees. The congruity in the themes of the laws attributed to the Pharisees by both the Gospels and the later rabbinic sources seems to me striking. What it means is that, from speaking of traditions about the Pharisees, we are apt to address the historical Pharisees themselves in the decades before the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. The historical Pharisees in the decades before the destruction of Jerusalem are portrayed by legal traditions that seem to be fundamentally sound in theme, perhaps also in substance, and attested by references of masters who may reasonably be supposed to have known what they were talking about. Which laws pertained primarily to Pharisaism and which were part of the law common to all of Palestinian Jewry? Most of the laws before us, verified early or late, affect primarily the sectarian life of the party.

The laws that made a sect sectarian were those that either were

interpreted and obeyed by the group in a way different from other groups or from common society at large, on the one hand, or were to begin with observed only by the group, on the other. In the latter category are the purity laws, which take so large a place in the Pharisaic corpus. One primary mark of Pharisaic commitment was the observance of the laws of ritual purity outside of the Temple, where everyone kept them. Eating one's secular, that is, unconsecrated, food in a state of ritual purity, as if one were a Temple priest in the cult, was one of the two significations of party membership. The manifold circumstances of everyday life required the multiplication of concrete rules. Representative of the former category may be the laws of tithing and other agricultural taboos. Here we are less certain. Pharisees clearly regarded keeping the agricultural rules as a primary religious duty. But whether, to what degree, and how other Jews did so is not clear. And the agricultural laws, just like the purity rules, in the end affected table-fellowship, namely, what one might eat.

The early Christian traditions on both points represent the Pharisees as reproaching Jesus because his followers did not keep these two kinds of laws at all, that is, why they were not Pharisees. The answer was that the primary concern was for ethics. Both the question and the answer are disingenuous. The questioners are represented as rebuking the Christians for not being Pharisees—which begs the question, for everyone presumably knew Christians were not Pharisees. The answer takes advantage of the polemical opening: Pharisees are not concerned with ethics, a point repeatedly made in the anti-Pharisaic pericopes, depending upon a supposed conflict between rules of table-fellowship, on the one side, and ethical behavior on the other. The obvious underlying claim is that Christian table-fellowship does not depend upon the sorts of rules important in the table-fellowship of other groups.

Since the tithes and offerings either went to the Levites and priests or had to be consumed in Jerusalem, and since the purity rules were to begin with Temple matters, we note that the Pharisees claimed laymen are better informed as to purity and Temple laws than the Temple priesthood. Morton Smith ("The Dead Sea Sect in Relation to Ancient Judaism," *New Testament Studies* 7 [1960]: 347-60) observes, "Differences as to the interpretation of the purity laws and especially as to the consequent question of table fellowship were among the principal causes of the separation of Christianity from the rest of Judaism and the early fragmentation of Christianity itself. The

same thing holds for the Qumran community, and, within Pharisaic tradition, the *haburah*. They are essentially groups whose members observe the same interpretation of the purity rules and therefore can have table fellowship with each other. It is no accident that the essential act of communion in all these groups is participation in common meals." Since food which had not been properly grown or tithed could not be eaten, and since the staple of the diet was agricultural products and not meat, the centrality of the agricultural rules in no small degree is on account of precisely the same consideration: What may one eat, and under what circumstances?

The commonplace character of Pharisaic table-fellowship is striking. The group's ordinary gatherings were not as a group at all, but in any private home, with all participating in an ordinary meal. All meals required ritual purity. Pharisaic table-fellowship took place in the same circumstance in which all nonritual table-fellowship occurred: common folk, eating everyday meals, in an everyday way, amid neighbors who were not members of the sect, and engaged in workaday pursuits like everyone else. This made the actual purity rules and food restrictions all the more important, for only they set the Pharisee apart from the people among whom he constantly lived. Since it was not on festivals or on Sabbaths alone, but on weekdays, in the towns, without the telling of myths or the reading of holy books (Torah talk at table is attested only later), or the reenactment of first or last things, Pharisaic table-fellowship depended solely on observance of the law. That observance, apart from the meal itself, was not marked off by benedictions or other rites. No stories were told during the meal or about it. Keeping the laws included few articulate statements, for example, blessings. The setting for observance was the field and the kitchen, the bed, and the street. The occasion for observance was set every time a person picked up a common nail or purchased a *seah* of wheat, by himself, without priests to bless his deed or sages to tell him what to do. So keeping the Pharisaic rule required neither an occasional, exceptional rite at, but external to, the meal, as in the Christian sect in Judaism, nor taking up residence in a monastic commune, as in the Qumranian sect in Judaism, but perpetual sanctification of daily life through rite, on the one side, and constant inner awareness of the communal order of being, on the other.

WOMEN AND PHARISAISM

Once the focus of piety through sanctification shifted out of the Temple, a new opportunity for women opened up. We recall that

women had gained access only to the outer precincts of the Temple. They could never approach the altar; they could not do the things men could do. Even if they were members of the priestly caste, their standing in the Temple was exactly the same as that of the lowliest daughter of the subordinated castes, for instance, the child of a couple legally not permitted to marry. But with the emphasis upon observing the rules of cultic cleanness, hence eating food in holy meals not only in the Temple but also in the home, everything shifted. For all of the evidence of this period takes for granted that women prepared meals. Accordingly, women gained a central role in the correct observance of the rules governing cultic cleanness. Let us not miss the point: if you keep these rules, you eat your food as if you were a priest, so you enter the status of holiness. But women bore responsibility for preparing food in accordance with the taboos. It follows that women now enjoyed the power to secure sanctification—and this in the very context from which, in the Temple itself, they were excluded. The paradox is striking.

We should not miss the full dimensions of the enhanced position now available. First, women were expected to keep the same cultic taboos as men did. So they attained complete equality in the life of the rites of the home. So far as the rules at hand were concerned, there were no distinctions between men and women. Second, the status of women, so far as cultic holiness was concerned, did not depend upon their relationship to men. They were not going to be cultically clean because they were descended from a father who was a priest, or because they married a priest. If women were daughters of priests, they also did not lose their status as persons who might attain sanctification merely because they married someone of a lower caste than themselves. Consequently, in the Pharisaic rite women enjoyed full personhood. Their status depended wholly upon what they themselves did or did not do, upon rules applicable equally to women and to men.

On the other hand, keeping the rules of cultic cleanness meant that in a period in which a woman was "unclean," that is, menstruating, she could not prepare food that was to be eaten by people who observed the taboos. What this meant in practice was that women could not prepare meals for their families for about a week each month. The alternative was that during the wife's menstrual period, the family simply ate its ordinary food not in a condition of cultic cleanness at all. It was no sin, but it also represented a considerable comedown. To be sure, households encompassed more than the nuclear family; if one woman was menstruating, there were others to

prepare the meals. The laws of cultic contamination, however, extended even to objects upon which unclean persons (such as are listed in Leviticus 15) stood, sat, or lay. Menstruating women therefore had to take special care to demarcate the places in which they walked, sat, and stood during a week each month.

In all, the importance of the woman was emphasized in Pharisaism. But it also complicated her everyday life. While ordinary Jewish couples, who did not think the rules of cultic cleanness applied outside of the Temple, refrained from having sexual relations when the women were menstruating, the sexual taboo cannot have imposed so broad a range of inconveniences as did the sectarian ones at hand. How women responded we do not know. We do have ample evidence that women as much as men voluntarily undertook the disciplines of sanctification as Pharisees understood them. But whatever writing we have comes from men only. So the picture, as usual, is incomplete.

CONCLUSION

The debate on the Pharisees embodies the Christian critique of Judaism, and the Jews' apologetic for their religion. The debate tends to be framed in polemical terms on both sides. Quite naturally, the negative picture of the Pharisees as legalists, hypocrites, people who care for the form but not the spirit of the law, predominates in Western culture. To be called "a Pharisee" is no compliment. The other side insists, in exactly these same terms, that Pharisees really preached a religion of love, citing sources out of the whole of rabbinic literature to prove it. For Jews know that it is their observance of the living faith, so rich in concrete expressions in ordinary life, that is under attack.

What happens, however, if the issue may be drawn differently? Then the debate falls away, since it misses the real point of both the Pharisees and their early Christian enemies and critics. In fact we have the picture of two sets of Jews—the ones for whom the Gospels speak, on the one side, and the ones described in the laws assigned to authorities before 70 C.E. in the later rabbinic writings, on the other side—who really are talking about different things and therefore are unable to address the important issues in common.

Clearly, the invective of the Gospels against the Pharisees bespeaks competition and strife between the communities for whom the Gospels speak and this other, quite separate, community of Israelites. To the framers of the Gospels, salvation is at hand. Equally obvious,

the stress of the Pharisees on the minutiae of cultic law, observed even outside of the cult, expresses a profound yearning for sanctification by participation in the holy and eternal life of the Temple. Now so far as salvation and sanctification talk of different things to different people, there really is no debate between Christian and Jew on the character of the Pharisees, and no apologetic is needed. Understanding supersedes dispute, respect for the deepest concern of the other takes the place of the need to justify and defend oneself. An issue between the Pharisees as we know them in rabbinical writings and the Christian critics of the Pharisees as we know their views in sayings assigned to Jesus is a simple question of how salvation is to be attained. That question endures, although in this very different century of ours the old bitterness is gone and a new sense of shared humility before God flourishes.