CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE CONCEPT OF EXILE IN JOSEPHUS

1. The Terminology of Exile

When Socrates has been judged by his jury to be guilty of the crimes of atheism and corrupting the youth, in accordance with Athenian practice he then is expected to propose a penalty. Among those penalties which he considers and rejects is exile (Plato, Apol. 37C; Cri. 52C). The word which he uses for “exile” is clearly the standard word, namely φυγή, as we see in many other instances in Plato, Greek tragedians, historians, and orators. When the LXX deals with exile (גולה), it uses the language of emigration or colonization. Thus, they translate גולה in 2 Kgs. 24:15 (LXX 4 Kgs. 24:15) by the Greek word ἀποικεσία, which means “emigration.” The same Greek word is used by the LXX in Ezra (6:19) in referring to the גולה. They use a word from the same stem, ἀποικία (“migration,” “colony”) or its corresponding verb, ἀποικιζεῖν, in translating the word גולה in Jer. (29:1, LXX 36:1) and the word תגלות in Jer. 28:4 (LXX 35:4), 29:22 (LXX 36:22), and 52:31, and 2 Kgs. 25:27. The synonymous noun, μετοικεσία is also used by the LXX to translate גולה (Judg. 18:30) or תגלות Obad. 1:20 [bis]) or גולה (Ezek. 12:11, Nah. 3:10).

The picture that one gets is of the founding of a colony, since this, or the verb ἀποικίζω, derived from the same stem, is the word used by Herodotus in referring to the colonies established by the Athenians in Ionia (1.146) and by the Therans in Cyrene (4.155) and the colony which Aristagoras the Milesian is thinking of founding (5.124). The word ἀποικία is likewise used by Hecataeus of Abdera (ap. Diod., Bibliotheca Historica 40.3.3) in referring to the “colony” in Jerusalem.

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1 E.g., Apol. 21A, Grg. 516D, Laws 1.638A, Prot. 325B.
2 E.g., Aes., Ag. 1412, Cho. 254; Soph., Oed. Tyr. 659; Eur., Hipp. 37, 1043, Med. 400, Ores. 900.
3 E.g., Hdt. 7.3.
4 E.g., Lys. 3.42, 13.74, 14.38; And. 1.78, 1.106.
and other cities established by Moses and his followers when they are allegedly driven out by the Egyptians during a pestilence.

That Philo is clearly aware of the significance of the term φυγή as referring to exile is to be seen in the passage (Abr. 64) where, parallel to the discussion in Plato’s Apol., Philo declares that actually exile is a far heavier punishment than death itself, since “death ends our troubles; but banishment (φυγή) is not the end but the beginning of other new misfortunes and entails in place of the one death which puts an end to pains a thousand deaths in which we do not lose sensation.” When Philo (Cher. 2) speaks of the expulsion of Adam from the Garden of Eden and of the expulsion of Hagar (Cher. 3-4, 9) he refers to these expulsions as eternal banishment (φυγή, “exile”). He likewise (Post. 9) refers to the exile of Cain in going forth into banishment (φυγή) from G-d as the greatest penalty that one could possibly imagine. Philo thus adopts the word that is used by Plato and the other classical Greeks noted above for “exile.” He stresses (Cher. 1) that such people as Adam were not merely “sent forth” but “cast forth.” He, moreover, uses the term φυγή in connection with the exile into which those who have slain people must go (Fug. 53, 89; Spec. 1.161, 3.123, 3.150, 3.168). It is clear that Philo looks upon such exile as a punishment, inasmuch as he speaks (Prob. 7, 55; cf. 145; Flacc. 105, 151, 181; Legat. 110, 341) in juxtaposition of those who have been condemned to disfranchisement or banishment (φυγή) and declares (Spec. 3.181) that those legislators deserve censure who prescribe banishment (φυγή) for wilful murder, since the penalty does not fit the crime. That, however, Philo does not regard the Jews who, in his day, were living in the Diaspora as “exiles” in this sense may be deduced from his statement (Virt. 117) that G-d may with a single call easily gather together from the ends of the earth to any place that He wills the exiles (ἀποκισμένους) dwelling in the utmost parts of the earth. The word that he here uses for exiles connotes those who have emigrated, who have settled in a far land, and who have been sent to colonize it; and it has not the connotation of having been punished thus.

The New Testament, on the other hand, uses the word φυγή only once (Matt. 24:20), and then not in connection with exile but rather with the flight that will take place at the end of days. In connection with the Babylonian exile the word which is used is μετοικεσία (Matt. 1:11, 12, 17), signifying merely a change of abode or a migration.

Similarly, Josephus, though he uses the word φυγή no fewer than