



by Nathan Alterman
(Translated from the Hebrew by Lisa Katz)

The New Pumbedita

"The role and mission of American Jewry is as a second national center, outside the State of Israel, like the Babylonian exile in its day."—US Zionist credo

Perhaps—as God is my witness!—
two centers
are necessary.

In the prosperous State of Israel,
the sages of Morocco, Tiberias, and Tunis
will dwell.

While the rest of the learned
in Cincinnati
are settled.

And in Brooklyn your people will enjoy la dolce vita,
as subjects of the New Pumbedita.

Without losing citizenship or traveling rights,
they will, as in Babylon, their own Talmud
inscribe and their tractates complete.
Isn't it great? --

This happened once (it's a reincarnation)—
and the people didn't suffer debilitation.

The nation will develop so beautifully
if we promise it two centers
and a chapter.



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—Perhaps. Especially

with philosophical-historical backing
that's pseudo profound.

In any case
it's good
that the American Zionists
are so unbound!

Their brains are awake, it's never too late
for new ideas to cogitate.

It's just strange that their thinking
in only one direction
is moving:

They strive to advocate
Why they shouldn't
immigrate.