

# YEHUDITH

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RAMSGATE  
Montefiore Theological College.  
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## PREFATORY NOTE

BY

HERBERT LOEWE, M.A.,

Reader in Rabbinics in the University of Cambridge,  
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MY gratitude is due to many friends for their helpfulness in the production of my Grandfather's Journal. First of all, to my father, Mr. James H. Loewe—to whom the Journal belongs—for permission to publish it; secondly, to my wife and my sons, who have given generously of their time in assisting me to copy the Diary out. Moreover, I have been ill during this period and unable to use my hands: in consequence, Dr. Helene Weiss has been good enough to give me several hours of devoted assistance each day for many weeks in making the transcription. My gratitude to her is correspondingly great.

But a Diary thrown into the air needs an Introduction, and this Mr. Paul Goodman has kindly consented to supply. He is clearly the right man for this purpose. To him, therefore, I acknowledge my cordial thanks.

Monday, 23 September 1940.  
20 Elul 5700.

My husband dictated the above preface to me a fortnight before he died; it was the very last matter to which he put his mind. To me has been left the task of seeing the Diary through the press, and I crave the indulgence of the reader for all errors of commission and omission.

E. L.



## INTRODUCTION

BY

PAUL GOODMAN, F.R.Hist.S.,

Author of "Moses Montefiore," etc.

**A**HUNDRED years ago the Jewish world was stirred to its depths by an event which was to prove a turning-point in Jewish history, the beginnings of the concerted effort to make the Jewish cause wherever attacked the concern of all Jews without distinction. This incident took place in February, 1840, in Damascus, one of the most ancient cities, with immemorial Jewish associations; it was far away from the European scene, and in those days almost inaccessible except to the venturesome. The cause of the intense interest which was aroused not only among Jews but in the highest diplomatic quarters was the recurrence of the hoary accusation against Jews that they practised ritual murder and that, particularly in connection with the preparation of Matsot and other observances on Passover, they used the blood of a Gentile in accordance with the precepts of their religion. This led to the intervention by a Mission to Damascus which proceeded from London and Paris to Alexandria, where Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt and the then ruler of Syria, was to be called upon to do justice to the victims.

The man who was foremost in championing the defence of the accused Jews in Damascus was Sir Moses Montefiore, representing the Jewry of the British Empire, who thus assumed the role of a protagonist of the rights of the Jewish people that was to prove of outstanding importance in the nineteenth century. Associated with Sir Moses in the Mission to Damascus was Adolphe Crémieux, on behalf of the Jews of France, who was accompanied by Salomon Munk, an Orientalist of distinction. Sir Moses was joined in the capacity of secretary and interpreter of Oriental and Modern languages by Dr. Louis Loewe, the author of the "Diary" that is now published for the first time and which complements the "Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore," edited by Dr. Loewe and issued posthumously in 1890, half-a-century ago.

## II.

There is a voluminous literature on the Blood Accusation, and much learning has been expended in proving that the grotesque charge of Jewish ritual murder has not the slightest basis in fact. The vast millennial literature of the Jews,

particularly in its esoteric aspects, has provided malice with deliberate misrepresentation, while popular ignorance, fanned by malevolent fanaticism, has kept this vile superstition alive to this day.

It was, indeed, against early Christians that the charge of using human blood for religious purposes was levelled by their pagan enemies, and it was many centuries afterwards that Christians made the same accusation against the Jews. It is a melancholy fact that the first of the recorded ritual murder accusations were alleged to have been perpetrated against a Christian child, William, at Norwich (1144), and another in the same year in Cambridge.\* This was followed in England by similar charges at Gloucester, Bury St. Edmunds and Winchester, the case of St. Hugh of Lincoln (1255) being referred to in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales." It would appear that no country has been immune; and there are records of no less than 42 serious charges, involving agitation on the one part and refutation on the other, that were made during the nineteenth, and 17 during the first three decades of the twentieth, century.† There has latterly been an organised recrudescence of the Blood Accusation in the lands that have come under the control of the German Nazi Government, where, particularly through the propaganda of the notorious paper "Der Stürmer," published by Julius Streicher, an intimate of Adolf Hitler, the publication of this libel on the Jews has become part of the official policy of the most powerful Government of Central Europe.

The attitude on this subject on the part of the great Roman Catholic Church is one of some difficulty. For the Church has accepted certain popular legends relating to incidents in which Jews are alleged to have been guilty of using the blood of Christians for ritual purposes. As an instance, I might mention a visit I paid in August, 1913, to a chapel at Judenstein, a place of pilgrimage near Innsbruck, in the Tyrol, where there is placed at the side of the altar a group of life-like, full-sized effigies of medieval Jews engaged in collecting the blood of a Christian child, St. Andreas of Rinn (1462). I asked a priest who knelt in prayer before this

\* There was an unnamed martyr, the victim of a blood accusation in 1144, which originated in Bridge Street, in Cambridge, at the instigation of a convert. (See H. P. Stokes, "Studies in Anglo-Jewish History," p. 125.) Cf. "The Book of Memorial" of the Cambridge Hebrew Congregation (ed. by Herbert Loewe and others), p. 21.

† Cf. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. 2, art. Blood Accusation (New York, 1940).



group as to whether the story (with its reputed miracle) was true, to which he answered emphatically: "Ja, ja." In reply to my further inquiry as to whether Jews of the present time were still practising this rite, he said, after some reflection, that the Chief Rabbi of Vienna would presumably not do so, but there were Galician Jews . . . .

The official view of the Roman Catholic Church is, however, unquestionably against any presumption of Jewish ritual murder. An impressive number of Popes have issued authoritative and unequivocal denunciations of the charge which were intended to leave no doubt on this subject, the most effective of these pronouncements being the Opinion of Cardinal Lorenzo Ganganelli (afterwards Pope Clement XIV), issued on the 21st March 1758.

### III.

The ritual murder accusation in Damascus in 1840, commonly known as the Damascus Affair, has been widely dealt with by Jewish historians and, therefore, requires here only to be stated briefly.\*

The superior of a Capuchin convent in Damascus, named Father Thomas, and his servant disappeared on the 5th February, 1840; and, instigated by local Roman Catholics, the French Consul, Ratti Menton, being hostile to the Jews, and at the same time desirous of furthering the influence of France by the support of the Clericals, proceeded against the Jews as having been guilty of the alleged murder for ritual purposes. The local Governor, Sherif Pasha, endeavouring to curry favour with the representative of the then most influential European Power and the protector of the Roman Catholics in the Near East, also pursued the matter on those lines; and, after an extorted confession by a Jew, imprisoned a number of Jewish notables and submitted them in vain to most excruciating tortures (under which some of them succumbed) in order to obtain their avowal of the alleged crime. Damascus being then under the rule of Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt (who had rebelled against the Sultan of Turkey and in this was supported by France), his

\* Additional documentary information on this subject, particularly with the texts of Austrian Consular Reports, has been made available by A. I. Brauer in

חומר חדש לירידת עליית דמשק.  
ספר-הזיכרון לפרופ' שמואל קרויס (ירושלים, תרצ"ז).  
pp. 260-302, and by Josef Meisl, Beiträge zur Damascus-Affäre (1840) in "Festschrift zu Simon Dubnows siebzigstem Geburtstag" (Berlin, 1930), pp. 226-236.

מסופר על ידי I. B. Levinsohn, on the Blood Accusation, was translated into English by Dr. Loewe and published in 1842.

consent was sought to the execution of the imprisoned Jews who, under the existing capitulations, had been tried by the French consul and had been declared by him guilty. The case attracted wide attention, notably by reason of active interest displayed in the highest Jewish and non-Jewish quarters in Europe and the Consular Corps in Egypt. An influential Mission, headed by Sir Moses Montefiore and Adolphe Crémieux, proceeded to Alexandria to intercede with Mehemet Ali, who, ultimately recognised the innocence of the accused and ordered their unconditional release.

Sir Moses Montefiore thereupon left for Constantinople—Turkey having meanwhile regained the possession of Syria—and obtained from the Sultan on the 6th November, 1840, a Firman Hatti-Humayun wherein the accused Jews were solemnly absolved from the charge of ritual murder—which in itself was declared as nothing but pure calumny—and were accorded the same rights and privileges as the other subjects of the Empire.

The Damascus Affair evoked the personal interest of Queen Victoria, who gave an audience to Sir Moses Montefiore before he left on his Mission on the 7th July. On his return, Her Majesty not only received from Sir Moses a facsimile and English translation of the Firman on being presented to the Queen by Lord Palmerston at a Levée at the St. James's Palace, but, "being desirous of giving an especial mark of our royal favour," and "in commemoration of these his unceasing exertions on behalf of his injured and persecuted brethren in the East and the Jewish nation at large," granted him the exceptional distinction of having supporters to his Arms. "The supporters I wish for," he wrote in his 'Diary', "are to exalt our holy religion by displaying 'Jerusalem' in a more distinguished manner than I could otherwise have done."

King Louis-Philippe of France, to whom Sir Moses Montefiore, on his way through Paris, likewise presented personally a copy of the Firman, had followed the unfriendly policy of his Government under M. Thiers. In contradiction to the hostile attitude of Liberal France, it was all the more remarkable that the Austrian Government under General A. Laurin in Egypt, and the Austrian Consul paradoxically the attitude of the Russian representative, Count Medem, who offered to assist Sir Moses Montefiore's object in any way he might have considered necessary. The efforts made by Lord Palmerston, the then British Foreign



Secretary, towards the success of the endeavours of the Mission to Damascus proved the beginnings of that traditional policy which led Great Britain to assume a virtual protectorate over the Jews in the Holy Land and the Near East generally, and was to come to fruition by the Balfour Declaration on the 2nd November, 1917.\*

The Jewish Question, hitherto of merely local interest, now became a matter of international concern. But while the Sultan's Firman was to be of ephemeral value only, the Mission to Damascus aroused Jewish national self-consciousness to an extent which was to prove of far-reaching and permanent effect. At last the Jewish people had found proud defenders from among its own sons; no longer were Jews to remain passive objects of persecution, humiliated and abject in their weakness, unable to react collectively. The dormant Jewish national spirit was re-awakened.

The Mission to Damascus was the first concerted effort for the defence of Jewish rights that, led by the London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews (of which Sir Moses Montefiore was then, and for a long time afterwards, the President), brought about ultimately the establishment of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris (of which Monsieur Crémieux became President) and of similar bodies in various other countries. The spirit of Jewish brotherhood, which had assumed so effective a form in the Damascus Affair, has remained alive to this day. It has been strengthened by the immeasurably tragic situation of the Jewish people a century after the event in Damascus, now that in the travail of the world the Jewries of Europe lie prostrate and again await their deliverance.

#### דאני אשכרי ולא אוליד יאמר די.

#### IV.

Strangely enough, the Firman of Sultan Abdul Medjid of Turkey proved its virtue in Palestine under the British Mandate as recently as 1931. In March of that year the Arabic paper "Falastin," of Jaffa, published the story of the alleged kidnapping of two Arab children by a Jaffa Jew. Lt.-Col. F. H. Kisch, the chairman of the Zionist Executive in Palestine, brought this matter to the urgent attention of Sir John Chancellor, the High Commissioner, who suspended the "Falastin" for an indefinite period. "I dwelt particularly on the 'Damascus Affair'," wrote Col. Kisch in his 'Diary'† "and showed him the Firman with which

\* "History of Zionism," by Nahum Sokolow (London, 1919).

† "Palestine Diary," by Lt.-Col. F. H. Kisch, C.B.E., D.S.O., pp. 390-91.

the Sultan ultimately laid the ghost of the libel in a manner which proved effective in the Ottoman Empire until its disruption." It so happened that Col. Kisch then asked me whether I could procure the original of the Firman, as apparently Ottoman law was still considered morally, if not legally, valid in this particular respect. I could not trace the original of that document, but sent a photographic copy of the facsimile of the original text (with Dr. Loewe's English translation attached) that was reproduced soon after its issue and is hung up framed in the Vestry Room of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Bevis Marks, London.\*

#### V.

Dr. Louis Loewe, the author of the "Diary" on the Mission to Damascus, was born at Zülz, in Upper Silesia, in 1809, and died in London in 1888. He came to England early in life, after having studied at the Pressburg Yeshibah and the Berlin University, became Orientalist to H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex, travelled widely in the East and was elected the first Principal of Jews' College, London (1855-58). In 1865 he became the Principal of the Judith Lady Montefiore Theological College at Ramsgate on its foundation by Sir Moses Montefiore, Bart., in honour of his wife. He was intimately associated with Sir Moses in his philanthropic and public activities for nearly half a century, and was entrusted by him with the issue of the "Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore, (1812-1883)." His general standing is indicated by the fact that he is one of the first Jews included in the Dictionary of National Biography.

Dr. Loewe first met Sir Moses in November, 1835, and in the following month stayed with him on a lengthy visit at East Cliff Lodge, Ramsgate, where Dr. Loewe was requested "to draw up a plan for some further travels in the Holy Land." The thread of their relationship was taken up again when they met in Rome in March, 1839:

"It was now nearly four years" related Dr. Loewe, "since I had first the pleasure of meeting Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore in London. I had since that time been travelling in Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia, Syria and the Holy Land, and had during these travels the gratification to receive some letters from Sir Moses. It was therefore a very pleasant surprise to me to meet them in Rome and to visit with them the numerous picture galleries

\* Cf. on this point the Foreword by R. Shemtob Gaguin, p. VII.



and most places of importance. They spoke to me of their intended pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and invited me to accompany them. Having had many opportunities when in Eyn Zetton, Upper Galilee, during the revolt of the Druses, to become fully acquainted with the character and peculiarities of the various classes of the inhabitants of the land, I felt a great interest in all measures that could be devised for the improvement of their condition; and anticipating good results from Sir Moses' visit to the Holy Land, I gladly accepted.\*

This second visit of the Montefiores to Palestine that, accompanied by Dr. Loewe, took place in 1839, led Sir Moses to elaborate extensive plans for the Jewish Re-settlement in the Holy Land, which he personally commended at an interview with Mehemet Ali. Owing to the politically disturbed conditions in the Near East and other intervening circumstances, these schemes could not, however, be put into effect.

When in July, 1840, Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore proceeded again to the East in connection with the Damascus Affair, Dr. Loewe joined the Mission in the quality of "secretary and interpreter of Oriental and Modern languages" to Sir Moses.

## VI

Dr. Loewe's "Diary"—the original text of which is now, by an expressed wish, reproduced *verbatim et literatim*—adds to the available documentary material on the Damascus Affair. It throws particularly a hitherto unknown, even though suspected, sidelight, on the relations between the component parts of the Mission. Both Crémieux and Montefiore were devoted Jews, although naturally each in their own way as events proved, but they differed markedly in their approach to matters Jewish. Their respective advisers, Munk and Loewe, were likewise not only Orientalists of distinction but held strong views that clashed on the immediate questions at issue. If Munk could claim to be an Arabist, Loewe had the additional advantage of being a Turkish scholar. The outstanding conflict between these two men arose out of the justifiable refusal of Loewe to consent to the inclusion of the word "pardon" in Mehemet Ali's release of the Jewish victims of the Damascus outrage, and the substitution of the term "honourable liberation" was entirely due to the uncompromising attitude of Loewe, supported with all his weight

\* "Diary of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore," I, p.154.

by Montefiore. Munk apparently accepted this solution of the difficulty with ill grace, particularly since Crémieux may have had to take account of the officially unfriendly attitude of the French authorities at home and abroad.

The relations between Montefiore and Crémieux thus also became strained, and led Crémieux and Munk to return to France, while Montefiore and Loewe proceeded to Constantinople, where on the 6th November, 1840, they obtained from the Sultan, the suzerain of Egypt and now again the ruler of Syria, the Firman that crowned brilliantly the efforts to proclaim to the world that the charge of ritual murder against the Jews of Damascus (and Rhodes) was not only false, but that the Blood Accusation generally was without any foundation.

In the regulations governing the Judith Lady Montefiore College (Ohel Moshé ve-Yehudith) there were set aside a number of anniversaries especially to be observed, one of these solemn occasions being the 11th Heshvan, the day on which the Firman by the Sultan Abdul Medjid was issued.

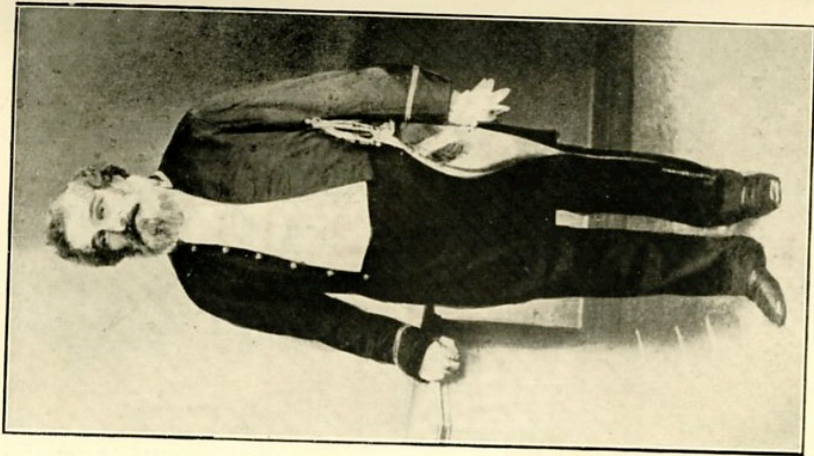
As an additional tribute to the memory of Louis Loewe his "Diary" on the Mission to Damascus is now published in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Judith Lady Montefiore College, of which he was the first Principal—a commemoration all the more noteworthy when the light of learning that has shone uninterruptedly for three quarters of a century has been dimmed by the darkness that has descended again upon the face of the earth.

## VII.

The publication of Dr. Louis Loewe's "Diary" is mainly due to the initiative of his grandson, Mr. Herbert Martin James Loewe, M.A. (b. 1st May, 1882; d. 11th October, 1940). Like his grandfather, an eminent Orientalist, Herbert Loewe was a devout and public-spirited Jew. It is my sad privilege to record that, after a life rich in achievement, the revision of this "Diary," the issue of which he entrusted to me, was the last work to which Mr. Loewe had put his hand. The performance of this labour of love, this Mitzvah, was to him an act of ancestral pietas that kept the sinking spirit of his valiant soul alive.

As Reader in Rabbinics at Cambridge and the interpreter of the Faith of Israel at that ancient University, he followed in the apostolic succession of S. M. Schiller-Szinessy,





DR. LOUIS LOEWE  
1809-1888

DIARY of Dr. LOUIS LOEWE

JULY—NOVEMBER 1840

Written on his Travels with  
Sir Moses Montefiore for the  
Relief of the Jews of Damascus.