

The Oxford Centre for  
Postgraduate Hebrew  
Studies

Tel Aviv University  
Jacob M. and Shoshana Schreiber  
Chair of Contemporary  
Jewish History

INAUGURATION  
OF THE  
JACOB AND SHOSHANA SCHREIBER FELLOWSHIP  
IN THE HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY JUDAISM

Yarnton Manor, Oxford

30th October 1980



£ 1.50

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*I am indebted to Mrs. Irma Dothan for her skillful participation in the preparation of this booklet and to Mrs. Sara Akavia, secretary of the Chair, for her assistance.*

**THE OXFORD CENTRE FOR  
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*The Jacob and Shoshana Schreiber Fellowship in the History of Contemporary Judaism at the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies is conceived as complementary to the Schreiber Chair in Contemporary Jewish History at Tel Aviv University.*

## PROGRAMME

FLUTE SOLO

Yael RONEN

INTRODUCTION

THE LORD BLAKE  
Provost, The Queen's College,  
University of Oxford

LECTURES

“Changing Approaches to Society in Nineteenth  
Century Hebrew Literature and Jewish Thought”

DR DAVID PATTERSON  
President, Oxford Centre for  
Postgraduate Hebrew Studies

PROFESSOR URIEL TAL  
Schreiber Professor in  
Contemporary Jewish History,  
Tel Aviv University

CLOSING REMARKS

JACOB M. SCHREIBER





## INTRODUCTION

Lord Blake:

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure to speak this evening and to preside, if that is not too impertinent a word, over this occasion. I am partly representing the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford and on his behalf, as well as everyone else here, I would like to say how grateful we are to Mr. and Mrs. Schreiber for the endowment of this Fellowship in the History of Contemporary Judaism at the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. We really are immensely grateful to them. The Fellowship has been conceived as a complementary Fellowship to the one which exists for Contemporary Jewish History at the University of Tel Aviv and we are really delighted that Colonel Carmel, who is representing the University of Tel Aviv, is able to be with us tonight.

There is a telegram from the President of the University which I would like to read out if I may. "The inauguration of the Schreiber Fellowship in the History of Contemporary Judaism at the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies is an event of academic significance which will undoubtedly initiate enhanced research and teaching of this subject at Oxford and contribute to scholarly exchange with other centres of Jewish Studies. The nature of the inauguration and the proposed joint publication of the inaugural lectures by the Fellowship and the Chair in Contemporary Jewish History at Tel Aviv University is an especially promising start for such scholarly co-operation and brings great credit to the generous donors of both projects. All good wishes for continuing fruitful activity. President, Tel Aviv University."

I am sure we all really welcome those sentiments.

I would like to say how delighted we are that the Ambassador and his wife are here. I know how enormously busy he is. It is very good of him to come on this occasion and we are delighted to see him.

Well, before actually introducing the first speaker, I would just like to say on behalf of Oxford University how greatly we value the Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. It has already proved itself to be a very valuable and fruitful spot and produces most useful exchanges of knowledge and information, and the Schreiber Fellowship will certainly contribute very nobly towards that aim.

Well, now, we are beginning with two lectures. The general title is "The Changing Faces of Society in Nineteenth Century Hebrew Literature and Jewish Thought." The first lecture will be given by Dr. Patterson who will consider Hebrew Literature, and Professor Tal of the University of Tel Aviv will then speak about Jewish Thought in that period.

Dr. Patterson, as you know, is the President of the Centre and is teaching, I believe, and is a Fellow of St. Cross College. He has lectured at many universities and has written many valuable and important books, most of which will be familiar to you. So I will, without further ado, ask Dr. Patterson to give his lecture.

## CHANGING APPROACHES TO SOCIETY IN NINETEENTH CENTURY HEBREW LITERATURE

David Patterson:

People usually change countries by emigration; but sometimes the change occurs without anyone having to move a step. The partition of Poland and Napoleon's downfall led to a westward expansion of the Russian empire. Between 1772 and 1815 more than one million Polish and Lithuanian Jews found themselves living, for the most part unwillingly, under Russian rule. Throughout the nineteenth century and beyond, the Czarist administration faced the uncomfortable spectacle of a numerous, exotic and alien population living just inside the country's western and very sensitive borders. Self-contained and highly outlandish, the Czar's new subjects professed a distinctive religion and practised its rituals, clung to their dietary laws, sartorial quirks, identifying hairstyles, social conventions and educational systems with tenacity. Since Yiddish was the Jewish vernacular and Hebrew the written language, communication between Jews and Russians was at best tortuous and halting. The Russians regarded the community as inbred, self-contained and of very doubtful loyalty.

The gulf separating Jews and Russians continued for many decades, as the following snatch of conversation from a novel by Peretz Smolenskin, entitled *The Wanderer in the Paths of Life*, may serve to illustrate. The novel contains marked autobiographical elements. The following passage describes conditions in the early fifties of the last century. After walking for six days and losing himself in a snowstorm at night, the young hero, Josef, is finally offered the loan of a horse by a passing traveller. Only sometime later, when they arrive at an inn, are they able to see one another, and the spectacle gives rise to mutual astonishment.

...When he saw me at the inn, he called out in amazement:

'Are you the man who was travelling with me?'

'Yes! Why are you so surprised?'

'A man like you, dressed in Hasidic clothes, speaking the language of the country fluently. That's something I never expected to see.'

'I know many Jews who speak it just as well' — I replied.

СОЧИНЕНІЯ  
П. М. Смоленскаго.

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Повѣсти     
и  
   Романы.

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I.  
Гатое Бедархе Гахаимъ.

Повѣсть въ 4-хъ частяхъ.

Часть I.

---

*Изданіе М. Катценеленбогена, Вильна.*

---

ВАРШАВА,  
Въ Типографіи „ГАЦЕФИРА“ Марьянская № 2.  
1905.

Title page of the Russian edition of *The Wanderer in the Paths of Life*, by Perez Smolenskin, published by M. Katzenellenbogen, Vilna, printed in Warsaw, 1905.

P. Smolensky's

sämtliche Werke.

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Novellen    
&  
  Romane.

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I.

**Hatoë Bedarche Hachaim.**

Erzählung in 4 Bänden.

**Band I.**

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*Verlag von M. Katzenellenbogen, Wilna.*

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**WARSZAWA,**

Buchdruckerei von „HACEFIRA“ Marjańska № 2.

**1905.**

Title page of the German edition of *The Wanderer in the Paths of Life*, by Perez Smolenskin, published by M. Katzenellenbogen, Vilna, printed in Warsaw, 1905.

'I know that, too. I'm a Jew myself. But this is the first time I've seen a man dressed as a *Hasid* speaking it.'

But I was even more surprised to hear that he was a Jew, for I had never expected to find a Jew dressed like a Gentile in these parts. During the whole time I had spent with the *Mitnaggedim*, I had never seen another instance of it...<sup>1</sup>

The hostility of the Czarist administration to what was considered an alien and hence suspect people living so close to a strategic frontier was sharpened by the wave of nationalism which swept across Russia following the Napoleonic wars. The government embarked upon a policy aimed at the 'russification' of its Jewish subjects and attempted throughout the nineteenth century to undermine their separateness. For the most part resort was made to naked and unashamed oppression. However, during the first period of the reign of Alexander II who ascended the throne in 1885 the road towards at least partial assimilation was smoothed by the alleviation of a number of Jewish disabilities, and by granting permission for Jews to enter high school and university. The orthodox Jews preferred to keep contacts between Jews and Gentiles to a minimum, regarding separateness as an effective safeguard for the preservation of traditional Judaism. They frowned upon the growing tendency for Jewish children to be taught Russian, while the teachers of Russian were viewed with contempt.

The exponents of Enlightenment, on the other hand, endeavoured to foster such teaching by every means at their disposal, and fully supported the Russian government in its attempt to enforce the teaching of Russian by decree. Known as *Maskilim*, many followers of Enlightenment or *Haskalah* regarded themselves as the disciples of Moses Mendelssohn, and attempted broadly to produce a synthesis of traditional Judaism and European culture. In so doing they came into direct conflict with both *Mitnaggedim* and *Hasidim*, themselves bitterly opposed, so that a three-cornered free for all was waged in Jewish life with great bitterness and anger throughout the century.

Although the Enlightenment movement in Germany which Mendelssohn had inspired was directed towards a very different social and cultural environment, the ideas themselves, often in half-baked or ill-digested form, were propagated in the entirely different conditions prevailing in the Russian Pale of Settlement with enthusiasm. Only a thoroughgoing change in Jewish social, cultural and religious attitudes, or so it was believed, could lead to any real amelioration of the Jewish plight.



Map. The Pale of Settlement to which the Jews of Russia were confined. This area of 362,000 square miles comprised 20% of the entire European Russia and 4% of the entire Russian area. It contained the districts of: 1. Bessarabia, 2. Chernigov, 3. Ekatorinoslav, 4. Grodno, 5. Kalisch, 6. Kherson, 7. Kielce, 8. Kiev, 9. Kovno, 10. Lomza, 11. Lublin, 12. Minsk, 13. Mohilev, 14. Piotrkow, 15. Plosk, 16. Podolia, 17. Paltava, 18. Radom, 19. Suwalki, 20. Syedletz, 21. Taurida, 22. Vilna, 23. Vitebsk, 24. Volhynia, 25. Warsaw

The Pale of Settlement, from *The Hebrew Novel in the Czarist Russia*, by D. Patterson, Edinburgh University Press, 1964.

In spite of herculean efforts, the exponents of Enlightenment achieved only limited success. In hindsight it is easy to perceive the fragility of the foundations upon which their high ideals were based. The goals of emancipation, equality and the acquisition of Western culture lay far beyond their grasp. Little by little, however, the painful process of self-awareness began to replace the self-delusion and curious air of unreality which characterised so much of Jewish aspiration in the century and a half following the French Revolution.

The ruthless oppression of the Jews in Russia throughout much of the nineteenth century and the successive waves of repressive legislation were rendered still more painful by a phenomenal growth in the Jewish population. By 1897 there were five million Jews living in the Pale of Settlement, and the consequent deterioration of an economic situation already desperate occasioned a number of attempts on the part of the Jews to alleviate their condition. In the second half of the nineteenth century Hebrew fiction became increasingly concerned with the reformation of Jewish social, educational and religious life.

Were a man to come from Western Europe (Braudes proclaims in his powerful novel *Religion and Life*) and with his own eyes see this backward people, their degradation, their level of culture, the education they give their sons and daughters, and their manner of life, without any doubt he would pose the question: Can reforms be of any avail? Is it still possible to reform them? Could even the third generation enter the society of men who are aware of life and all its manifestations?... Yet Nahman, the teacher from Minsk, could say to Samuel, for all the latter's long harangue during the "Great Sabbath": "We do not yet know whether our generation needs reform."<sup>2</sup>

What kind of reform and how best to bring it about exercised the minds of Hebrew writers in different ways. Abraham Mapu, a great champion of *Haskalah*, attempted to advocate social change by projecting his ideals into a fictionalised past. Two historical novels set in ancient Israel at the time of the prophet Isaiah depict the Jewish people living a free, untrammelled life on their own soil. It was as though he wished to use the past in order to instruct his own generation in the proper way to live, and to contrast the dignity of Jewish life in biblical times with its contemporary degradation. In his first novel, *The Love of Zion*, the hero Amnon and the heroine Tamar, both of aristocratic families, are betrothed at birth, but the hero is wickedly



exchanged in the cradle and brought up as a shepherd. They meet for the first time as adults, and the following scene ensues:

But Tamar gave no heed to Maacah's words. Instead she approached Ammon and addressed him: 'Give me, good youth, the garland of roses which is in your hand, if your heart be generous as your looks are kind.'

As Tamar spoke to him he paled and said: 'Here it is, my mistress, if you but deign to take it from your servant's hand.'

Then Tamar continued: 'I heard you say "The roses of the valley are the shepherd's garland, to grace the head of his beloved." So tell me, then, who is your beloved? For I would fain see her, and give her some gift in exchange for this garland of roses which you meant for her, but which I have taken from you.'

And Amnon lowered his eyes and said: 'I swear, my mistress, that out of the thousands of maidens my eyes have seen I have not yet found my beloved.'

And Tamar answered: 'It would seem, proud youth, that if you seek your beloved among thousands, then she must indeed be rare and choice.'

Then Maacah, her handmaid, took her arm and said: 'Enough, my mistress, let us arise and go. For someone is coming, and it does not befit your honour to stay and bandy words.'

It is, perhaps, difficult for a modern audience of sophisticated tastes to realise quite how daring such an encounter must have appeared in 1853. This mildly flirtatious, if somewhat quaint, conversation between a young man and woman came as a veritable bombshell at a time of arranged marriages, when bride and bridegroom frequently met for the first time under the wedding canopy. Abramowitz, through the eyes of his literary *persona*, Mendele the Bookseller, attacks the practice of such arrangements with mocking irony. Mendele's companion, Reb Alter, is in desperate financial straits, with his wife having just given birth and his eldest daughter in need of a dowry. He has just attempted to earn a few coppers at a fair by arranging a match between the children of two visiting dignitaries and was on the point of success when it transpired that both the young people concerned were boys! Mendele attempts to comfort his friend as follows:

Have no fear, Reb Alter! If you have just failed to make a match

# אהבת ציון

ספתי

אברהם בניקוטיאל מאפו

איש קאוונא

ווילנא

בדפוס ר' יוסף ראובן בר' מנחם סן ר א ם

שנת תר"ג לט"ק

---

АГАВОТЪ ЦІОНЪ

т. с.

Любовь Ціона, Соч. Авраама Мапу.

ВІЛЬНО,

Въ Типографіи. Р. Ш. Ронка.

1883.

Title-page of the first edition of *The Love of Zion*

By courtesy of the British Museum

Avraham Mapu, *The Creator of the Modern Hebrew Novel*, by David Patterson, Horovitz Publishing, London, 1964.

# עֵיט צְבוּעַ

סאתי

אברהם בנייקותיאל מאפו

איש קאוונא

ווי לנא

ברפוס ר' יוסף ראובן ביד מעטס סן ראם

שנת תרל"ז לש"ק

---

А П Т Ъ - Ц А В У А

Т. С.

Пестрая птица или Хаиша. Соч. Абрама Мапу.

В И Л Ъ Н О .

Въ Типографіи Р. М. Романа.

1857.

Title-page of the first edition of *The Hypocrite*

By courtesy of the Bodleian Library, Oxford

*Avraham Mapu, The Creator of the Modern Hebrew Novel*, by David Patterson,  
Horovitz Publishing, London, 1964.

between two young men, you will make up for it, God willing, by arranging another match. Don't despair, Reb Alter, keep your pecker up. I can see that you have all the makings of an expert, and you have grasped the art of it at once, at the very first attempt, like a real master. Indeed I can assure you that you have made a good beginning in this new trade of yours as a district matchmaker, a very good beginning indeed. What's that you say? — The boy? ... That's nothing ... Just wait till a girl falls into your hands — you won't let her go sour! Blind, lame, drunk — Come on, my girl, you will say, and away with you! Away with you to the canopy and the best of luck! The printer needs his money, and the horse needs fodder, my eldest daughter must be wed, and my wife, bless her, has given birth to a son. So come on, girl, and off with you to the canopy!

Elsewhere, in a bitter attack on ignorance and superstition, Mendele resorts to biting satire in deploring the custom of marrying cripples in the graveyard as a device to get rid of the cholera epidemic:

At first the community decided upon Yontel, a renowned cripple, who used to crawl about on his thigh, supported by two wooden blocks in his palms. They matched him with an equally famous beggar-girl, with widely spaced teeth and minus her lower lip. The plague took fright in the face of this marriage, and after taking a heavy toll of the citizens finally took to her heels and fled; and then the choice fell on Nehumtzi, the local idiot. The latter spread his wings, or rather the wedding veil, in the presence of the community elders in the graveyard, over a young lady, who had worn a wreath of leprosy all over her head and forehead since her youth, and about whom it was rumoured that she was androgynous. They say that anyone who failed to see that wedding, romping merrily among the graves, missed the chance of a lifetime. The guests frolicked and drank, and danced before the bride shouting 'What a lovely, charming bride,' not, God forbid, as some said to endear her to the cholera, but to endear her to her husband, the idiot. But that's another story.<sup>4</sup>

Education was always made a central plank in the platform of the *Haskalah* movement, and the widening of mental horizons beyond the confines of the traditional institutions of learning, the *Heder* and the

*Yeshiva*, is advocated in a variety of situations. The heroes and heroines are almost always staunch champions of Enlightenment, and represent in their cultural, intellectual and professional ambitions and achievements the ideals of *Haskalah*. Conversely, the villains personify blind obscurantism and passionately oppose the teachings of the *Maskilim*. Here, again, Mapu uses his hero, Amnon, to advocate the wisdom of turning to nature for inspiration — in the manner of Shakespeare's 'Books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything':

And it came to pass one day that Uz visited the pastures and found Amnon sitting wrapped in thought, watching a lily withering beneath the scorching heat and speaking thus: 'How lovely you are, my soft and tender lily, when dawn's first light steals upon you, when your cup is brimming with the dew of heaven, and even the great trees look enviously upon you! How beautiful you appear, my lovely one, in the light of the morning, when the clear drops of dew sparkle on your sweet petals, and you drink your fill and in good time blossom forth in joy. But now the scorching heat has smitten you, the dew of heaven has dried within you, and your face is wan, your bloom has withered, and you have become an object to be pitied. Thus even the plants of the field can teach us, and from whatever our eyes behold we can draw a moral. The heavens stretch an open book in front of us, while the earth, and all its host, spreads out its lesson before our very eyes. The word of God is stamped upon it, telling us: 'Read in this great book all the days of your life, for only then shall you act wisely and with understanding.'<sup>5</sup>

Braudes, as usual, is more direct. Convinced that literature should be a force in life with a definite role to play in the shaping of society, he describes how the heroine of *Religion and Life* deliberately engineers the hero's introduction to Russian positivist literature, fully aware of the conflict which the new ideas will arouse in his mind. The passage accurately reflects the manner in which the new concepts were actually propagated from the sixties onwards:

Rachel had brought her books with her from Naharayim, the latest Russian books at that time, devoted to questions of *community life*, a word then in vogue, and of reform in social life in general; questions of 'bread and butter', work and money, the people and its

rulers, men and women, and many similar matters. They also probed into the question of faith and religion in general, subjecting them to searching criticism in the light of natural science — ‘matter and force’, Darwin’s theory of the Origin of Species, the ideas of materialist philosophy, and the theories of determinism in nature and history. All such ideas were brought together and treated at length in these books which aroused great interest among the youth. Rachel, too, had read and thought about them a lot, and had become a devotee of their ideas. She always kept a selection of them near at hand, and had brought them to Pelagut with her. Now she handed them over to Samuel to read, to learn his opinion of them...<sup>6</sup>

It is only with Mendele, however, that the real nature of the Jewish situation in Russia is finally and devastatingly brought home, and then less by direct assault than by humour, irony and consummate artistry. For Mendele, Czarist repression and the all-pervading grinding poverty is compounded by a fecklessness and lack of worldliness which, in his view, pervaded so many of the little towns and villages of the Pale of the Settlement. Where Mapu points to the need to learn from nature, Mendele declares that Jewish life and nature are seriously out of joint. His masterpiece, *The Book of Beggars*, opens thus:

Now that the wind blows warm and sunny days are on the way, and all God’s world is full of light and joy — we Jews will soon be facing days of mourning, tears and fasting, one after the other, from the spring sowing at Passover until the autumn rains. This is the busy season for me, Mendele the Bookseller, when I do the rounds of the little townlets in the Pale, providing all the necessaries for a good cry namely, dirges, supplications, penitential prayers, rams’ horns, solemn lectionaries, grave-side elegies, pietistic tracts and whatever else is happily conducive to tears. Our fellow Israelites lament and spend the summer weeping — and I make my living from it. But that’s another story.<sup>7</sup>

It is the seventeenth of Tammuz, the black day in the Jewish calendar when the walls of the Temple were breached by Nebuchadnezzar’s hordes. Driving his old horse and wagon along a country lane our hero attempts to recite the laments appropriate to the sadness of the occasion, while the beauties of a lovely summer’s day beckon seductively on every side. Finally

dozing off in the middle of his prayers, his wagon collides with another horse and cart, and the following scene ensues:

I must apparently have nodded off asleep, right in the middle of my prayers, may such a thing never befall you! I see my wagon sinking in a pond, with the axle of another wagon stuck in one of its rear wheels. One of my horse's legs is standing outside the traces, and he is being pulled and pressed and squeezed, and is in a very bad way. From the far side a stream of piercing curses in Yiddish rises aloft punctuated by coughs and groans. 'So you're a Jew, are you!' — I say to myself — 'in that case, there's nothing to fear!' So I get to my feet at once and go round the other side full of rage. There I see before me a Jewish fellow entangled in his prayer-shawl and phylacteries squirming under a wagon. The straps and whip are all tied up, as he struggles to free himself with all his might. 'What's going on?' I shout at him in astonishment. And he replies at the top of his voice: 'You might well ask what's going on!' I vent my wrath on him, heaping all the insults on him I can conjure up; and he hurls them back at me, without either of us seeing the other's face. I say to him, 'Are you not ashamed to be a Jew and fall asleep in the middle of your prayers?' And he replies, 'How can a Jew be so little God-fearing as to doze off like that?' I curse him by his father, and he throws my mother into the bargain. I beat his horse, and he manages to free himself, and gets up and starts beating my horse. The horses take fright and rear up, while we angrily take each other's measure, preparing to grasp each other's sidelocks. For a little while we stand in silence gazing into each other's faces. What a spectacle we make! Two Israelite heroes in their prayer-shawls and phylacteries under the open sky, furiously preparing to box each other's ears ... What a sight for sore eyes! A rain of blows is just about to descend — when suddenly we both draw back, each of us crying out in simultaneous surprise:

'Oi, Reb Alter!'

'Oi, oi, Reb Mendele!!'<sup>8</sup>

For all the lighthearted and humorous style, the perceptive reader is aware of sad and serious undertones. The portrait of these two unfortunate Jews, clad in prayer-shawls and phylacteries and squabbling in the mud, is sketched in highly evocative language. The Hebrew original of "while we

angrily take each other's measure" is *ko'asim u-mishta'arim*. Both sound and rhythm are reminiscent of the phrase *kor'im u-mishtahavim* (we bow and prostrate ourselves), sacred language from the well-known *Aleinu* prayer. Again the Hebrew underlying the translation for "what a sight for sore eyes" is *ashrei ayin ra'ata zot* (happy the eye that sees this) which evokes the famous description in the liturgy of the Day of Atonement of the High Priest in all his splendour entering the Holy of Holies in the Temple, a once-yearly happening, a description punctuated time and again with the phrase *ashrei ayin ra'ata eleh* (happy the eye that saw these). There is more to come.

During Reb Alter's recital of his bad luck at the fair at which, as mentioned above, he almost betrothed two boys, the friends are disturbed by the approach of a band of Russian peasants:

But while Alter was cursing Yarmolimitz together with its fair, a number of farm-carts drew near, with the farmers clearly wondering why our wagons should be standing there blocking the road. No sooner were they close enough to see us wearing prayer-shawls and ritual fringes, with phylacteries strapped to our heads and on our arms, than they started mocking us aloud and crying: 'Look at those fancy boys! The Devil take their fathers and mothers. Hey! Make way there, you fringy Jews!' We at once bestirred ourselves and set about moving our wagons. As for the gentiles, in spite of their not belonging to the seed of Israel, I can testify to the fact that they observed the commandment, 'Thou shalt go to the help of thy neighbour', and they stood by us in our hour of need. By dint of their mighty efforts our wagons emerged safely from the pond. Had it not been for them, who knows how long it would have taken us to get them out. Perhaps we might never have managed it. Our coats were all muddied and our prayer-shawls torn. For indeed, what are we and what is our strength? But the strong hands of these sons of Esau made light work of it. They did all the pushing, and from the way they went about it, it was obvious that the hands were the hands of Esau. But as for us, all our strength is in the mouth — the voice is the voice of Jacob. So while they pushed, we shouted: 'Together heave! Together heave!' — because shouting goes well with pushing. We, ourselves, were groaning and twitching in every limb, and we looked just as though we were pushing — but that's another story. Once the road was clear, those sons of Ham went their way, turning back to



look at us in mockery and scorn because we were tending our horses in priestly vestments and serving our Creator with sticks and reins. Some of them screwed up the corners of their coats to look like pigs' ears, and pushed them under our noses to aggravate us. Alter paid no heed to them, dismissing them with the remark: 'Who cares about hooligans like them?' But as for me — their mockery pierced me like a scorpion's sting. 'God in Heaven! Why all this mockery? Why? Why? ...'<sup>9</sup>

The biblical references are, of course, too clear to require comment. But the Hebrew behind the translation "Together Heave! Together Heave!" is, for example, *dahafu heiteiv, heiteiv dahafu* (push well, push well), which is again clearly reminiscent of the talmudic description of the Priests preparing the incense for the offering and shouting *hadeik heiteiv, heiteiv hadeik* (pound well, pound well). The meaning of the passage is rendered unequivocal in the phrases, "Tending our horses in priestly vestments and serving our Creator with sticks and reins." The irony of a God-intoxicated people wallowing in mire, with its head in the clouds and its feet in the mud, is inescapable. Just as elsewhere the irony of a people whose genius has traditionally been expressed in the field of law, forced to live against a law aimed at its destruction, is equally made manifest.

The episode is an exercise in self-awareness. Unlike so many of his predecessors and contemporaries, however, Mendele does not resort to tub-thumping and blatant didacticism to convey his message, but rather demonstrates that art itself is the great teacher. But that, as Mendele might well have said, is another story.

It is pertinent, perhaps, to conclude with one last example in Hebrew fiction of exhortation to change the nature of Jewish society in the Pale. In 1899, Feierberg published his novella *Whither*, one of the finest Hebrew stories of its day. The 'madness' contracted by its young hero is more social than psychological, insofar as he — like many of his contemporaries — is no longer able to accept the religious tradition which governed social life, nor live outside it. Finally he propounds a Zionist solution to the Jewish plight, and delivers a remarkable peroration at a local meeting which concludes with the radical idea that the Jewish people must look for its salvation not to the West but to the East; and play a part in what he hopes will be a veritable Eastern Renaissance:

And so, my brothers, in journeying eastward, do not go as enemies of the East but as its admirers and loyal sons. Make sure you

are bringing it life and not death. Millennia have elapsed from the days of the prophet Balaam until now, and still we feel that we are only in the middle of the way and that we must say about ourselves as he did:

'I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh.' I was driven mad because I didn't know where to turn or how to escape, and now it's too late for me to change. There were days when I thought that I myself would stand in the vanguard of my people, but I now know that this cannot be. Let a new generation go before the people. And if the Jewish people has a destiny to fulfill, let it forge that destiny and that truth for itself and take them with it to the East. Not just to Palestine but to the entire East... only then can it know that it has taken the right and the natural path! And finally, my brothers, let none of you have the presumption to think that your generation can finish the task by itself. Let it be written on your banners: 'I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh.' To the East! To the East!

There was a sudden stirring among the audience. One of the young men loudly interrupted the speaker. The madman, however, did not seem to mind, nor did he wait to find out how his remarks had been received. Beads of perspiration fell on his flushed face which was then remarkably handsome. Without another word, he walked out and went home.<sup>10</sup>

An excellent example for any speaker!

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2. R.A. Braudes, *Ha-Dat ve-ha-Hayyim (Religion and Life)*, Lemberg, 1885, pt. 2, p. 110 (First published 1876-7). Cf. D. Patterson, *op.cit.*, p. 203.
3. A. Mapu, *Ahavat Ziyon (The Love of Zion)*, Vilna, 1853, ch. 4. Cf. D. Patterson, *Abraham Mapu*, London, 1964, p. 166f.
4. *Kol Kitve Mendele Mokher Sefarim*, Tel-Aviv, 1958, p. 97f. The extract is from the novel *Sefer ha-Qabzanim*, of which the first version in Yiddish appeared in 1869. The Hebrew version first appeared in 1909.
5. A. Mapu, *op. cit.*, *ibid.* Cf. D. Patterson, *Abraham Mapu*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
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7. *Kol Kitve Mendele Mokher Sefarim*, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 92f.
10. M.Z. Feierberg, *Le'An (Whither)* 1899. The passage is quoted from a translation by H. Halkin in *Whither and Other Stories*, Philadelphia, 1973, p. 214f.

Lord Blake:

Thank you very much indeed Dr. Patterson .

It is now my pleasure to introduce Uriel Tal, Professor of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University and holder of the Schreiber Chair for Contemporary Jewish History at that University. He has previously held positions at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and has taught widely in the United States, most recently as visiting professor in the Department of Religious Studies and History at the University of Pennsylvania. He has published many books in Hebrew, English and German. Among his books are *Christians and Jews in Germany* and *The Political Myth of Naziism Prior to the Holocaust*.

We welcome him here today. We are glad that he was able to come on this very appropriate occasion and, without further ado, I will ask him to speak. Professor.

## CHANGING APPROACHES TO SOCIETY IN NINETEENTH CENTURY JEWISH THOUGHT

Uriel Tal:

Mr. Chairman, it is going to be difficult for me to follow the brilliant and eloquent discourse just delivered by Dr. Patterson. I am reminded of a conversation I had many years ago with my uncle in Jerusalem. He had lived in Jerusalem for forty years yet had never managed to master the Holy Tongue. Being young and a great idealist, I asked him, "Uncle Eugene, how is it possible that you've been living here for forty years and you've never learned Hebrew? Aren't you ashamed?" To which he replied, "Young man, I am ashamed. But believe me, it's much easier to be ashamed than it is to learn Hebrew." And so, Mr. Chairman, it is much easier to admit my limitations than it is to equal the calibre of Dr. Patterson's lecture.

...

Mr. Chairman, your Excellency, dear Schreiber family, Bishop Appleton, Dr. Patterson, colleagues, students, ladies and gentlemen.

According to the legend in Leviticus Rabba, portion 4, a company of men was travelling aboard ship. One of them took a drill and started boring a hole under his seat. The other passengers complained bitterly and cried out desperately, "What are you doing? Water will enter and eventually drown us all." The man retorted, "What has that to do with you? Am I not drilling the hole under *my* seat?"

This little homily was included in a lecture delivered by Chaim Heymann Steinthal, co-founder in the 1860s of a school called *Völkerpsychologie* (later to become one of the foundations of our current psycho-history). Steinthal said that the parable teaches that according to Jewish ethics man was not intended to be self-centered nor to live in loneliness, but rather to be a member of a community, of society, in fellowship and in partnership. He believed that in his day (the second half of the nineteenth century) the quest for true fellowship was widening, for those were days of disenchantment. Contrary to the expectations of such founders of the Enlightenment as Voltaire, Leibnitz, Lessing,

- נבהל להון איש רע עין. «Der Geldgierige ist auch ein Mann  
(Sprw. 28, 22.) von bösem Auge (mißgünstig).»
- אל חיגע להעשיר  
מבינתך חדל. «Strebe nicht nach Reichthümern,  
יהעוף עיניך בו ואיננו כי עשה  
יעשה לו כנפים כנשר. Reichthum schafft sich Flügel, und  
יעוף השמים. fliehet hin wie der Adler in die Luft.»  
(Sprw. 23, 4. 5.)  
(Lied 274, 275 und 277.)

## 190. Wohlthätigkeit

aber, und eine vernünftige Anwendung seines rechtmäßig erworbenen Vermögens, ist dem Menschen anständig und nützlich, thut seinem Leibe und seiner Seele wohl, macht ihn bei Gott und Menschen angenehm.

- טוב מעט ביראת ה' «Besser wenig besitzen bei fester  
מאצר רב ומרומה בו. Gottesfurcht, als großen Schatz  
(Sprw. 15, 16.) mit unruhigem Gewissen.»
- טוב עין הוא יברך כי «Der Freigebige wird gesegnet;  
נתן מלהמו לדל. denn er theilet von seinem Brode  
(Sprw. 22, 9.) dem Armen mit.»
- מלצה ה' חונן דל «Wer gegen den Armen wohlthätig  
וגמולו ישלם לו. ist, der leihet dem Ewigen; Er wird  
(Sprw. 19, 17.) die Wohlthat ihm vergelten.»  
(Vgl. auch: Sprw. 28, 27.) (Lied 276, 335 und 336.)

## 191. Der Neid

erregt Haß und Hader, und führet demnach zur Uebertretung aller Gesetze. Der Neidische genießet weder Ruhe noch Zufriedenheit, und macht also sich selbst und Andere unglücklich.

אכוריות חמה ושטף אף «Wützig ist der Zorn, ungestüm der  
ומי יעמד לפני קנאה. Grimm; doch wer kann vor dem  
(Sprw. 27, 4.) Neid bestehen?»  
(Lied 352 und 374.)

## 192. Genügsamkeit und Wohlwollen

hingegen, erhalten den Menschen heiter, ruhig und zufrieden. Denn der Genügsame gönnet Jedem das Seine, verläßt sich auf Gott, und erfüllet desto getreuer seine Pflichten. (S. 129. und 130.)

חיי בשרים לב מרפא «Ein genügsames Herz erhält den  
ורקב עצמות קנאה. Körper gesund, gieriger Neid ist  
(Sprw. 14, 30.) nagender Beinfräß.»

איזהו עשיר רהשמה «Wer ist ein wahrhaft reicher  
בהלקי (אבות פ' ד) Mann? — Der mit seinem Theile  
zufrieden ist.»

רחב לב יגרה מדון «Den Unerfättlichen wird Zwist  
ובוטח על ה' ירושן. aufreiben; wer Gott vertrauet  
(Sprw. 28, 25.) wird gedeihen.»

(S. auch Aben = Esra in seinem Commentar zu der  
Stelle 2. B. Mos. 20, 14.)

(Lied 278 — 282.)

## 193. 4) Zorn und Unmuth

schaden dem Menschen an seiner Gesundheit, verwirren seinen Verstand, ereifern ihn gegen Gott und Menschen, führen ihn von seiner Pflicht ab, und bringen ihn zu vielen Sünden.

איש אף יגרה מדון ובעל «Ein auffahrender Mensch erregt  
חמה רב פשע. Hader; ein Zorniger begehet viel  
(Sprw. 29, 22.) Verbrechen.»

אל תבהל ברוחך לבעוס «Sey nicht voreilig mit zürnendem  
בי כעס בחיק כסילים. Unmuth; denn Zorn ruht in der  
(Predig 7, 9.) Thoren Schooß.»

On Jewish traditional values such as charity and moderation and the need to restrain envy, grudge, anger or wrath, reinterpreted by J. Johlson, teacher at the Modern Secondary School of the Israelites' Congregation at Frankfurt/M., in his textbook *Allume - Joseph* for young boys and girls, Frankfurt/M.: 1829, Andreas Publishing House, pp. 126 - 127.

Enlightenment had shed not only light, but also shadow, on man and society. Steintal added that better education and better living conditions had hardly improved the human condition and that people had constantly to struggle against evil, against eruptions of violence, against irrationalism and against loss of self-control. He stated that one side effect of the new era of urbanization and industrialization was loneliness amidst the masses, and he advised turning again to the wisdom and the ethics of bygone generations and blending them into the fabric of modern life.

In the light of the Central European *Zeitgeist* in the period from the revolution of 1848 to World War I, Steintal's approach to Jewish social ethics was an excellent exemplification of both the teaching and preaching of many of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars. Their approach to Jewish social thought is articulated in the collection of sources and interpretations entitled *Die Lehren des Judentums nach den Quellen*, published by the association of German Jews in the aftermath of World War I. This five-volume collection includes both scientific studies and edifying apologetics by outstanding Judaica scholars such as Abraham Geiger, Hermann Cohen, Max Dienemann, Moritz Lazarus, Moritz Gudemann, Michael Guttmann and Max Wiener (who utilized current Christian scholarship to support their views). Our topic tonight deals with the interrelation of modern society and Jewish ethics as formulated by these scholars.

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The phenomenon that crystallized the concept of modern society, according to this collection, was first and foremost the enlightened man who, through the intensive application of what was then believed to be the light of critical reason, logic, empiricism and cognitive ability, would be able to enhance the entire fabric of his life. This enhancement was to have taken place as a result of two key events: enlightenment and emancipation.

The Hebrew definition of the term "enlightenment" includes not only *haskala* — "knowledge", but also, as Solomon Maimon and afterwards Jakob Klatzkin indicated, *sachol*, meaning "derived from reason." The power of the mind had been elevated to the primary determinant of human life and of modern society. With the ability to reason, man would be able to strive for his intellectual freedom, his legal and social emancipation, his political sovereignty, his cultural progress, religious renewal and last but not least, his personal autonomy. As Max Wiener had pointed out, despite



haupte können, die Thora mache einen Unterschied zwischen Menschen und Menschen!

3. Aus diesen Gründen, denen noch viele beigelegt werden könnten, folgt, daß alle nachfolgenden Vorschriften der Thora über Liebe, Wahrhaftigkeit, Gerechtigkeit und Barmherzigkeit gegen unsere Nebenmenschen sich auf alle Menschen ohne irgend welchen Unterschied beziehen; und wenn die Thora (V. Mos. 23, 8) uns verbietet, einen Ägypter geringzuschätzen, weil wir das Gastrecht in seinem Lande genossen haben: wie sollten wir uns eine Lieblosigkeit und Ungerechtigkeit erlauben dürfen gegen die Völker, in deren Länder wir seit Jahrtausenden leben und Schutz, ja gleiches Recht mit den übrigen Einwohnern genießen!

## 82. Das Gebot der Menschenliebe und Menschenachtung.

1. Der Inbegriff aller Vorschriften, welche Gott uns in Bezug auf unser Verhalten gegen unsere Nebenmenschen erteilt hat, ist das Gebot der Thora: Liebe deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst, ich bin Gott. **ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה'** (III. Mos. 19, 18.)

2. Dieses Gebot fordert von uns, daß wir uns mit dem Wohlergehen unsres Nebenmenschen freuen sollen, wie mit dem eigenen, und uns über sein Leid betrüben sollen, als hätte es uns betroffen, daß wir zu seinem Wohlergehen mit derselben Freude beitragen, als gälte es unsrem eigenen, und Leid von ihm abhalten, als wären wir selber davon bedroht. (Hirsch, Pentat. Com. zu III. Mos.)

3. Mit dem Worte **כמוך** bezeichnet uns die Thora als Grundlage der wahren Menschenliebe die Menschenachtung. Wir müssen jeden Menschen ohne Rücksicht auf die Vorzüge oder Mängel, die er als Einzelner an sich hat, als ein von Gott uns gleich und zu seinem Ebenbilde geschaffenes Wesen betrachten, und als solches ihn lieben. (**סד' ח' רמב**)

Wer seinen Nächsten verachtet, ist ein Sünder; wer aber den Niedrigen begünstigt, Heil ihm! Spr. Sal. 14, 21.

Wer des Dürftigen spottet, der löstert dessen Schöpfer. Spr. Sal. 17, 6.

Jewish traditional values, such as honouring and respecting one's fellow man, reinterpreted by Ludwig Stein, principal of the Jewish School of Würzburg, in his textbook *Amude Hagolah*, second edition, Frankfurt/M.J. Kauffmann Publisher: 1886, pp. 176-177. Stein chose the title of his book according to the subtitle of the *Semak*, i.e. the "Small Book of Precepts" by Isaac ben Joseph of Corbeil (Thirteenth Century).

all the far reaching changes since the emergence of the Enlightenment, contemporary society was nevertheless the child of the enlightened man.

Accordingly, the power of critical reason would be able to free man from his enslavement to irrationalism or antirationalism; however, it would not automatically do so. From the days of the empiricists, like Francis Bacon, John Locke and on, from the emergence of rational self-understanding, following Descartes' second and third *Meditations*, and perhaps mainly with the systematic criticism of reason by Kant, until our historical scholarship in the realm of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, it had been affirmed that enlightenment possessed the power to make man autonomous, that is, free, and hence potentially moral. It had been assumed that with the modernization of society, man would come of age and free himself from ignorance, confusion, anxiety, pain and suffering, insecurity and injustice, deprivation and hunger, in short, would free himself from the oppression of evil.

However, even the thinkers of this turn-of-the-century period — thinkers such as Max Wiener, Max Dienemann and Martin Buber — had known that disillusionment and disenchantment were inescapable. The process of modernization, including its social implications such as the industrialization of society, had brought neither the social freedom nor the moral autonomy, nor the personal peace of mind that had been anticipated. Man's intellectual accomplishments, technological advances and high standard of living had brought neither moral improvement nor — as had been hoped — man's ethical perfection in society.

Rabbi Josef Eshelbacher indicated (in a manuscript published by Tel Aviv University in *Michael*, Vol. II) that the fact that progress, scholarship and science have not brought about this greater measure of anticipated contentment was not the fault of the process of modernization. The fault lay with man in society who had failed to control his progress in such a way as to derive from it happiness, build with it ethical ways of life, enact justice, maintain peace and master self restraint.

At this point scholars of two trends — neo-Kantians such as Hermann Cohen and the co-founders of *Völkerpsychologie*, Chaim H. Steinthal and Moritz Lazarus on the one hand, and on the other scholars of the Historical School such as Moritz Güdemann (then Rabbi of Vienna), the Talmudist Michael Guttman and the prolific writer Simon Bernfeld — made serious attempts to create a synthesis between religious faith and critical rationalism, thus also coping with hope and disenchantment, optimism and realism. Accordingly, both reason and history, a priori categories of

recognition and a posteriori forms of experience, were deemed necessary in establishing the validity of ethics. The attempt at synthesizing theory and practice, reason and faith, created quite an intriguing dilemma, one that seemed to be inherent in the very structure of syllogism. Reason and critical rationalism, it was argued, were indeed among the essential foundations of the kind of ethics that were valid for the modern person. Yet at the same time they were but a priori, theoretical and universal categories, hence necessarily devoid of and detached from concrete experience, from living reality, from particularity and individuality, from emotions and personal faith. How, then, could reason be made meaningful to faith, form to content, knowledge to experience? The answer offered in *Die Lehren des Judentums nach den Quellen* was a renewed encounter with tradition, with roots, with the origins of Jewish ethics.

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The second key event being dealt with tonight regarding the process of modernization is, as previously stated, emancipation. All our *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars concurred that one of the greatest achievements of the modern era was emancipation — not just the legal and social emancipation of the Jew but emancipation, in the broader sense, of man achieving personal freedom. This broader emancipation had been acquired through the emergence, since Descartes, of critical epistemology and through the acknowledgement, hailing from the French Revolution, of *les droits de l'homme et des citoyens*.

This more profound meaning of emancipation was interpreted semantically. Its root *emancipare* means 'to release from' — for example, from slavery or from tutelage — *e* 'out', *ex mancipium*, 'out of ownership', but also *e* 'out', *manus* 'hand', *capere* 'to take'. Hence, to emancipate would mean to take out of guardianship, for example, slaves, serfs, blacks, children, women and Jews.

History had taught these thinkers that along with the grandeur and the splendor of "freedom from", arose the question of "freedom for". With the achievement of social equality had come the quest for individuality and the search for personal identity. It was pointed out that not only emancipation but the entire process of modernization had filled the hearts of young Jews with both hope and despair. On the one hand a tremendous optimism, a nearly Messianic faith in the redeeming power of reason, of industrialization, practically intoxicated generations, including some of the founders of political Zionism. Trust in science, built on foundations of

Leidenschaft. Hierfür spricht auch vollständig die Wirklichkeit. (Die ausführliche Darlegung und Erweisung s. in unserm Bibelw. Th. I. zu 3 Moj. 18.)

Hierzu treten accessorisch a) das Verbot für die Priester, sich mit gewissen Frauenzimmern (s. unser Bibelw. zu 3 Moj. 21.), für den Hohenpriester, sich anders als mit einer Jungfrau zu verheirathen; b) das Verbot für die Israeliten, sich mit gewissen Nationen zu verschwägern. Es werden deren, wenn auch 2 Moj. 34, 11, 16 nur sechs, 5 Moj. 7, 1—3 sieben aufgezählt, und zwar ausdrücklich als diese „sieben Nationen“ bezeichnet, größere und kleinere Völkerschaften in Kanaan. Der Grund wird genau angegeben, damit die Israeliten durch die Verschwägerung nicht vom einzigen Gotte abgewendet und dem Götzthume zugeführt würden. Während des zweiten Bestandes erneuerten Etra und Nchemjah dieses Verbot mit Strenge, und bewirkten wiederholt die Entfernung aller fremden Weiber aus der jüdischen Kolonie. Etra zählt hier (9, 1.) acht Völker auf, indem er zwei, die damals nicht mehr existirten, ausläßt, und dafür Ammoniter, Meabiter und Egyptianer hinzuzählt. Nchemjah (13, 23.) fügt noch Aethiob (Pelsischthum) hinzu. Offenbar dehnen sie damit das Verbot auf „die Völker der Landschaften“ (עַמֵּי הַאֲרָצוֹת) aus, mit denen dort die Juden in nächster Verbindung standen. Sie waren hierzu durch das mosaische Motiv, die Verhütung des Abfalls, berechtigt. Auch zeigen bei genauerer Prüfung die angeführten Stellen der Eherab, daß die Aufzählung jener Nationen sich eigentlich nur auf deren Ausrottung bezieht, die dann dadurch motivirt wird, daß durch sie die Verschwägerung verhütet werde, so daß für letztere als eigentliches Prinzip aufzustellen ist, daß sie da verboten ist, wo die Gefahr droht, daß dadurch der Abfall von der Religion herbeigeführt oder nahe gebracht werde, ein Prinzip, das schon bei Abraham wegen Verheirathung des Isak (1 Moj. 24.) und bei Isak und Rebekka wegen Verheirathung ihrer Söhne galt (1 Moj. 27, 46. 28, 1. 6—8.) und von Mal. 2, 11. geradezu ausgesprochen ward: „Schudah hat das Heiligthum des Ewigen entweicht, und fremden Gottes Tochter geehlicht“. Im Alterthum galt dies nun dem Heidenthum gegenüber; aber auch nachdem das Christenthum erstanden, wurde das Verbot der Verheirathung von beiden, sowohl von christlicher<sup>1)</sup> als jüdischer<sup>2)</sup> Seite auf's strengste ausgesprochen, und wird

<sup>1)</sup> So verbot der Kaiser Constantius (339) die Verheirathung von Juden und Christen bei Todesstrafe, ein Verbot, das von den späteren Kaisern 388 und 393 wiederholt ward. Cod. Theod. Lib. XVI. Tit. VIII. Lex. VI. Lib. III. Tit. VII. Lex II. Cod. Jost. Lib. I. Tit. IX. Lex. VII.

<sup>2)</sup> In den Texten der jüdischen Gesetze heißt es überall עַבְדֵּי אֱלֹהִים, und dies sind Heiden. 3. B. Ramb. Jod haech. בְּיָמֵינוּ אֵין אִסּוּר בְּיָמֵינוּ 12, 1. Eben haes. Arijhn. 16. §. 1. In der Praxis wurde aber auch in Bezug auf Christen das Verbot aufrecht erhalten.

von der Kirche noch heute entschieden aufrecht erhalten. Das von Napoleon I. zusammenberufene Sanhedrin<sup>1)</sup> und die Rabbinerverversammlung zu Braunschweig<sup>2)</sup> beantworteten die ihnen vorgelegte Frage, ob Juden und Christen sich miteinander verheirathen dürften? dahin, es sei kein striktes Verbot, daß Juden sich mit Menckelweitem verheirathen, vorhanden; daß Sanhedrin bemerkte aber, daß die religiöse Trauung bei einer solchen Mischehe nicht anwendbar sei, und die Braunschweiger Rabbinerverammlung fügte hinzu: „wenn es den Eltern von Staatsseiten gestattet ist, auch aus gemischten Ehen erzielte Kinder in der israelitischen Religion zu erziehen“. — In zwei Personen verschiedenen Glaubens, die sich mit einander verheirathen, liegt nun der Widerspruch, daß sie einerseits ihrem Glauben treu sind, so daß keine von Beiden zu der Religion der andern überzutreten sich entschließen kann, und daß sie andererseits in ihrer Religion so schwach sind, daß sie die Gefahr, ihr Leben von ihrer Religion, gerade auf deren lauterstem und innigstem Gebiete, dem Familienleben, der Erziehung der Kinder u. s. w. nicht durchbringen und erfüllen zu lassen, und in der höchsten Anschauung und dem heiligsten Gefühlten sich vom Gatten verziehen zu wissen, nicht scheuen. — Ueber diesen Widerspruch kommt man in der Erwägung über Mischehen nicht hinweg. Der gläubige Christ — und das ganze System des Christenthums kann nur einen Gläubigen als Christen ansehen, weil es sich ganz und gar auf dem Glauben aufbaut — wird und kann nicht ablassen, seine Ehehälften zur christlichen Religion hindüberzuleiten und sie auf seinen eigenen Standpunkt zu bringen; er wird sich so lange unglücklich,

<sup>1)</sup> Der betreffende Passus der *Décisions doctrinales* des großen Sanhedrin, das im Februar und März 1807 in Paris versammelt war, Art. 3., lautet wörtlich: „Le grand sanhedrin déclare, en outre, que les mariages entre israélites et chrétiens, contractés conformément aux lois du Code civil, sont obligatoires et valables civilement, et que, bien qu'ils ne soient pas susceptibles d'être revêtus des formes religieuses, ils n'entraîneront aucun anathème“. d. h. „das große Sanhedrin erklärt, daß Heirathen zwischen Israeliten und Christen, die den Gesetzen des bürgerlichen Gesetzbuches gemäß geschlossen worden, verbindlich und bürgerlich gültig sind, und daß sie, obgleich sie nicht sähig sind mit den religiösen Formen bekleidet zu werden, keinen Bann noch sich ziehen dürfen“. *S. Récueil des lois etc. par A. E. Halphen. Paris 1851. p. 25.* In der That haben die Trauformalitäten jeder Religion beide Personen zu den durch die Ehe zwischen ihnen stattfindenden Verbindlichkeiten zu verpflichten, und diese Verpflichtungen zu sanktioniren; sie werden also mißbräuchlich angewandt, wenn sie nur den einen Theil verpflichten, nicht aber den andern, der sie in ihrer Gültigkeit gar nicht anerkennen kann.

<sup>2)</sup> Die Versammlung tagte vom 12—19. Juni 1844. *S. die Protokolle der ersten Rabbinerverammlung, Braunschweig, 1844. A. Zeit. d. Jud. 1844, S. 374.*

On the merits of a closely knit family for the personal happiness of parents and children, as well as for a stronger Jewish society, and on problems of intermarriage in the era of emancipation, starting with Napoleon's "Grand Sanhedrin", Paris 1807, from *Die Israelitische Religionslehre*, by Ludwig Philippson, Vol. III, Part IV, published by the "Institute for the Advancement of Jewish Literature" (Tenth Year: 1864-1865). Leipzig, Baumgärtner Publishing House: 1865, pp. 248-249. See Uriel Tal. "German-Jewish Social Thought in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," 1981.

rational critical ontology and empirical evidence as established in the course of the 18th century, was still overwhelmingly dominant at the end of the 19th century. For example, Lazarus wrote regarding the term *law* in the teachings of our Sages on Deuteronomy in the weekly portion Nitsavim, that if it were not for law, the world, meaning creation or the cosmos, would return to chaos. Therefore, law was no longer to be understood as Torah only, but as science as well. Moreover, the process of modernization was being conceived by Jewish students in terms of a new Exodus. This time the *yetsiat mitsraim* was to be an exodus out of ignorance, social discrimination and primitive ways of production and marketing. In addition to leaving behind the misery of illiteracy, poverty and illness, an exodus from oppression by political and clerical institutions which had remained alien to the blessings of progress was believed to have taken place.

But then the other side of the coin appeared. Jellinek, among others, discerned the opposite mood, the critical mood that had been surfacing during the second half of the nineteenth century. Our young intellectuals had been influenced by the revolt initiated by Feuerbach, one of the neo-Hegelians who turned theology into anthropology and thus paved the way for the ultimate elevation by Nietzsche of man into God. Moreover, it was observed that the *Zeitgeist*, the mood of those days, was also one of scepticism as disseminated by Schopenhauer with his ontological pessimism and his rebellion against the notion of man's reason and conscience as the prime criteria of ethics. These aspects of the intellectual and emotional climate had been summed up by leading members of the *Verband* of German Jews in the aftermath of the elections to the *Reichstag* in 1912. They said that they discerned among their students feelings of spiritual emptiness, of intellectual perplexity, of emotional abandonment and, at the same time, of yearnings for a peaceful, tranquil, perhaps utopian style of life; longing for more joy, more simplicity, more honesty in relations between human beings. Moreover, with emancipation also appeared new and quite unexpected feelings of alienation and uprootedness. Jewish students wrote of having lost their point of anchor, for the acquisition of equal status had brought man into another exile, into another *Nechar*, in the sense of being *Nochri*, being alien, but now alien to oneself. Being *Selbstentfremdent* meant being alienated from one's own traditions both as a man in modern society and as a Jew in a secular society. Hence, being *BaNechar*, in exile, meant being uprooted.

At this point it was suggested by our scholars that the application of traditional Jewish ethics to modernity could be a possible answer to the

existential dilemma of the Jew in modern society. When semantically analyzed, the root of the term *kadom* — kuf, daled, mem — from which is derived both *kadima* 'forwards' and *kidma* 'progress', and also *kadum* 'the ancient past' and *kedma* 'to the east' — suggests a certain romantic, primordial aura. The relationship of these words, one to the other, implies that the future and progress have to be anchored in the past. For even ontologically, no future seemed possible or justified without its cause and its reason; that is, its germinating past or, speaking existentially, one's roots. It was this causal relationship that showed that without historical roots there could be no conceivable future.

This way of thinking was then applied to Jewish ethics. Indeed, as Lazarus, Steinthal, Güdemann and Karpeles argued, it was in ethics that both reason and emotion, theory and practice, and even some sense of the mystique of being, of life, of love, of fellowship, could be articulated and perhaps realized. In the era of modernity, it was argued, theories of determinism had allowed people to shake off the yoke of moral responsibility. Relying on social Darwinism and Spencerian positivism, on Materialism and Monism, it had often been claimed that a person was conditioned, was predestined by factors beyond his control. One's heredity, one's childhood, one's parents, one's material condition, the social, economic and political circumstances one claimed — they, rather than oneself, were morally accountable. It was argued that if indeed this generation were to relinquish the only feature that made a human being different from all other creatures — that is one's capacity for conscious choice between good and evil — then nothing could stop humanity from self-destruction. Had not Nietzsche predicted that it was the modern rather than the non-enlightened man who would be doomed to return to the state of brutish primitivism, to coarse animalism, to self-annihilation? Jewish ethics, our authors emphasized at this point, might provide a way out of relativism, especially in light of the ethical norm of personal responsibility.

As a point of departure, Deuteronomy XI:26ff and XXX:15 has frequently been quoted as the source from which man's ability, right and duty to choose between good and evil, between life and death, between a blessing and a curse was derived. This charisma — in the sense of a divine or, as it was reinterpreted, a natural gift — was bestowed upon each individual for each and every individual was unique.

Contrary to theories of historical determinism and contrary to scepticism and post-Nietzsche nihilism, Jewish tradition taught that man should not be justified by some causal rationalization. Man was created to

mold causation rather than be molded by it. Man was created to cause good to rule over evil, justice over inequality and freedom over slavery — whether slavery to external forces or inner inclinations — wrestling for the mastery of his personal mind or soul. The Mishnah and the Talmud, Tractate *Sanhedrin* chapter IV, emphasize the a priori uniqueness of each individual. In pointing out the responsibility of a witness in cases where a man's life is at stake, the Sages say that when man casts many coins in one mold they are all alike, yet when the Holy One, praised be He, mints every man in the mold of the first Adam, each person is different, each individual is unique.

On the basis of this axiomatic understanding of a person as an individual rather than merely a member of a crowd, the ethical meaning and commitment derived from the notion of man's individuality unfolded in the course of Jewish history. *Maccabees IV* which Josephus Flavius and some of the Church Fathers called "On the Rule of Reason" and which includes significant elements of stoicism, has this to say of the Sages' teachings about moral responsibility emanating from man's uniqueness: "...it is within the province of reason to control desire and instincts and divert them towards the good or to suppress some of them..." (2:6; 18; 3:2-5; 7:20). Generations later Maimonides (*Rules of Repentance V: 1-3*) stated, in the same spirit, that every individual is endowed with the capacity of ethical judgment and autonomy, hence of personal responsibility; it is in his power to incline toward the path of good or of evil, "... thus this species man is unique in the world and no other resembles him in this matter that he himself in his mind and thought knows good from evil... and do not imagine... that the Holy One blessed be He decrees that a man from the commencement of his creation should be righteous or evil... but he himself of his own mind leans toward the path he desires."

Beginning in the early 1840s, Jewish social and ethical thought emphasized that all of these various teachings arrived at one and the same conclusion: the acceptance of personal ethical responsibility transforms a person into a human being and strengthens his struggle against ethical relativism.

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Let me please, Mr. Chairman, sum up this paper. Our topic has been the interrelationship of modern society and Jewish ethics as formulated by



several scholars of Judaic studies prior to World War I. Contrary to original expectations, Enlightenment and emancipation, while encouraging social and cultural integration, also strengthened the quest for Jewish identity, for self-understanding of man in modern civilization and thus of the Jew in the modern world. We saw that one of the guiding answers to the perplexed at the second half of the nineteenth century was a re-interpretation of Jewish historical ethics — in our particular case tonight, the notion of personal responsibility.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, if asked what in fact is the central idea of this entire discourse on Jewish ethics, I should say that the essence is the difference between the righteous and the wicked. Both are human; both have good and evil inclinations. However, as taught in Genesis Rabba, portion 39, the wicked are those who are under the control of their impulses; the righteous, the Midrash says, are those who have their impulses under control.

Thank you.

chata] niederhaut, soll gezüchtigt werden [vgl. Baba kamma 91 b]. Man darf sie nur dann vernichten, wenn sie andern Bäumen oder der Saat oder dem Felde des Nachbarn Schaden zufügen. — Maimonides: das. VI, 8.

### Neueres jüdisches Schrifttum

- VII, 1: Aber selbst da, wo der Krieg unausweichlich war, mußte eine jede Grausamkeit vermieden und soweit es nur möglich war, schonend verfahren werden. Vor Beginn eines Krieges mußten Friedensanerbietungen gemacht werden und nur, wenn diese zurückgewiesen wurden, konnte der Kampf eröffnet werden; nach erlangtem Siege mußte das Leben der Weiber und Kinder, sowie das der Tiere geschont werden (Talmud Jer. Schebit VI). Bei der Belagerung einer Stadt mußte eine Seite frei gelassen werden, damit die friedlich gesinnten Bewohner ihr Leben retten könnten (Maim. Melachim c. 6 § 7) . . . . Friedensbündnisse, die geschlossen wurden, und wären diese auch von dem Gegner listigerweise erzielt worden, mußten gehalten werden (Josua 9). — M. Bloch: Die Ethik in der Halacha S. 94.

### Christliche Schriftsteller

- VIII, 1: Auch das feindliche Land sollte im Kriege möglichst geschont werden: Fruchtbäume sollten auch bei Belagerungen von Städten nicht umgehauen werden, sondern nur nichtfruchtbringende Bäume, und auch diese nur, um das für die Belagerung notwendige Holz zu gewinnen. Das Gesetz fragt ganz richtig: „Sind denn die Bäume Menschen, daß du mit ihnen Krieg führst?“ — Carl Heinrich Cornill: Das Alte Testament und die Humanität S. 14.
- 2: Endlich muß noch, im Anschluß an die besprochenen Stücke, die Rede sein von dem *eigentümlichen Wert des Menschenlebens*. Wer von den Nibelungen und der Ilias oder bloß vom Richterbuch und den Samuel-

büchern an die Patriarchensage herantritt, ist erstaunt über die geringe Rolle, die Krieg und Kriegsgeschrei in ihr spielt. — Max Haller: Religion, Recht und Sitte in den Genesisworten S. 107.

- 3: Es ist nun im einzelnen sehr bemerkenswert, daß Israel in seiner Handlungsweise gegenüber dem Auslande im allgemeinen eine Art Völkerrecht walten lassen soll. Das Kriegsrecht gebietet und heiligt den Versuch, eine feindliche Stadt vor ihrer Belagerung zur friedlichen Kapitulation zu bewegen. Es erlaubt wohl im Falle einer Belagerung die Ausnutzung der natürlichen Hilfsquellen dazu im Feindeslande, verbietet aber allen grundlosen Vandalismus und beschränkt endlich nach der Eroberung die Mordlust der Sieger auf die Tötung der erwachsenen männlichen Bevölkerung. Die Gewährung des Beuterechts an allem übrigen, nämlich den Weibern, den Kindern und dem Vieh, bedeutet nicht die Erlaubnis jeder Brutalität, z. B. gegen die jungen Weiber. — Georg Sternberg: Die Ethik des Deuteronomiums S. 54.

Sieh auch:

Andreas Eberharter: Das Ehe- und Familienrecht der Hebräer, S. 93.

Heinrich Ewald: Geschichte des Volkes Israel, 3. Ausg., III, S. 739.

Eduard König: Völker- und Kriegsrecht im Altertum (Zeitgeist d. Berl. Tagebl. Nr. 45, 1915).

Georg Sternberg: Die Ethik des Deuteronomiums, S. 56; 61.

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Lord Blake:

I would like to thank you very much indeed, Professor Tal, for an extremely stimulating and interesting talk.

I would now like to ask Mr. Schreiber to speak to us.

## CLOSING REMARKS

Jacob Schreiber:

Mr. Chairman, your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends.

In addressing you now, I obviously shall not attempt to equal my distinguished predecessors whom we have all had the pleasure of hearing tonight. Being a businessman, I know better than to attempt something at which I have no chance in succeeding.

Thank you very much Lord Blake and Dr. Patterson for your very kind personal words. Knowing that the academic world does not concern itself with elaborate gestures but is devoted to precision, I dare say that tonight this rule has been slightly "bent" in favor of my wife and myself, and we are both deeply appreciative. Shoshana and I are very grateful to all of you for being here with us tonight. We know that you have come from near and far to attend the inauguration of the Fellowship in our names, for the benefit of the History of Contemporary Judaism.

David Patterson had begun to acquaint us, in his noble way, with the existence and aims of the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies more than three years ago. As our acquaintance with its aims grew, so did our interest and admiration for its activities and for the scope and potential which it harbors. This Centre seems to us to provide an ideal and unique basis for study and research in all the aspects of the ancient Hebrew language and Jewish culture, right through its long troubled history, its periods of glory and suppression. Here we can follow the resolute strength of our dispersed people throughout history to the recent attempt at total annihilation, and then of revival and rejuvenation. Many centres of Hebrew Studies and Jewish Culture were destroyed during the Holocaust in one of the most calculated attempts in history to wipe out not only the existence but also the heritage and indeed all traces of the culture of Judaism. We today are living witnesses to the fortunately unsuccessful attempt to which, however, many valuable and irreplaceable centres on the continent of Europe fell victim. When the remains of Hebrew Studies and Jewish Culture arose from the ashes of war and joined with the few scattered centres of Jewish studies outside Europe, the newly established State of Israel seemed

to constitute a natural basis and starting point for the renewal of Hebrew Studies in our generation and for the future. The foremost basis for this is Tel Aviv University where alongside research in many aspects of Jewish history, culture and language, specific studies of contemporary Jewish history are carried out. We are proud to have been able to provide a chair in Contemporary Jewish History there, held by Professor Tal who has excelled in his deliberations here tonight. The work he does in an important link in the chain of revived Hebrew Studies worldwide.

There are a number of motives behind our decision to provide a Fellowship here, now, in Oxford. We need not, in this circle, exclaim our firm commitment to the study of the history and culture of Judaism. Obviously, the provision of facilities to foster, nurture and preserve this goal is close to our hearts. Our connections at Oxford are not based on ancient or historical bonds with this country generally, or with Oxford in particular, but rather on our observance of its activities and our experience with other academic institutions here resulting from our son Mordy having completed his studies at Oxford. The very fact of the existence of the Centre, plus our knowledge of the commitment and devotion shown by both Dr. Patterson and Professor Tal, and indeed by the whole of the Centre, charged us with a desire to create a facility to complement the studies being carried out at Tel Aviv University. We hope that many academic opportunities and advantages will develop through exchange programs for students and research fellows and we also hope that the facilities provided by both Centres will promote high academic levels and lead to a creative cross fertilization. These thoughts have contributed to our decision to establish this Fellowship and we are happy and proud of the worthy frame which we have found for it here.

With respect to Oxford and the Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, I would like to venture the following remarks. The study of history requires constant reevaluation. Examining the past and its order and then assessing its relevance in shaping and determining our present and our future, can lead us to a fuller understanding of ourselves and of our place in the universe. In our lifetimes, we have witnessed periods of major upheavals. Yet Judaism has proved its ability, in spite of such upheavals, to adapt to new situations and surroundings, never relinquishing its ancient heritage and culture. It should be the objective of all communities to remain as receptive as possible to the peoples and cultures which surround them. Once a community or culture ceases to be receptive, closes up and retreats into gloom, it dies a natural death. The mere fact that Oxford University as

we know it today began as a monastic centre hundreds of years ago is in itself a testimony to its continuing vitality, its ability to diversify and to adjust to our modern world, thereby remaining a potent factor within our civilization. It is our hope, therefore, that not only will the Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies here in Yarnton benefit from the powerful and vital academic community of Oxford, but that — by the same token — Oxford University on a modest scale will also benefit from the added dimension this Centre lends.

We believe that the further development and future of the Centre is in the hands of able and devoted persons, and we shall be greatly honored to be able to witness and share the fruits of its success for many years to come.

On behalf of my wife and myself, thank you very much.



Lord Blake:

I would like to conclude now by expressing once again the very great gratitude that we feel toward Mr. and Mrs. Schreiber for their splendid generosity. We are really most grateful to them for their participation in the establishment of the Fellowship.

