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Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1951-1952.

DIRECTOR OF ARCHIVES: JACOB R. MARCUS, PH. D.

Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

ARCHIVIST: SELMA STERN-TAEUBLER, PH. D.

CLIFTON AVENUE · CINCINNATI 20, OHIO

1803

P E R S O N A L.

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver,
Congregation Tifereth Israel,
E. 105th Street and Ansel Road,
Cleveland 6, Ohio.

Sept.
18th,
1951.

Dear Abba:

You have seen the Archives and you know the nature of our work. We lean over on the pedantic and scientific side but this does not necessarily mean that we have any intention or desire to remain immersed in the colonial period or in the eighteenth century.

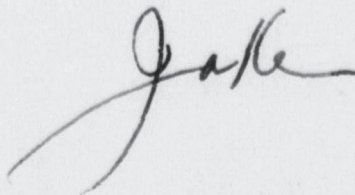
We are interested in history, and history is being made every day.

I believe that you are a historic personality, in spite of the fact that you are very much alive, still kicking, and with God's help, will be heard from for another generation yet to come. I wonder whether you have ever thought of sitting down and writing 2 or 3,000 words of an autobiographical nature? We would love to have such a preface to your future autobiography. You could write on anything that you wish, express your point of view, tell your opponents what you think of them, etc. Please think this request over and let me hear from you.

We want an autobiographical article from you in which you express yourself on any subject of Jewish import.

With best wishes to you and Virginia and the boys for the coming High Holydays, I am

As ever,



JRM:pk

OUR WEEK-END PILGRIMAGE TO H.U.C.

By ARNOLD TASK

Over the week-end of May 4, 5, and 6, 1951, thirteen boys from Chicago set out on a modern pilgrimage: a pilgrimage to the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. To most of us, before we had the experience of seeing the College, Hebrew Union College merely represented the name of the school from which our rabbis graduated. We had seen pictures of the school and heard of its wonderful operation, but there was something missing. No matter how carefully we may try to describe an experience, it is almost impossible to fully transmit the feeling which comes from having experienced something yourself. Thus it was that we felt the thrill of seeing for ourselves Hebrew Union College.

The week-end began with Friday evening services at K.A.M. Temple in Chicago, which was in honor of those who were going on the trip. Early the next morning, we arrived in Cincinnati after an overnight train trip. Shortly afterward, we saw for the first time the center of Reform Judaism. Our day started with a delicious breakfast at the HUC dormitory. The food, throughout our stay at the dormitory, was always the best. The meals were very well prepared.

Following breakfast, we met in the "bumming room" with our hosts, Mr. Bernard Martin, President of the HUC Student Association; Mrs. Max Schiff, the wonderful Matron of the HUC dormitory; Rabbi Samuel Cook, Director of the National Federation of Temple Youth; Rabbi Robert Katz, Director of Field Activities at HUC; and Henry Skirball, a former President of NFTY and now a student in the College. Our program for the week-end was explained and we proceeded to the HUC Chapel for the Sabbath Service.

The Chapel gives the students in the College the opportunity and experience of conducting services and delivering sermons while they are studying for the rabbinate. Besides this, students in their third year of the College begin to visit temples around the country during the week-ends, where they act as "apprentice rabbis." In this way they gradually accustom themselves to the type of positions they will hold within a few years.

The services in the Chapel are indeed unique because of the spontaneous participation of the congregation in the reading of the prayers and the singing of the hymns. Many times, we were told, it is a toss-up to see who finishes first, the choir or the congregation. The eagerness with which the services are conducted is a tribute to the inspiration of Judaism. The sermon, which was delivered by a student from Cleveland, was the topic of discussion at many of the lunch tables later. These Chapel services, then, are somewhat of a proving ground for the ideas and techniques of our future rabbis.

Immediately following the service, we met informally with Dr. Nelson Glueck, President of the Hebrew Union College.

This was one of the most memorable occasions of the trip. Dr. Glueck, who has spent the greatest part of his life as an archaeologist, told us of his many experiences which have been responsible for changing our ideas, interpretation, and understanding of the past. It was not only what Dr. Glueck had told us that caused us to listen intently, but it was the man himself for whom we had so much admiration. Here was a man whose responsibilities are ten-fold, and yet his informal, friendly manner was something to note. He truly represents the live, exciting spirit of the College.

At the noon hour, we returned to the dining hall for luncheon. At these meals, we learned a great deal about the men who attend the College. Many of them we knew from NFTY Institutes, and others we met quite rapidly. During our stay, we were made to feel that we were a part of the school and not just guests. The formalities of the guided tour which came in the afternoon were about the only reminder we had that we were not students in the College. And yet, even then the doors were wide open for us and we saw as much as there was to see.

The College takes great pride in its Library. In its collection of books about Judaism, it far exceeds the number of books on that subject in the Library of Congress. Mr. Herbert Zafren, Librarian at HUC, led us through the rare books room where we spent a long time looking through many rare and ancient volumes, some dating as far back as the sixteenth century. These books have been carefully preserved. We examined several books which were especially interesting landmarks of Jewish culture. The architecture of the library building left an ever-lasting impression on our minds. The beautiful furnishings of the library make it a very pleasant place in which to study.

From the tour of the buildings, we joined Dr. Samuel Cohon, Professor of Theology, for an informal discussion about the rabbinate and the College. We sat on the spacious lawn which surrounds the buildings. Cincinnati is a city of hills; Hebrew Union College sits on top of one of these hills. The lawn stretches downward in front of the College for a long distance to the street. Behind us, a number of the students were playing baseball. Meanwhile, we were asking Dr. Cohon several questions which were on our minds. It was there again, that we observed the down-to-earthness of the students and faculty of HUC. Quite often during the trip we could not help but comment on the friendliness of everyone.

Many of us used the next hour and a half of free time to take advantage of the athletic facilities at the school. Others took the opportunity to tour the city. Still others spoke with the rabbis about the possibility of entering the College.

After supper, a house party was planned for the boys. Ruth Stein, NFTY National Board member from the Ohio Valley Federation of Temple Youth was the hostess. Girls from one

of the youth groups were present to make the party a successful social affair.

On Sunday morning, after breakfast, the boys met again with Bernard Martin and one or two other students for a summary session. At this time the duties of the rabbi were discussed. The boys were greatly concerned with the varied role of the rabbi both inside and outside of the temple. A discussion of this type with someone who will assume the position of a rabbi within a few months does an effective job of making one be aware of the significance and importance of the Reform rabbi. Above all, an understanding of the process through which a rabbi must go, creates in the observer a feeling of admiration and satisfaction for the foresightedness which results in the complete, well-rounded program or curriculum for the rabbinic student at Hebrew Union College.

Sunday afternoon, we ate dinner at a restaurant in downtown Cincinnati and then proceeded to the Temple which has become a memorial to Isaac Mayer Wise, the Plum Street Temple. Here Rabbi Wise occupied the pulpit for many years, and here the first classes of the Hebrew Union College were held. The colorful interior of the Temple with its 1700 lights was an unusual spectacle. Our visit to this Temple constituted the climax of the pilgrimage.

A trip of this type, although it is short in length, is rich in memory. Like visiting any impressive monument, one cannot avoid a feeling of veneration towards the principles for which the monument stands. The Hebrew Union College inspires more than a feeling of veneration. It is a monument to Reform Judaism, but, more than being a monument, it is a living monument producing, reproducing, generating the spirit of Reform Judaism. The students at Hebrew Union College, who made our visit so pleasant, will be the rabbis of tomorrow, carrying on the spirit of Judaism which finds expression in the College.

Similarly, we who visited the College over the week end felt the urge to do something in our own way which will make us better Jews. Some of us have expressed an interest in the rabbinate. Others feel that, just as important as having responsible rabbis, is the importance of having responsible laymen. "A Reform Jew must be an informed Jew" is a slogan which is often heard from the Sinai pulpit. This was the keynote of the trip. Informing the Jewish person about the mechanics of his religion is a necessary step in the development of an intelligent, understanding Jew.

Discussing the trip on the train coming home, we began to realize the full importance of the Jewish movement. Buildings, such as the Hebrew Union College, are not built in a vacuum; they are built on the foundation of ideas and ideals. For the boys who participated in the pilgrimage, another portion was added to their individual foundations for the building of Reform Judaism in the future.

THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE . . . CINCINNATI
JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION . . . NEW YORK

1835

Office of the Director of Admissions and Field Activities

CLIFTON AVENUE • CINCINNATI 20, OHIO

December 4, 1951

Rabbi Abba H. Silver
Temple Tifereth Israel
E. 105 and Ansel Rd.
Cleveland 6, Ohio

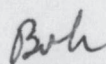
Dear Friend:

As part of our program for recruiting rabbinic leadership from youth of our Reform congregations, we are seeking to arrange for "pilgrimages" from key cities in the midwest to the Cincinnati campus. A student's reaction to this visit is enclosed.

While we shall ask Earl Stone to lend active support to this project, we hope it will have your endorsement in the temple and community at large.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,



Rabbi Robert L. Katz

RLK:n
Enc.

DIRECTOR OF ARCHIVES: JACOB R. MARCUS, PH. D.

Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

ARCHIVIST: SELMA STERN-TAEUBLER, PH. D.

CLIFTON AVENUE · CINCINNATI 20, OHIO

1803

February 14, 1952

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
East 105th Street at Ansel Road
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Abba:

75 I would greatly appreciate hearing from you in reply to my letter of November 5, 1951, in which I asked whether it would be possible for you to send us a contribution for the Archives from a special fund of the congregation.

Believe me, we shall all be deeply grateful to you for any help you can give us so that we may continue our important work.

With all good wishes, I am,

As ever,

JRM

JRM:SG

Hope you & Virginia are well.

February 19, 1952

Dr. Jacob R. Marcus
American Jewish Archives
Clifton Avenue
Cincinnati 20, Ohio

My dear Jake:

Thank you for your kind letter of February 14th. I am enclosing my personal contribution to the American Jewish Archives. We have no special fund at The Temple for such projects. I hope that before long we shall be able to establish such a fund here.

With warmest regards, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:er
Enc.

DIRECTOR OF ARCHIVES: JACOB R. MARCUS, PH. D.

Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

ARCHIVIST: SELMA STERN-TAEUBLER, PH. D.

CLIFTON AVENUE · CINCINNATI 20, OHIO

1803

February 21, 1952

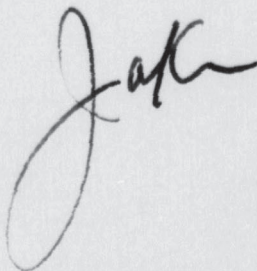
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
East 105th Street at Ansel Road
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Abba:

A thousand thanks for your kind letter of the 19th and for your contribution of \$25 to the Archives. I didn't intend for you to send your personal check. I hoped that your congregation had a special fund for requests such as ours. However, I appreciate your kindness all the more and I am deeply grateful for your interest and support.

With all good wishes and, again, with many thanks,
I am,

As ever,



JRM:SG

FACULTY LETTER



Jewish Institute of Religion

CINCINNATI, OHIO

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Volume 1 No. 3

March 1952

ARTICLES

Notes on Homiletics

The earnest Jewish preacher of today, especially if his ministry is centered in a small community, is apt to regard the preparation and delivery of his weekly sermon as a singularly trying task, for preaching is only part of his vocation as rabbi. He is the head of a school which specializes in a difficult type of instruction. He is a communal leader whose activities, even when wholly confined to his own congregation and city, consume much of his time. He is also shepherd of his flock. His pastoral duties are in inverse ratio to the size of the congregation he serves. His Sabbath sermon, if it is to win his own approval, calls for a greater reserve of intellectual strength than he can bring to it. And the result is unsatisfying. How much easier must have been the lot of his remote predecessor who had but to present a simple homily, and that to people most avid to receive it!

Little as we know of the life and labors of the early preachers, we shall not go far astray if we assume that they did not derive their livelihood solely from their homilies. Some of the best-known preachers were also the most learned men of their time, and the busiest communal leaders as well. Nor were their homilies quite as brief and simple as we find them. Some far-sighted editor mercifully raised the stature of the preacher by mercilessly reducing the size of his sermon. Nor were they encouraged to rest content with the mere framework of the homily. They were spurred to take utmost pains to couch their ideas in attractive form and so to master what they had prepared as to make the oral utterance most effective and impressive. Their teachers of homiletics, though no Greeks, insisted that the preacher who could not make his sermon as alluring to his audience as is the bride to the groom, had better maintain a dignified silence (Ex.r.41:6). They also sought to frustrate the facile confidence of the would-be extemporaneous preacher. God Himself, they declared, thought it necessary to prepare and master what He had to say, "He saw and rehearsed and verified and probed -- and then He spoke to man" (Ibid. 40:1).

Yet with all their painstaking efforts, the early teachers did not always succeed in keeping their audiences fully awake, nor, when wholly successful in this preliminary undertaking, did they always contrive to impress upon them the worthwhileness of the message. As conscientious a lecturer as Akiba, who once declined the honor to read the Torah portion from the scroll because he had not

been thoroughly prepared (Tanh. Jeth.15), found it expedient on one occasion to deliver himself of a startling observation, in order to dissipate the drowsiness of his listeners (Esth.r.1:8). And concerning the homily of as celebrated a preacher as Eleazar b. Azariah, a group of students who had gone to hear him could report nothing more interesting and enlightening than that they had heard nothing worthy of note (Mek. Bo 16).

The preacher in a modern American community, however strenuous the tasks he must perform, and however disappointing the outcome of his labors, has little reason to pine for a day that is past.

-- Israel Bettan

Reform and Haskalah

A chronological accident has thus far prevented the proper evaluation of the influence which the Eastern European Haskalah has had upon Reform Judaism. The standard histories of our movement were all written more than thirty years ago. Historians, like Dr. Philipson who was a partisan of our movement, devoted no more than a passing reference to the Haskalah (The Reform Movement in Judaism p. 563). As far as I am able to ascertain, Dr. Max Raisin is the only scholar who published something on the interrelation between Reform and the Haskalah (The Reform Movement as Reflected in Neo-Hebraic Literature, C.C.A.R. Yearbook XVI, p. 273; XXXII, p.60).

There were a number of reasons for this oversight. In the first place, at the time the standard history of Reform Judaism was written, the influence of Eastern Europeans and their descendants was hardly felt in the Reform Movement. The eyes of the American leaders were German-centered. Many of our Reform scholars were not fully acquainted with modern Hebrew literature and a number of texts were unavailable in America. Then too, Jewish scholars of the time were only beginning to study the Haskalah movement. The sources were not ready for a proper evaluation of its role. Moreover, the unsympathetic Jewish historians attempted to conceal as much as possible any evidences of the connection between the Hebrew revival and the reformist ideas of many of its authors. Most historians of Modern Hebrew Literature still tend to minimize the reformist elements in the works of Erter, Miseses, Gordon, Mendele, Lilienblum, and a host of lesser authors. Only Klausner has shown some appreciation for their role.

The complexion of the reform movement of the United States has been radically altered in the last three decades of our century. With the rapid increase in the number of rabbis and congregants whose families are of Eastern European origin, a new set of reformist ideas that can be traced back to the Haskalah and the Zionist periods of modern Hebrew literature has been grafted upon the original stock of Western European ideas. Our reform movement is no

longer German centered but is rather a synthesis of German, Eastern European and purely American Jewish ideas. Moreover, if American Jews wish to encourage the development of religious liberalism in Hebrew-speaking Israel, we shall be able to do so only if we utilize the reformist tradition that already exists in modern Hebrew literature. By showing a vital relationship between the Hebrew revival and a dynamic Judaism, we shall win half the battle for religious reform in Israel.

The time has come, therefore, to reappraise the Haskalah. More light must be thrown on the relationship of Geiger and other German reformers with the radical wing of the Galician Haskalah. The reformist works of men like Judah Lieb Miseses, Abraham Krochmal, Osias Schorr, Isaac Erter, Isaac Reggio, Judah L. Gordon, Moses Lilienblum, Reuben Braudes and others should be re-evaluated and integrated into the general picture of nineteenth century Jewry. Modern American Jewry has its roots in the social, economic, and religious revolution which swept Eastern Europe during the nineteenth century. A proper study of each facet of the literature produced by this community will give us a more accurate picture of the development of our own movement. It can serve also as a device for the spreading of our liberal theology to other Jewish communities.

WRHS

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

-- Ezra Spicehandler

Thoughts on Founder's Day

"The preservation of Judaism means first and foremost the preservation of its spirit in its pristine purity and beauty. This is accomplished not only by theoretical and abstract teachings, reasonings, expounding and convincing arguments and illustrations, it must be done with the aid of adequate forms, institutions, usages and performances, in which the spirit is manifested. They are both the educational means and the media of intercourse between the feeling and the reason, the emotional and the intellectual natures of man. Besides all that, they are the external signs and bonds of Israel's union as one congregation, the signs and tokens of this eternal fraternity, the organon of revelation and its custodian to the very end of its mission. Man, perhaps most men, can conceive the spirit only by the forms in which it appears, and to many others the form is the only comforter, and the only bond of union with Israel and the spirit of Judaism. Wherever the ancient, inherited, established and accepted forms and institutions, usages and performances are adequate to reach their end and fulfill their aim, it is our duty to guard and sanctify, to expound and to recommend them by words and deeds. Wherever the means are no longer adequate to the end, it is no less our duty to replace them by new and proper means.

--From the Opening Address, C.C.A.R. (1890)
by Isaac Mayer Wise

"The chief office of the minister, I take it, is not to represent the view of the congregation, but to proclaim the truth as he sees it. How can he serve a congregation as a teacher save as he quickens the minds of his hearers by the vitality and independence of his utterances? A free pulpit, worthily filled, must command respect and influence; a pulpit that is not free, howsoever filled, is sure to be without potency or honor.

"In the pursuit of the duties of his office, the minister may from time to time be under the necessity of giving expression to views at variance with the views of some or even many members of the congregation. Far from such difference proving the pulpit to be wrong, it may be and ofttimes is found to signify that the pulpit has done its duty in calling evil evil and good good, in abhorring the moral wrong of putting light for darkness and darkness for light."

-- From a sermon delivered by
Dr. Stephen S. Wise

R E S P O N S A

Question: "We just don't know what to do about the kids...We'll raise them in Jewish and Christian traditions. What's wrong with that? Tell us, please, what could hurt them by raising them in both groups and letting them decide which to follow?"

Comment: The question seems to indicate not a desire to enrich the children's religious education but to escape from Jewish loyalty. On the surface it appears liberal to say, "We'll raise our children in both Jewish and Christian tradition and let them decide which to follow." In actuality, it is an evasion of parental responsibility to identify their children with their spiritual heritage. Would parents translate the same idea into political terms and say, "We'll bring up our children simultaneously as Englishmen, Germans or Russians and Americans and let them decide which to follow?" Such liberalism would defeat itself and create confusion in the minds of the young.

Religion is not merely a set of ideas to be taught, but a way of life with which to identify oneself. It is essentially loyalty to sacred values, forming the core of the spiritual life. To raise children in a particular religious tradition means to make them part of a religious community, and to initiate them with its history and traditions, with the observing of holydays, and modes of worship, aswell as teaching them ethical ideals and beliefs. To attempt to raise them in two differing religious traditions - amounts to keeping them away from wholehearted integration into either and thus undermining their religious development. A plant cannot grow simultaneously in two soils and climates.

-- Samuel S. Cohon

Comment: From a psychological point of view on the above question, certain features of these parents are revealed in the very nature of the question raised. Parental insecurity, indecisiveness and associated anxieties are suggested in the statements: "We just don't know what to do about the kids ... What's wrong with that ... What could hurt them (the children)?" Here are indicated doubts about the parent-child relationships, a resolution of which is sought by pseudo-liberal and intellectualistic attitudes.

In actuality, a mature parent, self-respecting and self-confident, recognizes his capacity to guide his children as well as their need for emotional security in belonging to a particular cultural and religious group. The emotionally secure Jewish parent can teach, through the example of his own active participation in Judaism, that he is not shut off from his fellow men but rather has a modus vivendi for effective contact with them.

-- Henry D. Lederer

Question: "I would be very grateful if you would advise me concerning the use of carillon music in a proposed Temple Tower. Those who have it in mind are thinking in terms of a Memorial Tower from which would be played at Festival times, hymns out of the Jewish background."

Answer: The carillon is but a mechanical device to draw elaborate tones from the play on bells, and of the origin and use of bells some interesting and extensive studies have been made (A. Gatty: The Bell, Its Origin, History and Uses; G.S. Tyack: A Book About Bells).

Some students of the subject are inclined to trace the origin of bells to sheer superstition. It was thought, they hold, that the sound of bells had the magic power to safeguard against demons and other evil influences. They further claim that we may discern vestiges of that superstition in the uses and treatment of bells all through the Middle Ages.

But whatever the origin and early uses of bells, certain it is that from the Sixth Century to the present day bells have been closely associated with the Church and its worship. Even the Protestant Reformation, which put an end to many things it regarded as unneeded appendages to Christian worship, carefully avoided laying hands on the popular church bells. Today the ringing of bells is a preliminary to prayer in Protestant as in Catholic churches. In the Church of England, the clergy is required by canon law to toll a bell before the daily service. Bells are as indigenous to worship in the church as is the Shofar to the service in the synagogue.

-- Israel Bettan

B O O K N O T E S

Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament. Edited
by James B. Pritchard. Princeton 1950. \$15.00.

James B. Pritchard has edited, for Princeton University, a comprehensive collection of the ancient texts which illustrate and explain the Bible. All the translations are by authorities in their respective fields. The translators have introduced their texts with summaries and evaluations, and have added cross-references to the Bible and to other literature.

The volume now takes the place of Gressmann's Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum alten Testament, or of Barton's more popularized Archaeology and the Bible. It is well indexed and easy to refer to, as well as being more authoritative and reliable than any previous collection of similar scope.

The work is divided principally on the basis of literary types (Mythology, Legal Texts, Historical Texts, Rituals and Incantations, Hymns and Prayers, Wisdom Literature, etc.). Within each division, the materials from the various Near Eastern cultures have been collected. The First Section, for example, includes the well-known Creation Epic and Flood Epic of the Akkadians, together with less well-known creation myths and parallel material from Egypt, Sumeria, and other sources. The remaining sections of the book contain some material which has been readily available hitherto (the Code of Hammurapi, the Egyptian Hymns to the Sun, etc.), but also many less popularized but equally valuable and revealing sources.

For a religious liberal who believes that revelation is the process whereby man strives to discover God, a work such as this is a necessary pre-requisite for a complete appreciation of the Bible. The old documents not only help to show what an obscure biblical text intended to say, they reveal also how the Bible succeeded in advancing beyond its environment and embodied in its laws and legends the finer insights of Israelite civilization. The process, of course, did not stop with the Bible, but was continued in rabbinic and later times.

To take one example in some detail: it is well known how the early Pharisees reinterpreted the law of retaliation. The biblical principle of "an eye for an eye" evidently meant that one should do to the criminal that which he did or intended to do to his victim. The rabbis, on the other hand, interpreted the principle to mean that the guilty party must make monetary compensation for the damage done.

It is not well known, however, that the Biblical law had already progressed far beyond the legal systems of the surrounding civilizations. Babylonia knew of a strictly mechanical implementation of the lex talionis. If a builder constructed a house for a man, and the house collapsed and killed the owner of the house, then the life of the builder was forfeit in exchange. On the other hand, if only the son of the owner was killed in the accident, then it was enough that the son of the builder be put to death. (page 175, paragraphs 229, 230). In Assyria, if a man struck another man's wife and caused a miscarriage, the punishment was strictly retaliatory; his own wife was struck in the same way; he compensated for the lost fetus with a life, -- that of his own child (p. 184, paragraph 850).

In biblical law, the principle of retaliation is not carried to this length. A man's wife and children are not so much his chattel that he can dispose of their lives for injuries which he inflicts on others (Ex. 21:22 ff.) The primitive lex talionis is still in force. But the life which is forfeit can be only that of the person who is himself responsible for the crime.

Such differences are apparent even in a cursory reading of the sources presented in Pritchard's work. The Babylonian distinction between "seignior" and "peasant" is unknown to the Bible. The Bible still recognizes slavery, but at least all free men have the same rights before the law. Moreover, even in recognizing the institution of slavery, only the Bible has the remarkable law: Thou shalt not deliver to his master a slave who escapes unto thee from his master (Deut. 23:16).

The Bible is evidently a product of its environment; it has not outgrown all the weaknesses of its environment. But from the earliest times new insights are perceptible. It is here that the specific contribution of Israel may be studied.

So much concerning the prosaic legal prescriptions of the Bible, and their Near-Eastern parallels. When biblical law passes into poetry (e.g. Lev. 19) even the possibility of comparison disappears.

WRHS

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVE

Hillel A. Fine

The Brandeis Sabbath Evening Service for Cantor and Congregational Singing, and Organ. By Max Helfman: Brandeis Youth Foundation, 1951.

This represents another attempt to write a service for Cantor and congregational singing. The trend was started in Europe and has been transplanted here by such experienced composers as Jacob Weinberg, A. W. Binder, and now by Helfman. Instead of Kabbalath Shabbath, he uses Minkowski's composition of Bialik's famous Sabbath poem, Hachamah merosh (without giving the composer's name). A rather conventional L'Chah Dodi follows. The Bor'chu is a splendid piece for a Cantor and really introduces the Sabbath atmosphere. Of the ensuing numbers, the Mi Chomocho l, the V'Shomru and the Vay'chulu are good, clean arrangements of the traditional tunes and therefore recommendable. Altogether, Helfman's congregational Service is another laudable contribution towards a crystallization of Minhag America.

-- Eric Werner

The Burden of Egypt: An Interpretation of Ancient Egyptian Culture. By John A. Wilson: The University of Chicago Press. 1951. 73 illustrations, \$6.00.

The kind of Biblical criticism which was current during the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century and the first quarter of the Twentieth left the historical reliability of many parts of the Bible in pretty bad shape. Thus Ezra never lived; the Tabernacle of the Wilderness was really the product of the imagination of the

priestly circles in the Fifth Century, B.C.E.; the Book of Ezekiel was a pseudepigraph of about 250 B.C.E.; Joshua had very little to do with the conquest of Canaan; and monotheism, if the Israelites of the period of Moses really knew of it, was only a concept taken directly from the circles of the Fourteenth Century Egyptian king Akhenaton (Amenhotep IV, about 1380 - 1362 B.C.E.).

No one was more responsible for the last-mentioned opinion becoming popular, among scholars and laymen alike, than the great Egyptologist at the University of Chicago and head of its justly famed Oriental Institute, James H. Breasted ...

...John A. Wilson is Breasted's successor in Egyptology at Chicago and was, for ten years, director of the Oriental Institute. For the past quarter of a century he has been active in digging up the culture of Egypt's past and in interpreting its written and unwritten remains ... He first indicated his disagreement with Breasted's view in his notable chapters (II - IV) on Egypt in The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man 225, where the term monotheism in the Mosaic sense was not associated with Akhenaton. However, in his Burden of Egypt, Wilson has come out unequivocally with his own interpretation of the Egyptian data. "The most important observation about (Akhenaton's) Amarna religion is that there were two gods central to the faith, and not one. Akh-en-Aton and his family worshipped the Aton, and everybody else worshipped Akh-en-Aton as a god ... It must be emphasized that the Aton faith had no penetration below the level of the royal family as an effective religious expression ... Two important questions face us. Was this monotheism? -- If so was it the world's first ancestral monotheism -- and did it come down to us through the Hebrews? Our own answer to each question is in the negative ... it may be stated flatly that the mechanism of transmission from the faith of Akh-en-Aton to the monotheism of Moses is not apparent." (pp. 221 ff.)

In reality Atonism was but the theological expression of an economic and political element in the Egyptian ruling class which came to power in the New Kingdom. It is an interesting fact that probably the best analysis of how this bureaucratic group came into being is that of Breasted (in the Cambridge Ancient History) but Breasted was too busy finding a pre-Mosaic monotheism in Egypt to see the Aton worship of Akhenaton in its proper historical perspective. No person who is interested in history in general and in the ancient Near East in particular can afford to neglect this well thought out, stimulating and interestingly written book.

-- Harry M. Orlinsky

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June 16, 1952

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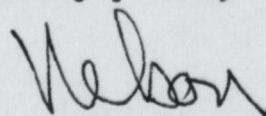
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It was one of the most satisfying rewards of my Presidency to be able to ordain Dan and have you present to deliver your beautiful Commencement address at the same time. We are looking forward to publishing the manuscript, for the prompt sending of which I am grateful to you.

With very best regards to you and Virginia and best wishes for a very pleasant summer, I remain, as ever,

Sincerely yours,



Nelson Glueck