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A champion of toleration - Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 1929.

"A CHAMPION OF TOLERATION.--

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING."

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER,

THE TEMPLE, SUNDAY MORNING,

JANUARY 27, 1929, CLEVELAND, O.



AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES



JOSEPH T. KRAUS
Shorthand
Reporter
CLEVELAND

On the 22nd of this month there occurred the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, one of Germany's great men of letters, one of mankind's great champions of toleration, one of Israel's great friends. We have had many enemies during our long and checkered career, who, out of hatred of us and our race, of our religion or of our economic status, made life intolerable for our people. We had a few friends, who, out of love of God and of mankind, out of a sense of justice and fairness, sought to make life a little more tolerable for us.

One of the staunchest of these friends, all too few in number; one of the most influential, one of the most disinterested, was this self-same Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Lessing has a vast significance for Germany, and has an equally vast significance for Israel. For Germany Lessing marks the dawn of a new day in its art and literature. He established a new canon of criticism for German art and letters; he gave a new direction to German creative literature; he molded the modern German drama.

Lessing has been called the "father of German criticism." He emancipated the German drama from its traditional enslavement to the classic French school, and he taught Germany to appreciate the glories of the

Greek drama from Shakespeare. Perhaps it was Lessing who made Germany the greatest Shakespeare loving country in the world next to England. Lessing's immortal "Laocoon," which is an inquiry into the principles of art and criticism, set in motion a new esthetic movement in Germany, paved the way for Goethe and Schiller, and its influence reached beyond the boundaries of Germany. Thus Goethe said of this work of Lessing's: "One must be a youth in order to realize the effect produced upon us by Lessing's 'Laocoon' which transported us from the ken of miserable observation into the very fields of thought." And the Englishman Macauley said that the reading of Laocoon formed an epoch in his mental history. And similarly his other great critical writings,--his "Ausgewählte Prosa und Briefe," and his "Hamburgische Dramaturgie" were epoch making in German literary history.

But Lessing was more than an art critic and more than an artist. He was a supreme humanist, one of the first among moderns. Lessing's complete critical apparatus, his entire critical code, derived from a fundamental, intellectual honesty, and from a great longing for spiritual and intellectual freedom. Lessing hated sham and hypocrisy and dogmatism and fanaticism. He loved truth, and with a passionate intensity he sought for truth, not only in art, poetry, sculpture, painting, but in every sphere or department of human life,--in politics, in religion, in the social contacts and relationships among men.

He was a rationalist in the finest sense of the word. He sought to apply the canon of reason and reasonableness to all human relationships. Thus he said of truth that it is far more important to seek truth than to have truth; "not the truth which a man possesses," said Lessing, "or believes himself to possess, but the sincere attempt which he has made to reach the truth constitutes his work; for not through possession of truth but through inquiry after truth are developed those powers in which his ever increasing perfection consists. Possession makes the mind stagnant, negative, proud." Listen to this: "If God held in His right hand all truth, and in His left hand only the ever active impulse to search for truth, even with the condition that I must forever urge, and said to me, 'Choose,' I should humbly bow before his left hand and say, 'Father, give. Pure thought belongs to Thee alone.'"

Because of his love for truth and because of his great reverence for the processes of a free human intellect, Lessing became one of the first champions in Germany of the right of the intellect to inquire, to search, to express itself freely; and he insisted at a time when it was dangerous to insist; that not even the sphere of religion and Bible was immune from the searching and questing intellect of man. Lessing accordingly became one of the first of the modern Biblical critics of Germany, and made some very significant contributions about science.

Lessing, although the son of a Lutheran

clergyman, and himself destined for the Protestant ministry, Lessing dared to speak at a time when it was dangerous to speak of it. He dared to speak of Jesus the man in place of Christ the God, and he presented an historical picture of Jesus the man, the teacher, which any modern religionist in the Christian world can accept; and he also championed, as did his French contemporaries of the liberal tendencies of the day, the rights of man as against the state; the rights of the individual as against the tyranny and the exploitation of the state. He gave priority in all things to man. The organization, the institution, the state, were agencies called into existence to serve the basic needs of the individual, and his concern and his interests are primary.

Thus he said in one of his critical letters: "States unite men that through and in their union every individual may better and more surely enjoy his share of welfare. The total of the welfare of all its members is the welfare of the state. Besides this there is none. Every other kind of welfare of the state whereby individuals suffer or must suffer, is a cloak for tyranny; as if nature could have intended the welfare of an abstract idea, the state, the Fatherland, and the like, rather than that of each individual."

I give you this background of Lessing's mentality so that you may understand how Lessing came to be the great champion of the Jews. It was not accidental

and it was not sporadic, and he didn't come to it out of a sense of pity. It was his whole life's philosophy, his complete spiritual motivation to interest himself in the life of the Jew, to seek to understand them, to welcome such a friendship of an outstanding Jew like that of Moses Mendelssohn, and who championed their cause when opportunity presented itself.

Lessing met Moses Mendelssohn in 1754, when he was twenty-five years old; but seven years prior to that time he had already written his first play about Jews, a play called "The Jew," in which perhaps for the first time in German literature a Jew is represented as a human being, possessing noble qualities. He was severely criticized by his contemporaries for trying to present a Jew in the preposterous role of a human being, and Lessing was compelled to answer his critics for committing such a heresy.

He met Moses Mendelssohn, and there sprang up between these two choice and rare spirits of that century a beautiful and ennobling and a lifelong friendship; and Mendelssohn loved this young German, free, proud, brilliant, charming, tolerant; and Lessing loved this deformed little Jew who spoke like an angel, this hunchback man who, when he came to Berlin at the age of fifteen or sixteen, could not speak a word of German, but who at the age of thirty was writing the finest German style in the whole of Germany,--this Jewish Socrates, as he was called.

And Lessing's contact with Moses Mendelssohn

deepened his understanding of Jewish life and of Jewish character, and all that he learned and all that he profited from this fellowship, companionship with Moses Mendelssohn, he poured into his great immortal drama, "Nathan the Wise."

"Nathan the Wise" is a dramatic poem of five acts, and the hero, Nathan, is clearly modeled after Moses Mendelssohn. "Nathan the Wise" established for all time Lessing's claim to fame in the literary world, but far more than that, it has still greater significance: it was a milestone in Jewish history. For the first time the cause of Israel was championed, not by special pleaders, not by members of our own race begging for a concession here or there, but by a non-Jew, a great artist, a man who occupied a position of eminence in the world of German literature, and a man who championed the cause of Jewry not on the basis of pity but on the basis of fundamental human rights; on the basis of freedom and human equality.

"Nathan the Wise" may not be a great drama from the point of view of abstract literary creation. There are some works of literature that are great as art, and others that are great as social factors. Hamlet is a great work of art, quite regardless of any influence which it may have exerted or is exerting upon movements in life, in society. Other works of literature are great because of the tremendous influence which they exerted upon social tendencies; and Nathan the Wise is that type of a book.

You know the story. The story is a very

simple one. There lived in Jerusalem in the days of Saladin the Magnificent, during the period of the Crusades, a Jew by the name of Nathan, who was called "the Wise" because of his great wisdom. He was not only wise but good, generous, broadminded, and his fame extended from the Euphrates and the Tigris to the River Jordan. He was very rich, and he journeyed all over the Orient, and once on his return from one of his journeys to his home, he learned part of his house had been burned down, and that his beloved daughter had been rescued from the flames by a Knight Templar, a Christian warrior, one of the Crusaders who had been taken prisoner by the forces of Saladin and whose life had been spared because Saladin had detected in the Knight Templar some resemblance to his lost brother.

Nathan seeks out this Knight Templar in order to thank him for having saved his daughter, and in order to reward him. He is received with scant courtesy. The Knight Templar does not like Jews and does not hide this fact from Nathan. But Nathan the Wise soon wins over the heart of this young chivalrous Knight Templar by his wisdom, by his kindness, by his expressions of broadmindedness. Says Nathan to the Knight Templar: "Surely, there are good men born in every people; surely, we are not responsible for the race into which we are born. Can we not meet one another as men?"

Nathan's graciousness is irresistible, and the Knight Templar becomes a friend of Nathan's. He visits

Nathan's home; he falls in love with his daughter; he wishes to marry this Jewess. But Nathan, on learning the name of this Knight Templar, receives the proffer with coolness, which the Knight Templar cannot understand.

In the meantime Saladin the Magnificent, who spent his money lavishly, so that he is constantly in need of replenishing his treasury, hears of this rich man, this rich Jew Nathan, and decides to summon him. Saladin's sister, knowing from reports that Nathan is not in the habit of lending money, suggests to Saladin that he might compel Nathan to lend him money by trapping him, by embarrassing him with questions.

Nathan appears before Saladin, and Saladin, in order to entrap Nathan, puts to him bluntly this question: "Which religion do you regard as the best?" If Nathan is to answer this question at all, he can answer it in one of three ways: he could say Judaism. In that case Saladin the Mussulman, Saladin the Mohammedan, would overwhelm him then with insults for being so arrogant. Or he could say Christianity or Mohammedanism. In that case Saladin would ask him why, then, does he not accept either of those religions. But Nathan the Wise replies in that famous parable of the three rings, of which I shall speak in a moment. And Saladin is so impressed by Nathan's wisdom and keenness of intellect and broadness of mind, that he invites his friendship; he wants to be friend with this Jew because, he says, "I have never wanted the same kind of

bark to grow upon every tree in my domain."

While this is going on, a Christian servant in the house of Nathan, Daja by name, reveals to the Knight Templar that Nathan's daughter is not his daughter at all but an adopted daughter, and that she is no Jewess at all but a Christian whom Nathan had reared as a Jew. When the Knight Templar hears of it he is terribly angered. It was a crime punishable by death for a Jew to rear a Christian child as a Jew; and the Knight Templar at once goes to the Christian patriarch of Jerusalem to consult him, and presents this problem to him; and the only miserable character in the play is this Christian patriarch, a man who would stoop to any felony, a bigot, an intolerant person, who, as soon as he hears of this conjectural person that is put to him by the Knight Templar, promptly replies, "Burn him! Take him to the stake!" When the Knight Templar asks of him, "What if this child would have perished if it were not for this Jew?" "That matters not at all," said the patriarch, "burn him, nevertheless." "What if this Jew did not raise this child to be a Christian but raised him or her in no faith at all?" "Burn him!" says the patriarch, "for having dared to raise one an infidel."

The Knight Templar is disgusted with the spokesman of his religion, and when he appears next before Saladin--for Saladin is interested in this young man because of his close resemblance to his lost brother--he blurts out

this fact about Nathan and his adopted daughter. Saladin is not much interested in the religious angle of it; he is interested in helping this young man because he likes him, and he decides to intervene to persuade Nathan to marry his adopted daughter to this Knight Templar. But Nathan in the meantime investigates the history of this Knight Templar and finds,--and this is the whole plot of the story,--that this Knight Templar is really a brother of his adopted daughter, and that both in turn are the children of Saladin's lost brother; for he had married in exile a daughter of some German prince, and these two were the offspring of that union.

Nathan loved this child which had been entrusted into his keeping at a terrible moment in his life. Eighteen years prior to the time when this drama is developing, his wife and his seven children had been killed, burned alive by Christian Crusaders, and when Nathan learned of it he swore eternal hatred of everything that was Christian; he was maddened by fury and anger, and it was just at that time that someone deposited into his keeping this little girl whose mother and father had died, and who needed protection and love; and Nathan looked upon this as a sign from Heaven that he was to requite love for hatred, kindness for brutality, and all the love which he had lavished upon his own seven children he now lavished upon this little girl, and he raised her not into a narrow Jewish loyalty; he did not want to wean her away from the

faith of her fathers, but into a broad, ethical life.

The significance about this drama, of course, is the character of this Jew. It is the story of the three rings. I want to read to you that story, one of the great stories of literature, because in the form of a parable it condenses the whole philosophy of religious liberalism.

Saladin had just asked Nathan which religion is the best, and Nathan replies;

"In yore antiquity, there dwelt in Eastern lands
A man who had received from a beloved hand
A ring of priceless worth. An opal was the stone
It bore, which shot a hundred fair and varied hues
Around, and had the mystic power to render dear,
Alike to God and man, whoever wore the ring
With perfect faith."

In other words, the man who had the ring was by virtue of that ring beloved by God and men alike.

"What wonder, then, that Eastern man would never
Lay it off, and further made a fixed and firm resolve
That it should bide forever with his rest.
For this he left it to his dearest son, having
A stringent clause that he in turn should leave it
To the son who ^{is} loved the most; and that in every
Age the dearest son, without respect to seniority,
By virtue of the ring alone, should be the lord
Of all the house. Sultan, I ask if you have marked

me well?

"Aye, aye," said the Sultan. "Proceed."

"And this ring came down from sire to son
Till it reached a father of three sons,
Each equally obedient to his will, and whom
Accordingly he was constrained to love alike.
And yet from time to time, when either the one
Or the other chanced to be alone with him, and
His overflowing heart was not divided by the other two,
The one who stood beside him still would seem most
Worthy of the ring; and thus it chanced that he
By kindness had been led to promise it in turn
To each of them."

He loved his three sons alike, and whenever
one would be with him alone, he thought he loved him most,
and he promised that one ring to each of his three sons.

"This state of matters lasted while it could,
But bye-and-bye he happened to think of death,
And then this worthy sire was sore perplexed.
He could not brook the thought of breaking faith
With two dear ones to whom he pledged his word.
But now, what was he to do? He straightway sends
In secret to a skilled artificer, and charges him
To make two other rings precisely like the first
At any cost. This the artificer contrives to do.
And when at last he brings him all three rings,

Even the father can't say which is which.
With joyful heart he summons then his sons,
But singly and apart; bestows on each his special
Blessing and his rings--and dies.
You hear me, Sultan?

"Ay! I hear. Come, make an end of it."

Saladin is getting nervous.

"I am at the end," says the Sultan. "What is to
Follow may be well conceived. Scarce was the father
Dead, each separate son comes with his ring,
And claims to be the lord of all his kindred.
They investigate, recriminate and wrangle,
All in vain. Which was the true, original, genuine
Ring was undemonstrable then, almost as much as now
By us is undemonstrable the one true faith."

"Saladin: Is that your answer to my question?"

"Nathan: No! It is only meant to serve
As my excuse for a better answer. How could I here
Presume to pronounce distinction between the rings
The father purposely designed to be quite
Indistinguishable.

"Rings! Forsooth!" said Saladin. "Trifle
not with me thus. I should have thought the three
Religions which I have named to you were easily to

Distinguish, if alone by difference of dress,
Food and Drink."

"Ah," says Nathan, but not these
Fundamental differences. Are they not founded
All on history, traditional or written?
History must still be taken upon trust alone.
And who are they who best may claim our trust?
Surely, our people of whose blood we are,
Who from our infancy have proved their love,
And never have deceived us, save perchance when
Kindly guile was wholesomer for us than truth itself.
Why should I less rely upon my ancestors than
You on yours? Or can I ask of you to give the lie
To your forefathers merely to agree with mine?
And all that I have said applies to Christians as well.
Is this not so?"

"Saladan: (aside) Now by the living God,
This man is right. I must be silent."

"Nathan: Let us return now once more
To our rings. As I have said, the sons now sued
Each other. Each of them swore to the judge he
Had received the ring straight from his father's
Hand--as was the fact--after he had long enjoyed
His father's promise to bequeath the ring to him
Alone--which also was the truth. Each vowed the

Father never could have proved so false to him,
And rather than believe a thing like this from
Such a loving sire, he was constrained, however
Loath he was to think unkindly of his brethern,
To charge them both with some nefarious trick."

Saladin by this time is very much intrigued.

"Saladan: Well, and the judge? I am
Curious now to hear what you will make him say.
Tell on!"

"Nathan: The judge pronounced: unless you
Bring your sire and place him before the judgment
Seat, I must dismiss your suit. Think you I am here
For solving riddles? Or perhaps you will wait until
The genuine ring declares itself. You said the
Genuine ring contains the magic power to make its
Wearer loved more than all else in sight of God and
Man. This must decide the case. The spurious ring
Will not do this. So, then, which of you is by
The other two most loved? What! no reply? Your
Rings would seem to work inwardly, not on external
Objects, since it seems each is enamored of himself
Alone. So then, all three of you have been deceived,
And are deceivers, too, and all three rings are
Spurious alike. The genuine ring is lost, most likely,
And to hide this loss and to supply its place, your
Father caused these three to be made up instead of it."

Because they hated one another was proof that none was in possession of the ring, because the true ring would make the one beloved by all.

"Bravo!" said the Sultan, "Bravo!"

And then the judge continued, says Nathan:

"Should you not relish my advice more than the Judgment I have now pronounced, in that case go. But my advice is this: (here the judge, having decided the case, gives them a piece of advice) Accept the case precisely as it stands. If each of you in truth received his ring straight from His father's hand, then each believes his own to be the true and genuine ring. Perhaps your father wished to terminate the tyranny of that especial Ring in his posterity. Of this be sure: he loved you all and loved you all alike; hence he was loath to injure two of you that he might favor one alone. Well, then, let each now rival his unbiased love, His love, so free from prejudice. Vie with each other in the generous strife to prove the virtues of the ring you wear. To this end let mild humility, hearty forbearance, true benevolence and resignation to the will of God come to your aid; and if in distant times the virtues of the genuine gem be found amid your children's children, they shall then, when many a thousand years have rolled away, be called once more before this judgment seat, where a wiser man

Than I shall sit, and give his version now begun.
Thus spake the modest judge."

Saladin said: "My God!

"O Saladin," says Nathan, "could you, too,
Be that wiser promised man?"

"Saladin (stepping forward and grasping
Nathan's hand): "Dust that I am, and nothing else.
Oh God!"

"NATHAN: What ails thee, Sultan?"

"Saladin: Nathan, a thousand years of
That wise judge are not yet past, nor is his
Judgment seat for Saladin. Now go, but be my friend."

There are four distinct ideas involved in
this beautiful story,--which, by the way, is not original
with Lessing. Lessing borrowed it from Boccaccio, and
Boccaccio borrowed it from other sources, and which in
turn is traced back to original Jewish sources. These
four ideas are, first, that the test of true religion is
conduct and character,--not profession, not creed. If
your religion will make you beloved by men; if your religion
will enable you so to live your life that men will love you
for the good you do and the service you render, then your
religion is a true religion.

It is not what is written in the creed that

makes a religion; it is what religious men do in their daily lives that counts. That seems to have been a new idea in the days of Lessing. Perhaps it is a new idea today; but here is this exposition of this tremendous, human conception of what religion is. And, secondly, that our creeds are matters of accident. We are born into them; we are born into our religion just as we are born into our race. We do not choose them, as a rule, and we are more or less suspicious of the person who goes about choosing a religion.

Religion is universal; creeds are accidental. The religion of good deeds, the religion of love of fellow-man, the religion of sacrificial loyalty,--that religion is universal to Jew and Christian and Mussulman, and on the basis of that religion they can meet and cooperate, vieing with one another in works of beneficence.

And again, as long as religions are engaged in competition and in rivalry with one another, as long as they are doing what the three brothers were doing,--sueing one another, denouncing one another, decrying one another, the true merit and worth of their respective religions cannot come to the surface; it is not given an opportunity to express itself. As long as they fight one another, all of their religions are lies.

And lastly, this great thought is conveyed by means of this parable: there is no supremacy of one religion over another. Each religion fits a distinct race

or a distinct epoch. The only supremacy which a religion can claim is the supremacy of service. If that religion makes its disciples and devotees more just, more loving, more peaceful, more tolerant than all other religions, that religion is ipso facto the supreme religion. It is no test of the truth of a religion to say that it has a billion worshippers, or that it is numerically the strongest. That is nothing. Quantity does not pertain to ideas. And it is no true test of a religion to say that its devotees are prosperous; that they are in the saddle physically, economically, socially; that they can build for themselves magnificent cathedrals and churches, while the disciples of the other religions live in poverty and are abused and are in contempt. The judgment of the world is not the judgment of truth.

The only test of supremacy in religion is what that religion is doing to the hearts and the souls of human beings; how it is molding character; how it is determining action; what goals has it set for men, and what impetus has it given men to follow through to those goals. This marvelous definition of religion Lessing gave the men of his day is still very pertinent today. We may still profit very greatly from this parable of Lessing's, shouted from the house tops and proclaimed in every assembly and gathering of human beings.

Israel joins the rest of mankind and all the free spirits of the earth today, in celebrating in joy, in

gratitude, the anniversary of the birth of this great,
free spirit of men, this spokesman of the better day, of
the greater brotherhood of men, of the more gracious
social order among men,--Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.

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Sermon 291

The TEMPLE BULLETIN



THE TEMPLE

East 105th St. and Ansel Rd.
CLEVELAND, OHIO

Abba Hillel Silver, D.D.
RABBI

Rabbi Leon I. Feuer
Minister of Religious Education

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 1929

RABBI SILVER

will speak on

**"A Champion of Toleration—
Gotthold Ephraim Lessing"**

Commemorating his two hundredth anniversary

The Sabbath Eve Service
5:30 to 6:10

The Sabbath Morning Service
11:00 to 12:00

The Temple Bulletin, published weekly from the middle of September to June, by Tifereth Israel Congregation, E. 105th Street at Ansel Road, Cleveland, Ohio. E. E. Wolf, Pres.; Emanuel Einstein, Treas.; Rabbi Leon I. Feuer, Editor. Subscription price, 50 cents per annum.

Entered as second-class matter, Dec. 11, 1925, at the Post office at Cleveland, Ohio, under the act of March 3, 1879.

Music for Sunday Morning, January 27th

Organ (10:15 A. M.)

Prelude

Prelude and Fugue in C Minor

.....Bach

CantileneFrydinger

Adoracion.....de Arbaolaza

Postlude

Finale in A.....Harris

Paul Allen Beymer

Anthem

To Zion's Heights.....Saminsky

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing

One of the greatest champions of toleration and Jewish equality was the great German poet and dramatist, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, lifelong friend of Moses Mendelssohn and author of the immortal drama, "Nathan the Wise". On January 22nd occurred the two hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Rabbi Silver will devote his address next week to Lessing as spokesman of human rights and human equality.

Broadcasting

The Temple will broadcast a Vesper Service, Sunday afternoon, January 27th, at 5:30 P. M., over radio station WJAY. Rabbi Silver will deliver an address at this service.

Dr. Vinson at the Temple

During Dr. Silver's absence from The Temple attending the Conven-

tion of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in San Francisco, Dr. Robert E. Vinson, President of Western Reserve University, will occupy the pulpit on Sunday, February 10th. His subject will be: "The Place of Religion in Higher Education".

Our Congregation is looking forward with eagerness to welcoming Dr. Vinson to its pulpit and to receive his message. We recall with great pleasure his last address before our Parent-Teachers body two years ago.

Last Week

During the past week Rabbi Silver addressed the Unity Club of the Unitarian Church of Cleveland on the theme, "What Judaism Owes to Christianity—What Christianity Owes to Judaism"; he delivered the commencement address at the graduation exercises of Glenville High School at the Masonic Hall; he visited the Jewish communities of York, Pa., and Youngstown, Ohio, and addressed the congregations there.

Temple Boys and Girls Away at School

The Temple would like to complete its list of the names of sons and daughters of Temple members who are attending out-of-town schools, colleges and universities. Rabbi Silver would like to keep in touch with them. If your son or daughter is away at school, will you please phone or write to The Temple, giving us the information?

Art Museum Program

The Temple Boy Choir, Paul Allen Beymer, director, and the Temple Junior Orchestra, Mrs. J. Singer, director, will give a program of Jewish music at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Saturday afternoon, January 26th, at 2:00 P. M.

Musicale Extraordinary



Beryl Rubinstein, Pianist

Marcel Salzinger, Baritone

Felix Eyle, Violinist

These three great artists will participate in the musical afternoon which the Temple Women's Association and the Temple Men's Club has planned for

Sunday, February 3rd, at 5:00 P. M.

The Musicale will be followed by a buffet supper at 6:00 P. M.

Dancing will follow the supper.

This is the second annual musicale of The Temple. The extraordinary success of the last one is a warrant for an even greater success this year. You are urged to make your reservations at once. Admission, including the buffet supper, is \$1.00 per person.

THE TEMPLE MONDAY EVENING LECTURE COURSE

presents

LOUIS LIPSKY

Monday Evening, January 28th, at 8 P. M. in Mahler Hall

"The Present Status of the Zionist Movement" will be the subject of Mr. Lipsky's address.

Mr. Lipsky is a leader in the Zionist Movement in America. As the President of the Zionist Organization of America, he is the official spokesman of the movement. In addition he brings to the discussion of his subject years of knowledge and experience gained from constant writing and laboring in behalf of the Zionist ideal. Mr. Lipsky is an eloquent and earnest speaker and always thorough in the discussion of his subject matter.

"THE DUMB MESSIAH"

A 3-act play depicting the expulsion of the Jews
from France

by

DAVID PINSKI

To be presented by

THE TEMPLE ALUMNI THEATRE GUILD

Tuesday Evening, Jan. 29, at 8:15 P. M. in Mahler Hall

Admission, 50 cents or Alumni Season Ticket

Temple Religious School

Report for the Week

The total enrollment, including the High School—1346.

Number of pupils, Kindergarten to 9th grade, inclusive—1203.

The average attendance for the week was 93%.

The following classes had 100% attendance: 2B, Miss Gup; 4D, Miss

Sugarman; 4F, Miss Bernstein; 5A, Mrs. David; 6C, Mrs. Wolf; 7C, Miss Suit; 8C, 8D, Miss Rosen; 8E, Miss Fink; 9D, Miss Krause; 9F, Miss Ruben.

1C, Mr. Kutash in the High School had 100% attendance.

Sunshine Fund

The collection of the Sunshine Fund amounted to \$32.63 for the week.

The Temple Wishes to Acknowledge with Thanks the Following Contributions:

To the Floral Fund

Ida Schwab Lazard and
Irma Schwab Messeri
Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Dettel-
bach
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Alt-
schul

In memory of father, Moses Schwab

In memory of Herbert Dettelbach

In memory of Rosa Kohn and Henrietta
Keller

To the Scholarship Fund

Mrs. Carol Levison
Mrs. Henry Einstein
Miss Flora Rohrheimer

In memory of Adolph Miller

In memory of Feist Strauss

In honor of the 60th wedding anniversary of
Mr. and Mrs. M. Printz

Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Gold-
berg

In honor of the 60th wedding anniversary of
Mr. and Mrs. M. Printz

Mrs. Berthold Auerbach

In memory of mother, Mrs. Caroline Eisen-
man

In Memoriam

We record with deep sorrow the death of EDITH L. WEGLEIN during the past week and extend the condolences of the Congregation to her bereaved family.

1. On Jan. 22 of this year, occurred 200th -

(a) Our history so full of enemies - and among our friends - Stauvols - disinfecting.

(b) He has his vast sign for German people. Equally for us.

(c) For Germany - herald a new day in art and literature. - (1) He gave new direction to German liter. (2) Fashioned a new canon of literary criticism (3) ^{and} revived the drama, modern Germany. He has been called, and rightly called, the Father of modern German literary criticism. - He emancipated the German drama from its enslavement to classical French school. He taught Germany the glories of Greek drama & of Shakespeare. - His immortal work, "Lacoon" which is an inquiry into the principles underlying art, & the criticism, art ^{has} ~~influenced~~ ^{led} ~~found~~ a new ~~school~~ aesthetic movement in Germany, paved way for Goethe & Schiller, and ^{it} ~~reached~~ ^{influenced} beyond the boundaries of Germany. (I note). And equally new his other critical studies: "Literaturbriefe" and "Hamburgische Dramaturgie" epoch-making.

(d) He was more than a critic, letter. He was more than an artist. He was a humanist - one of the first of the modernists. All of his criticism was derived from a fundamental ~~his~~ intellectual honesty, and spiritual freedom. He hated sham, hypocrisy, intolerance, dogmatism & fanaticism. And his critical analyses passed beyond the sphere of letters into life. He in every walk of life, in science, in art, in religion, in social life he sought Truth. To all things he applied standards of reason. He worshipped Truth. (I note).

1) He was led to champion the right, the intellect to free inquiry & expression.

2) Even religion & scriptures were not immune from man's critical faculty. Among post-modern critics

3) In a world of Chr. orthodoxy he dared to speak of the Myth

4) Championed right, Man as against State. (Just) He was not a

2. It was his gen. humanistic outlook which led him to champion cause of Jew, to seek to understand Jews, to welcome friendship of such an interesting Jew as M.M.

a) He met M. in 1754. But already in 1747 - he had written "The Jew" - first time in germ. ~~late~~ drawn. later that Jew represented as a noble human being. Criticized!

b) His friendship with M.: beautiful - lasting to both - and life-long. He loved this germ. Socrates, this deformed little Jew, who spoke like an angel - who at 16 could not speak a word, german ~~but~~ and at

c) deepened his sympathies, ~~and~~ and in (1779) wrote Nathan der Weise - a dram. poem in 5 acts, using M. as his inspiration for the leading character - Nathan.. It ~~made~~ ^{established} a claim to fame. It marked a milestone in J. history in Germany. For first time cause, Jew was being championed by a leading man, just ~~was~~ ^{rank}, a non-Jew, not on basis of pity, but on basis on liberalism, toleration and the rights of man.

3. It may not be great drama. Some lit. works are great in & by ess. - Hamlet, & others for influence they exert upon social progress. Such is Nathan -

1. Story -

2. The 3 Rings. (Read).

1. Lessons:
- (1) Test of True Religion - character & conduct.
 - (2) Cries an accident. Religion & good deeds universal.
 - (3) As long as they quarrel - truth & justice can be discovered.
 - (4) There is no supremacy in Rel. Each fitted for part. race & epoch - Supremacy in service.

Growth de "Laocorn"

"One must be a youth in order to realize the effect produced upon us by Lessing's 'Laocorn', which transported us from the region of miserable observation into the free fields of thought."

Macaulay said, that the reading of Laocorn proved an epoch in his mental history.

Champion of Truth.

Not the truth which a man possesses or believes himself to possess, but the sincere attempt which he has made to reach the truth, constitutes his worth. For not through the possession of truth, but through inquiry after truth, are developed those powers in which his ever increasing perfection consists. Possession makes the mind stagnant, inactive, proud. If God held in His right hand all truth, and in His left only the ever-active impulse to search for truth, even with the condition that I must forever err, and said to me: "Chose!" I should humbly bow before His left hand and say, "Father, give! For thought belongs to Thee alone."

State.

States unite men that through and in this union every individual may the better and more surely enjoy his share of welfare. The total of the welfare of all its members is the welfare of the state; besides this there is none. Every other kind of welfare, the state, whereby individual suffers and must suffer, is a cloak for tyranny.... As if nature could have intended the welfare of an abstract idea, State, Fatherland, and the like, rather than that, each individual

1. There was a Jew in Jerusalem - Wise - Gen - God - David - Nathan
2. On his return from one of his journeys he learned -
3. Had to thank him - ^{second time} - Nathan accepts him & wins him over - ^{Good men are produced in every land - they are to be used} - ^{we don't want to have a race - we want to have a people} - falls in love with Reba - wishes to marry her. Nathan is able to persuade. ~~He~~ on bearing name of Templar. Templar cannot understand why?
4. Marston, Saladin, David, and funds. He bears N's wealth - used for him. Is told N. does not bid. His note suggests a way of enlargement. N. - Sumner - What religion is best? - 3 Rings - Proves his wealth - Makes friend of Nathan - ^{never claimed that same (type) should grow in any tree} - Daya, Chr. ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~ward~~ ^{ward} of Reba, meanwhile reveals secret to Templar - Let a Jewess - but a Christian - Argued - goes to ^{stop to Villainy - photo of Saladin} ~~Patience~~ ^{bigoted} - ^{Burnt} ~~also~~ tells Saladin. Saladin who likes Templar has valuable brother - sends to ~~interfere~~ - Reba ~~remains~~ to palace.
6. Nathan ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~gave~~ ^{gave} - ~~because~~ ^{because} that Templar is brother of his adopted daughter. ^{adopted per why import & del} And that both are children of Saladin's brother. Happy reunion -

AN ABSTRACT OF THE ADDRESS
"A CHAMPION OF TOLERATION - GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING"

BY
RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER
AT
THE TEMPLE, JAN. 27th, 1929

The twenty-second of this month marked the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, one of the choicest spirits of Germany and one of the staunchest friends of Israel. Lessing was Germany's herald of a new day in art and literature. He influenced the course of German letters for generations. He fashioned a new canon of literary criticism and he molded the drama of nineteenth century Germany. His critical writings gave rise to a new aesthetic movement in Germany, paved the way for Goethe and Schiller and their influence reached beyond the boundaries of the Fatherland.

But Lessing was more than an artist. He was a humanist - one of the first of the modernists. All his criticism was derived from a fundamental intellectual honesty. He hated sham and dogmatism and intolerance. He championed the right of the intellect to free inquiry and expression. He asserted the right of critical investigation. Even in the field of religion he was among the first of modern Biblical critics. And in common with the liberal spirits of France, he arose in defence of the rights of Man as against the State.

His vast humanity and liberalism led him to a sympathetic understanding of Jewish life and to a glorious defence of the Jew at a time when such a defence was sorely needed. He became the close friend of Moses Mendelssohn, the outstanding Jew of Germany and their friendship was beautiful, enobling and enduring. Mendelssohn served as his model for the character of Nathan in his immortal drama, "Nathan The Wise."

For the first time the cause of the Jew was being championed by a literary man of first rank, a non-Jew, on the basis not of pity, but of liberalism and human equality. The parable of "The Three Rings" remains forever the classic vehicle for the expression of the great doctrines of religious toleration.

The test of true religion is not creed, but character and conduct. No religion can claim supremacy unless it is supreme in service and its disciples express in their conduct and their daily relations the ideals which their religion professes. Creeds are accidental, religion is universal. And on the basis of universal men of all creeds may join in fraternity and in cooperation. As long as religions quarrel with one another, they are all lies.

In place of Shakespear's "Merchant of Venice," Lessing's, "Nathan The Wise" ought to be placed in every school of the land.