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Can you live with yourself?, 1954.

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CAN YOU LIVE WITH YOURSELF?

January 17, 1954

This question which we proposed for discussion this morning may be put in two ways: Can you live by yourself? and Can you live with yourself? There is much to be said for living by yourself, not permanently of course, but for retreating from time to time from the world to yourself. The world is often too much with us - its clamor, its claims, its entanglements, its continuous tug and pull. Sometimes it is good to be alone to regain composure and perspective, take stock, and in quietude of soul and mind find rest and restoration.

Emerson said, " At times the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles. Friend, client, child, sickness, fear, want, charity, all knock at once at your door and say, 'Come out unto us.' Do not spill thy soul; do not all descend; keep thy state; stay at home in thine own heaven; come not for a moment into their facts, into their hubbub of conflicting appearances, but let in the light of thy law on their confusion."

Solitude is often a very good thing. It is in solitude that we develop ourselves spiritually, intellectually; it is in solitude that we develop our talents; it is in solitude that the great men of the ages receive their deep insights and their revelations.

Again, my dear friends, there is much to be said for living by yourselves in the sense of relying on yourself, trusting yourself, not taking your cue, always, from the opinions and the judgments of other people; to be able to stand alone in conviction or in the championing of some good cause, or in loyalty to some great principle; to be able to stand alone even there are not many other people with you - or any people, for that matter. That is a high virtue, indeed. (Hebrew *)

* In the place where there ^{are no} ~~are no~~ men you strive to be a man. We are inclined to rely too often and too much on others; on outside props, as it were. We are inclined to

go along with the mass, with the mob because we find a certain support and uplift in moving along with the current, as it were - with others. We are inclined to rely too much on the world's opinion of us; we desire the world's good opinion, its friendship, its approbation, and frequently we pay too high a price for it. We are inclined to rely too much on property, on possession, to sustain us - on external props. But to be able to live by ourselves, to stand alone without props, secure in our own truth, is to have the security of a fortress against all changes of fortune, to be inwardly secure. That is to live by yourself.

There are people who are fed up with the world, who are disgusted with the world, despair of the world. They would like to flee into isolation, frequently do, to be there by themselves free from the world's contamination, away from the world's hates, strife, bitterness, and disillusionment. The prophet Jeremiah experienced that feeling, although he did not yield to it, when he cried out in the bitterness of his soul (Hebrew) "Oh that I might find in the desert a wayfarer's lodge and that I might lead my people and go away for they are all a company of treacherous men!" He was perhaps the greatest of all the literary prophets. His soul was so with a sense of disillusionment of the failure of his mission ^{and} ~~that~~ his inability to convert his people to righteousness surrounded by their hate and distrust, he wanted to flee out into the desert to some wayfarer's lodge and be there by himself at least emancipated from the world's wickedness.

It is remarkable when you come to think of it how much of the religions of mankind is motivated by fear of life and the desire to run away from the hopelessness of living and from the evils of the world and to seek refuge in monasteries and hermitages, nunneries, places of isolation and seclusion. Men have always, in a sense, been afraid of life. There is much to make them afraid. There is much that is baffling and unknown in the world, much of evil and wrong, of pain and sorrow, of the things which overshadow their lives, and always, always the dread and ineluctable fact of death. Man was never quite equal to the tribulations of his life, never quite

able to master the forces which determined the course of his life. Man never could really understand himself, his world, his origin, his destiny; there are always these vast, impersonal forces about him, floods and storms, and draughts and earthquakes which frequently crushed or overwhelmed him or his beloved ones. There was always these destructive social forces above him which he could not control - wars and invasions and tyranny and oppression - which undermined his confidence and filled him with a deep sense of anxiety. And that was true not only of societies long ago in ancient time, not only of primitive community, but it is true in our own day. Our age has that same sense of deep, penetrating anxiety, insecurity, caused by the failure of science and education to give to the world peace and an ordered and secure way of life; the mood of our day has been a mood of pessimism, of apprehension. That has been true of many societies and many civilizations and many religions. The desire to run away from life into aloneness, into asceticism. You find that in Hinduism, which is the religion of hundreds of millions of people today and has been so for countless generations. The chief thought of Hinduism is to provide men with a way, called the sans sara, of how to escape the relentless wheel of life. And the religion advises its devotees to divide their lives into four periods, as it were: the first is the period of the student, of early training; second is the period of the householder when a man marries and builds a home, a family, and thereafter comes a third period when a man shall become an anchorite and abandon his home and his family and repair to some forest and lead the solitary life of a hermit; culminating the fourth period when a man no longer lives any social life whatsoever, lives without fire, without any abode, on roots of trees, possessing only a bowl and a water jug, begging food, utterly indifferent, utterly detached, letting his life and the machinery of his life run down. Get away from life - that's the ideal which Hinduism holds out for its followers, and Budahism, which has its hundreds of millions of followers in the world and which, in a way, was a reform movement in Hinduism, likewise did not depart from this general trend. Budahism

established monasteries, preached the ideal of poverty and celibacy. We are told that in the sixth century of the common era there were two million Budahist monks in China alone.

And that, my good friends, is true not only of the religions of Asia, but when we speak of the religions of Greece, for example, we are inclined to think of the Greeks in terms of "sweetness and light", of the philosophy of the "golden means" - nothing to excess. But when you come to study the popular religions of the Greeks, you find in them the same fear and despair of life and the same strong asceticism that you find in these religions of the Orient. Plato himself, the wisest of the Greek philosophers, said a wise man should detach himself from all social pursuits and from all demands of community life and live in intellectual isolation.

You know, of course, of the Cynics among the Greeks, of their contempt for life, their indifference to all external things, their avoidance of all human society and their desire to be alone as a means of emancipating themselves from all claims of life and of the things of life.

The Stoics likewise were characterized by a sort of melancholy austerity. They had no strong social consciousness, no faith in human progress. That was true also of early Christianity which was other-worldly and ascetic in trend. Christianity came to build monasteries and nunneries all over the world. And even in Islam the religion of the Mohammedans there arose immediately after the establishment of the faith within Islam the movement of the Sufis, the monks who wore the coarse garments, and they subjected themselves to the discipline of fasting and poverty, many of whom dwelt in caves, deserts, and cemeteries. It is remarkable when you come to think of it how much of the religions of mankind is permeated with this sense of wanting to be away from the things of life, from the institutions of life, almost from life itself.

Judaism alone taught men not to run away from life. Life is good, and the supreme gift of God. And the way to reach God is not through fasting or

self-flagellation but through good deeds. "Rend your hearts and not your garments." The spiritual leaders of Judaism, the prophets, the sages, the rabbis were not mendicants, not monks, not friars, who with staff and bowl walked around begging for food. They did not live in penitential forests. They lived among their people, worked with their people and gave them industry and trade and commerce and artisanship and craftsmanship. They did not run away from life or the fear of its temptations, and the principle of theirs was (Hebrew) "Do not separate yourself from the community." It is within the community that a man must fulfill his life and his destiny and attain the highest form of spiritual protection.

But it is good, from time to time, to be alone with yourself, your own memories, your own hopes, your own God. It is good to be able to live by yourself from time to time, not permanently. (Hebrew) It is not good for a man to be alone as a fixed and permanent regiment of life. In the Book of Proverbs we read, "Two are better than one because if they fall, one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone, When he falls and has no one to lift him up." There is an old Italian proverb, "Solitude is intolerable, even in Paradise."

But that is one way of putting the question Can you Live by Yourself? It is good if you are able to answer the question in the affirmative. It is quite another thing to ask the question, Can you Live with Yourself? Whether alone or in company? Do you respect yourself sufficiently to want to be at home with yourself? Have you earned enough self-esteem to be proud of your own company? Or are you deep down in yourself where no one can see really ashamed of yourself - ashamed for not being what you let on people to believe you are - for being a fraud, an imposter, for not doing what you ought to be doing and what you know you ought to be doing; for not sharing what you ought to share what you know you ought to share; for wasting your life, your time, your talents, your opportunities; for not improving yourself mentally, spiritually. Are you ashamed of yourself without acknowledging it sometimes even to yourself, certainly not to others. Are you ashamed for growing lazy and sluggish and dull and a frightful bore to yourself as well as to others?

A bore to yourself. They tell the story of the man who came to the doctor and said, "Doctor, I am sick." And the doctor asked him, "What's wrong with you?" And he said, "Doctor, I talk to myself." And the doctor said, "That's no disease." "Oh yes, Doctor, but you don't know what a bore I am." Going around in circles, never advancing, never moving spirally upward into higher regions. Are you ashamed of yourself for being selfish? Or spiteful? Or a gossip, or a tale-bearer? Can you really live with yourself? There are people who cannot live with themselves. Such people are afraid of being alone. They don't like their own company. They despise themselves really. They are hollow. Therefore they're always running away from themselves, trying to lose their shadow, as it were, in the crowd. The plight of such a man or such a woman is sad indeed. The saddest thing is, really, they don't know what's making them run.

The real test, my good friends, and the real reward of a good life is the inner strength, the inner calm, the inner confidence of self-worth. A man can say to himself, "I am trying to do a man's job, an honest day's work, to the best of my ability." That kind of a person can live with himself. If a man can say "I am within as I am without", that man can live with himself. If a man can say, "I pull my true weight in the community in which I live, I don't sponge on others, I don't expect others to do my work, my portion of the total job which has to be done", that man can live with himself. If a man can say "God gave me a mind and I am trying to cultivate it because mind is a matter of cultivation, of development and unfoldment, growth. He who does not educate his mind stunts it." If a man can say, "The mind which God gave me I am endeavoring to improve. The soul which God implanted within me I am endeavoring to improve," That man can live with himself. He doesn't have to be a philosopher, he doesn't have to be a saint, but he is doing the best that he is capable of with the tools available to him in an honest, forthright manner, as befits a man a child of God. That man can live with himself. If a man can say, "I have a family and I strive to be worthy of my family. I have friends, and I strive to be helpful to my friends," that man can live with himself. Always, in light and

in darkness, in prosperity or inadversity, he can live with himself. If a man can say, "I may not have as much as some other people but I am grateful for what I have," that man can live with himself. He is not torn by envy and covetousness, made miserable by what others have. And if a man can really say, upon reflection, "I can live with myself, alone, or in the company of other people," that man is a blessed man indeed. You find such people in any walk of life. You can pick them out in any company - self-reliant, self-assured, not boisterous, not feverish, not excitable, and sort of with an inner strength, a calmness in them, a spiritual calmness. They go through life regardless of the circumstances of their life. They go through life with a sort of radiance in their hearts, sort of a glow in their inner self. These are the people that can live with themselves, that can live with others, that can live with their God. Amen.



1. Bore

2). Can you live by yourself; Can you live with yourself?

3/ there is much to be said for living by yourself - not permanently - but to retreat from him to him from the world - to yourself.

The world is often too much with us - its claims, its entanglements, its continuous tug & pull

We want to be alone - to regain composure, perspective, to take stock - to rest - and in quietude find rest and restoration.

Emerson (~~the~~) (Heath) (Solitude) - Revelation - Talent

4). Again - there is much to be said for living by yourself - in sense of relying on yourself - trusting yourself - not taking your eyes, always, from the presence and judgments of others

To be able to stand alone - in conviction - confidence, loyalty - that is a high virtue. alone

We are inclined to rely too often & too much on others - on outside people

(1) to go along with the tide - along with the

current - Rely on the Mass

(2) on Wald's opinion - we desire it - keep too high a price

(3) Rely on superstition - to sustain us

crushed town where he was

(3)

Destitute Social Free - Was - involuntary, growing, pressure

- condemned his captives - filled him with anxiety

Wally primitive Society - Today - future, future

most of persons - affection

6. Ran away from life - into slavery, action ^{seeking} _{St. Louis, Mo.}

Hinduism - "samana" - the rebirth wheel of life

① Student ② Hare Krishna ③ Amish - clad in brown - refuse
to own property - lead simple life of hermit - ④ Live without fire,
without any alcohol, on roots, trees, possessing only a cloth, and a
water jug - happy lot - they understand their duties, letting
the machinery of life run down -

Buddhism - established monasteries - hermits & monks

6C - (2hr) Buddhist monks run in China

Gautama - "enlightenment" - "Golden Mean" - nothing to
excess - popular religion - peace & harmony - strongly

Buddha - wise man with duties running from all social pressure
& demands, commitment of life

Grees - contempt for life - indifference to all external things
& human frailty (4)

Stoics = melancholy austerity - no thing sad & carefree
and no path in human progress

Early Christianity - other - notably ^{Marcanian} - Marcanian - Marcanian

Islam - Sufis - cross parents - poverty - poverty
- desert in cave - desert & mountain

1/ Judaism alone - not to run away from life - life is part
and a part of God.

Way to reach God is not the poverty, self-denial - good
deed - "Read your heart & your parents"

Element of Sin in Nazareth who denied himself was

Heaven, know not mendicant, or friars, staff & bowl
Did not live in hermitical forest

Did not run away from life but, for, its fulfillment

1237 for God's sake

8. But don't you, from time to time, to be alone with yourself -
your memories, your life, your past

Just to be able to live by yourself - from time to time -
- 1370 p. 110 x 10 10 10

- "2 or better than one; because, if they fall, one will lift up his
fellow, but not to him who is alone when he falls and has
no one to lift him up."

"Solitude is intolerable even in Paradise" (I have known)

9. It is just another question - Can you live with yourself?

Whether alone or in company?

Do you respect yourself sufficiently to want to be at home
with yourself?

Have you earned enough self-esteem to be proud of your
own company?

Or are you, really, def down in yourself, when no one
can see, really orphaned of yourself -

Shamed for not being what you let on paper to be when
you are -

For being a fraud, ^{an impostor} for not doing - sharing - what you wish

For ~~not~~ working your life, ^{wisely, unselfishly} your time, your talent,

your power

For not improving yourself - mentally, spiritually -

For growing lazy, sluggish, dull & frightened here -

To being selfish, selfish, a person to take heaven.
Can you live with yourself? Such people are afraid / being
alone - They don't like their own company. They refuse to
always ^{follow} ~~remember~~ - less than modern in ^{the} crowd -

10. The real test & reward of a good life is the inner calm -
the confidence, self worth -

I am trying to do a man's job, ^{and an honest day's work} ~~honestly~~, to the best of my
ability.

I am as rich as I am content.

I put my ^{true} weight in the community in which I live.

God gave me a mind - but - improve them

Family - worthy, then - helped - Friends - Two boys

I may not have as much as some other have -

but I am grateful for what I have

And I can live with myself - alone or in company
with other people

At times the whole wrld seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles. Friend, client, child, sickness, fear, want, charity, all knock at once at thy closet door and say, 'Come out unto us.' Do not spill thy soul; do not all descend; keep thy state; stay at home in thine own heaven; come not for a moment into their facts, into their hubbub of conflicting appearances, but let in the light of thy law on their confusion.

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The Temple Bulletin

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Vol. XXXX

JANUARY 17, 1954

No. 15

Sunday Morning Service

10:30 o'clock

*Record - Log - History,,
"What is Judaism?"*



3 Rollers

RABBI SILVER

will speak on:

Can You Live With Yourself?

Friday Evening Services
5:30 to 6:10

Saturday Morning Services
11:15 to 12:00

The Temple Bulletin

The Temple

Congregation Tifereth Israel
(Founded 1850)

Rabbis:

Abba Hillel Silver, D. D., Litt. D., D. H. L.

Earl Stanley Stone, M. H. L.

Associate Rabbi
Director of Religious Education

Ass't. Director of Religious Education
MILDRED B. EISENBERG

Executive Secretary
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Ansel Road and East 105th Street
SWEETBRIAR 1-7755

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

This Sunday morning Rabbi Silver will speak on the subject, "Can You Live With Yourself?"

THE TEMPLE HIGH SCHOOL

The Temple High School Oratorical Contest was held in the Chapel last Sunday morning before an enthusiastic audience of parents and students. The winning oration entitled "I Am Proud to be a Jew" was presented by James Brown. Second prize went to Beverly Shapiro and third prize to Ruth Strauss. The other contestants were David Madorsky, Carol Schoenberger, Sandi Zipser, Tom Hornsten, and Roberta Gluchov.

The judges, Mr. Alan D. Kandel, Mr. Philip L. Steinberg, and Mrs. Harry L. Wolpaw, commented on the excellence of all the orations and the difficulty of selecting a contest winner. During the weekend of January 23-24, Beverly Shapiro will travel to Sharon, Pennsylvania to compete in the Goldman Oratorical Contest sponsored by the North Eastern Lakes Federation of Temple Youth.

Temple Memorial Book

The name of
FREIDA BERK

has been lovingly inscribed in The Temple Memorial Book by Mr. and Mrs. Morton Soss.

MRS. SYDNEY N. GALVIN APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNITY CHEST WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

President of The Temple Women's Association and long-time leader in Jewish community and welfare activities, Mrs. Sydney N. Galvin was recently appointed chairman of the Community Chest Women's Committee by Ray S. Livingstone, Chest campaign chairman.

Cleveland born, Mrs. Galvin was graduated from East High School and received her A. B. degree from Smith College. She is the wife of Sydney N. Galvin, partner in Galvin & Galvin, attorneys-at-law.

Mrs. Galvin has worked closely with the Chest for many years. She started as a campaign solicitor for the Metropolitan Division and has been a member of Team 32, the Division A women's team, since 1948.

In addition to her Chest activities, Mrs. Galvin has held numerous other posts among which are membership in the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Community Federation and membership in the Board of Montefiore Home. She is a past chairman of the Women's Division, Jewish Welfare Fund Appeal; a former Board member of both the Society for the Blind and the Council of Jewish Women.

Temple Memorial Book

The names of

ISAAC MARKS

IDA MARKS

FLORENCE MARKS MARKO

DR. JOSEPH MARKO

SOL M. MARKS

have been lovingly inscribed in
The Temple Memorial Book by
Mrs. Sol M. Marks.

MR. AND MRS. CLUB

The committee for the Mr. and Mrs. Club Annual Dinner Dance to be held at the Allerton Hotel on January 23, 1954 at 7:00 p.m. is awaiting replies to the cards which Mr. and Mrs. Club members received in the mail this week.

The dance, preceded by a filet mignon dinner, will have music by Hal Lynn's Orchestra through dinner until 1:00 a.m. Tickets are being sold for \$10.75 per couple. Former Mr. and Mrs. Club members may purchase tickets through The Temple.

The Temple Gratefully Acknowledges The Following Contributions

TO THE LIBRARY FUND:

In memory of Rose Newman by Mr. and Mrs. Lester Kahn; in honor of 30th anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. M. H. Green by Mrs. S. P. Schoenberger; in memory of Max Rosenblum by Mr. and Mrs. Albert S. Amster.

TO THE FLOWER FUND:

In memory of mother, Mrs. Rachel Klinger, by Mrs. Irma Spitz; in memory of wife and sister, Sarah Goldstein Van Camp, by Miss Tobiah Goldstein and Mr. George Van Camp; in memory of Mrs. Clara Markus by Dr. and Mrs. I. E. Yoelson; in memory of Mr. Samuel Baum by Mr. and Mrs. Lee Rotman; in memory of Mrs. J. Luxemburg by Mrs. E. N. Pollock.

TO THE SOPHIE AUERBACH SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

In memory of Mrs. Carrie Livingston by Mrs. Felice L. Rich; in memory of Harry Katz by Mr. and Mrs. Myron Urdang; in memory of sister, Gertrude Moss, by Mrs. Herman Applebaum; in memory of parents, Pearl and Aaron Spitz, by Mrs. Daniel Grossman, Mrs. Julius G. Koller, and Mrs. Rose S. Wolf; in memory of Mrs. Johanna Baumoel by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Benesch; in memory of father, Isidore J. Benesch, by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Benesch.

TO THE MUSEUM FUND:

In memory of Albert Taub by Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Amster; in memory of Arnold Weil by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney N. Weitz; in memory of Mr. Nathan Cornsweet by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney N. Weitz; in memory of Mr. Emanuel Altman by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney N. Weitz.

TO THE RICHARD ALLAN FISHEL HONOR KEY FUND:

In memory of grandfather, Isadore Fuldauer, by Ivan and Donna Fuldauer; in memory of Richard Allan Fishel by Mr. and Mrs. Wesley R. Fishel; in memory of Richard Allan Fishel by Mr. and Mrs. Irwin J. Schwartz; in memory of Richard Allan Fishel by Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Fishel.

TO THE ABBA HILLEL SILVER CHARITABLE AND EDUCATIONAL FUND:

In memory of Ralph I. Bass by Mr. and Mrs. Isadore Rapport; in memory of brother, Solomon Green, by Mrs. Reuben Peretz; in honor of grandchild, Susan Beth Shapiro, by Mr. and Mrs. R. Peretz; in memory of brother, Max Myers, by Mr. and Mrs. Ben Hibshman; in memory of mother, Mrs. H. R. Fishel, by Mrs. Eli I. Goulder.

THE SONG OF SONGS

by
ROBERT GORDIS

This is a new study, translation, and commentary of *The Song of Songs* as just appeared from the pen of Dr. Robert Gordis. The author is to be congratulated upon this attractive volume which follows his earlier study of *Koheleth—The Man and His World*. It is rich in scholarship and replete with fine and discriminating insights.

From the Introduction we quote the following:

A UNIQUE BOOK

"The entire universe is not as worthy as the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel, for all the Writings are holy, but the Song of Songs are the Holy of Holies." In these passionate words, Rabbi Akiba was upholding the right of the Song of Songs to a place in the Scriptures. The warmth of his defense testifies to the vigor of the challenge to which it was subjected, probably stronger than in the case of Esther, Koheleth and Job.

The Song of Songs is unique among the books of the Bible in spirit, content and form. It is the only book in the canon lacking a religious or national theme, the Divine name occurring only once and then only as an epithet. To be sure, Esther also makes no direct mention of God, but its national emphasis is unmistakable. Even that is lacking in the Song of Songs. The reason for the doubts as to its canonicity is not hard to discover. Fragments of secular poetry are imbedded in the Bible, but this is the only complete work which is entirely secular, indeed, sensuous, in character.

As in the case of Koheleth, more than one factor helped to win admission for this little book into the canon of Scripture. While the charm and beauty of its contents played their part, if only on the subconscious level, there were two basic factors operating consciously. First was the occurrence of Solomon's name in the text, which led to the attribution of the whole book to him, as witness the title: "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's" (1:1). The several references to "the king" were, naturally enough, identified with Solomon as well. Second was the allegorical interpretation of the book, according to which the love of God and Israel is described under the guise of a lover and his beloved. This seemed reasonable since wise King Solomon would surely occupy himself only with recondite, spiritual concerns. Hence the Solomonic authorship of the book undoubtedly strengthened, if it did not

create, the allegorical interpretation of the Song. This interpretation found Biblical warrant in the frequent use by the Prophets of the metaphor of marital love to describe the proper relationship of Israel to its God. This combination of factors overcame all doubts about the sacred character of the Song of Songs, and its canonicity was reaffirmed at the Council of Jamnia in 90 C. E., never to be seriously challenged again.

THE ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

When the Christian Church accepted the Hebrew Scriptures as its Old Testament, it was easy to transfer the parable from the old Israel to the New Israel, though there were variations of attitude. The first known allegorical treatment was that of Hippolytus of Rome, written early in the third century. He precedes Origen, Jerome, and Athanasius, who referred the book to Christ and the Church, while Ambrosius and Cornelius a Lapide identified the Shulammitte with the Virgin Mary. Other figurative theories also were not lacking. Some of the older commentators, like Origen and Gregory of Nyassa, saw in it an allegory of the mystical union of the believing soul with God, a particularly congenial view, since mysticism has often expressed itself in strongly erotic terms. Luther saw in it an allegory of Christ and the Soul.

The allegorical theory has been generally abandoned by modern scholars in its traditional guise. Yet a few contemporary Roman Catholic scholars and some Orthodox Jewish writers still interpret the book as an allegory of Israel's history.

Other forms of the allegorical theory have not been lacking. Isaac Abrabanel and his son Leo Hebraeus, basing themselves on the fact that Wisdom is described in *Hokmah* literature as a beautiful woman, who is contrasted with the "Woman of Folly" in Proverbs, interpreted the beloved in the Song as a typological symbol of Wisdom, a view suggested in modern times by Godek and Kuhn. However, the details in the Song of Songs are both too concrete and too numerous to support this or any other allegorical view, which has accordingly found few adherents.

THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION

While the allegorical view of the Song of Songs early became official, it is noteworthy that the Rabbis were well aware that in many circles it was being

interpreted literally. That the allegorical view had difficulty in winning universal acceptance is clear from the warmth of the statement in the Tosefta: "He who trills his voice in the chanting of Song of Songs and treats it as a secular song, has no share in the world to come."

Obviously, too, the literal view of the book lay at the basis of the doubts expressed in the Mishnah as to its canonicity: "The Song of Songs and Koheleth defile the hands (i.e. are canonical). Rabbi Judah says, The Song of Songs defiles the hands, but Koheleth is in dispute. Rabbi Jose says, Koheleth does not defile the hands and the Song of Songs is in dispute . . . Rabbi Simeon ben Azzai said, I have a tradition from the seventy-two elders on the day that Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah was appointed president of the Academy that both the Song of Songs and Koheleth defile the hands. Said Rabbi Akiba, Heaven forbid! No one in Israel ever disputed that the Song of Songs defiles the hands. For all the world is not as worthy as the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel, for all the writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies. If they differed at all, it was only about Koheleth. Rabbi Johanan ben Joshua, the brother-in-law of Rabbi Akiba, said, Both the division of opinion and the final decision accorded with the statement of Ben Azzai, i.e. they differed on both books and finally decided that both were canonical."

Nevertheless, the literal view, which was rejected on the conscious level, won a measure of unconscious acceptance even in Rabbinic circles. That the book deals with human love is implied in the well-known statement: "Solomon wrote three books, Proverbs, Koheleth, and the Song of Songs. Which did he write first? . . . Rabbi Hiyya the Great said, He wrote Proverbs first, then the Song of Songs, and then Koheleth . . . Rabbi Jonathan said, The Song of Songs he wrote first; then came Proverbs, and then Koheleth. Rabbi Jonathan proved it from normal human behavior. When a man is young, he sings songs. When he becomes an adult, he utters practical proverbs. When he becomes old, he voices the vanity of things."

In the Christian Church, too, the literal view was known and fought. The position of the fourth-century Theodore of Mopsuestia was declared a heresy by the Second Council of Constantinople in 353. His objects to the book were repeated, in 1544, by Chateillon, who wanted it expunged from the canon as immoral. It is characteristic of the broader conception of canonicity in Judaism that no

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such demand for its elimination was made, even by the anonymous French Jewish commentator of the twelfth century or by a few other medieval Jewish writers who regarded it as a song written by Solomon for his favorite wife. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries various scholars suggested that the book was a collection of eclogues, and analogies with the Idylls of Theocritus were frequently invoked. It was Herder who, in 1778, explained it as a collection of songs extolling the joys of human love. This view, however, receded in popularity for over a century thereafter.

THE SONG OF SONGS IN HOLY WRIT

Undoubtedly, the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs, aided by the ascription of the book to King Solomon who is mentioned in the text, led to its inclusion in the Biblical canon. That Pharisaic Judaism admitted the book into the canon because it was "an ancient book, a religious book, and one that had always been religious" as part of a pagan fertility cult, is unlikely to the point of impossibility. Had there been any recollection of such a use of the material, those who objected to the canonicity of the book would not have hesitated to mention it, and its chances for inclusion would have been nil.

The view against which Rabbinic Judaism levelled its strictures and which led to lengthy discussions as to its canonicity was the widely held literal interpretation, with which the Rabbis were very familiar, as has been noted. That all objections were overridden and the Song admitted into the canon indicates that on the subconscious level, at least, another factor operated, as was the case with Eccle-

siastes: a genuine affection for the book. It was this attitude which refused to permit its exclusion from Scripture, an act that would have spelled its ultimate destruction. As Jastrow well says: "It entered the canon not by vote, but because of its inevitable human appeal. Love is sacred even in passionate manifestations, when not perverted by a sophisticated self-analysis."

The physical basis of love is extolled in the Song without shame or prurency. Yet it serves as the foundation for the spiritual relationship, which is adumbrated in many an incidental phrase and reaches its climax in the great paean to love in 8:7:

Many waters can not quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it.
If a man would give all the substance
of his house for love,
He would be laughed to scorn.

It is in this sense that the modern reader, who is not likely to read it as an allegory, will echo Akiba's passionate description of the book as "the Holy of Holies," for it is, in Herder's words, "holy as a song of pure natural love, the holiness of human life."

Over and beyond its eternal youthfulness and inherent charm, the Song of Songs, precisely because it is within the canon of Scripture, serves to broaden the horizons of religion. It gives expression, in poetic and hence in deathless terms, to the authentic world-view of Judaism, which denies any dichotomy between body and soul, between matter and spirit, because it recognizes them both as the twin aspects of the great and unending miracle called life.

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