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National Foundation for Jewish Culture, grant proposals,  
1975-1985.

## NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

### INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT APPLICATIONS

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has as its purpose the creation of a broader understanding of the field of Jewish culture in America and the enrichment of programs in this field. Its program of pre-doctoral grants is intended to encourage study and research in the various disciplines related to Judaica and Jewish life.

Applicants for doctoral dissertation grants must be citizens of the United States; must have completed all academic requirements for the doctoral degree except the dissertation; and should give evidence of a plan leading to a career in Jewish scholarship or related fields. They must give evidence of language proficiency for pursuing a career in their chosen field, and those whose career interests will be in Jewish Studies must possess a background demonstrating a capacity to deal with Jewish primary sources in the languages in which they are written.

The amount of the grants will be determined on the basis of individual requirements. Awards are granted for one academic year.

Applicants are expected to observe the following procedures and guidelines:

1. The completed application form must be **legibly** typed. Illegible applications will be disqualified upon receipt. Dark ribbons should be used to facilitate copying. If more space is needed on any item in the application, attach separate sheet of paper of same size (8½ x 11).
2. Transcripts of all completed undergraduate and graduate work are to be furnished. The applicant shall also arrange for GRE scores (verbal test only) to be sent to the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.
3. A dissertation prospectus or description is required of all applicants as detailed in Section VII of the application. This will be given great weight in the selection process.
4. Three (3) letters of reference on the enclosed forms are to be sent directly to the Foundation. **One should be from the dissertation advisor**, and the others from scholars with whom the applicant has taken extensive work.
5. **All materials are to be submitted by December 31st.** Only those applications which are completed and received by the Foundation on or before this deadline will be considered.

## 122 East 42nd Street New York, N.Y. 10017 490-2280

## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
                *Last*                      *First*                      *Middle*  
  
Male \_\_\_\_\_  
Female \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

**Marital Status** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dependents** \_\_\_\_\_

## School and Department \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Title \_\_\_\_\_

## Fields of Comprehensive Examinations

**Actual or anticipated completion dates of:**

a) course work \_\_\_\_\_ b) language examinations \_\_\_\_\_

c) comprehensive examinations \_\_\_\_\_ d) Dissertation project approval \_\_\_\_\_

e) Dissertation \_\_\_\_\_

**Career plans after obtaining doctorate** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are planning an academic career, please indicate the expected discipline or fields.**

School ( <i>last school first</i> )	Years Attended	Degree and Date
1. _____		
2. _____		
3. _____		
4. _____		
5. _____		

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*Name of Applicant*

## VII. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Dissertation title \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation advisor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please append to this application a dissertation prospectus or description of the objectives, scope, and methodology of the dissertation and its relation to other work and literature in the field. A prospectus already approved by your University will be acceptable. If one is to be written specially for this application it should not exceed ten (10) double-spaced pages.

## VIII. PUBLICATIONS

Give title, where published, date, and number of pages. Applicants may at their discretion provide copies (at least three) of those publications they feel would support their candidacy.

## IX. REFERENCES

List name, address and position of at least three academic references under whom you have taken extended work. It will be your responsibility to arrange for referees to send in supporting statements on the enclosed forms directly to the Foundation. **One referee should be your dissertation advisor.**

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# EDUCATION *(contd.)*

Other Relevant Education	Years Attended	Degree and Date
1. _____		
2. _____		
3. _____		

## IV. HONORS, AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

	Date
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	

## V. LANGUAGE

Please indicate the languages in which you have proficiency and grade your ability using A for fluency and B for working knowledge.

Language	Reading	Writing	Speaking
1. _____			
2. _____			
3. _____			
4. _____			

## VI. EMPLOYMENT

Please list positions you have held which would support your application for a grant.

Position	Description	Dates Held
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		

## X. FINANCIAL DATA FOR COMING ACADEMIC YEAR

## Resources and Expected Income

Savings \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Employment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's  
Employment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarships \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other Income\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Needs

Living Expense \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Travel \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Tuition \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Books and  
Materials \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other Needs \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*If "Other Income" or "Other Needs" are over \$1,000 please explain.

Amount requested of National Foundation for Jewish Culture: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

For what other scholarships or grants have you applied at this time? (Include Amounts)

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT PROGRAM

### Reference Statement

To be returned by Referee to  
NFJC by December 31st

This section to be filled in by the applicant

Statement concerning \_\_\_\_\_  
First Middle Last

**WAIVER\*** In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I waive my right to review this letter.

Signature

Date

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has as its purpose the creation of a broader understanding of the field of Jewish culture in America and the enrichment of programs in this field. Its program of pre-doctoral grants is intended to encourage study and research in the various disciplines related to Judaica and Jewish life. The Foundation will appreciate a statement from you about the applicant named above.

**\*CONFIDENTIALITY:** Federal law gives students the option of waiving their rights to see specific confidential statements and letters of recommendation. If the applicant has waived this right by signing the waiver above, this reference statement will be held confidential. If the applicant has not signed the waiver, it will be assumed that this statement may be seen by the applicant.

Name of person writing recommendation \_\_\_\_\_

School affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Title and department: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you known applicant? \_\_\_\_\_ In what capacity? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please rate the applicant relative to others of your students who are now or who have recently been in doctoral programs.

Academic Performance

Scholarly Potential

Outstanding top 5%	Excellent next 10%	Good next 10%	Other

3. Please rate the applicant's ability to carry out his assignments and plans on time.

Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please comment on the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

5. Please comment on any other factors that bear on the applicant's capacity and potential to make a contribution to scholarship and to the academic study of Judaica and/or Jewish life and institutions.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Referee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this statement before December 31st directly to the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 122 East 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT PROGRAM

### Reference Statement

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NFJC by December 31st

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First Middle Last

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Signature

Date

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Name of person writing recommendation \_\_\_\_\_

School affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Title and department: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you known applicant? \_\_\_\_\_ In what capacity? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please rate the applicant relative to others of your students who are now or who have recently been in doctoral programs.

Academic Performance

Scholarly Potential

Outstanding top 5%	Excellent next 10%	Good next 10%	Other

3. Please rate the applicant's ability to carry out his assignments and plans on time.

Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please comment on the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

5. Please comment on any other factors that bear on the applicant's capacity and potential to make a contribution to scholarship and to the academic study of Judaica and/or Jewish life and institutions.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Referee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this statement before December 31st directly to the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 122 East 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017*

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT PROGRAM

### Reference Statement

To be returned by Referee to  
NFJC by December 31st

This section to be filled in by the applicant

Statement concerning \_\_\_\_\_  
First Middle Last

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Signature

Date

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Name of person writing recommendation \_\_\_\_\_

School affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Title and department: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you known applicant? \_\_\_\_\_ In what capacity? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please rate the applicant relative to others of your students who are now or who have recently been in doctoral programs.

Academic Performance

Scholarly Potential

Outstanding top 5%	Excellent next 10%	Good next 10%	Other

3. Please rate the applicant's ability to carry out his assignments and plans on time.

Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please comment on the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

5. Please comment on any other factors that bear on the applicant's capacity and potential to make a contribution to scholarship and to the academic study of Judaica and/or Jewish life and institutions.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Referee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this statement before December 31st directly to the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 122 East 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017*

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

122 East 42nd Street

New York, N.Y. 10017

490-2280

## APPLICATION FOR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT

JAN 19 1976

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Date of Application December 25, 1975

Name ROTSSTEIN MARC DAVID Male ☒ Female ☐  
Last First Middle  
Present Address 76 Blometh Street, Malden, Mass. Zip 02148 Tel. 322-5393  
Legal Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_  
Birthdate Dec. 19, 1946 Birthplace Beyreut, W. Germany Citizenship American  
Marital Status Married Dependents One child

### II. ACADEMIC STATUS

School and Department Brandeis University, Near Eastern and Judaic Studies  
Dissertation Title The Ironie Sub-Structure in the short stories of S. Yizhar  
Fields of Comprehensive Examinations Literature : 1. The Fiction of S. Yizhar  
2. Hebrew Literature in Warsaw; 1885-1915  
Actual or anticipated completion dates of: History : 3. Para-Military Organizations in Palestine; 1882-1948  
a) course work COMPLETED b) language examinations COMPLETED  
c) comprehensive examinations COMPLETED d) Dissertation project approval Nov. 21, 1975  
e) Dissertation In progress

Career plans after obtaining doctorate College Teaching

If you are planning an academic career, please indicate the expected discipline or fields.

Modern Hebrew Literature

### III. EDUCATION

School (last school first)	Years Attended	Degree and Date
1. <u>Brandeis University</u>	<u>Sept. 1970-Present</u>	<u>MA</u>
2. <u>University of Massachusetts</u>	<u>Sept. 1965-1969</u>	<u>BA</u>
3. <u>Hebrew College, Brookline, Mass.</u>	<u>Sept. 1963-1968</u>	<u>BJed.</u>
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____

## EDUCATION (contd.)

Other Relevant Education

Years Attended

Degree and Date

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## IV. HONORS, AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

		Date
Brandeis University	: National Defense, Title IV Fellowship	1971
	<del>Teaching Assistanship plus scholarship</del> (full tuition)	1972-present
Hebrew College	: Pollock Memorial Prize	1965
	Friedman Memorial Prize	1966
	Dana Scholarship	1967
	Ruttenberg Memorial Prize	1968

## V. LANGUAGE

Please indicate the languages in which you have proficiency and grade your ability using A for fluency and B for working knowledge.

Language	Reading	Writing	Speaking
1. Hebrew	A	A	A
2. Yiddish	A	A	A
3. French	A	A	A
4. _____			

## VI. EMPLOYMENT

Please list positions you have held which would support your application for a grant.

Position	Description	Dates Held
<del>Instructor</del>	Hebrew Language and Literature Hebrew College	Sept. 1972 - Present
Teaching Assistanship (Full Course Instruction)	Hebrew Language and Literature Brandeis University	Sept. 1972 - Present
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Marc D. Rotstein  
Name of Applicant

### VII. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Dissertation title The Ironic Sub-Structure in the Short Stories of S. Yizhar

Dissertation advisor(s) Dr. N.C.Brandwein, Dr. Yehudah Friedlander, Dr. Marvin Fox

Please append to this application a dissertation prospectus or description of the objectives, scope, and methodology of the dissertation and its relation to other work and literature in the field. A prospectus already approved by your University will be acceptable. If one is to be written specially for this application it should not exceed ten (10) double-spaced pages.

### VIII. PUBLICATIONS

Give title, where published, date, and number of pages. Applicants may at their discretion provide copies (at least three) of those publications they feel would support their candidacy.

Most of my publications to date, some fifteen articles, have appeared in a local Jewish students' publication, Genesis II, and in the Israeli newspapers HaAretz and Maariv. These have dealt primarily with topical issues, and will be of little consequence in evaluating the merits of this application.

A scholarly article on a story by S. Yizhar is currently under consideration by the literary monthly Moznayim.

### IX. REFERENCES

List name, address and position of at least three academic references under whom you have taken extended work. It will be your responsibility to arrange for referees to send in supporting statements on the enclosed forms directly to the Foundation. One referee should be your dissertation advisor.

1. Dr. Marvin Fox, Chairman, Dept. of NEJS, Brandeis University
2. Dr. Yehudah Friedlander, Visiting Professor, Modern Hebrew Literature, Brandeis University
3. Dr. David S. Segal, Chairman, Dept. of Hebrew Literature, Hebrew College

P.S. Deadline considerations have prevailed against requesting a recommendation letter of Dr. Brandwein, who is spending the current academic year in Israel.

## X. FINANCIAL DATA FOR COMING ACADEMIC YEAR

Resources and Expected Income		Needs	
Savings	\$ 150.00	Living Expense	\$ 9200.00
Employment	\$ 10,500 (Gross) 8,450 (Net)	Travel	\$ 1500.00
Spouse's Employment	\$ 0.00	Tuition	\$ 0.00
Scholarships	\$ 0.00	Books and Materials	\$ 50.00
Other Income*	\$ 0.00	Other Needs	\$
TOTAL	\$ 8,450.00	TOTAL	\$ 10,750.00

\*If "Other Income" or "Other Needs" are over \$1,000 please explain.

## Expenses Itemized:

Living Expenses		Travel	
Housing	\$3360.00	Gas and Repair	\$ 550.00
Food and Clothing	\$4500.00	Car Loan	\$ 600.00
Utilities	\$ 950.00	Insurance	\$ 350.00
Medical	\$ 150.00		\$ 1500.00
Personal	\$ 300.00		
Total: \$9260.00			

Amount requested of National Foundation for Jewish Culture: \$ 8,000.00

For what other scholarships or grants have you applied at this time? (Include Amounts)

Should the National Foundation grant my request for the coming year, I intend to give up my assistanship at Brandeis. This assistanship (\$2500) has provided just enough to pay mt rent, and has made an inordinate demand upon my time; cutting dangerously into the time available for working on my dissertation. I have thus indicated \$0.00 under item "scholarship" above. I have also considered requesting the Hebrew College for a reduction of my teaching load (currently 16 hours).

I have been assured that this may be possible, providing the trustees of the National Foundation reach an early decision on my application; allowing the college sufficient time to re-schedule teaching assignments.

Since the college provides the bulk of my income, the amount requested of the Foundation will ultimately make up for the loss resulting from the reduction.

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT PROGRAM

RECEIVED  
NOV 1 1975

### Reference Statement

To be returned by Referee to NFJC by December 31st

This section to be filled in by the applicant

Statement concerning Marc David Rotstein  
First Middle Last

**WAIVER\*** In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I waive my right to review this letter.

Y. Friedlander  
Signature

Nov. 20, 1975  
Date

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has as its purpose the creation of a broader understanding of the field of Jewish culture in America and the enrichment of programs in this field. Its program of pre-doctoral grants is intended to encourage study and research in the various disciplines related to Judaica and Jewish life. The Foundation will appreciate a statement from you about the applicant named above.

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Name of person writing recommendation Prof. Yehuda Friedlander

School affiliation Brandeis University

Title and department: Visiting professor in Hebrew Literature, 1975-1976

Address 126 Thorndike St. Brookline, Mass. 02146 U.S.A.

1. How long have you known applicant? half a year In what capacity? Temporary adviser in his doctoral dissertation on the works of S. Yizhar.

2. Please rate the applicant relative to others of your students who are now or who have recently been in doctoral programs.

Academic Performance

Scholarly Potential

Outstanding top 5%	Excellent next 10%	Good next 10%	Other
X			

3. Please rate the applicant's ability to carry out his assignments and plans on time.

Good X Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please comment on the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

Mr. Marc David Rotstein is one of my best students in Hebrew Literature I ever had. I am following his research with a great deal of satisfaction, or even a good deal of pleasure.

Mr. Rotstein is a promising scholar, and has a very good capacity to be a distinguish researcher in future.

5. Please comment on any other factors that bear on the applicant's capacity and potential to make a contribution to scholarship and to the academic study of Judaica and/or Jewish life and institutions.

I am sure without any doubt that Mr. Rotstein will finish his doctoral dissertation very successfully. I have no doubt that his work should be a remarkable contribution to Hebrew Literature.

I don't know him as a teacher, but I hear very good opinions about his capacities as a teacher in academic institution.

Date

November 20 1975

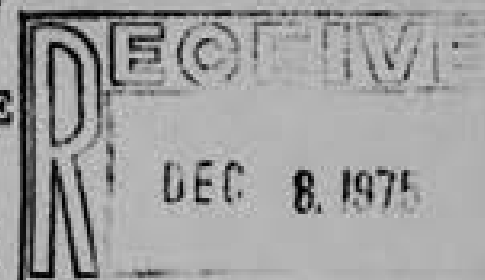
Referee's Signature

J. Friedman

Please return this statement before December 31st directly to the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 122 East 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT PROGRAM



### Reference Statement

To be returned by Referee to  
NFJC by December 31st

This section to be filled in by the applicant

Statement concerning Marc David Rotstein  
First Middle Last

**WAIVER\*** In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I waive my right to review this letter.

Signature

Nov. 20, 1975  
Date

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has as its purpose the creation of a broader understanding of the field of Jewish culture in America and the enrichment of programs in this field. Its program of pre-doctoral grants is intended to encourage study and research in the various disciplines related to Judaica and Jewish life. The Foundation will appreciate a statement from you about the applicant named above.

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Name of person writing recommendation Marvin Fox

School affiliation Brandeis University

Title and department: Professor of Jewish Philosophy,  
Chairman of Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies  
Waltham, Mass. 02154

Address

1. How long have you known applicant? 1½ yrs. In what capacity? I have served on committees for his oral examinations, have advised him in the development of his work and as Chairman of his department have been in close touch with him.

2. Please rate the applicant relative to others of your students who are now or who have recently been in doctoral programs.

Academic Performance

Scholarly Potential

Outstanding top 5%	Excellent next 10%	Good next 10%	Other
	X		
	X		

3. Please rate the applicant's ability to carry out his assignments and plans on time.

Good X Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please comment on the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

His strengths are readily apparent. He has thorough control of the Hebrew language and of the field of modern Hebrew literature. He has had good literary training and possesses sound general Judaic scholarship. If he has any significant weakness, it is a tendency to be a bit pedantic. He does not work with great and sweeping imagination but concerns himself rather with the slow building up of a detailed account of whatever topic he is working on. This is not necessarily a defect, though one does at times wish that there were greater flare and spark in the man. At the same time, he has been a very successful teacher of Hebrew literature both here at Brandeis University and at the Hebrew College in Boston.

5. Please comment on any other factors that bear on the applicant's capacity and potential to make a contribution to scholarship and to the academic study of Judaica and/or Jewish life and institutions.

Marc Rotstein is an advanced graduate student at Brandeis who has completed all of his work except his dissertation. His dissertation topic has been approved and he is now actively engaged in a study of the "Ironie Substructure of the Fiction of S. Yizhar." Rotstein is a mature and thoroughly trained young scholar in the field of modern Hebrew literature. He has done excellent work in courses and seminars and has persuaded us beyond any serious doubt that he will produce a fine dissertation. He has excellent literary training, a highly developed literary sense, and the range of scholarship which is requisite for his work. This is a man who is near to the completion of his studies and who eminently deserves the last bit of help which will make it possible for him to devote himself uninterruptedly to his dissertation. He carries heavy teaching responsibilities at present and it would be a contribution to his scholarly career to relieve him of some of that burden. He certainly should be able to finish his dissertation over the next academic year and to take his place on a full-time basis in the academic community. Relatively few people are being trained in modern Hebrew literature in this country today. Rotstein is one of the ablest of that small group, a man who has an important scholarly career ahead of him once he is able to complete his formal studies. I recommend him enthusiastically and with great confidence in his abilities and his diligence.

Date

12/3/75

Referee's Signature

*Marvin Fox*

Please return this statement before December 31st directly to the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 122 East 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017

Letter of Recommendation on Marc Rotstein from  
Dr. David Simha Segal, Chairman, Dept. of Hebrew Literature  
Hebrew College, Brookline, Mass.

November 3, 1975

Some bright students have the advantage of a clear and early orientation to their academic goals: Mr. Rotstein seems to be such a one. When he studied with me the poetry and background of the Golden Age of Spain, he brought to the course a relatively broad sensibility to questions of prosody, literary typology and the creative process (to mention but a few topics) as evidenced by his cogent remarks in the classroom and on paper. I was doubly pleased by the manner of Mr. Rotstein's participation--a willingness to share his frequent insights with his classmates; readiness to absorb, critically new ideas and information from any quarter; and even patience with students who had not attained his level of proficiency linguistically and literarily.

Mr. Rotstein is unusually methodical--his notes which I saw, were exceptionally well organized. His oral presentations were prefaced by careful delineations of his theme, method and criteria of evaluation. His final paper was one of the best I have received--a close analysis of a highly involved philosophic poem of Ibn Gabirol. It was exemplary in its thoroughness and originality. The better to explain two of his points, Mr. Rotstein appended a very helpful diagram--yet a further instance of his creative application of recent methodologies in literary criticism.

I am sorry I cannot comment on Mr. Rotstein's weakness: I am not aware of any. And I am sorry if that sounds like an exaggeration.

It is my pleasure to be entering into my second year of working closely with Mr. Rotstein as a teacher at the Hebrew College.

My initial labors at structuring and restructuring the Literature Department have been aided greatly by Mr. Rotstein's participation in all departmental meetings and conferences, to the inclusion of his careful at-home consideration of departmental projects and problems, and reactions to the same. Furthermore, we are now utilizing, both in the college and in our literature--one in Hebrew and one in English--which he prepared from start to finish. This year our collaboration is closer than ever, as we are both teaching sections in the High School Division's senior class--in modern Hebrew Literature. Again, Mr. Rotstein's thoroughness in preparation has been everything that I have expected.

Finally, a last fact that cannot be overlooked, Mr. Rotstein has managed to maintain his very high standards while holding a full position--17 hours of instruction-- at the Hebrew College for 4 years; teaching 2 courses at Brandeis University in

H

Hebrew Language an additional 6 hours of instruction, not to mention travel time, and working on his doctorate! And now he has a wife and child.

I hope you will agree that such a rare breed as Mr. Rotstein, a man who is contributing to scholarship and to the academic study of Judaica in two institutions--deserves the fullest measure of tangible encouragement toward the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

122 East 42nd Street

New York, N.Y. 10017

490-2290

ETV

DEC 14 1977

## APPLICATION FOR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name Danzig Neil Date of Application 11 November 1977  
Last First Middle Male ☒ Female ☐  
 Present Address 1426 48th Street Brooklyn, N.Y. Zip 11219 Tel. 436-1818  
 Legal Address same Zip            Tel.             
 Birthdate 3 Dec 1950 Birthplace New York City Citizenship U.S.A.  
 Marital Status married Dependents one

### II. ACADEMIC STATUS

School and Department Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University  
 Dissertation Title see VII  
 Fields of Comprehensive Examinations Talmudic and Rabbinic Literature, Ancient Jewish History, Semitic Languages  
 Actual or anticipated completion dates of:

- a) course work June 1977 b) language examinations 20 November 1977  
 c) comprehensive examinations 1 March 1978 d) Dissertation project approval Summer 1978  
 e) Dissertation Summer 1979

Career plans after obtaining doctorate Research in Judaic Scholarship, Teaching on University Level

If you are planning an academic career, please indicate the expected discipline or fields.  
Rabbinics, Talmudic Literature, Gaonic and Geniza Studies

### III. EDUCATION

School (last school first)	Years Attended	Degree and Date
1. Bernard Revel Graduate School	June 1972- present	PhD anticipated M.A. January 1975
2. Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary	9/72-6/75	Rabbinic Ordination
3. Yeshiva University	9/68-6/70, 9/71-6/72	B.A. June 1972
4. Yeshivat Israel Meir HaKohen, Jerusalem	8/70-6/71	
5. High School for Boys, Brooklyn	9/64-6/68	Diploma

## EDUCATION (contd.)

Other Relevant Education	Years Attended	Degree and Date
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____

## IV. HONORS, AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

	Date
Bernard Revel Graduate School Tuition Fellowship	Sept. 1976-June 1977
Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture	Sept. 1975-June 1976
Award for Excellence in Talmudic Studies	Sept. 1974-June 1975 June 1972
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## V. LANGUAGE

Please indicate the languages in which you have proficiency and grade your ability using A for fluency and B for working knowledge.

Language	Reading	Writing	Speaking
1. English	A	A	A
2. Hebrew	A	A	A
3. French, German	A	B	B
4. Arabic, Aramaic	A	A	B
Greek	B	B	

## VI. EMPLOYMENT

Please list positions you have held which would support your application for a grant.

Position	Description	Dates Held
Hillel Academy	Instructor of Talmud and Judaic Studies	Present
Hebrew Academy HS of Westchester	"	9/73-6/77
Techiya	Assistant Director of help agency for Russian immigrants and Jewish poor	1/73-9/73
Jewish Free University of Queens College	Lecturer in Talmud and History of Mishnah	9/73-12/73
Yeshiva University Residence Halls	Counselor to College Students	6/72-9/75
Dirshu	College seminars in Judaism, Assoc. Direc.	1/72-6/74

Neil Danzig

Name of Applicant

## VII. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Dissertation title The Development of the Delineation Between Biblical and Rabbinic Ordinances in the Talmud with Special Regard to the Asmakhta

Dissertation advisor(s) Dr. Meyer S. Feldblum and committee

Please append to this application a dissertation prospectus or description of the objectives, scope, and methodology of the dissertation and its relation to other work and literature in the field. A prospectus already approved by your University will be acceptable. If one is to be written specially for this application it should not exceed ten (10) double-spaced pages.

## VIII. PUBLICATIONS

Give title, where published, date, and number of pages. Applicants may at their discretion provide copies (at least three) of those publications they feel would support their candidacy.

1. Hisurei Mehasra- a Saboraic Style "ח'סורא - חסורא"   
 will appear in next issue of Sinai (10 pp.)
2. "An Israeli Version of the Abridged Laws of R. Yehoudai Gaon" (20 pp.)   
 "ח'סורא - חסורא"   
 will appear in Geniza Studies published by Yeshiva University.
3. In preparation for publication:   
 "The Commentary of R. Sherira Gaon on Tractates Baba Batra and Pesahim "   
 "ח'סורא - חסורא"   
 30 fragments of Sherira's commentary found in the Taylor-Schechter collection of Geniza fragments. Notes completed and introduction.

## IX. REFERENCES

List name, address and position of at least three academic references under whom you have taken extended work. It will be your responsibility to arrange for referees to send in supporting statements on the enclosed forms directly to the Foundation. One referee should be your dissertation advisor.

Dr. Meyer S. Feldblum Professor of Talmudic Literature Yeshiva University

Dr. Elazar Hurvitz Director of Erna Michael Geniza Collection "

Dr. Haim Soloveitchik, Dr. Leo Landman Dean and Secretary of the   
 Faculty, Bernard Revel Graduate School

## X. FINANCIAL DATA FOR COMING ACADEMIC YEAR

Resources and Expected Income		Needs	
Savings	\$ <u>0</u>	Living Expense	\$ <u>7500</u>
Employment	\$ <u>5000</u>	Travel	\$ <u>0</u>
Spouse's Employment	\$ <u>0</u>	Tuition	\$ <u>500- fees</u>
Scholarships	\$ <u>0</u>	Books and Materials	\$ <u>500</u>
Other Income*	\$ <u>0</u>	Other Needs	\$ <u>1000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ <u>5000</u></b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ <u>9500</u></b>

\*If "Other Income" or "Other Needs" are over \$1,000 please explain.

Amount requested of National Foundation for Jewish Culture: \$ 4500.

For what other scholarships or grants have you applied at this time? (Include Amounts)

**None. I have exhausted monies from Bernard Revel Graduate School and Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.**

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT PROGRAM

NOV 15 1977

### Reference Statement

To be returned by Referee to NFJC by December 31st

This section to be filled in by the applicant

Statement concerning NEIL DANZIG  
First Middle Last

**WAIVER\*** In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I waive my right to review this letter.

Neil Danzig  
*Signature*

7 Nov 77  
*Date*

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has as its purpose the creation of a broader understanding of the field of Jewish culture in America and the enrichment of programs in this field. Its program of pre-doctoral grants is intended to encourage study and research in the various disciplines related to Judaism and Jewish life. The Foundation will appreciate a statement from you about the applicant named above.

**\*CONFIDENTIALITY:** Federal law gives students the option of waiving their rights to see specific confidential statements and letters of recommendation. If the applicant has waived this right by signing the waiver above, this reference statement will be held confidential. If the applicant has not signed the waiver, it will be assumed that this statement may be seen by the applicant.

Name of person writing recommendation LEO LANDMAN

School affiliation PROF. OF JEWISH HISTORY & SECRETARY OF THE FACULTY

Title and department: BRES

Address AMSTERDAM AVE & 195 STS.

1. How long have you known applicant? c. 4 yrs In what capacity? STUDENT

2. Please rate the applicant relative to others of your students who are now or who have recently been in doctoral programs.

Academic Performance

Scholarly Potential

Outstanding top 5%	Excellent next 10%	Good next 10%	Other
✓			
✓			

3. Please rate the applicant's ability to carry out his assignments and plans on time.

Good ✓ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please comment on the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

Neil Danzig is extremely bright, has tremendous drive to see things through to their conclusion and is meticulous as to detail in his research. His classroom participation exemplified a keen, analytic mind. His papers were well thought out. Even minor points were well documented in footnotes. ~~Anyone who is~~ so thorough will succeed.

If he has any weakness, it is not academic. He is extremely quiet and does not give the impression of an extremely capable person.

5. Please comment on any other factors that bear on the applicant's capacity and potential to make a contribution to scholarship and to the academic study of Judaica and/or Jewish life and institutions.

In addition to his unusual ability, I feel that Neil Danzig has the ambition to make a contribution to the field of Rabbinic Literature. I am convinced that this combination, plus any help that the National Foundation might provide will allow him to do so.

Date

11/14/77

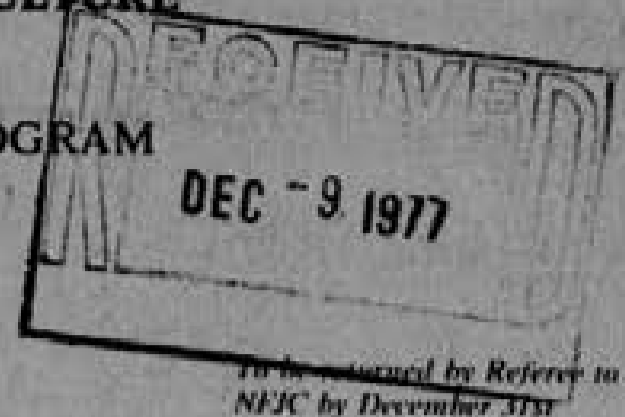
Referee's Signature

Leo Paul

Please return this statement before December 31st directly to the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 122 East 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT PROGRAM



### Reference Statement

This section to be filled in by the applicant

Statement concerning NEIL DANZIG  
First Middle Last

**WAIVER\*** In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I waive my right to review this letter.

Neil Danzig  
Signature

7 Nov 77  
Date

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has as its purpose the creation of a broader understanding of the field of Jewish culture in America and the enrichment of programs in this field. Its program of pre-doctoral grants is intended to encourage study and research in the various disciplines related to Judaism and Jewish life. The Foundation will appreciate a statement from you about the applicant named above.

**\*CONFIDENTIALITY:** Federal law gives students the option of waiving their rights to see specific confidential statements and letters of recommendation. If the applicant has waived this right by signing the waiver above, this reference statement will be held confidential. If the applicant has not signed the waiver, it will be assumed that this statement may be seen by the applicant.

Name of person writing recommendation Dr. Elazar Hurvitz

School affiliation Yeshiva University

Title and department: Professor, Bernard Revel Graduate School

Address 105th Street and Amsterdam Avenue

1. How long have you known applicant? 4 years In what capacity? teacher

2. Please rate the applicant relative to others of your students who are now or who have recently been in doctoral programs.

Academic Performance

Scholarly Potential

Outstanding top 5%	Excellent next 10%	Good next 10%	Other
x			
x			

3. Please rate the applicant's ability to carry out his assignments and plans on time.

Excellent Good Fair Poor



YESHIVA  
UNIVERSITY

BERNARD REVEL GRADUATE SCHOOL

Amsterdam Ave. & 186th St. / New York, N.Y. 10032 / (212) Lorraine 8-8400

December 6, 1977

Dear Sir,

I consider Mr. Danzig as one of my outstanding students which I had during my academic career at Yeshiva University.

In a very short time he rose with great ability to learn and deeply understand the many aspects of Rabbinic Literature and its history.

Recently I designated him to share with me the research of Geonic Literature, a field which needs badly new and fresh minds. All assignments that I gave him in this field he fulfilled with excellence. I foresee a great future for this man in teaching and researching in the field of Rabbinic Literature.

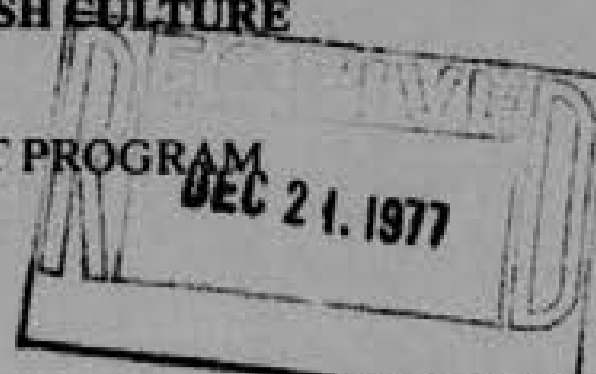
Any financial help given to this man to fulfill his goals is an investment in raising a scholar of first rate.

Yours truly,

*Elihu R. Haritz*  
Dr. ELIHU R. HARITZ

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT PROGRAM



### Reference Statement

To be returned by Referee to  
NFJC by December 31st

This section to be filled in by the applicant

Statement concerning NEIL DANZIG  
First Middle Last

**WAIVER\*** In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I waive my right to review this letter.

NEIL Danzig  
Signature

7 NOV 77  
Date

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has as its purpose the creation of a broader understanding of the field of Jewish culture in America and the enrichment of programs in this field. Its program of pre-doctoral grants is intended to encourage study and research in the various disciplines related to Judaica and Jewish life. The Foundation will appreciate a statement from you about the applicant named above.

**\*CONFIDENTIALITY:** Federal law gives students the option of waiving their rights to see specific confidential statements and letters of recommendation. If the applicant has waived this right by signing the waiver above, this reference statement will be held confidential. If the applicant has not signed the waiver, it will be assumed that this statement may be seen by the applicant.

Name of person writing recommendation Meyer S. Feldblum

School affiliation Bernard Revel Graduate School

Title and department: Professor of Talmudic Literature

Address 515 W. 183<sup>rd</sup> St. New York, N.Y. 10033

1. How long have you known applicant? five years In what capacity? Teacher

2. Please rate the applicant relative to others of your students who are now or who have recently been in doctoral programs.

Academic Performance

Scholarly Potential

Outstanding top 5%	Excellent next 10%	Good next 10%	Other
	✓		
✓			

3. Please rate the applicant's ability to carry out his assignments and plans on time.

Good ✓ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please comment on the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

The applicant has written his M.A. thesis under my supervision. Both his thesis and the research papers that he has written in the courses he has taken with me give convincing evidence of a keen and critical mind with a thorough understanding of Talmudic historiography. There is no doubt that the applicant is a well-qualified student with real ability, who is soundly motivated with an abiding interest in the field of Rabbinics.

5. Please comment on any other factors that bear on the applicant's capacity and potential to make a contribution to scholarship and to the academic study of Judaica and/or Jewish life and institutions.

Mr. Danzig's preliminary research for the Ph.D. dissertation shows originality and promise. It would be a pioneering work into the origin and final status of laws that seem to be products of a Biblical exegesis which was later termed (i.e. Rabbinic legislation with a tenuous or mnemonic relationship to the Pentateucal verse) either in the Talmudic sugya or by post-Talmudic commentators.

Neil Danzig has a good grasp of the problems involved, as well as a mastery of the requisite methodology needed to clarify the issues. His research will definitely make an important scholarly contribution to the study of the evolvement of Talmudic and Rabbinic law.

Date 12/18/77

Referee's Signature

Yip S. Feldman

Please return this statement before December 31st directly to the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 122 East 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017

RABBI ISAAC ELCHANAN  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
2540 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10033  
Affiliated with Yeshiva University

ADDRESS

1426 148th Street  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11219

ID NO:

SEX: MALE

DATE OF BIRTH: 12/3/50

RECORD OF DANZIG, NEIL

BASIS OF ADMISSION

ADMITTED Sept. 1972  
CATEGORY Regular

REMARKS

EXPLANATION OF TRANSCRIPT

All courses are on the graduate level. Length of semester: 15 weeks, including examinations. Unit of credit: semester-hour. Required for ordination: 60 credits. GRADING SYSTEM Grades are given either in percent, with 60 as the lowest passing grade, or using the following symbols:

A - Excellent  
B - Good  
C - Fair  
D - Poor, lowest passing grade  
F - Failed  
G - Dropped by student without permission (equivalent to F)  
Inc - Incomplete  
M - Missing (no grade reported)  
P - Passed  
W - Withdraw without penalty  
X - Course in progress  
Y - Year course, June grade applies to both semesters

PRESENT STATUS

GOOD STANDING

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

ORDAINED AS RABBI

(Semicha Yoreh Deah)

DATE: June 15, 1976

HONORS:

GRADUATED

WITH DEGREE OF

DATE

HONORS:

NOT VALID WITHOUT  
ORIGINAL SIGNATURE  
AND IMPRINTED SEAL

REGISTRAR

FORM 10 (12/70)

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

COURSE NO.

ACADEMIC YEAR

1ST SEMESTER

CREDIT GRADE

CREDIT

GRADE

CREDIT

GRADE

CREDIT

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FEB 10 1977

FOR ADMISSION TO THE  
RABBI'S COLLEGE  
NOT TO BE GRANTED TO ANYONE  
UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

NO ENTRIES BELOW THIS LINE

# YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE FACULTY OF  
BERNARD REVEL GRADUATE SCHOOL

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY BY VIRTUE  
OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN THEM HAVE CONFERRED UPON

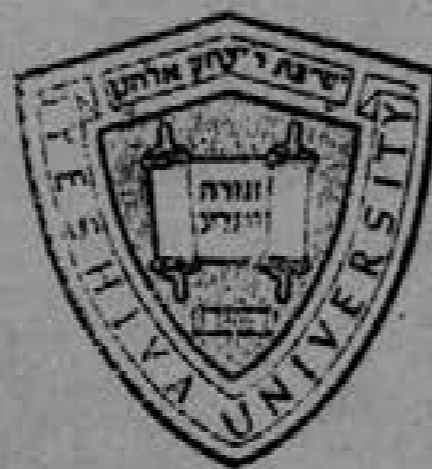
NEIL DANZIG

THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

WITH ALL THE RIGHTS PRIVILEGES AND HONORS THEREUNTO PERTAINING  
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF THIS DIPLOMA IS GRANTED IN THE CITY OF  
NEW YORK ON THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF JANUARY, 1975.

*Max J. L. ...*

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



*Samuel Belkin*

PRESIDENT

*Shmuel A. ...*

DEAN

# YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE FACULTY OF

YESHIVA COLLEGE

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY BY VIRTUE  
OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN THEM HAVE CONFERRED UPON

NEIL DANZIG

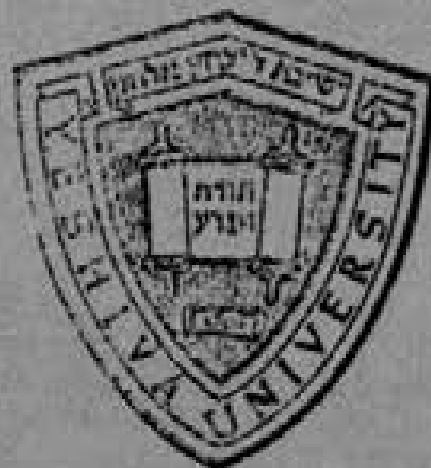
THE DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF ARTS

WITH ALL THE RIGHTS PRIVILEGES AND HONORS THEREUNTO PERTAINING  
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF THIS DIPLOMA IS GRANTED IN THE CITY OF  
NEW YORK ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF JUNE, 1972.

*Max J. L. L.*

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



*Samuel Belkin*

PRESIDENT

*Isaac Bauer*

DEAN

**BERNARD REVEL GRADUATE SCHOOL  
HARRY FISCHER SCHOOL FOR HIGHER  
JEWISH STUDIES**

**YESHIVA UNIVERSITY**  
Amsterdam Avenue and 186th Street  
New York, N. Y. 10033

RECORD OF **DANZIG, NEIL**

SEX: **MALE**

ADDRESS

**NOV 18, 1977**

DATE OF BIRTH: **12/3/50**

ID No.:

UNDERGRADUATE RECORD GRADUATED June 1972 FROM Yeshiva University New York, N. Y. 10033 WITH DEGREE OF <b>B.A.</b> MAJOR: <b>Pol. Sci.</b> AVERAGE: <b>3.242</b> RANK IN CLASS: <b>96/252</b>	ACADEMIC YEAR	COURSE NO.	DESCRIPTIVE TITLE	1ST SEMESTER		2ND SEMESTER	
				CREDIT	GRADE	CREDIT	GRADE
	Summer 1972	RT131	Talmudic Period and Literature	3	A	-	-
		RT333.2	Interrelationship of the Talmudim	3	IneB	-	-
	1972	JH141.1	.2 Ancient Jewish History	3Ine	A	3	B
	-73	RT391.1	.2 Research in Talmudic Texts	3	Y	3Ine	B

**OTHER DEGREES RECEIVED**

ADMITTED **July 1972**  
CATEGORY **Regular**

**REMARKS**

DEPARTMENT **Talmudic  
Studies**

**PRESENT STATUS**

**GOOD STANDING** UNLESS OTHERWISE  
INDICATED

☒ **GRADUATED** WITH DEGREE OF  
**Master of Arts**  
ON **January 31, 1975**  
MAJOR: **Talmudic Studies**

FINAL AVERAGE: **3.714**

☐ **GRADUATED** WITH DEGREE OF

ON

MAJOR:

FINAL AVERAGE:

NOT VALID WITHOUT  
ORIGINAL SIGNATURE  
AND IMPRESSED SEAL

DATE **NOV 16 1977**

*Maria Silverman*  
REGISTRAR

TURN OVER FOR EXPLANATION  
OF GRADES AND SYMBOLS

Form T18 9/68-300

**06500**  
- **DANZIG** **NEIL**  
JH 215.1 JEWISH LIT TANNAITIC 3.0 A  
RT 304.1 TANNAITIC LIT II 3.0 Y  
RT 341.1 SABORAIC&GAONIC LIT 3.0 Y  
**FALL 73 SEM AV 4.000 CR. EARNED 9.0**

**02000**  
- **DANZIG** **NEIL**  
AR 300 RESEARCH SEMINAR 3.0 A  
RT 304.2 TANNAITIC LIT II 3.0A  
RT 341.2 SABORAIC&GAONIC LIT 3.0A  
**SPRING 74 SEM AV 4.000 CR. EARNED 9.0**

Title of master's project: "A STORY IN CONTRADICTION:  
'A PHRASE IS MISSING AND THE MISHNA SHOULD READ THUS'",  
accepted 12/19/74

**02000**  
- **DANZIG** **NEIL**  
RT 303.1 TANNAITIC LIT I 3.0 Y  
RT 331.1 THE TALMUD 3.0A  
**FALL 74**

**02000**  
- **DANZIG** **NEIL**  
JH 239.2 HIST BABYLON AGGADAH 3.0 A  
RT 303.2 TANNAITIC LIT I 3.0 A  
**SPRING 75**

**02000**  
- **DANZIG** **NEIL**  
BB 111 BIBL EXEGESIS &SEMIT 3.0 A  
RT 121 MIDRASHIC LITERATURE 3.0 A  
RT 345.1 GAONIC LIT 10-11 CEN 3.0 A  
**FALL 75**

**02000**  
**093-40-7685** **DANZIG** **NEIL**  
BB 112 BIBL EXEGESIS &SEMIT 3.0 A  
RT 122 MIDRASHIC LITERATURE 3.0 A  
RT 345.2 GAONIC LIT 10-11 CEN 3.0 A  
**SPRING 76**

continued on page 2

**CONFIDENTIAL RECORD**  
**FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE USE**  
**NOT TO BE GIVEN TO APPLICANT**  
**UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES**

UNDERGRADUATE RECORD GRADUATED FROM  see page 1  WITH DEGREE OF MAJOR AVERAGE	ADMITTED CATEGORY	PRESENT STATUS  ELIGIBLE TO REREGISTER, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED  <input type="checkbox"/> GRADUATED WITH DEGREE OF ON FINAL AVERAGE  MAJOR:  <input type="checkbox"/> GRADUATED WITH DEGREE OF ON FINAL AVERAGE  MAJOR: DISSERTATION TITLE:
	DEPARTMENT	
OTHER DEGREES RECEIVED	REMARKS	

NOT VALID WITHOUT ORIGINAL SIGNATURE AND IMPRESSED SEAL  
DATE NOV 16 1977 REGISTRAR  
FOR EXPLANATION OF GRADES AND SYMBOLS SEE OTHER SIDE

COURSE NO.	DESCRIPTIVE TITLE	CREDIT	GRADE	COURSE NO.	DESCRIPTIVE TITLE	CREDIT	GRADE
28 093-40-7685 DANZIG NEIL	AR 400.1 DOCTORAL RESEARCH	3.0	1				
	RT 361.1 CAIRO GENIZA CODICES	3.0	A				
	SL 301.1 ELEMENTARY ARABIC	3.0	V				
	SL 333.1 ARAMAIC BABYL TALMUD	3.0	Y				
FALL 76							
28 093-40-7685 DANZIG NEIL	AR 400.1 DOCTORAL RESEARCH	3.0	1				
	RT 361.2 CAIRO GENIZA CODICES	3.0	A				
	SL 301.2 ELEMENTARY ARABIC	3.0	V				
	SL 333.2 ARAMAIC BABYL TALMUD	3.0	E				
SPRING 77							
NO ENTRIES BELOW THIS LINE							
CONFIDENTIAL RECORD FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE USE NOT TO BE GIVEN TO APPLICANT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES							
CONFIDENTIAL RECORD FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE USE NOT TO BE GIVEN TO APPLICANT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES							

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

122 East 42nd Street

New York, N.Y. 10017

490-2280

DEC 24 1979

## APPLICATION FOR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Date of Application December 15, 1979

Name BERNER LEILA Male ☐ Female ☒  
Last First Middle  
 Present Address 821-11th St. #3 Santa Monica, California Zip 90403 Tel. (213) 395-1984  
 Legal Address 821-11th St. #3 Santa Monica, California Zip 90403 Tel. (213) 395-1984  
 Birthdate 2/17/50 Birthplace San Francisco, Calif. Citizenship U.S. and Israel  
 Marital Status Single Dependents None

### II. ACADEMIC STATUS

School and Department University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), History Department  
 Dissertation Title The Jewish Community of Barcelona during the Reign of James I of Aragon (1212-1276)  
 Fields of Comprehensive Examinations 1. Jewish History (emphasis on ancient and medieval) 2. Medieval Christian Spain; 3. Reformation History 4. Roman Empire  
 Actual or anticipated completion dates of:  
 a) course work completed Fall 1978 b) language examinations Completed May, 1978  
 c) comprehensive examinations completed March 9, 1979 d) Dissertation project approval Approved March 9, 1979  
 e) Dissertation June, 1982  
 Career plans after obtaining doctorate I hope to pursue a career in historical research (emphasis on medieval Jewish and Spanish history) and university instruction.

If you are planning an academic career, please indicate the expected discipline or fields.

History - medieval, Jewish, Spanish, Western Civilization courses

### III. EDUCATION

School (last school first)	Years Attended	Degree and Date
1. <u>Univ. of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)</u>	<u>1977-1979 (present)</u>	<u>C. Phil., June 15, 1979</u>
2. <u>Univ. of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)</u>	<u>1975-1977</u>	<u>M.A., March 30, 1977</u>
3. <u>Hebrew University of Jerusalem</u>	<u>1968-1973</u>	<u>B.A., History 1974</u> <u>B.A., English Lit.</u>
4. _____		
5. _____		

## EDUCATION (contd.)

Other Relevant Education	Years Attended	Degree and Date
Habonim Youth Leadership		
1. Workshop. Kibbutz Urim, Israel	1967-1968	Certificate in Youth Leadership
Israel Govt. Ministry of Tourism		License to Guide Visitors in
2. Guides Course	1973-74	Spanish, Hebrew and English
		(1974)
3.		

## IV. HONORS, AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

	Date
1. Charles & Anna Stockwitz Fund Scholarship	9/67-9/68
2. Research Assistantship (special award by UCLA History Dept.)	Spring 1978
3. Maurice Amado Scholarship, Temple Tifereth Israel, Los Angeles	Fall 1978
4. Mabel Wilson Richards Fellowship (university-wide competition)	
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	9/78-9/79
5. Teaching Assistantship (award based on academic merit)	9/78-6/80
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	

## V. LANGUAGE

Please indicate the languages in which you have proficiency and grade your ability using A for fluency and B for working knowledge.

Language	Reading	Writing	Speaking
1. Hebrew	A	A	A
2. Spanish	A	B	A
3. Latin	A	not applicable	not applicable
4. French	B	-	-
5. Catalan	B	-	-
6. Ladino	A	-	-

## VI. EMPLOYMENT

Please list positions you have held which would support your application for a grant.

Position	Description	Jewish Natl. and Univ.	Dates Held
1. Researcher and Bibliographer	(Jewish Studies) Library, Jerusalem, Israel		9/69-9/72
2. Lecturer - History of Christianity	for Israel Govt. Ministry of Tourism		6/74-8/75
	Guides Course		
3. Teacher of Jewish History	- Temple Beth Hillel, North Hollywood, Calif.		9/75-6/76
4. Director, Educational Program (Jewish)	involving 200 Junior High School students; Bureau of Jewish Education, Los Angeles		9/75-9/76
5. Tourist Guide	Licensed by Israel Govt. Ministry of Tourism, guiding visitors from English and Spanish-speaking countries		9/74-present (occasionally)
6. Assistant Director; "Ulpan"	Education Abroad (Israel) Summer Program sponsored by Bureau of Jewish Education, Los Angeles		9/75-9/77

(CONTINUED ON ATTACHED SHEET)

LEILA BERNER

*Name of Applicant*

## VII. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Dissertation title A Social History of the Jewish Community of Barcelona during the Reign of James I of Aragon [1212-1276]

Dissertation advisor(s) Prof. Robert I. Burns, S.J., and Prof. Amos Funkenstein (vice-chairman)

Please append to this application a dissertation prospectus or description of the objectives, scope, and methodology of the dissertation and its relation to other work and literature in the field. A prospectus already approved by your University will be acceptable. If one is to be written specially for this application it should not exceed ten (10) double-spaced pages.

## VIII. PUBLICATIONS

Give title, where published, date, and number of pages. Applicants may at their discretion provide copies (at least three) of those publications they feel would support their candidacy.

"The Jewish Community of Barcelona in the 13th Century: Jews Living in a Gentile World," to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the West Coast Association of Women Historians, Los Angeles, March, 1980

## IX. REFERENCES

List name, address and position of at least three academic references under whom you have taken extended work. It will be your responsibility to arrange for referees to send in supporting statements on the enclosed forms directly to the Foundation. One referee should be your dissertation advisor.

1. Prof. Robert I. Burns, S.J., Professor, History Dept., Univ. of California, Los Angeles  
and Director, Institute for Medieval Mediterranean Spain
2. Prof. Amos Funkenstein, Professor, History Dept., Univ. of California, Los Angeles
3. Prof. Ronald Mellor, Professor, History Dept., Univ. of California, Los Angeles
4. Prof. Herwig Wolfram, Professor, Institute for Austrian History, University of Vienna,  
Austria
5. Dr. Stephen D. Benin, Assistant Professor, School of International Studies,  
Univ. of Washington, Seattle, Washington

(calculated on 12 month  
basis)

X. FINANCIAL DATA FOR COMING ACADEMIC YEAR

## Resources and Expected Income

Savings \$ 1,250

Employment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's  
Employment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarships \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other Income\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ 1,250

## Needs

Living Expense \$ 7,800 (see details below)

Travel \$ 1,250 (see details below)

Tuition \$ -

Books and  
Materials \$ 250 (see details below)

Other Needs \$ 100 (see details below)

TOTAL \$ 9,400

\*If "Other Income" or "Other Needs" are over \$1,000 please explain.

- a) Living Expense includes: rent (approx. \$200 monthly); per diem (\$15 a day which includes food, utilities, postage, recreation, and all other incidentals)
- b) Travel includes round-trip air fare from Los Angeles to Barcelona (high season/summer rates) and a Eurail pass (for travel to other Spanish archives). (\$1,000 air fare and \$250 Eurail pass).
- c) Books and Materials includes Xeroxing, microfilm of documents, some books (which can be purchased only in Spain - export to the U.S. doubles their price - stationary goods and materials needed for research.
- d) "Other" includes minor medical expenses (medication, visit to physician, etc.)

(this indicates the difference between

Amount requested of National Foundation for Jewish Culture: \$ 8,150 my need for the year and my savings)

If granted less than I have requested, I am willing to incur a debt for the balance in the

For what other scholarships or grants have you applied at this time? (Include Amounts) form of a Federally Insured Student Loan

1. Fulbright-Hays (approx. \$ 5,500)
2. American Association of University Women (\$7,000)
3. Social Science Research Council (18 months support — approx. \$12,000)
4. Del Amo Foundation (\$5,000)
5. Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture (\$4,000)

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT PROGRAM

### Reference Statement

*To be returned by Referee to  
NFC by December 31st*

This section to be filled in by the applicant

Statement concerning \_\_\_\_\_

ALLEN  
First

DANIEL  
Middle

REMARK  
Last

**WAIVER\*** In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I waive my right to review this letter.

Allen Daniel Remark  
Signature

12/1/80  
Date

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has as its purpose the creation of a broader understanding of the field of Jewish culture in America and the enrichment of programs in this field. Its program of pre-doctoral grants is intended to encourage study and research in the various disciplines related to Judaism and Jewish life. The Foundation will appreciate a statement from you about the applicant named above.

**\*CONFIDENTIALITY:** Federal law gives students the option of waiving their rights to see specific confidential statements and letters of recommendation. If the applicant has waived this right by signing the waiver above, this reference statement will be held confidential. If the applicant has not signed the waiver, it will be assumed that this statement may be seen by the applicant.

Name of person writing recommendation HAIM Z. DIMITROVSKY  
*Presently visiting professor at Hebrew University, Jerusalem*

School affiliation Jewish Theological Seminary - Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Title and department: Professor, Dept. of Talmud

Address Hebrew University, Dept. of Talmud, Jerusalem, Israel

1. How long have you known applicant? 15 years In what capacity? Teacher over

a long period of time in the rabbinical school, as well as thesis adviser

2. Please rate the applicant relative to others of your students who are now or who have recently been in doctoral programs.

Academic Performance

Scholarly Potential

Outstanding top 5%	Excellent next 10%	Good next 10%	Other
	✓		
	✓		

3. Please rate the applicant's ability to carry out his assignments and plans on time.

Good ✓ Fair Poor

4. Please comment on the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

Rabbi Kusky is a graduate of the rabbinical school of The Jewish Theological Seminary & has a very comprehensive background in rabbinic literature, Halachic as well as Agadic. While studying at The Seminary he was chosen to participate in a special program of Kabbalah under my supervision. This was a program open only to the best students. In this program he proved himself to be a very serious student who showed excellent promise as a teacher & a scholar. He is very well equipped with the tools needed for his Theses research. He has a fine knowledge of Agadic literature & very well versed in Mishnah, & needs to say, in Hebrew. In the papers that he presented during his period of study he revealed an excellent ability & original insights.

5. Please comment on any other factors that bear on the applicant's capacity and potential to make a contribution to scholarship and to the academic study of Judaism and/or Jewish life and institutions.

Rabbi Kusky is an unusually fine & serious person who is deeply committed to the Jewish Community & to Jewish scholarship. During the period that I have known him, I have at all times been deeply impressed by his extraordinary personal qualities - his total commitment, morality & integrity. He is an outstanding rabbi who also has a real gift for teaching.

Date

12/1/81

Referee's Signature

Isaac L. Dimofsky

האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים  
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

Office of Research Students

February 4, 1979

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Transcript of Mr. Marc Joel Bregman

In satisfaction of course requirements for the degree of Ph.D at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Mr. Bregman was required to take the following courses for grade credits

Prof. J. Heinemann, Selected Sections of Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael, Grade 95

Mr. M. Assis, Talmud, Grade 85

Mr. Bregman also audited the following courses and received the signatures of the instructors certifying his active participation in the courses

Prof. Y. Zussman, Introduction to Midrash and Aggadah

Prof. E. Urbach, Beliefs and Opinions of the Sages

Prof. J. Heinemann, Moses in the Aggadah (Seminar)

Mr. Y. Elboim, Selected Sections from the Pesiqtot

Dr. Y. Fraenkel, Selected Sections from Torat Kohanim

Since Mr. Bregman received his M.A. Degree in the U.S.A., he was required to submit a paper equivalent to The Hebrew University M.A. thesis. This work was received in Jan. 1976 and was evaluated by Prof. J. Heinemann, Dept. of Hebrew Literature, and Prof. Y. Zussman, Dept. of Talmud, who awarded it a grade of "Very Good". A copy of this evaluation is enclosed.

It should also be noted that Mr. Bregman is the recipient of this year's Warburg Prize for Academic Excellence awarded by The Hebrew University's Institute of Jewish Studies.

Mr. Bregman has completed all the requirements for the Ph.D. degree apart from submission of his doctoral dissertation.

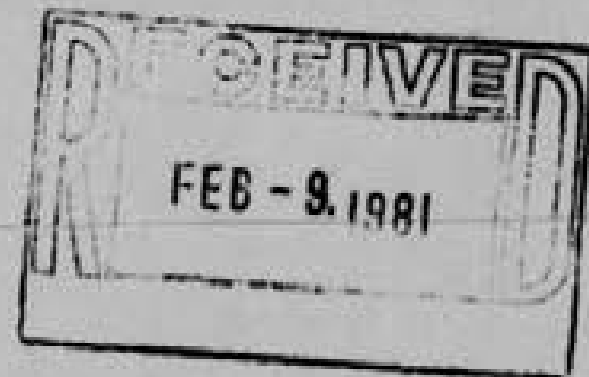
28.1.81

Note:

This is Mr. Bregman's  
latest transcript

N. S. Sh...  
[Signature]

Office of Research Students



NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE  
122 EAST 42ND STREET NEW YORK, N.Y. 10168 (212) 490-2280

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Daniel J. Silver  
FROM: Carl J. Rheins  
DATE: Feb 12, 1981

---

Enclosed is material which was missing from the file of Jody Meyers, as of February 2. Please consider the enclosed information when grading this applicant's file.

Thank you very much.

# NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT PROGRAM

### Reference Statement

To be returned by Referee to  
NFK by December 31st

This section to be filled in by the applicant

Statement concerning JODY ELIZABETH MYERS  
First Middle Last

**WAIVER\*** In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I waive my right to review this letter.

Jody Myers  
Signature

Dec. 21, 1980  
Date

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has as its purpose the creation of a broader understanding of the field of Jewish culture in America and the enrichment of programs in this field. Its program of pre-doctoral grants is intended to encourage study and research in the various disciplines related to Judaica and Jewish life. The Foundation will appreciate a statement from you about the applicant named above.

**\*CONFIDENTIALITY:** Federal law gives students the option of waiving their rights to see specific confidential statements and letters of recommendation. If the applicant has waived this right by signing the waiver above, this reference statement will be held confidential. If the applicant has not signed the waiver, it will be assumed that this statement may be seen by the applicant.

Name of person writing recommendation Arthur J. Band

School affiliation UCLA

Title and department: Robert H. Brown Comp. Lit. Comparative Lit.

Address UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90024

1. How long have you known applicant? 3 yrs In what capacity? Sec

exclusively

2. Please rate the applicant relative to others of your students who are now or who have recently been in doctoral programs.

Academic Performance

Scholarly Potential

Outstanding top 5%	Excellent next 10%	Good next 10%	Other
		X	
		X	

3. Please rate the applicant's ability to carry out his assignments and plans on time.

Good X Fair Poor

NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

January 15, 1981

To Whom It May Concern

Re: MS. Jody Myers

Though Ms. Myers has been doing most of her graduate studies at this university under the direction of my colleague, Prof. Amos Funkenstein, she has been required to take a reading course with me preparatory to her doctoral examinations and has also discussed her dissertation topic with me subsequently. Her reading list consisted of a variety of early nineteenth century Hebrew works. She applied herself assiduously to these works, read them intelligently, and could discuss them with the competence one expects of a graduate student. During her oral examinations, she did much better on this section of the questions than she did on the other sections.

Her doctoral thesis on messianism in the writings of Zvi Hirsch Kalischer might very well turn out to be a significant contribution to learning since Kalischer was very influential in formulating and propagating a religious brand of Jewish nationalism in the nineteenth century and influenced a variety of subsequent thinkers and pamphleteers. To date I have read the prospectus and a draft of the first chapter and, though I make no claim to expertise in the area --especially since much of the material is involved Rabbinic responsa--I find Myers performance here more impressive than anything she has done to date.

Sincerely yours,

Arnold J. Band  
Professor of Hebrew

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE

122 EAST 42ND STREET

NEW YORK, N.Y. 10168

(212) 490-2280

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Daniel J. Silver  
FROM: Carl J. Rheins  
DATE: Feb 12, 1981

---

Enclosed is material which was missing from the file  
of \_\_\_\_\_, as of February 2. Please  
consider the enclosed information when ~~grading~~ *reading* this  
applicant's file.

Thank you very much.

↓  
Diane Levenberg  
Marc Bugman  
Irma Lieberman  
Allan Kenady

## THE HORACE H. RACKHAM SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ACADEMIC RECORD OF R F 124-42-9417-4

DEGREE RECEIVED	A. B., Swarthmore College, 1974																											
U. OF M. FIELD OF SPECIALIZATION	(Russian & East European Studies) History Fa'78																											
GRADING SYSTEM	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>A+ 9</td> <td>C+ 3</td> <td>S SATISFACTORY</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A 8</td> <td>C 2</td> <td>U UNOFFICIAL ELECT.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A- 7</td> <td>C- 1</td> <td>VI VISITOR</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B+ 6</td> <td>D 0</td> <td>ED UNOFFICIAL DROP</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B 5</td> <td>D- 0</td> <td>NR NO REPORT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B- 4</td> <td>E 0</td> <td>T EXTENDED COURSE</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>I INCOMPLETE</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>U UNSATISFACTORY</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>W OFFICIAL DROP</td> </tr> </table>	A+ 9	C+ 3	S SATISFACTORY	A 8	C 2	U UNOFFICIAL ELECT.	A- 7	C- 1	VI VISITOR	B+ 6	D 0	ED UNOFFICIAL DROP	B 5	D- 0	NR NO REPORT	B- 4	E 0	T EXTENDED COURSE			I INCOMPLETE			U UNSATISFACTORY			W OFFICIAL DROP
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		W OFFICIAL DROP																										
GRADUATE INCOMPLETE POLICY: "I" GRADES: IF AN "I" HAS STOOD FOR TWO FULL TERMS, CREDIT FOR THE COURSE CAN BE EARNED ONLY BY ELECTING THE COURSE AGAIN.																												

ANN ARBOR

DEGREE CONFIRMED

A.M., December 22, 1979

Livezeanu, Irina

501 E ANN ST # 15

(HOME ADDRESS)

ANN ARBOR, MI 48104

(CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE)

BIRTHDATE: 10-18-52

DEGREE LEVEL: (Mast.) Pre-Cand Fa'78

COURSE	WICH TERM	CRST	WICH	COURSE	WICH TERM	CRST	WICH	COURSE	WICH TERM	CRST	WICH
	END	TERM	POINTS		END	TERM	POINTS		END	TERM	POINTS
LIVEZEANU IRINA				WINTER 78 1244294174				12-22-79 A.M. awarded in Russ & East Eur Studies.			
FALL 76 1244294174				HIST 745 POLISH E-EUR HIST	2	A-	21				
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HIST 503 SOVIET UNION	3	A-	21					HIST 700 INDEPEND RES SEM	3	S	
HIST 506 E.EUR 1500-1900	3	A	24	FALL 78 1244294174				HIST 500 PREP FOR PRELIMS	*2	-	
POL SCI 407 COMMON THOUGHT	3	A-	21	HIST 432 RUSS-PETER GREAT	3	A	24	HIST 500 PREP FOR PRELIMS	3	-	
RUSS 401 FOURTH-YEAR	3	A	24	HIST 643 COMP 19C EUROPE	3	A	24				
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MSH 12 CTP 12 MHP 90	7	500		MSH 33 CTP 36 MHP 252	7	636					
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ECON 456 SOVIET ECONOMY	*3	A-	21	HIST 653 STUDY 20C E EURCP	3	A	24	HIST 900 PREP FOR PRELIMS	6		
*FOR GRADUATE CREDIT				HIST 657 STU PREPETRIN RUS	3	A	24				
HIST 502 IMPERIAL RUSS	3	VI		8.000	6	6	48	MSH 48 CTP 54 MHP 369	7	687	
HIST 655 SOVIET UNION	3	A	24	MSH 39 CTP 42 MHP 300	7	690					
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MSH 11 CTP 21 MHP 182	7	70		HIST 700 INDEPEND RES SEM	3	A-	21				
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8.000	3	6	24	MSH 48 CTP 51 MHP 369	7	687					
MSH 24 CTP 27 MHP 183	7	500									

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

REMARKS: SEMESTER — TERM # Credit not applicable for Degree in Russian & East European Studies 12-14-79. Has Comp the req for the Mast. Deg.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS: ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY: DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

EXAMINATIONS:

Russian: Adv-1-77  
French: Adv-1-8-79

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR Area Code 313, 764-0280  
555 Literature, Science and Arts Building  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR 48109  
Unless otherwise indicated on the face of this record the student is eligible for readmission.

JAN 30 1981

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Registrar: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dean: \_\_\_\_\_

# Temple Beth Sholom

610 Gladys Drive  
Middletown, Ohio 45044

Feb. 14, 1985

Dear Rabbi Silver,


Enclosed are a few items of interest which I hope will give you insight into my scholarly potential and fitness for the CCAR Centennial Project. Included are:

1. My academic resume
2. Galleys to a forthcoming article in Modern Judaism (May, 1985)
3. Typescript of an article for American Jewish History on synagogue architecture - this was a difficult piece for me - Marc Raphael was most helpful.
4. Typescript of an article for American Jewish Archives on Leeser and Protestantization.

I hope to talk to Benny Kraut in a few days to go over what he has already done.

Even if nothing else comes of this (and I hope that's not the case), I look forward to receiving your comments on my work.

Best,



LANCE J. SUSSMAN, RABBI

SUSSMAN, LANCE J.JEWISH HISTORY

ADDRESS: 604 Gladys Dr.  
 Middletown, OH 45044  
 (513) 423-2799 (H)  
 (513) 422-8313 (O)

BIRTHDATE: July 17, 1954

FAMILY STATUS: Married, three children

SOCIAL SECURITY: [REDACTED]

## EDUCATION:

	1973	Hebrew University (Jerusalem)	Summer Ulpan
B.A.	1975	Franklin & Marshall College (PA)	Religious Studies
M.A.H.L.	1979	Hebrew Union College (OH)	Rabbinics and Jewish History
	1980	Hebrew Union College (OH)	Rabbinic Ordination
Ph.D.	(1985)	Hebrew Union College (OH)	Modern Jewish History

## HONORS:

H.R. Bloch Memorial Fellowship, 1980-1985  
 Wiener-Lowenstein Fellowship in American Jewish History, 1984  
 Mrs. Arthur Hays Sulzberger Prize in Homiletics, 1980  
 Phi Beta Kappa, 1975

## CANDIDACY EXAMINATION AREAS:

1. American Jewish History (Prof. Jacob R. Marcus)
2. American Jewish Historiography (Prof. Jonathan D. Sarna)
3. Modern European Jewish History (Prof. Michael A. Meyer)
4. American History and Historiography (Prof. Roger Daniels, University of Cincinnati)

## DISSERTATION TOPIC:

"The Life and Career of Isaac Leeser, 1806-1868: The Most Important  
 Jewish Religious Leader in Antebellum America."  
 (Advisers: Profs. Jacob R. Marcus and Jonathan D. Sarna)

## AREAS OF TEACHING COMPETENCE:

Primary: History of Judaism; Jewish Religious Thought; Modern Jewish  
 History; American Jewish History; Biblical, Rabbinic and  
 Modern Hebrew

Secondary: Bible; Rabbinics; Intertestamental Judaism; Religion  
 in America; Ethnicity in America; American History

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

1982-85	Lecturer, Docent Education Program, HUC-JIR (Jewish History)
1982-	Lecturer, Jewish Chatauqua Society
1981-82	Adjunct Instructor in Judaic Studies, University of Cincinnati (Modern Hebrew)
1980-82	Instructor, Introduction to Judaism, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Cincinnati, OH.

## RELATED EXPERIENCE:

1982-	Rabbi, Temple Beth Shalom, Middletown, OH
1981-82	Education Director, Valley Temple, Cincinnati, OH
1980-81	Youth Director, Wise Center, Cincinnati, OH

SUSSMAN, LANCE J.

JEWISH HISTORY

PUBLICATIONS:

A Biographical Dictionary and Source Book on Reform Judaism in America  
(Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., publication date - 1987).

"Another Look at Isaac Leeser and the First Jewish Translation of the Bible in the United States," Modern Judaism (May, 1985, galley available).

"Isaac Leeser and the Protestantization of American Judaism," American Jewish Archives (April, 1986, forthcoming).

"The Suburbanization of American Judaism as Reflected in Synagogue Architecture, 1944-1984" American Jewish History (forthcoming).

"Further Reflections on Jewish Demography and Reform Judaism," Journal of Reform Judaism 31(Fall, 1984): 31 ff.

"Reflections: The Writing of Indiana Jewish History," Memoirs and Reflections (Indiana Jewish Historical Society, 1983): 28 ff.

"'Toward Better Understanding': The Rise of the Interfaith Movement in America and the Role of Rabbi Isaac Landman," American Jewish Archives 34(November, 1982): 35 ff.

The Emergence of a Jewish Community in Richmond, Indiana (Indiana Jewish Historical Society, 1980).

Reviews:

Morton Borden, Jews, Turks, and Infidels. Religious Studies Review (forthcoming).

Saul J. Rubin, Third to None: The Saga of Savannah Jewry, 1733-1983. Religious Studies Review (forthcoming).

PAPERS PRESENTED:

"Isaac Leeser and the Protestantization of American Judaism," Summer Fellows Program, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH., June, 1984

"The Suburbanization of American Judaism as Reflected in Synagogue Architecture, 1944-1984," Ohio State University, Conference on Contemporary American Judaism, March, 1984.

"Another Look at Isaac Leeser and the First Jewish Translation of the Bible in the United States," Open History Seminar (by faculty invitation, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, OH, February, 1984.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Association for Jewish Studies, Organization of American Historians, Central Conference of American Rabbis, American Jewish Historical Society, Indiana Jewish Historical Society.

CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

Federal Emergency Food and Shelter Advisory Board (Butler Co., OH), Board- Planned Parenthood (Butler Co., OH), Board- Salvation Army (Middletown, OH), Member- Religious Services Committee (Middletown Regional Hospital), Board- Pastoral Counseling Services (Middletown, OH), Middletown Ministerial Association, Rotary Club International, Middletown YMCA, Jewish Community Center of Cincinnati.

REFERENCES:

Prof. Jacob R. Marcus, HUC-JIR, 3101 Clifton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45220.

Prof. Jonathan D. Sarna, HUC-JIR, 3101 Clifton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45220.

Prof. Michael A. Meyer, HUC-JIR, 3101 Clifton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45220.

Mrs. Susan Newmark, Director of Gallery and Docent Program, HUC-JIR,  
3101 Clifton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45220.

Prof. Benny Kraut, Director - Judaic Studies Program, University of  
Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221.

February 6, 1985

Rabbi Lance J. Sussman  
Temple Beth Shalom  
604 Gladys Dr.  
Middletown, OH 45042

Dear Lance:

I have read your essay several times with care, and find that it is still in need of revision. The introduction is the major problem--our largely lay readership will not understand the very first paragraph.

What is the "revival of organized religion in the late 1940s"? (p. 1) You must tell our readers about it; they are not historians of American religion.

What was the "transformation" you vaguely mention? What was "transformed"? Is this a synonym for "revival"? Was something "revived" and "transformed"? If so, what was it like before it was "transformed"? The point is that you must explain the religio-historical context very carefully.

Please do the same with the phrase "historical revival themes." What are the themes you have in mind?

And, in the same paragraph: is your point that the change in the 1940s was that synagogues were "no longer viewed merely as a place to pray"? If so, that's bad history. But do tell us exactly what you mean and avoid abstract, undefined phrases.

On p. 2 between the end of the first paragraph and the beginning of the second paragraph, your "flash-back" is not done well (though an excellent point is made). You drop the 1950s too quickly, and perhaps if you argue the apologia Judaica at the beginning of the paragraph you will strengthen it.

Now, at the top of p. 3, you drop back in time even further; hence, the 1950s are far away from us and this makes for an awkward flow or structure in the essay.

Also on p. 3, it is good that you make a comparative reference to German architecture, but you must prepare the reader for why you are doing it and why now. In fact, it might best be introduced later where it thematically makes more sense.

On p. 8, four lines from the bottom, you have another of the kind of phrases I do not like: "values and realities of American Jewish life after 1945." I do not know what they are--tell us.

In sum, look at the essay again and make sure that you assume nothing on the part of our readers. When you revise this draft, I think we will have a piece which could appear in June or September of this year!

Sincerely,

Marc

Marc Lee Raphael  
editor

Jeffrey S. Gurock  
associate editor

Rabbi Lance J. Sussman  
Temple Beth Sholom  
604 Gladys Drive  
Middletown, OH 45042  
513-422-8313 (O)  
513-423-2799 (H)

The Suburbanization of American Judaism as Reflected  
in Synagogue Building and Architecture, 1945-1975

The revival of organized religion in the late 1940s and early 1950s necessitated the radical recasting of Jewish self-expression in America. The most conspicuous evidence of this transformation was the creation of a new kind of synagogue, different from its predecessor both in appearance and function. The exterior of the synagogue no longer expressed a number of different historical revival themes. Instead, it boldly presented Jewish symbols either through architectural design or in the plastic and graphic arts in a contemporary, modern style. No longer viewed merely as a place to pray the new synagogue was, in the classical vocabulary of rabbinic Judaism, a House of Worship, a House of Study, and a House of Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

An unprecedented number of these new synagogues were built in the post-World War II era, largely because of important demographic changes in American society. Most of the 4,200 synagogues currently in use in the United States were either built or have been remodelled since World War II.<sup>2</sup> It might even be asserted that building new synagogues and temples became the central religious activity of American Jews in the post-war period.<sup>3</sup>

However, the suburban synagogue was not just a Jewish institution. It was also a symbol of suburbia. Its program promoted the values of a recreation and youth oriented society. Aestheti-

cally, the suburban synagogue embodied a sense of newness in everything from furniture and light fixtures to Torah covers and candelabra. Carefully sited with an expansive lawn and attractive landscaping, accessible primarily by automobile, the synagogue became a quintessential suburban institution.<sup>4</sup>

The stately urban synagogues of the pre-World War II era, on the other hand, expressed through their designs and derivative architectural styles the idea that Judaism was an ancient and integral part of Western Civilization. Their fluted columns, classical domes and impressive porticos suggested that the Jewish heritage was based on lofty, noble ideas that contributed to the strength and stability of society. Whether Greek, Moorish, or one of a variety of other period and revival styles, synagogue architecture in America always conveyed the idea that Judaism was in a Golden Age and that Jewish particularism was merely an instrument of a faith that was universalistic at its core.<sup>5</sup> The pre-World War II synagogue in America, in other words, was a monumental apologia Judaica.

The basic plan of the pre-1945 synagogue was similar to that of a church. It was dominated by a large sanctuary, big enough to accommodate the entire congregation, which occupied the major floor area of the structure. The sanctuary was generally a half-story above the street. Downstairs was a large, low ceilinged room, the vestry, used for social affairs and various educational activities. Sometimes modest "annexes" were built to house additional classrooms, meeting rooms, and various offices. However, the "annex" was, as a rule, architecturally inferior to the main structure.<sup>6</sup>

The most important trend in synagogue architecture during the early decades of the twentieth century was simply the gradual abandonment of the profuse ornamentation of the Gilded Age. Certain styles, especially Gothic Revival, were generally avoided because of their popularity in the Christian community. Instead, Greek, Byzantine, and "meshugothic" styles characterized synagogue architecture. [Fig. 1] In a searching and influential article in the Menorah Journal in 1925, Lewis Mumford suggested that the dome should become the distinctive feature of the American synagogue. On the other hand, he did not advocate any significant change in the synagogue's basic floorplan.<sup>7</sup>

The last great synagogue of the pre-World War II era was Temple Emanu-El of New York, built in 1929 at a cost of \$4,000,000. The style of the Fifth Avenue structure was dominated by early Italian Romanesque features [Fig. 2]. It had an impressive portico, a basilican floor plan with 2,600 permanent seats, and an "annex" in the rear. Its polished exterior masonry was the building's most conscious link with the streamlined art moderne aesthetic, then so popular in America.<sup>8</sup>

By contrast, European, particularly German, architects, influenced by theories of functionalism, were already developing flexible-space plans, introducing contemporary styles and employing new building materials in the field of synagogue architecture during the 1920's and 1930's. An extreme example of functionalist simplicity was the Liberal Synagogue at Hamburg (1931) with its bare, windowless facade. New synagogues also were built in British Palestine. One example, Jerusalem's Jeshurun Synagogue (1934-35), employed a similarly austere treatment. In the United States,

however, these innovations were not adopted until after World War II when the new role of the synagogue in America became manifest.<sup>9</sup>

The idea that the synagogue could broadly serve the cultural and social needs of the Jewish community was a product of the American urban environment. The Jewish Center Movement which emerged in second and third zones of settlement in American cities early in the twentieth century suggested to a number of people, especially Mordecai Kaplan, that a new type of Jewish community was emerging in America based on ethnicity and not religion. If the synagogue was to survive, Kaplan suggested, it would have to become part of a larger, a religious institutional framework. Of course, Kaplan could not have foreseen the new sociological function of religion after 1945. In the post-war era, the revitalized synagogue absorbed many of his ideas and Reconstructionism, his broad philosophy of Judaism, became a Jewish religious denomination.<sup>10</sup>

The new American synagogue which emerged after 1945, although it had roots both in modern European architecture and the Jewish Center Movement, was basically the product of the vast process of suburbanization which transformed American life after World War II. In the post-war era, religious affiliation was used by Americans as an important social mechanism for adapting to the new lifestyle of the automobile suburbs. Millions of Americans, recently located in the suburban rings developing around the cities, turned increasingly to organized religion to ease their sense of rootlessness as well as to transmit their respective traditions to their children. "America," Will Herberg observed, "changed from the 'land of immigrants,' with its thriving ethnic groups, to the 'triple melting

pot ' in which people tend[ed] more and more to identify and locate themselves in terms of three great sub-communities--Protestant, Catholic, Jewish--defined in religious terms."<sup>11</sup>

For the American Jew, the post-war "triple melting pot" was an anomaly. Jews comprised only 3.2 percent of the total American population, yet they found themselves enfranchised as the guardians of one-third of the American religious heritage. Their synagogues as institutions and as structures were inadequate to the task.<sup>12</sup>

To create the suburban synagogue, congregations and their national umbrella organizations turned to architects, most of whom were Jewish, in the hope that they could authentically interpret Judaism in their work. A widespread belief existed in the Jewish community after 1945 that the true Jewish style in art and architecture was about to be created and that the synagogue would emerge as a distinctively Jewish building. The great artistic challenge was to discover how to represent the eternality of Jewish values in a contemporary fashion.

Both because of its financial resources and its strong tradition of aesthetic reform, the Reform movement took a leading role in the architectural development of the suburban synagogue.<sup>13</sup> The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), the national synagogue organization of Reform Judaism, anticipated a boom in synagogue construction by publishing a modest guide in 1946 for congregations thinking of relocating in the suburbs. The following year, the UAHC sponsored two conferences on synagogue architecture. Organized by Rabbi Jacob D. Schwartz, UAHC Director of Synagogue Activities, the meetings were held in New York and Chicago in June and November of 1947, respectively. Participants included archi-

itects (Percival Goodman, Ely Jacques Kahn and Harry M. Prince), artists (Marc Chagall and Jacques Lipshitz), congregational rabbis and lay representatives, and faculty members from the Hebrew Union College (Abraham N. Franzblau and Franz Landsberger).<sup>14</sup>

Subsequently, in his 1948 State of the Union address, an impressed UAHC president, Maurice D. Eisendrath, made an "urgent plea for the establishment of a permanent Institute for Synagogue Building."<sup>15</sup> The UAHC then organized a panel of synagogue architects that travelled around the country to meet with congregational building committees. The Architects Advisory Panel of the UAHC, as it was later known, also developed a series of guidelines for new synagogue construction which the Union published.<sup>16</sup>

Another of the UAHC's projects was publication of a major work on synagogue architecture based on the various conferences and programs it had sponsored. In 1954, Peter Blake compiled and edited An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow: A Guide Book to Synagogue Design and Construction. "The purpose of this book," Blake wrote trandiosely, ". . . is nothing less than to lay the foundation for a great renaissance in the architecture of the synagogue."<sup>17</sup> The complex relationship between modern architecture and synagogue art was further explored in a second UAHC sponsored volume, Avram Kampf's Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965 <sup>New York,</sup> (1966).

While the UAHC promoted innovations in synagogue art and design at the national level, the work of the individual architect or team of architects was paramount at the congregational level. Architects also promoted new synagogue design in their professional organizations, particularly the American Institute of Architects,

and in a variety of journals. The two architects who had perhaps the greatest impact on the design and style of the suburban synagogue after 1945 were Eric Mendelsohn and Percival Goodman.

Eric Mendelsohn established important trends in the design of large post-war synagogues as well as in the use of new construction materials. Beginning in the 1920s, he designed important buildings on a monumental scale in Germany and, later, in England and British Palestine. In 1945, he moved to the United States and was involved in synagogue planning until his death in 1953. Examples of his work include the domed Park Synagogue (Cleveland, 1948) and B'nai Amoona (St. Louis, 1949) [Fig. 3] which features a parabolic roof. Mendelsohn's work is credited with having influenced many of the great architects of the twentieth century, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Philip C. Johnson, Walter Gropius, and Minoru Yamasaki to try their own hands at synagogue design.<sup>18</sup>

Percival Goodman designed and built more than fifty synagogues of all sizes in the post-war period, but made especially noteworthy contributions to the design and style of the small synagogue. His ideas about intimacy in synagogue architecture were derived from his reading of Martin Buber. Goodman attempted to translate Buber's dialectic concept of I-Thou into synagogue design by using special lighting, wood, and, most importantly, by collaborating with artists to develop new forms of synagogal art. Likewise, Goodman designed his synagogues to achieve spacious interiors without a massive facade. Perhaps his most lasting contribution to synagogue architecture, however, was the emphasis of the ark as a conspicuous external feature of the synagogue (B'nai Israel, Millburn, New Jersey, 1951). Goodman believed that the ark, used

in a manner comparable to a church steeple, could explicitly define a building as a synagogue.<sup>19</sup>

More spectacular but less successful attempts to make the suburban synagogue distinctively Jewish involved transforming the entire structure into a symbol of Judaism. Just as the floor plans of some churches incorporated the shape of a cross, the new synagogue could be designed, for instance, as a Star of David. Attempts were also made at creating new symbols. Frank Lloyd Wright, for example, designed Beth Shalom (Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, 1959) as a glass, concrete and steel replica of Mount Sinai [Fig. 4]. Avrom Kampf, writing of Walter Gropius, says that "in his search for a genuinely twentieth-century synagogue, . . . [he] merged the shape of the turbine with the shape of the Decalogue, and thus satisfied his own belief in the machine and that of Baltimore's Oheb Shalom Congregation in the Torah."<sup>20</sup> However, in most instances, symbolism in the design of the synagogue either could not be seen from inside the structure or was so abstract that it could not be recognized by most congregants.

Architects also attempted with some success to reformulate the basic design of the American synagogue. No longer exclusively modeled after a church, the post-World War II synagogue broadly reflected trends in the architecture of religious institutions, auditoriums, public schools, and suburban buildings. Perhaps even more than style, the distribution of interior space expressed the values and realities of American Jewish life after 1945.

The most important new architectural feature of the suburban synagogue was the expandable sanctuary. First used by Cecil Moore in a synagogue in Tucson, Arizona in 1945, the idea was popularized

by Eric Mendelsohn. The plan called for linking the sanctuary with the social hall on the same level. Separated by a foyer with movable walls, the sanctuary and social hall could be joined to greatly expand seating capacity for the High Holy Days and special events.

Although multi-functionalism was a hallmark of architecture in general after 1945, it is interesting to note that the expandable sanctuary was more widely used in American synagogues than in churches. One reason for this was that churches in the post-war period drew 50 to 80 percent of their total membership to Sunday worship on a weekly basis. It made sense, therefore, for church architects to design sanctuaries large enough for the entire congregation. To some extent, the decision to keep the church social hall a distinct architectural unit also reflected the sharper differentiation made by Christianity than by Judaism between the sacred and the mundane.

In many ways, the social hall, now often larger than the sanctuary, was the heart of the new synagogue. It reinforced the idea that Judaism, although a religious tradition, was also a "way of life."<sup>21</sup> Equipped with a kitchen and a stage, the social hall could be used for a wide variety of activities, ranging from formal banquets to school assemblies.

However, the size of the sanctuary and the social hall often made their use inappropriate for small gatherings. Additional partitions were sometimes used to reduce the volume of a given room or even to create a number of smaller areas. In other cases, particularly in Conservative synagogues, several smaller, specialized facilities were built, including a sanctuary for daily worship, called a Beth Midrash, and youth chapel in the school

building.

The religious school was another important and often very visible component of the suburban synagogue. Closely modeled after the public school in design and appearance, synagogue schools had no distinctive features that identified them as Jewish institutions. Initial plans for synagogue schools often did not include youth group lounges or adult study areas because no parallel facilities existed in the secular institutions. Libraries, separate school auditoria, and facilities for physical education were also rareties in new suburban synagogues, a reflection of the supplemental nature and limited intellectual goals of synagogue educational programs.

The central office, however, became a conspicuous feature of large synagogues after 1945. It reflected both the bureaucratic needs of the suburban congregation and the important role of office work in post-World War II society. A typical administrative center included a waiting area, a main business office, an executive director's office, a mailing and equipment room, and a filing area. Similarly, the rabbi's office was moved to a central location, enlarged, and modeled as a showcase of professionalism.

The appearance of the new synagogue with its expandable sanctuary, large social hall, impressive school building and modern administrative center generated a considerable amount of excitement in the American Jewish community. The realization that something new had been created was carefully documented by Rachel Wischnitzer in her Synagogue Architecture in the United States <sup>Philadelphia,</sup> (1955), the first major scholarly work on the topic. "Perhaps it was necessary," wrote one astute reviewer, "that an entirely new

phase in the shaping of the American Jewish house of worship began before its history could be written and a proper interpretation of its significance given."<sup>22</sup>

The "new phase" in American synagogue architecture is now almost forty years old. Since 1946, the basic design of the suburban synagogue has remained constant. By contrast, the external appearance of the post-World War II synagogue has shown little homogeneity. Designed in a variety of contemporary architectural styles, synagogues have reflected, with varying degrees of success, congregations' attempts to express their institution's uniqueness and independence. Thus, the hope expressed early in the post-war period that a distinctive modern American synagogue be created has only partially been fulfilled.

Several important developments in synagogue art and architecture in recent years also indicate that the American synagogues of the future may not resemble the post-war suburban edifice. Privatism, a resurgence of traditional religious observance, and the movement to preserve historic buildings are a few of the many forces that are currently reshaping the appearance of the American synagogue. Moreover, the nature of contemporary synagogue finances and the changing pattern of American Jewish demographics suggest that few new synagogues will be built in the foreseeable future to give full architectural expression to these developments. Instead, changes in synagogue architecture will likely be more subtly expressed through redecorating, remodeling, and restoring.

Just as suburbanization transformed the design and appearance of the American synagogue after World War II, privatism, and to some extent elitism, have removed new synagogues from public view

in recent years. Beginning in the late 1960s, many synagogues were sited in wooded areas, well off major thoroughfares (e.g., Wise Center, Cincinnati, 1976). No longer conceived as highly visible symbols of Judaism, synagogues began to serve individual rather than communal needs. Weddings and Bar/Bat mitzvahs, viewed primarily as private events, started to undermine the social cohesiveness of many congregations and the utility of buildings constructed primarily to serve as social centers. Moreover, elitism, the use of synagogue membership to show one's high social status or aspirations thereto, in contrast to the use of the synagogue as a vehicle for active participation in organized Jewish life, has further eroded the function of the synagogue as a communal institution.<sup>23</sup>

The Havurah Movement, on the other hand, which also began in the late 1960s, sought to reestablish the concept of a Jewish religious community as a social process based on personal commitment. Part of the early Havurot's rebellion against the impersonality of "establishment" Judaism in America was a rejection of the architecture of the suburban synagogue. Just as "downtown" synagogues did not reflect the reality of Jewish life for suburbanites after 1945, so the suburban synagogue did not express the highly spiritual concerns of the Havurah Movement. When Havurot were organized within already existing congregations, many groups preferred to meet in private homes rather than in their synagogues for similar reasons.<sup>24</sup>

During the 1970s, American Jews also began to reevaluate their attitude toward the art and architecture of the pre-World War II synagogue. At exhibitions of synagogue architecture commemorating America's Bicentennial held at the Spertus College of

Judaica in Chicago and Brandeis University, pre-World War II synagogues were, for the first time in a generation, presented in a positive fashion.<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati sponsored in 1982 an exhibit of nineteenth century American synagogues. Rabbi William A. Rosenthal, whose collection of photographs formed the basis of the Cincinnati exhibit, enthusiastically concluded that "a mighty contribution to religious art as well as to communal identity was made by our nineteenth-century forebears."<sup>26</sup> By contrast, when a 1963 exhibit on "Recent American Synagogue Architecture" was held at the Jewish Museum in New York, its organizer, Richard Meier, forthrightly maintained that "none of the buildings exhibited here in drawings, photographs, and models were intended to exploit historical sentimentalism dependent on tangible reminders of the past."<sup>27</sup>

In fact, "tangible reminders of the past" have become the hallmark of current interest in synagogue architecture. For instance, the Lloyd Street Synagogue in Baltimore (1845, 1964) and the Plum Street Synagogue in Cincinnati (1866, 1975) have been restored and registered as national historic landmarks. The Touro Synagogue of Newport, Rhode Island (1763) was selected in 1982 as the first American synagogue to be featured on a United State postage stamp.

Similarly, antiques and relics from old synagogues are increasingly being placed in newer facilities. For instance, the Scheuer Chapel at the Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati, <sup>1912</sup>remodeled 1949 and 1971) features a restored <sup>eighteenth</sup> ~~seventeenth~~ century Polish-Lithuanian Ark [Figs. 5 and 6].<sup>28</sup> To create a sense of continuity with the past, many congregations are also hanging photographs of former

religious school classes in hallways originally intended to be left undecorated.

The need to remodel synagogues both to provide new services (e.g., day care) and to make them more energy-efficient is currently necessitating a general reevaluation of synagogue design in the United States. Baltimore's four Reform congregations, for instance, <sup>occasionally</sup> hold joint services to curtail the expense of heating and cooling their large sanctuaries. Har Sinai, one of those congregations, has also added a senior citizens' complex to its building.

The current situation of the American Jewish community, therefore, suggests a need for a synagogue environment that nourishes neo-traditionalism and provides a wide variety of human services, especially for the growing number of Jewish aged. To some extent, developments in liturgy and programming have already partially met these needs and begun to offset the corrosive effects of privatism and elitism.<sup>21</sup> There is also evidence that the synagogue edifice itself is reflecting the return to tradition and the providing of human services. Perhaps, once again, a new type of synagogue will emerge in the future.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The basic work on the history of Synagogue Architecture in the United States is Rachel Wischnitzer, Synagogue Architecture in the United States: History and Interpretation (Philadelphia, 1955). More broadly, see Brian de Breffny, The Synagogue (New York, 1978) and Richard Meier, "Synagogue--Architecture--Contemporary Period," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem, 1971), Vol. 15, cols. 620-629. See also Linda Perlis Black, Synagogue Architecture and Planning: An Annotated Bibliography (Council of Planning Librarians, Exchange Bibliography #1469, February, 1978), 24 pp. and Hannah R. Kuhn, Synagogue Architecture: Primarily in the United States: A Selective [Annotated] Bibliography (typescript, 1977, copy in Klau Library, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati), 16 pp.

<sup>2</sup>The scope of the synagogue building program was massive. However, the exact number of synagogues built from 1945 to 1975 is unknown. Estimates of the capital invested in new synagogue construction tend to be conservative. For example, Lloyd Gardner has suggested that less than \$200,000,000 was spent on building synagogues from 1945 to 1962; see his "United States, 1945-1790," Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 15, col. 1643. But even low estimates combined with subsequent operational and maintenance costs has led Daniel Elazar to conclude "that the total of all funds raised by individual synagogues approximately equals the amount raised by federations," quoted from his Community and Polity: The Organiza-

tional Dynamics of American Jewry (Philadelphia, 1976), pp. 305-6.

<sup>3</sup>Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy (Garden City, New York, 1967, 1969), p. 170.

<sup>4</sup>Marshall Sklare, "The Sociology of the American Synagogue," Social Campus XVIII, 1971, No. 3, pp. 375-384; reprinted in his America's Jews (New York, 1973) and in Understanding American Judaism, Jacob Neusner, ed. (New York, 1975), Vol. 1, pp. 91-102.

<sup>5</sup>On the relationship of universalism and particularism in Jewish thought, see Benny Kraut's excellent article "Judaism Triumphant: Isaac Mayer Wise on Unitarianism and Liberal Christianity" AJS Review 7-8 (1982-83), pp. 179-230.

<sup>6</sup>No study of synagogue "annexes" has been made. The absence of classrooms in early American synagogues can be explained partly by the reliance of synagogue design on church architecture and the fact that Jewish education before the Civil War was not exclusively the responsibility of individual congregations. Even the original Sunday schools were independent operations; see David Uriah Todes, "The History of Jewish Education in Philadelphia: 1782-1873" (Ph.D. diss., Dropsie College, 1952), pp. 57-71, and Joseph R. Rosenbloom, "Rebecca Graetz and the Jewish Sunday School Movement in Philadelphia," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society 48 (1958) pp. 71 ff.

<sup>7</sup>Lewis Mumford, "Toward a Modern Synagogue Architecture," Menorah Journal (June, 1925), pp. 225-252. See also Albert S. Gottlieb, Synagogue and Sunday School Architecture (New York, 1919?) 22 pp.

<sup>8</sup>Gerald Bernstein, "Two Centuries of American Architecture" in Two Hundred Years of American Synagogue Architecture (American

Jewish Historical Society, 1970), p. 17 and Charles Butler, "The Temple Emanu-El, New York," Architectural Forum 52 (February, 1930), pp. 151-154.

<sup>9</sup>On the historical development of the European synagogue, see Rachel Wischnitzer, The Architecture of the European Synagogue (Philadelphia, 1964), pp. 218-247. See also Harold Hammer-Schenk, *Untersuchungen zur Synagogengeschichte in Europa* (Frankfurt, 1974) and his

<sup>10</sup>On the Jewish Center Movement, see Benjamin Rabinowitz, The Young Men's Hebrew Associations: 1854-1913 (New York, 1943) pp. 79-81, passim (reprinted from Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, Number 37, 1947) and Deborah Dash Moore, At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews (New York, 1981), pp. 129-147. On Reconstructionism, see Charles S. Liebman, "Reconstructionism in American Jewish Life," American Jewish Yearbook 71 (1970), pp. 3-99.

<sup>11</sup>Will Herberg, Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology (New York, revised edition, 1960), p. 56 and his "The Postwar Revival of the Synagogue" Commentary 9 (April, 1950), pp. 315-325.

<sup>12</sup>Herberg, Protestant-Catholic-Jew, pp. 195-198; Nathan Glazer, American Judaism (Chicago, 1957, 1972), pp. 106-128; and Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein, "The Problem of Synagogue Architecture: Creating a Style Expressive of America" Commentary 3 (March, 1947), p. 241.

<sup>13</sup>Although the UAHC was more <sup>involved</sup> ~~proactive~~ than the United Synagogue in promoting innovations in synagogue architecture, more Conservative than Reform synagogues were built. The role of the Conservative synagogue as a model to both Reform and Orthodox congregations is discussed by Marshall Sklare, "Recent Developments

*Untersuchungen zur Synagogengeschichte in Europa (Frankfurt, 1974) and his Synagogen in Deutschland, Geschichte einer Baugattung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (1780-1932), 2 vols. (Hamburg, 1981).*

in Conservative Judaism," Midstream 18 (January, 1972), p. 3. On the UAHC, see Sefton D. Temkin, "A Century of Reform Judaism in America," American Jewish Yearbook 74 (1973), pp. 3-75.

<sup>14</sup>"[UAHC] Eastern Conference on Synagogue Building: An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow" (June 22-3, 1947, New York), copy at American Jewish Archives, n.p. See also "Creating a Modern Synagogue Style: A Discussion" in Commentary 3 (June, 1947), pp. 537-544. Rabbi Jacob D. Schwartz was succeeded by Rabbi Eugene Lipman as UAHC Director of Synagogue Activities.

<sup>15</sup>Maurice D. Eisendrath, "The State of Our Union," November 14, 1948, p. 12. For a comprehensive view of Eisendrath's career, see the forthcoming senior rabbinic thesis by Avi Schulman at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati. On the UAHC Architects' Advisory Panel, see William Robbins, "Architects' Panel Helps to Shape Synagogue Evolution," New York Times, Sunday, October 8, 1967, 8:1.

<sup>16</sup>UAHC pamphlets on synagogue construction include Accredited List of Synagogue Artists and Craftsmen, n.d.; Architects Advisory Panel of the UAHC, n.d.; Check Lists For The Development of a Synagogue Building Program, n.d.; Guide to Planning Your Synagogue Building, n.d.; and How to Select an Architect, reprinted from "Facts About Your Architect and His work" (American Institute of Architects), n.d. See also Eugene Mihaly, The Implications of the Jewish Concept of Prayer for Synagogue Architecture, delivered at the Second National [UAHC] Conference on Synagogue Architecture and Art, 1957 (mimeograph copy at Klau Library, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati).

<sup>17</sup>Peter Blake, ed., An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow: A Guide Book to Synagogue Design and Construction (New

York, 1954), p. vii. See also his Form Follows Fiasco: Why Modern Architecture Hasn't Worked (Boston, 1977).

<sup>18</sup>Abraham Erlik, "Eric Mendelsohn," Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 11, cols. 1323-1324.

<sup>19</sup>"Percival Goodman," ed., Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 7, col. 782.

<sup>20</sup>Avram Kampf, Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965 (New York, 1966), p. 37. For Gropius' views on Oheb Shalom, see Architectural Record (June, 1964) p. 140 and Charles Jeneks, Modern Movements in Architecture (New York, 1973) pp. 110 and 121, who points out architectural similarities between Oheb Shalom and Gropius' design for an auditorium at Baghdad University (Iraq, 1958).

<sup>21</sup>Samuel S. Cohon, Judaism: A Way of Life (New York, 1948). On the social hall, see Stanley Feldstein, The Land That I Show You: Three Centuries of Jewish Life in America, (Garden City, New York, 1979), pp. 595-607.

<sup>22</sup>Stephen S. Kayser, "Book Review--Synagogue Architecture," Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society 46 (1956), pp. 64-66. See also Franz Landsberger in American Jewish Archives 8 (1956), pp. 143-144.

<sup>23</sup>On "privatism," see Sam Bass Warner, Jr., The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth (Philadelphia, 1968) pp. 3-4. See also Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations (New York, 1979).

<sup>24</sup>Jacob Neusner and Ira Eisenstein, The Havurah Idea (New York, n.d.); Gerald Bubis and Harry Wasserman, Synagogue Havurot:

A Comparative Study (Philadelphia, 1973); Bernard Reisman "The Havurah: An Approach to Humanizing Jewish Organizational Life," in Human Relations: Practicum for Senior Students, Robert C. Katz, ed. (typescript, Cincinnati, 1980?), pp. 123-136; and Harold M. Schulweiss, "Restructuring the Synagogue," Conservative Judaism 27 (Summer, 1973). See also Paul Cowan, An Orphan in History: Retrieving a Jewish Legacy (New York, 1982), passim.

<sup>25</sup> Synagogue Architecture in America (Spertus Museum, 1975), 12 pp.; Faith and Form (Spertus Museum, 1976), 101 pp.; and Two Hundred Years of American Synagogue Architecture (Rose Art Museum, American Jewish Historical Society, Brandeis University, 1976), 63 pp.

<sup>26</sup> William A. Rosenthal, "The American Synagogue in the 19th Century: Unfettered and Unintimidated," in The American Synagogue in the Nineteenth Century (American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, 1982), p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Meier, "Introduction," Recent American Synagogue Architecture (Jewish Museum, New York, 1963), p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> ~~28~~ Gerald Bubis, "The Synagogue and the Seventies: What Will Its Leaders Need to Know," Reconstructionist 37 (October, 1971), pp. 7-14 and Eric C. Friedland, "The Synagogue and Liturgical Developments," in Movements and Issues in American Judaism: An Analysis and Sourcebook of Developments Since 1945, Bernard Martin, ed., (Westport, Connecticut, 1978), pp. 217-232 and passim.

→ <sup>28</sup> Fred Natkin, "Hebrew Union College Chapel" (typescript, American Jewish Archives, 1969); HUC-JIR Bulletin, February, 1949, II, 1; and Cincinnati Enquirer (June 6, 1975), p. 51.

A Comparative Study (Philadelphia, 1973); Bernard Reisman "The Havurah: An Approach to Humanizing Jewish Organizational Life," in Human Relations: Practicum for Senior Students, Robert C. Katz, ed. (typescript, Cincinnati, 1980?), pp. 123-136; and Harold M. Schulweiss, "Restructuring the Synagogue," Conservative Judaism 27 (Summer, 1973). See also Paul Cowan, An Orphan in History: Retrieving a Jewish Legacy (New York, 1982), passim.

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<sup>26</sup>William A. Rosenthal, "The American Synagogue in the 19th Century: Unfettered and Unintimidated," in The American Synagogue in the Nineteenth Century (American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, 1982), p. 3.

<sup>27</sup>Richard Meier, "Introduction," Recent American Synagogue Architecture (Jewish Museum, New York, 1963), p. 8.

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# American Jewish Archives

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January 14, 1985.

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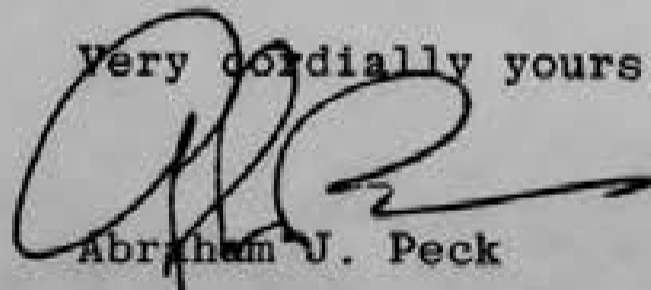
Dear Lance:

I am very pleased to inform you that we will publish your paper on "Isaac Leeser and the Protestantization of American Judaism."

Both Dr. Marcus and I have made a number of suggestions and corrections which I hope you will incorporate in your manuscript. Since you are here it will certainly be easier to discuss the final polishing of the piece and I look forward to working with you.

With all good wishes, I am

Very cordially yours,



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## ISAAC LEESER AND THE PROTESTANTIZATION OF AMERICAN JUDAISM

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In attempting to understand Judaism in America during the nineteenth century, historians have largely focused on the development of the Reform movement and on the origins of Conservative Judaism. Significantly less attention has been paid to the history of traditional Judaism in America prior to 1880.<sup>1</sup> Yet, <sup>one can argue</sup> ~~it is a fact~~ <sup>(+ traditional Judaism?)</sup> that Orthodoxy dominated American Jewish religious life during most of the nineteenth century. In 1861, according to Leon Jick, whose <sup>own</sup> book, The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870 (~~Hanover, NH, 1976~~), emphasizes the centrality of the Reform movement in nineteenth-century American Judaism, there were more than 200 Orthodox synagogues in the United States and only eight Reform congregations. "Among the eight," Jick added, "were a number that would be considered, by twentieth-century standards, Conservative."<sup>2</sup>

[Orthodox Judaism in ante-bellum America was a relatively large and unquestionably complex phenomenon. A core of five Sephardic synagogues were established during the eighteenth century. Although they followed the Sephardic rite, by 1720, the majority of their members were of Central European descent. Beginning in 1802, with the founding of the Rodef Sholom congregation in Philadelphia, Ashkenazic Jews began organizing synagogues of their own. As immigration swelled their ranks, new synagogues, particularly in larger cities, were increasingly

organized along sub-ethnic lines. By the 1840s, highly Americanized Orthodox Ashkenazic congregations, such as New York's B'nai Jeshurun, successfully competed with the Sephardic synagogues for the leadership of the Jewish community.

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1840  
1840* Lay domination of the early American synagogue, widespread ignorance of Jewish law, the absence of ordained rabbis until 1840, and the need to conform to the mores of American society combined to make religious accommodationism a normative part of Orthodox Jewish life in America prior to the Civil War.

Although this trend was most pronounced among reformers, it also broadly existed among traditionalists. In fact, many of the most important accommodative strategies of American Jews during the first half of the nineteenth century were first developed within the context of the native Orthodox community. The main thrust of the movement to accommodate traditional Judaism to American society involved the adaptation of select features of American Protestantism, which allowed Jews to maintain their own distinctive identity and yet be a part of mainstream religious life in nineteenth-century America.

The Protestantization of American Judaism actually began at the start of the nineteenth century with the break-up of the original kehilloth (synagogue-communities) and the rise of radical Jewish congregationalism. Subsequently, beginning in the 1830s, a movement to imitate specific practices and theological emphases of American Protestantism, which did not violate either traditional Jewish law or doctrine, started among Orthodox Jews in America. By the 1850s, a clear trend toward

Jewish denominationalism also developed, which neither the accommodative traditionalists nor the moderate reformers could avert. Thus, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a profoundly transformed American Judaism had become, sui generis, a unique expression of the Jewish heritage.<sup>3</sup> (perhaps cite quote in Korn article in N.H.B. book.)

The most important spokesman of traditional Judaism in the United States who selectively advocated the Protestantization of American Judaism was Isaac Leeser (1806-68).<sup>4</sup> Four of his Protestantizing activities were eventually taken over by the American Jewish community as a whole. These included regular vernacular preaching, the transformation of the traditional office of hazzan into a Jewish ministry, the establishment of the Jewish Sunday School, and the widespread use of an English-language Jewish Bible translated by Leeser himself. Leeser also developed an eclectic theology that stressed the themes of man's sinfulness, the coming of a Messiah, and the restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. Although a full-scale treatment of his theology is beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting to note that a radical reformer, Samuel Hirsch, contemptuously--but, in part, correctly--called Leeser's theology an "Abklatsch" (poor imitation) of English-Christian Methodism.<sup>5</sup>

Leeser was a ubiquitous figure in American Jewish life from 1830 to 1868. "Practically every form of Jewish activity which supports American Jewish life today," wrote historian and Reform Rabbi Bertram W. Korn, "was established or envisaged by this one man" and "almost every kind of publication which is

essential to Jewish survival was written, translated or fostered by him." Indeed, it is no exaggeration to call the ante-bellum period in American Jewish history, the "Age of Leeser."<sup>6</sup>

Included among his firsts are: the first volumes of sermons delivered and published by an American Jewish religious leader (1837-68); the first complete American translation of the Sephardic prayerbook (1837); the first Hebrew primer for children (1838); the first successful American Jewish magazine-newspaper, The Occident and American Jewish Advocate (1843-69); the first American Jewish publication society (1845); the first complete English translation of the Ashkenazic prayerbook (1848); the first Hebrew "high school" (1849); the first English translation of the entire Bible by an American Jew (1853); [the first Jewish defense organization--the Board of Delegates of American Israelites (1859)]; and the first American Jewish theological seminary--<sup>the short-lived</sup> Maimonides College (1867). *He also served as a vice pres. of the A. J. C.*

Leeser's role as the leading Protestantizer of American Judaism in the first half of the nineteenth century is <sup>best understood in</sup> ~~actually~~ part of the general history of religion in America during that period.<sup>7</sup> <sup>Following</sup> In the aftermath of the "Second Great Awakening," resurgent Protestant churches sought to make America a godly nation. Missionary activity was increased at home and abroad with impressive results. Between 1800 and 1830, church membership in the United States nearly doubled. Various Protestant denominations supported the American Bible Society (1816) and the American Tract Society (1825), which succeeded in broadly disseminating religious literature in all sectors of

American society. Finally, Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others established numerous theological seminaries as well as secular colleges, thereby fortifying Protestantism's intellectual foundations. By the beginning of the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, the role of Protestantism in American society had become so great that Alexis de Tocqueville observed upon his arrival in the United States in 1831 that "there is no country in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America."<sup>8</sup>

As a tiny minority in a vast land, Jews needed to ally <sup>was faced with the task of</sup> themselves with the Protestant majority, but without endangering <sup>preserving the integrity of their communal & religious lives and, at the same time, participate</sup> the integrity of either their communal or religious lives.<sup>9</sup>

Fortunately, Protestants were generally inclined to look benevolently on the Jews. First, they were the children of Abraham, living representatives of the Israelites of the Bible. As such, even the foreignness of Jewish immigrants was forgivable. Moreover, Jews played an important role in God's ultimate plan for humanity. The presence of a remnant of the House of Israel in America was perceived as proof that the Almighty had not forgotten His promise of redemption. On the other hand, Catholics, not Jews, received the brunt of religious animus during the ante-bellum period as a result of nativist suspicions about the purpose of the Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy and fear that the growing Catholic population would eventually achieve a majority in the American electorate.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, a high degree of social contact existed between ante-bellum Jews and their gentile neighbors. Jews frequently attended church as guests or curious on-lookers and became familiar with many Christian practices. Likewise, Christians occasionally attended synagogues, creating a need among Jews to showcase Judaism in its best possible light.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, American Judaism during the Early National Period was both institutionally and intellectually weak. American Jewry, whose population was only 3,000 as late as 1815, suffered from an "orthodoxy of salutary neglect" that had prevailed in American Jewish religious life since the seventeenth century. *A high rate of* rampant intermarriage, apostasy, and indigenous calls for reform, all testified to the precarious condition of the religious life of American Jewry. Innovators and traditionalists alike agreed that if Judaism was to survive in America, a new vision of Judaism would be needed to inspire its adherents, redefine its goals, and, ultimately, provide it with a viable institutional infrastructure.

It is possible that Leeser was more deeply influenced by the Episcopalian Church than by other Protestant denominations. In both Richmond, Virginia, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania--the two cities where Leeser lived--the Protestant-Episcopal Church was particularly strong, especially among the cities' social and intellectual elite.<sup>12</sup> Leeser shared their "High Church" liturgical sensibilities and probably looked favorably on their form of church government. The problem among Episcopalians of re-establishing a Bishopric in America after the Revolution is

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even analogous to Leeser's lifelong concern with organizing a national ecclesiastical structure, including a <sup>Bet</sup> Bet Din (Jewish religious court), among Jews. In his own life, he had good personal relations with several Episcopalian clergymen, especially Dr. Joseph Jaquett, a scholarly Episcopalian minister in Philadelphia, with whom Leeser co-edited a Biblia Hebraica (1848).<sup>13</sup> Lastly, there is little question that Leeser was an Anglophile and corresponded regularly with such notable English Jews as Grace Aguilar and Sir Moses Montefiore, as well as with British rabbis.<sup>14</sup>

From the very beginning of his public career as a Jewish religious leader, Isaac Leeser clearly understood that to save American Judaism from extinction it would be necessary to adapt it more completely to the American scene. <sup>about</sup> ~~He~~ enthusiastic ~~by~~ the industriousness of his age and ~~being~~ devoted to the religion of his ancestors, Leeser systematically attempted to lay the foundations for a new, vital Judaism in America during the ante-bellum period. Leeser believed, <sup>according to one historian,</sup> ~~writes Joseph Blau,~~ "that there should be a conscious and selective acceptance of American cultural elements into Jewish life, lest the unconscious, unthinking and unselective espousal of Americanism go too far."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>Leeser</sup> Leeser arrived in the United States in the spring of 1824 at the age of <sup>eighteen</sup> 18. He was born in the little village of Neuenkirchen in Prussian Westphalia on December 12, 1806, and moved to nearby Duellen in 1814 after the death of his mother. In Duellen, Leeser received a traditional but limited formal

Jewish education in a local heder. In 1820, after his father's death, Leaser resettled in the provincial capital, Muenster, and enrolled at a local Catholic academy to begin his secular education. The Muenster Academy, which had attained full university status in 1717, had been reduced to a gymnasium after Prussia's reabsorption of the Kingdom of Westphalia in 1818.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, Leaser was able to pursue a broad course of studies, including mathematics and Latin.<sup>17</sup>

While studying at the Academy, Leaser also attended the Jewish Institute of Muenster, where he came under the influence of the Landrabbiner, Abraham Sutro (1784-1869). "Sutro," <sup>according to a biographer,</sup> ~~writes~~ ~~Lawrence Grossman~~, "was part of the first generation of German rabbis who combined strict traditionalism with certain innovations. ... He wore an old-fashioned beard and was one of the earliest rabbis to deliver German sermons."<sup>18</sup> However, Leaser's education in Germany did not include advanced halachic training. Later in life, he frequently pointed out to friends and foes alike that he never prepared for rabbinic ordination and always deferred in matters of Jewish law to those of greater learning.

In 1824, orphaned, penniless, and with few prospects for improving his situation, Leaser accepted the invitation of his prosperous maternal uncle, Zalma Rehine, to resettle in Richmond, Virginia. Association with the Jews of Richmond and the cultural environment of tidewater Virginia had a decisive impact on Leaser. In just five years, he not only mastered English but was also able to synthesize his traditional Jewish

upbringing in Germany with his new life in America. When Leeser left Richmond in 1829 to become the hazzan of Congregation Mickveh Israel in Philadelphia, he had already formulated a Protestantized bibliocentric approach to Judaism, which became the backbone of his program for American Jewry.<sup>19</sup>

In a manuscript written in Richmond but not published until 1834, Leeser outlined his belief in a historical revelation at Sinai and concluded that the only source of religious truth was the Bible. Faith in the veracity of the biblical account and in the truth of biblical doctrines was, according to Leeser, the exclusive basis of Judaism. He further maintained that neither human reason nor intuition could ever discover eternal truth without the benefit of historical revelation. Moreover, in his opinion, no later Jewish teaching could possibly contradict the Bible. He maintained that Judaism was fully developed prior to the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C.E. and that the rabbis correctly applied biblical teachings in post-biblical times.<sup>20</sup>

Leeser further developed his bibliocentric approach to Judaism in the hundreds of sermons and lectures he delivered from 1830 to 1867.<sup>21</sup> Of all his accomplishments, his role as the pioneer Jewish preacher in the United States was closest to his heart. On being honored by friends in March 1861, Leeser responded to the tribute by saying, "You have spoken of my sermons; and indeed, if I have any merit, it is to these that I point."<sup>22</sup> Yet, up till 1830, when he gave his first sermon, Leeser had heard but a dozen addresses, either from the pulpit or elsewhere.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, formal preaching in the synagogue in both Europe and America was generally limited to two Sabbaths per year and at special events that were often connected to official government requests for public demonstrations of religious concern. In Germany, reformers were the first to preach in the vernacular on a regular basis. They consciously modelled their sermons on the pattern of Christian homiletics and even used Christian guides to the art of preaching.<sup>23</sup> In England, on the other hand, a Committee of Elders at the Orthodox Bevis Marks Sephardic Synagogue in London, recommended in 1828 that "approved" sermons be given on a Scriptural text every Saturday afternoon.<sup>24</sup>

Although Leeser was aware of developments in Germany and England, he was more directly influenced by the strong American Protestant tradition of preaching, which extended back to the Puritans. "Sermons," he wrote in 1845, could "exercise an influence over the mind of society, which we now can hardly have any idea of. What does any one think would be the fate of protestant Christianity without the constant appeal to the fear and reason of its professors from the ten thousand pulpits which scatter information and admonition many times during every week?"<sup>25</sup> Similarly, he believed the fate of Judaism greatly depended on the establishment of the sermon as a permanent part of synagogue life in the United States.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the American pulpit was filled with many fine preachers, including Henry Ward Beecher (Congregationalist), Peter Cartwright

(Methodist), and Charles G. Finney (Revivalist).<sup>26</sup> In Philadelphia, Leeser and many of his congregants had direct contact with William Henry Furness (1802-96), a Unitarian minister who was a popular speaker with Christians and Jews alike.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, between 1826 and 1834, more than 3,000 lyceums were established in the United States as forums for adult education.<sup>28</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that a group of women from Mickveh Israel approached Leeser and asked him to give "popular discourses" on the Jewish religion.<sup>29</sup>

The influence of Protestantism on Leeser's religious thinking was particularly strong during his early years as a preacher. For example, during the course of 1830--the first year he preached--Leeser's sermon titles included, "Confidence in God," "Want of Faith," and "Pious Reflections."<sup>30</sup> In his sermons, Leeser frequently talked about the truth and permanence of biblical teachings, discussing man's battle with sin and irreligion and, most of all, emphasizing Judaism's eschatological doctrines, including the belief in a Messiah, Restoration, and the promise of eternal life. Later in his career, Leeser continued to discuss the same topics. However, during the 1840s and 1850s, he not only differentiated between his religious views and Christian theology but also polemicized against the non-Orthodox beliefs espoused by Jewish reformers in America.

Although Leeser did not experience any resistance to introducing the sermon into the synagogue, and eventually received official sanctioning from the Board of Mickveh Israel to preach (1843), neither did he receive much encouragement

beyond the close circle of friends who had originally prevailed upon him to assume the role of a Jewish preacher.<sup>31</sup> He probably did not become a popular preacher because of the staidness of his public presentations. According to the fashion of the day, each of his discourses lasted approximately 45 minutes. He began with an original prayer and then developed a single theological theme around a biblical verse selected from the weekly portion. He rarely told stories or used other illustrative materials and consciously chose not to appeal to his congregants' emotions. Most often, his only illustrations were additional biblical references.

Despite the literary shortcomings of his own work, Leeser made the sermon an integral part of the Jewish worship service in the United States. He published a ten-volume collection of his sermons, traveled around the country as a guest preacher, and reproduced a broad sampling of American and European sermons in his monthly journal, The Occident and American Jewish Advocate. Almost singlehandedly, Leeser made sermons a form of devotional literature widely read by American Jews during his times. Most importantly, he viewed preaching as the central activity of the Jewish religious leader in America and advocated the transformation of the office of hazzan into a Jewish ministry based on the Protestant model.

In the absence of ordained rabbis in America until the 1840s, the hazzan, a semi-trained religious officiant, had already become the principal Jewish religious specialist in the American synagogue prior to the Revolution.<sup>32</sup> However, in the

Colonial synagogue, the hazzan served as a religious functionary under the direct control and strict supervision of the congregational board of trustees. In addition to chanting the service, his duties included teaching the children Hebrew along with the rudiments of the Jewish religion. In small congregations and remote locations, the hazzan also served as the shochet, mohel, and shamas. Salaries were very low, and the individual hazzan was not held in high esteem by the congregation.

To some extent, however, the eighteenth-century American hazzan was already considered as a "minister." Several factors contributed to this early evolution of the American Jewish ministry. First, Jews frequently had to be represented to the general public by a minister, and the hazzan was the only official who could serve in that role. The second factor was that early American Jews had very little Jewish knowledge and their hazzanim, however poorly trained, were still the only available resident experts in Jewish law. Third, already by 1654, New York had authorized only two officials, a minister of religion or a justice of the peace, to perform the marriage ceremony. Likewise, state laws of incorporation for religious societies often specified particular ministerial functions.<sup>33</sup>

Gershom M. Seixas (1746-1816), by virtue of his exceptional personality, was the first to demonstrate the full potential of the office of hazzan in America.<sup>34</sup> He was respected by the two congregations he served, Shearith Israel (New York, 1768-76 and 1784-1816) and Mickveh Israel (Philadelphia, 1780-84), and was

considered a colleague by many Christian clergymen. ~~He~~ <sup>no!</sup>  
~~represented the Jewish community of New York at the first~~  
~~inauguration of George Washington~~ and also served as a trustee  
 of Columbia College. (48) However, Seixas was an exception. Most of  
 the early American hazzanim were intellectually and socially  
 unable to match his achievements and simply performed their  
 limited tasks without distinction.

Thus, the board of Mickveh Israel certainly did not expect  
 a 22-year-old Isaac Leiser to promote actively the  
 professionalization of the office of hazzan when they hired him  
 in the fall of 1829. However, a series of degrading incidents  
 early in Leiser's career quickly led him to the conclusion that  
 only a trained, adequately paid, contractually secure, native  
 American Jewish ministry could properly serve the religious  
 needs of Jews in the United States. In an editorial article in  
 the Occident in 1846, he wrote:

Let it then be a first step in the reforma-  
 tion of the personnel of our ministry to place  
 its members above want, and then demand that  
 every incumbent should be fit to grace the  
 station which he fills.<sup>35</sup>

Leiser clearly viewed the Protestant clergy as a model for  
 the American Jewish ministry. In an article, "The Demands of  
 the Times," published in October 1844, Leiser noted that "there  
 is hardly any Christian society which does not strain every  
 nerve to have an intelligent and virtuous ministry, composed of  
 men who would honour any calling by their acquisition and

general good conduct."<sup>36</sup> "Jews," he wrote subsequently, "have hitherto been neglectful in the greatest duty they owe themselves, to rear up from among themselves persons to fill the important office of minister of religion."<sup>37</sup>

Unfortunately, few members of Mickveh Israel liked Leeser as a person or fully understood his efforts on behalf of Judaism. They simply expected him to behave as a paid functionary and be obedient to the officers of the congregation. After twenty-one stormy years as hazzan at Mickveh Israel, Leeser left his post in anger and disappointment.<sup>38</sup> However, in numerous editorials in the Occident, Leeser continued to make the question of the role of the Jewish ministry in the United States an important issue of the day.<sup>39</sup> Equally important is that, through his vast personal contacts as well as in the Advertising Supplement to the Occident, Leeser played a crucial role in the placement of scores of hazzanim in the country for more than a quarter of a century.<sup>40</sup>

For more than 25 years, Leeser also urged the establishment of a "College for the Education of Youth for the Ministry" to create an American Jewish ministry.<sup>41</sup> Again, he used Christian theological schools as his model and appealed to affluent Jews for material support.

We ask those whom God has blessed with plenty, with superabundance, with more than they or their families can conveniently consume, whether they will not do that for Judaism which so many Christians do for Christianity? In every direction colleges and schools are rising up, even in far off Wisconsin ... supported by the munificence of churches or individual endowments. Jews alone stand aloof. ... They seem to feel no shame at the humiliating spectacle of their spiritual dependence.<sup>42</sup>

only a handful for  
the students

1864

Unfortunately, Maimonides College (1867-73), the fruit of his labors, only graduated <sup>four - no graduation</sup> four students before closing. However, as the first American Jewish theological seminary, Maimonides College helped establish Leeser's vision of a Jewish ministry as the norm for Jewish religious leadership in the United States.

Leeser was fully aware that what he termed a "Jewish minister" was not a rabbi in the traditional sense of the word. In an editorial entitled "The Ministry," in August 1866, he openly acknowledged the novelty of his views.

English!!

Perhaps it will be urged as making against us that by our present plans we shall be able to raise Rabbins in this country for ... there will be no time for extensive Talmudical study. We confess that it is so. But for the present and years to come, we need ministers and teachers more than those thoroughly versed

English

in all the casuistry of Judaism, and for this purpose we are perfectly willing to depend on Europe, or Asia, or Africa for some considerable time, till the period when Jewish literature and learning shall have pitched their tent on the western Hemisphere.<sup>43</sup>

need to emphasize institutional aspect and not theological -

Not only did Leeser seek to Protestantize Jewish religious leadership in America, he also hoped to create a new type of Jewish congregant whose piety and religious education was modelled after those of his Christian neighbors. "We want ministers," Leeser wrote in the Occident, "so also do we want an enlightened community."<sup>44</sup>

Jewish education, Leeser believed, was the way to attain this goal. After several unsuccessful attempts at creating a Jewish day school, Leeser, <sup>gave his full support to</sup> ~~along with~~ Rebecca Gratz, <sup>who</sup> opened ~~a~~ <sup>the first</sup> Jewish Sunday School in Philadelphia in 1838. Two years after its opening, Leeser wrote the following:

Sunday schools are nothing new among our Christian neighbours, as many sects of them have had such establishments for shorter or longer periods. Among our people, however, the case is very different, as far as the knowledge of the writer extends. ... As may easily be imagined, some prejudice was at first manifested by various persons, who fancied that they

can't find  
any more  
of this  
type of  
Sunday  
schools

[Hebrew]

discovered an objectionable imitation of gentile practices in this undertaking, forgetting that it is the first duty of Israel to instil knowledge of divine things in the hearts of the young, and this institution was eminently calculated to bestow this necessary blessing alike upon rich and poor without fee or price. It is but seldom that so noble an aim has been sought after, begun solely for the glorification of our Maker and the well-being of his people; it is therefore gratifying to record, that this unfounded prejudice has nearly died away, and one cannot give a better evidence of the fact, than that now fully one hundred children are enrolled, and what is more, that nearly all attend whenever the weather is at all favorable, and this despite the great distance which many of the scholars and teachers have to walk, living as they do in almost every part of the city and suburbs.<sup>45</sup>

While still in Richmond, Leeser had already helped Isaac B. Seixas, a nephew of Gershom Seixas and the hazzan of Beth Shalome, ~~to~~ run a Sabbath and ~~the first~~ <sup>Sabbath - Sunday</sup> day school. However, this early experiment proved to be ephemeral. The Philadelphia Sunday School, on the other hand, succeeded for several reasons. First, the Protestant Sunday School by 1830 had ceased to

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Not the same day school  
May 1830 1750's

function as a general school for poor and frontier children and had fully embraced a religion-oriented curriculum.<sup>46</sup> Second, the public school movement was beginning to strike deep roots in the general community and often left Jewish parents with few options as to when they could arrange lessons for their children's Jewish education. Third, the ~~Leeser-Gratz~~ <sup>Sunday School</sup> school was supported by the women of the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, many of whom served as teachers.<sup>47</sup> Lastly, Leeser, now a mature individual and an established author, was in a position to help supply the school with appropriate children's religious literature.

Leeser's Catechism, an expansion of Eduard Kley's Catechismus Der Mosaischen Religion (Berlin, 1814), as well as several works written by some of the Sunday-School teachers under Leeser's supervision, quickly became the standard text of Jewish Sunday Schools in the United States.<sup>48</sup> Initially the Sunday School had to rely on Christian educational materials in which religiously objectionable passages were either pasted over or torn out by Gratz's staff.<sup>49</sup> Although Leeser preferred Jewish parochial schools and advocated their establishment throughout his career, his efforts to develop Jewish Sunday Schools proved more enduring.

Leeser's literary magnum opus and most lasting contribution to the Protestantization of Judaism in America was his English translation of the Bible (1853-54).<sup>50</sup> He drew on a wide variety of Jewish sources, especially the German-language Bible edited by Leopold Zunz (1838) and the one annotated by Ludwig Philipson

(185<sup>4</sup>X). Leaser's Bible was neither a translation of a translation nor an entirely original work. Rather, using his own religious views as criteria, he pieced together an English-language Bible based on Jewish exegetical traditions. With regard to style, however, Leaser endeavored "to adhere closely to the ordinary English version," which, he maintained, "for simplicity cannot be surpassed."<sup>51</sup> In fact, Leaser viewed his Bible as the Jewish successor to the King James version. "It would be a species of mental slavery," he wrote his readers, "to rely for ever upon the arbitrary decree of a deceased King of England, who certainly was no prophet, for the correct understanding of Scripture."<sup>52</sup> "Though the slight verbal changes grated upon the ears of us the older generation," a sympathetic Rosa Mordecai recollected in 1901, "the constant reading and reciting from it in Sunday School made it familiar to the young."<sup>53</sup>

The "Leaser Bible" originally was complemented by a very modest commentary that mainly reported variant translations from German-Jewish Bibles. Subsequently, with the second edition, the commentary was reduced to a few notes placed at the end. Thus, like other "Protestant" Bibles, the Leaser version emphasized the "Word" itself and not the commentaries. In its appearance, the "Leaser Bible" also functioned as a Protestantizing instrument. Initially, it appeared in a quarto size, appropriate for use on a pulpit. Later, it was also bound in white leather and used for sacramental-like purposes at weddings and confirmation services.<sup>54</sup> Thus, Leaser's rendition

of the Holy Scriptures clearly identified American Jewry with its biblical past and even drew high praise from many Christians, including Charles Hodge, the leading "Old-School Presbyterian" theologian who called for a similar work by a Protestant scholar.<sup>55</sup>

The legacy of Leeser's Protestantizing activities was both rich and enduring. His Bible won wide acceptance among both the Sephardim and the German Jews. Later, in the early part of the twentieth century, it was widely distributed among East European Jews by the Hebrew Publishing Company. Similarly, the Leeser-inspired Sunday School movement was first accepted among the Sephardim. With the decline of Jewish parochial schools after 1855, Sunday Schools also found acceptance in German congregations and thus became the dominant form of Jewish education in the United States. During the 1850s, vernacular preaching in the American synagogue also won broad acceptance. Besides Leeser, Samuel M. Isaacs, Max Lilienthal, and, most importantly, Morris J. Raphall, all contributed to the popularization of the Jewish sermon in America.

The creation of a Jewish ministry in the United States, however, proved to be a highly problematic undertaking. "In the emerging American-Jewish pattern," writes Leon Jick, "congregational life continued to be dominated by laymen, and rabbis were frequently reminded of the precariousness of their position."<sup>56</sup> Thus, at the beginning of the 1850s virtually every religious leader of standing was repudiated by his congregation. Lilienthal, Wise, and Leeser lost their

positions, Leo Merzbacher's post at Emanu-El was in serious jeopardy, and Abraham Rice resigned and went into the dry goods business. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Leiser's vision of a professionalized Jewish ministry became the norm for Jewish religious leaders in the United States and still broadly serves as the basis for the American rabbinate, except in the most sectarian areas of Orthodox Jewish life.

Remarkably, as the spectrum of Jewish religious life in America broadened during the 1840s and 1850s with the rise of Reform Judaism and the arrival of ordained Orthodox rabbis in the United States, Leiser did not abandon his efforts to adapt traditional Judaism to American culture. Until the end of his life, he remained convinced that he could create a context wherein a Protestantized Orthodoxy could serve as a unifying force among American Jews and even attempted on several occasions to organize national ecclesiastical bodies to regulate Jewish religious life in the United States.<sup>57</sup> His contributions to the Protestantization of mid-nineteenth-century American Judaism had an affect on the development of modern Orthodoxy as well as Reform and, ultimately, Conservative Judaism in America. Thus, in effect, he played an important role in the transformation and perpetuation of the Jewish heritage in America.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Jeffrey S. Gurock, American Jewish History: A Bibliographical Guide (New York, 1983), pp. 33-39.

<sup>2</sup>Leon Jick, The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870 (Hanover, NH, 1976), p. 173.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph L. Blau, Judaism in America: From Curiosity to Mind Faith (Chicago, 1976), pp. xi, 8, 9, 51-53. Also, see Sidney E. Mead, Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America (New York, 1963) and his "Denominationalism: Protestantism in America," Church History 23 (1954), pp. 291ff.

<sup>4</sup>There is no standard biography of Leeser. For the first account of his life, see Mayer Sulzberger, "The Late Rev. Isaac Leeser," Occident 25 (1868), pp. 593-611, republished in American Jewish Archives 21 (1969), pp. 140-148 (hereafter, AJA). Book-length studies of Leeser include: Lance J. Sussman, "Confidence in God:" The Life and Preaching of Isaac Leeser (1806-1868) (ordination thesis, Hebrew Union College, 1980); E. Bennett, An Evaluation of the Life of Isaac Leeser (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yeshiva University, 1959); Maxine Seller, Isaac

Leeser: Architect of the American Jewish Community (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1965). Also see Bertram W. Korn, "Isaac Leeser: Centennial Reflections," AJA 19 (1967), pp. 127-141. On Leeser's opposition to Reform Judaism, see Henry Englander, "Isaac Leeser," Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook 28 (1918), pp. 213-252. On Leeser in the context of the Philadelphia Jewish community, see Maxwell Whiteman, "Isaac Leeser and the Jews of Philadelphia," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society 48 (1959), pp. 207-244, (hereafter, PAJHS). Whiteman's article complements E. Digby Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentlemen, The Making of a National Upper Class (Glencoe, IL, 1958). Also, see his "The Legacy of Isaac Leeser," in Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830-1940 (Philadelphia, 1983), Murray Friedman, ed., pp. 26-47.

<sup>5</sup>Die Deborah 13 (December 27, 1867), p. 98.

<sup>6</sup>Maxwell Whiteman and Edwin Wolff, The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson (Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 372-373.

<sup>7</sup>William G. McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform (Chicago, 1978), pp. 98-140. Also see Donald G. Matthews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis," American Quarterly 21 (1969), pp. 23-43.

<sup>8</sup>Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York, 1945), vol. I, Phillips Bradley, ed., p. 303.

<sup>9</sup>Jonathan D. Sarna, Jacksonian Jew: The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah (New York, 1981), p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>Bertram W. Korn, "The Know Nothing Movement and the Jews," in his Eventful Years and Experiences (Cincinnati, 1954), pp. 58-78. Also see Ray A. Billington, The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism (New York, 1938) and Thomas T. McAvoy, A History of the Catholic Church in the United States (Notre Dame, IN, 1969).

<sup>11</sup>The concept of "showcasing" Judaism was suggested to me by Prof. Jonathan D. Sarna.

<sup>12</sup>E. Digby Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentlemen, passim, and his Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia (Boston, 1979, 1982). On Episcopalianism, see Raymond W. Albright, History of the Protestant Episcopal Church (New York, 1964); Powel M. Dawley, The Episcopal Church and Its Work (Greenwich CT, 1955); and Walter G. Posey, "Protestant Episcopal Church: American Adaptation," Journal of Southern History 25 (1959), pp. 3ff.

<sup>13</sup>Isaac Leeser and Joseph Jacquett, Biblia Hebraica (Philadelphia, 1848). According to T. H. Darlow and H. F. Monle, Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture (London, 1903), vol. 2, pp. 725, 729, the Leeser-Jacquett text was probably based on a Hebrew Bible published by Samuel Bagster (London, 1824, 1844). On Jacquett, see Franklin Spencer Edmonds, History of St. Mathew's Church, Francisville, Philadelphia, 1822-1925 (Philadelphia, 1925), pp. 72-73, copy at Archives of the Episcopal Church, Austin, TX. Also see Matitiah Tsevat, "A Retrospective View of Isaac Leeser's

Biblical Work," Essays in American Jewish History (Cincinnati, 1958), Bertram W. Korn, ed., pp. 295-313.

✓ 14 On Grace Aguilar (1816-47) and Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885), see Henry Samuel Montias, Eminent Israelites of the Nineteenth Century (Philadelphia, 1980), pp. 12-15, 236-240.

Also see Jacob Neusner, "The Role of English Jews in the Development of American Jewish Life, 1775-1850," YIVO Annual 12 (1958-59), pp. XXX-XXX. Examples of Leeser's correspondence with British Jews include: Isaac Leeser to David Meldola, Philadelphia to London, December 1841 (Dropsie College, Leeser Papers); Moses Montefiore to Isaac Leeser, East Cliff Lodge, 7' Rainsgate to Philadelphia, January 3, 1843 (American Jewish Historical Society, Leeser Papers); and Occident 2 (1844), pp. 340-342. 7'

15 Joseph C. Blau, Modern Varieties of Judaism (New York, 1964, 1966), p. 83.

16 W. Engel Kemper, "University of Muenster," Catholic Encyclopedia (New York, 1911), vol. 10, p. 639.

17 When he immigrated to America, Leeser brought his student notebooks with him. Original manuscripts are housed at Dropsie College, Leeser Papers.

18 Lawrence Grossman, "Isaac Leeser's Mentor: Rabbi Abraham Sutro, 1784-1869," in Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein Memorial Volume (New York, 1980), Leo Landman, ed., p. 156; and Bernhard Brilling, "Abraham Sutro (1784-1869)," Westfälische Zeitschrift 123 (1973), pp. 51-64, and "Beifrage zur Biographie des letzten Landrabbins von Muenster, Abraham Sutro (1784-1869)," Uchim 2?

III (1972), pp. 31-64. Also see Isaac Leeser, Jews and the Mosaic Laws (Philadelphia, 1834), p. iii; Discourses on the Jewish Religion (Philadelphia, 1867), vol. I, Dedication Page; and Occident 18 (1860), p. 274. Abraham Sutro to Isaac Leeser, Muenster to Richmond, February 24, 1829; Isaac Leeser to Abraham Sutro, Richmond to Muenster, November 1825; Esther Sutro to Isaac Leeser, Muenster (?) to Philadelphia, July 17, 1864; Esther Faber Sutro to Isaac Leeser, Ochtending (Coblentz) to Philadelphia, October 19, 1865; and Esther Sutro Faber to Isaac Leeser, Muenster to Philadelphia, December 2, 1866--photostatic copies in the possession of Jacob Rader Marcus. A small collection of Sutro Papers is housed at the Leo Baeck Institute (New York).

<sup>19</sup>Isaac Leeser, Jews and the Mosaic Law. Several times during the course of his career, Leeser referred to Jews and the Mosaic Law as the definitive statement of his belief in revelation and as a summary of his view of the Bible, see Occident 3, p. 189, and 12, p. 539.

<sup>20</sup>Jews and the Mosaic Law, pp. 7-9, 13, 15-21. Also see Isaac Leeser, "The Jews and their Religion," in The Paja Kuulesia, I (Philadelphia, 1844), Daniel Rupp, ed., pp. 362-366, and Discourses 6, p. 195; 7, p. 157, 262; 8, p. 103; and 9, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup>Leeser's sermons have been virtually ignored by historians. An annotated selection from his first sermon, "Confidence in God," appears in Joseph L. Blau and Salo W. Baron, The Jews of the United States, 1790-1840 (New York,

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1964), vol. 2, pp. 578-582. A recent article by Robert V. Friedenberg, "Isaac Leeser: Pioneer Preacher of American Judaism," Religious Communication Today (September 1983), pp. 22-27, contains numerous errors.

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 22 Discourses 10, p. 313. Also see Isaac Leeser, "Preface" (to Jerusalem), complement of Occident 9, p. xiv.

23 Alexander Altman, "The New Style of Preaching in Nineteenth-Century German Jewry," in Studies in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Intellectual History (Cambridge, MS, 1964), Alexander Altman, ed., pp. 65-116.

24 Louis Jacobs, "Preaching," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem, 1971), vol. 13, cols. 1003-1004.

25 Occident 2, p. 318.

26 On ante-bellum Protestantism, see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (Garden City, NY, 1975), parts IV and VI; vol. 1, pp. 471-614, and vol. 2, pp. 79-115; Winthrop S. Hudson, American Protestantism (Chicago, 1961); and Martin E. Marty, Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America (New York, 1970).

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 27 F. T. Persons, "William Henry Furness," Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1931), vol. 7, p. 80. On Jews attending his church to hear him preach, see Rebecca Gratz to Merin Gist Gratz, Philadelphia to Lexington, KY, May 28, 1837, in Letters of Rebecca Gratz (Philadelphia, 1929), David Philipson, ed., p. 237.

28 Carl Bode, American Lyceum: Town Meeting of the Mind (New York, 1956), and Vern Wagner, "Lecture Lyceum and Problem

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of Controversy," Journal of the History of Ideas 15 (1954), p. 119.

<sup>29</sup>Discourses 1, p. 2, see note.

<sup>30</sup>Discourses 1, p. v-vi.

<sup>31</sup>M. Whiteman, "Isaac Leeser and the Jews of Philadelphia," p. 213, n. 34.

<sup>32</sup>No study of the office of hazzan, 1654-1840, has been conducted. See Jonathan D. Sarna, "Introduction," American Jewish Archives 35 (November, 1983), pp. 90, 97-98, as well as bibliographies in Jewish Communal Services in the United States: 1760-1970 (New York, 1972), Norman Linzer, ed., pp. 128-248; and Rabinnic Authority: Papers Presented Before the Ninety-First Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (New York, 1982), Elliot C. Stevens, ed., pp. 111-118.

<sup>33</sup>Hyman Grinstein, The Rise of the Jewish Community at New York, 1654-1860 (Philadelphia, 1947), pp. 84-86.

<sup>34</sup>Jacob R. Marcus, The Handsome Young Priest in the Black Gown: The Personal World of Gershom Seixas (Cincinnati, 1970).

<sup>35</sup>Occident 3, p. 582.

<sup>36</sup>Occident 2, pp. 313-314.

<sup>37</sup>Occident 3, p. 577.

<sup>38</sup>On Leeser's relation to Mickveh Israel, see Isaac Leeser, "To the Parness and Members of the Congregation Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia," May 15, 1840 (typescript, Dropsie College Library), 15 pp.; A Review of the Late Controversies Between the Rev. Isaac Leeser and the Congregation Mikveh Israel (pamphlet, Philadelphia, 1850), 18 pp.; A Review of "The Review"

(pamphlet, New York, 1850), 11 pp., copy in Korn Papers, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>39</sup>On Leeser's view of the "Jewish Ministry," see Occident 3 (1845-46), pp. 218-221, pp. 577-83; 9 (1851), pp. 385-94, 433-43; 10 (1852), pp. 177-187, 225-238; 15 (1857-58), pp. 493-496; and 18 (1860-61), p. 304. More broadly, see Burton S. Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in the United States (New York, 1976); Thomas C. Haskell, The Emergence of Professional Social Science and the American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth Century Crisis of Authority (Urbana, 1977); Donald M. Scott, From Office to Profession: The New England Ministry, 1750-1850 (Philadelphia, 1978).

<sup>40</sup>Prof. A. Karp of Rochester, NY, directed me to the Occident's Advertising Supplement as an important but neglected source of data about the American Jewish experience, 1843-69. For example, see Advertising Supplement to the Occident 24, no. 7 (1866), p. 3, which includes five notices by congregations looking for hazzanim/teachers:

#### HAZAN WANTED

The congregation B'nai Israel, Augusta, GA, is desirous of engaging the services of a gentleman competent to officiate as Hazan and Preacher, at a fixed salary of

\$1500 per annum and perquisites. An additional income may be expected by teaching a Hebrew school. Applicants, stating qualifications, should address either

LEWIS LEVY, President,

WILLIAM M. JACOBS, Secretary

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WANTED

By the Hebrew Congregation Amunath Abothenu, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, a competent man to act as Chasan, Shochet, Mohel, and Teacher in German and Hebrew. Salary, \$600 and perquisites. Applicants will please address at once the under-signed. None but those fully competent need apply. References required.

L. FALK, Secretary

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WANTED

At St. Paul, Minnesota, a competent person to act as Teacher and Shochet. Salary, about \$700 per annum. Applicants address

I. MENDELSON,

St. Paul, Minnesota

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## WANTED

By the congregation Shaaray Shamayim of Mobile, Ala., a Rabbi and Lecturer, competent to preach in the German and English languages, and superintend a Hebrew School. None need to apply but those fully qualified, and with the best of references as to character and abilities. Salary \$4000 and perquisites. Applicants will address


S. RICHARD, Chairman,  
Mobile, Ala.

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## WANTED

A Hebrew Teacher, officiating at the same time as Chasan and Shochet, for the Kahal in Montgomery, Ala., on the 1st of August. Salary per annum, \$2000 to \$2500. Communications will be received by the undersigned, and the necessary information and all particulars given. Single men preferred.

H. WEIL, President,  
Montgomery, Ala.

 <sup>41</sup>Bertram W. Korn, "The First American Jewish Theological Seminary: Maimonides College, 1867-1873," in his Eventful Years and Experiences: Studies in Nineteenth Century American Jewish History (Cincinnati, 1954), p. 164.

<sup>42</sup>Quoted in Solomon Solis Cohen, "The Jewish Theological Seminary: Past and Future--Address Delivered at the Twenty-Fifth Annual Commencement, New York, June 2, 1918" (New York, 1919), p. 44.

<sup>43</sup>Occident 24, p. 200.

<sup>44</sup>Occident 2, pp. 320-321.

<sup>45</sup>Isaac Leeser, "Memorial on Sunday Schools (1840)," in Blau and Baron, Jews in America, vol. 2, pp. 447-449. Also see Joseph R. Rosenbloom, "Rebecca Gratz and the Jewish Sunday School Movement in Philadelphia," PAJHS 48 (1958), pp. 71ff, and David Uriah Todes, The History of Jewish Education in Philadelphia (Ph.D. Dissertation, Dropsie College, 1952), pp. 43-56.

<sup>46</sup>Jack L. Seymour, From Sunday School to Church School: Continuities in Protestant Church Education, 1860-1929 (Washington, 1982), and Edwin W. Rice, The Sunday School Movement and the American Sunday School Union (Philadelphia, 1917). Also see Frank Freidel, Harvard Guide to American History (Cambridge, 1974), section 24.6.5, pp. 520-521.

<sup>47</sup>On the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, see Henry Samuel Morais, The Jews of Philadelphia: Their History from the Earliest Settlements to the Present Time (Philadelphia, 1894), pp. 127-129, 143.

<sup>48</sup>Isaac Leeser, Catechism for Young Children (Philadelphia, 1839); Simha Cohen Peixotto, Elementary Introduction to the Scriptures (Philadelphia, 1840); and Eleaza Pyue, Scriptural Questions (Philadelphia, 1857).

<sup>49</sup>Jacob R. Marcus, The American Jewish Woman: A Documentary History (New York, 1981), pp. 135-143.


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<sup>50</sup>Isaac Leeser, The Twenty-Four Books of the Holy Scriptures (Philadelphia, 1853). Also see his The Law of God (Philadelphia, 1845), 5 vols.

<sup>51</sup>Leeser, Holy Scriptures, p. iv.

<sup>52</sup>Isaac Leeser, The Twenty-Four Books of Holy Scripture (Philadelphia, 1856, 2nd ed.), pp. iii-iv.

<sup>53</sup>Rosa Mordecai, "Personal Recollections of Rev. Isaac Leeser" (American Jewish Archives, Englander Papers, 1901), n.p.

<sup>54</sup>The Klau Library (HUC-JIR) has  Block Publishing and Printing Company editions of the Leeser Bible from 1888, 1891 (fourth edition), 1894, 1897, 1899, 1901, 1905, 1907, 1912, and 1914.

<sup>55</sup>Occident 12, p. 360. Also see Alexander A. Hodge, The Life of Charles Hodge (New York, 1880, 1969), and Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life (New York, 1973), 2nd ed., pp. 162-168.

<sup>56</sup>Leon Jick, The Americanization of the Synagogue: 1820-1870, p. 130.

<sup>57</sup>Joseph Buchler, "The Struggle for Unity: Attempts at Union in American Jewish Life, 1654-1868," American Jewish Archives 2 (1949), pp. 21-46, and Maxwell Whiteman, "Isaac Leeser and the Jews of Philadelphia," pp. 207ff.

Lance J. Sussman

ANOTHER LOOK AT ISAAC LEESER AND  
THE FIRST JEWISH TRANSLATION  
OF THE BIBLE IN THE UNITED STATES

Isaac Leeser (1806-68) was the most important Jewish religious leader in the United States during the Ante-bellum Period.<sup>1</sup> Leeser's lengthy list of accomplishments include the establishing of the vernacular sermon as a permanent feature in the American synagogue, the editing and publishing of the first successful Jewish "newspaper" in the United States (*The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, 1843-69), and the founding of the first American rabbinical school (Maimonides College, 1867). "Practically every form of Jewish activity which supports American Jewish life today," observed Bertram W. Korn, "was either established or envisaged by this one man," and "almost every kind of publication which is essential to Jewish survival was written, translated or fostered by him."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Maxwell Whiteman and Edwin Wolf did not exaggerate when they concluded that "the years of American Jewish history from 1830 until the close of the Civil War are, in fact, the 'Age of Leeser.'"<sup>3</sup>

Leeser's literary *magnum opus* and most lasting contribution to Judaism in America was an English translation of the Hebrew Bible (1853-54), complete with "short explanatory notes." According to Harry Orlinsky, Leeser's Bible, as it has come to be known, quickly became "the standard Bible for English-speaking Jews, especially in America . . . [and] were it not for the appearance of the Jewish Publication Society's translation in 1917, would have retained much of its popularity to this day."<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, contemporary scholarly attention has focused rather narrowly on Leeser's skill as a translator and, more subjectively, on the literary quality of his work.<sup>5</sup> Other aspects of the Leeser Bible have virtually been ignored. A close reading of the Leeser Bible and exegetical notes reveals that both are representative of his modern Orthodox understanding of Judaism. Moreover, as an *apologia* for modern Orthodoxy, the Leeser Bible also typifies the religious viewpoint of traditional Judaism in America from the time of the Revolution until the Civil War.

LEESER'S EDUCATION

Born in the little village of Neuenkirchen in Prussian Westphalia on December 12, 1806, Leeser moved to nearby Dulmen at the age of eight after the death of his mother. In Dulmen, Leeser received a traditional but limited formal Jewish education. He studied with several *melamdim* (traditional Hebrew instructors) including Rabbi Benjamin Cohen, a student of Ezekiel Landau. Even the provincial *chadarim* (traditional Jewish elementary schools) where Leeser studied were affected by the sweeping reforms in Jewish education promoted by Israel Jacobsohn in the Consistory of Westphalia. Thus, at an early age, Leeser had probably already become familiar with the new catechetical literature used in the modern Jewish schools of the period, examples of which he would later translate into English.<sup>6</sup>

In 1820, shortly after his father's death, Leeser moved to the provincial capital, Muenster, and enrolled at a local Academy to begin his secular education. The Muenster Academy, a Catholic institution, had attained full university status in 1771. But in 1813, following Prussia's reabsorption of the Kingdom of Westphalia, the school's status was reduced to that of the gymnasium. Nevertheless, Leeser was able to pursue

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a broad course of studies including mathematics and Latin. Some of the classes were taught by Jesuit priests. Their warm acceptance of a young Jewish student helped to create in Leeser a broader hope for mutual understanding between Christians and Jews.<sup>7</sup>

While studying at the Academy, Leeser also attended the Jewish Institute of Muenster where he came under the influence of the *Land-rabbiner*, Abraham Sutro (1784-1869). Leeser greatly admired the man and remained in contact with Sutro until his own death in 1868. Sutro, writes Lawrence Grossman, "was part of the first generation of German rabbis who combined strict traditionalism with certain innovations. . . . He wore an old-fashioned beard and was one of the earliest rabbis to deliver German sermons." Sutro published numerous responsa in Jacob Ettlinger's *Shomer Zion Hane'eman* and wrote an important polemic against Reform Judaism, *Milhamot Adonai* (1836). His accommodation to the multifaceted changes in German-Jewish society, can be seen in his counter-polemic and defense of Judaism, *Des Land-Rabbiners Sutro der Schrift des Herrn H.B.H. Cleve* (1824), in which, among other things, he endorses the modernization of Jewish religious pedagogy. In 1826, Professor Alexander Haindorf, with Sutro's approval, founded a Jewish normal and vocational school in Muenster. As District Rabbi, Sutro also acted in behalf of Jewish Civil Rights, inspiring his young disciple to do likewise.<sup>8</sup>

Leeser's education in Germany did not include advanced halachic (Jewish legal) training. He probably left the Muenster academy when he was seventeen years old. Later in life, he forthrightly pointed out to friends and foes alike that he never prepared for rabbinic ordination and always deferred in matters of Jewish law to those of greater learning. However, what Leeser did acquire in Germany was the ability to be "progressive in everything that did not touch the ritual or traditional doctrines of Judaism."<sup>9</sup>

Early in 1824, having left school and with few prospects for making a living, Leeser accepted (with Sutro's approval) the invitation of his prosperous maternal uncle, Zalma Rehine, to resettle in Richmond, Virginia. Hoping to continue his nephew's general education, Rehine arranged for Leeser to study with a private tutor. However, the instructor left Richmond after a brief ten-week engagement. Undaunted, Leeser continued to read broadly on his own, frequently seeking intellectual stimulation from Richmond's more learned Jews.<sup>10</sup>

One of the most important influences on Leeser during this period was a scholarly, semi-retired schoolmaster, Jacob Mordecai (1762-1838) who resettled in Richmond in 1818 after selling his well-known private academy for girls, which he had owned and operated in Warrenton, North Carolina, since 1809.<sup>11</sup> Mordecai took Leeser under his wing, introduced the young, eager student to contemporary, English-language Christian theological literature, and discussed grammatical problems in biblical Hebrew with him. In 1825, shortly after Leeser's arrival in America, Mordecai prepared a reply to an address delivered by Isaac Harby at the first annual meeting of the Reformed Society of Israelites. "We thought then, inexperienced though we were," Leeser wrote in the *Occident* in 1851, "that Mr. M had the best of the argument."<sup>12</sup>

Association with learned Jews in Richmond and the cultural environment of tidewater Virginia had a decisive impact on Isaac Leeser. Between 1824 and 1829, when he left Richmond, Leeser, tutored by Mordecai and others in the field of polemics, clearly recognized the role of religion and the Bible in America. The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the start of a period of mass evangelization that not only revitalized religion at the grass roots level, but also transformed America in its wake. The "Second Great Awakening (1800-1830)," according to William G. McLoughlin, created a cultural consensus and "out of it came the new democratic faith in the common man that made Jacksonian democracy possible."<sup>13</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville observed upon his arrival in the United States (1831) that "there is no country in the world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America."<sup>14</sup>

The core of religion in Protestant America was the Bible. In less than four years, the American Bible Society (est. 1816), itself a product of the "Second Great Awakening," distributed nearly one hundred thousand

Bibles in the United States. Since the time of Luther and the Reformation, reading the Bible had been central to the religious life of Protestants. In America, this tradition was firmly established by the Puritans; Jewish religious life, on the other hand, was basically shaped by the Talmud and medieval rabbinic codes. As early as 1739, Abigail Franks wrote, "I cant help Condemning the Many Superstitions wee are Clog'd with & heartily wish a Calvin or Luther would rise amongst Us."<sup>15</sup>

While still living in Virginia and studying under the tutelage of Mordecai, Leeser came to believe that Judaism had to be adapted to the Bibliocentrism of religious life in America. It would be essential, therefore, for American Jews to have an English translation of Hebrew Scripture, based on Jewish tradition. Even though Leeser's education had hardly prepared him for the ministry, let alone for the translating of the Bible and reinterpreting its role in Jewish tradition, he considered these tasks to be paramount for Judaism in America, and completely dedicated himself to accomplishing them.

#### THE STORY OF THE LEESER BIBLE

Leeser's career as a religious leader and writer began in 1828, when an unknown party in Richmond called his attention to an article in the *London Quarterly Review* "in which our nation [the Jews] were very much abused, and their moral and religious character shamefully vilified." Believing discretion to be the better part of valor, Leeser deferred noticing it publicly, until the article in question was republished in a New York newspaper. At this point he was no longer able to hold his peace and "without being solicited by any one [undertook] the task of refuting accusations." Leeser wrote two letters that were printed in the *Richmond Whig* before the local publishers "closed their columns against further continuation of the controversy."<sup>16</sup>

However, the matter did not end there. Baruch Hillel Judah, librarian of the Richmond Library Company, strongly urged Leeser to continue his research and controversial writing. Something deep inside Leeser's being responded to Judah's encouragement, and with a fervor he had never experienced previously, he began to prepare a broad defense of the Jewish idea of revelation. Before he left Richmond to become the *chazan* (cantor) at Philadelphia's Mickveh Israel — an appointment based in part on the merit of his literary debut — Leeser had completed an impassioned book-length manuscript in which he stated his now fully developed theological position.<sup>17</sup>

Leeser's book contained selections from the Old Testament. "In some places I have followed the English version of the Bible [i.e., King James]," Leeser wrote early in 1829, "in others again I have attempted to translate the original myself, either because I did not consult the English at all, or because the common translation seemed to me incorrect."<sup>18</sup> Later in life, Leeser recalled that his interest in translating the entire Hebrew Bible was "a desire entertained for more than a quarter of a century, since the day he quitted school in his native land to come to this country, to present to his fellow Israelites an English version, made by one of themselves, of the Holy Word of God."<sup>19</sup>

Leeser's translation of the Bible actually developed in stages. Although nearly all of his literary activity involved translating passages from the Bible, his translations of the Pentateuch did not appear until 1845. This was followed by a *Biblia Hebraica* (1848), the first vocalized Bible printed in America, and, finally, his complete *Twenty-Four Books of the Holy Scriptures* (1853-54).

He accomplished all this with virtually no assistance. "Properly speaking," Leeser wrote in the preface to his Pentateuch, "the labour of reading, which a correct Hebrew text requires, ought to be performed by at least two competent persons; but in the absence of an associate of this kind, I had to do all this myself."<sup>20</sup> Several years earlier, while working on a translation of the Sephardic liturgy, he imported Hebrew types and "was obliged to teach the Sacred language to the printers in order that they might set up the pages with tolerable correctness."<sup>21</sup> Lastly, with regard to editing his English text, Leeser noted, "We did not obtain the

assistance of the various literary gentlemen in the country . . . we thought it best to assume the whole responsibility, grave as this confessedly is."<sup>22</sup>

The members of Mickveh Israel, a prestigious Sephardic congregation in Philadelphia founded in 1740, elected Leeser, then twenty-two years old, as their *chazan* on September 6, 1829, by a narrow margin. Unfortunately, the opposition did not relent after the elections and made the inexperienced Leeser uncomfortable in his new role.<sup>23</sup> Not surprisingly, he all but forgot about his grand idea to translate the Bible. More immediate concerns held his attention. First, he attempted to find a way to upgrade Jewish education. He experimented with a variety of small day schools; some of the classes even met where he boarded. But all these efforts quickly ended in failure. Furthermore, his first published book, a translation of Joseph Johnson's, *Die Lehren der Mosaichen Religion* (1819), proved unappealing to students and did little to alleviate the pressing need for Jewish school books.<sup>24</sup>

He also invested considerable time and energy in the preparation of his "discourses." Of all his accomplishments, his role as the pioneer Jewish preacher in the United States was closest to his heart. Leeser was totally enamored with the idea of Jewish preaching. Remarkably, until 1830, when he gave his first sermon, "Confidence in God," he "had heard but about a dozen addresses, either from the pulpit or elsewhere."<sup>25</sup> By 1867, however, Leeser had published a broad and representative sample of his sermons and public addresses, which filled ten volumes of *Discourses on the Jewish Religion*.<sup>26</sup>

Preaching made Leeser a devoted student of the Bible. According to the fashion of the day, his discourses were always delivered without notes and lasted nearly an hour. He rarely told stories or appealed to his congregants' emotions. Instead, he lavished an elaborate, doctrinal eisegesis on a chosen biblical text, usually from the weekly portion or *haftara* (prophetic reading). Most often, his only illustrations were additional biblical texts. Thus, Leeser's interest in and pursuit of homiletics made him thoroughly familiar with the Bible.<sup>27</sup>

His early years at Mickveh Israel were also marred by personal hardships. Late in 1833, he was stricken with smallpox. A sympathetic observer noted that although "his life and eye sight have been spared, I am told his countenance will bear many marks of its ravages . . . and unless some Desdemona shall arise to see his visage in her mind—all future expectations must be confined to solitary studies."<sup>28</sup> Leeser's brother Jacob, recently arrived from Europe, immediately went to Philadelphia to help, caught the disease, and died within a few weeks.<sup>29</sup>

Nor was this the least of Leeser's difficulties. After a slow recovery, Leeser was forced to muster all his strength to fight for his job at Mickveh Israel. Jacques Judah Lyons (1813-77), a native of Surinam, arrived in Philadelphia in 1836 and was invited to run in July against Leeser in the elections for the position of *chazan*. Leeser won, but was only given a one-year contract at a greatly reduced income. Lyons made a second unsuccessful bid for Leeser's job in September 1837, before leaving for a position at Beth Shalom in Richmond, Virginia. A greatly relieved Leeser is reported to have written to his Uncle Zalma that "the Lyon is subdued."<sup>30</sup>

Leeser maintained that he actually began working on his translation of the Pentateuch, *The Law of God*, in 1838.<sup>31</sup> Three factors were involved in his decision to begin systematically working on a translation at this time. First, Leeser had recently completed his six-volume rendition of *The Form of Prayers According to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews* (1838) and felt encouraged by his English version of the Psalms in the Sephardic liturgy.<sup>32</sup> Second, Rebecca Gratz's Sunday School met for the first time in March 1838, in Philadelphia, and was desperately in need of appropriate study material. The American Sunday School Union, a Protestant organization, provided copies of *Child's Bible Questions*. Religiously objectionable passages were either pasted over or torn out by Gratz's staff, and students were compelled to use the King James Bible and Protestant Hymnals for want of alternatives. Leeser, who supported the Sunday School and was its chief academic resource person, felt compelled to find more suitable texts for the students.<sup>33</sup> Third, the Zunz Bible, the most popular German-Jewish translation of the Old Testament during the nineteenth century, was published in 1837-38. Leeser was par-

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ticularly satisfied with Zunz's choice of Heymann Arnheim's (1796-1869) translation of the Five Books of Moses, and adopted it as the prototype for his own work.<sup>34</sup> The achievements of the broader world of Jewish scholarship and his own personal agenda for American Jewry seemed perfectly synchronized.

*The Law of God* is best understood as part of Leeser's plan to provide American Jewry, in Korn's words, "with every kind of publication essential to Jewish survival."<sup>35</sup> "My intention," Leeser wrote in the preface, "was to furnish a book for the service of the Synagogue, both German and Portuguese." Therefore, the final work included a vocalized Hebrew text, notes, and the *hafturot* (prophetic readings) "given according to the various customs, with the necessary directions."<sup>36</sup> Each of the Five Books of Moses was published in a separate volume. Perhaps, when Leeser explained to his readers that "however much a revised translation may be desired by all believers in the Word of God, there is no probability that the gentiles will encourage any publication of this nature, emanating from a Jewish writer," he was referring as much to the work's essentially liturgical arrangement as he was to the state of Jewish-Christian relations in the America of 1845.<sup>37</sup>

The publication of *The Law of God* in 1845 was a clear indication of the growing role Leeser was playing in the American Jewish community.<sup>38</sup> By 1840, he had already gained national prominence for his role in organizing American Jewish opinion during the Damascus Affair. However, an attempt to found a national Jewish ecclesiastical body with Louis Salomon the following year went unheeded. Since 1843, his monthly journal, the *Occident*, had carried his name and opinions to every Jewish community in North America, the Caribbean, and, to a lesser extent, England and Europe. It remained the only Anglo-Jewish paper in the United States until 1849. By contrast, few of the other American *chazanim* were known beyond their local communities, and Isaac M. Wise, Leeser's principal rival during the 1850s, was still a "schoolmaster" in Europe.

No sooner had Leeser announced his intention to complete a translation of the entire Bible in the final volume of *The Law of God* than he decided to suspend the project temporarily. Six years earlier, he had written to Rev. Nathaniel Hewit in Bridgeport, Connecticut, to explore the possibility of printing a vocalized Hebrew Bible. Leeser had obtained a Van der Hooght Bible and came to the conclusion that "if there is a demand for 1,000 copies I see no reason why Americans should depend upon Europe for a supply of the holy word, which they can and ought to have in their own hands." Apparently, Hewit declined. Leeser then turned to Dr. Joseph Jaquett, a scholarly Episcopalian minister in Philadelphia, and began to work on a *Biblia Hebraica*, according to the Masorah.<sup>39</sup>

Jaquett's role was limited to comparing several polyglot Bibles to help Leeser determine the best Hebrew text. However, their partnership was not without significance. Whereas no translation of the Bible could "ever succeed in meeting the needs of all biblically-based faiths," Leeser and his associate, in fact, did issue an interfaith Old Testament by leaving the text in the original Hebrew.<sup>40</sup> The Leeser-Jaquett *Biblia Hebraica* was first published in September 1848, and, as one scholar observed, "is a fine piece of printing as well as a careful edition of the text."<sup>41</sup> It quickly superseded an unvocalized Hebrew Bible published by Thomas Dobson in Philadelphia in 1814.<sup>42</sup>

However, for all of its merits, the Leeser-Jaquett *Biblia Hebraica* was overshadowed by another, more controversial collaboration. In 1852, just four years later, the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) issued a vocalized Hebrew Old Testament under the editorship of Hebrew poet and *Muskil* (follower of the Jewish Enlightenment), Meier Letteris (1800-71). Both Leeser and Letteris based their works on the masoretic studies of Dutch Protestant scholar, Everardus van der Hooght (fl. 1686). The Letteris Bible (1852), with the tremendous resources of the BFBS behind it, instantly became the standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament throughout much of the world. The BFBS continued to use it until 1922. However, Letteris' reputation among Jews suffered because of his association with a missionary group. Ironically, early in the twentieth century,

the Hebrew Publishing Company of New York produced a Hebrew-English Bible using Letteris' Hebrew text and Leeser's translation.<sup>43</sup>

Considering Leeser's many other activities while he worked on the *Biblia Hebraica*, his achievement seems even more remarkable. He preached frequently during this period and devoted a significant amount of time to editing and publishing the *Occident*. He was also involved in a variety of additional literary pursuits, including the founding of the first American Jewish Publication Society in 1845. In 1848, the same year he published the *Biblia Hebraica*, he also translated *The Book of Daily Prayers for Every Day in the Year according to the Custom of the German and Polish Jews*.

Jewish immigration from Central Europe was also on the rise. Leeser worked diligently to assist the newcomers and took an active role in nearly all aspects of Jewish philanthropy, particularly in Philadelphia. His friends, however, reminded him of the task at hand. As late as May 1849, Abraham Rice, the first ordained rabbi to settle in America, wrote to Leeser: "If you, my dear friend, could make up your mind definitely that an English Bible be printed for us Jews, you should do everything possible, even though you desire no benefit from it. For in this way, you will be able to gain eternal life for your soul."<sup>44</sup>

The biggest obstacle preventing Leeser from working on a translation of the Bible was close to home: he never developed a harmonious relationship with his congregation. Few members of Mickveh Israel liked Leeser as a person or fully understood his monumental efforts on behalf of Judaism in America. Above all, they expected him to behave as a paid functionary and, at all times, be obedient to the Board and Officers of the congregation.<sup>45</sup> "I fear they (or some of them)" Gershom Kursheedt wrote to Leeser, "will not appreciate you until they lose you."<sup>46</sup>

Leeser, on the other hand, had fought long and hard to upgrade the "Jewish Ministry" in the United States. He believed that the office of *chazan* was a profession and merited respectable remuneration.<sup>47</sup> Nor did he refrain from expressing his opinions to his congregation. The situation continued to deteriorate until on March 24, 1850, the members of Mickveh Israel censured Leeser for having printed a public notice in the *Occident* which was highly critical of their refusal to pass "some wholesome legislation with respect to the office of Hazan."<sup>48</sup> He immediately submitted a letter of resignation, effective September 1850, the end of his contractual period. Thereafter, he severed all ties to the congregation after twenty-one years of service.

The break with Mickveh Israel was a shattering experience for Leeser. His opponents had openly engaged in *ad hominem* attacks. They publicly questioned his character and suitability as a religious leader.<sup>49</sup> He was also deprived of both the emotional and financial security of permanent employment. However, in retrospect, it seems clear that Leeser eventually coped with this great moment of personal crisis by immersing himself in work on an English language Bible. The results were outstanding. In less than three years, he published a wide variety of items, including his translation of the Bible.<sup>50</sup>

First, during the summer of 1850, while in the uncomfortable position of being a lame-duck *chazan*, Leeser completed and published a translation of Rabbi Joseph Schwarz's *A Descriptive Geography and Brief Historical Sketch of Palestine*, based on "a printed Hebrew copy and a German translation in manuscript."<sup>51</sup> He agreed with Schwarz that the *Geography* was to be "viewed as a commentary on the geographical passages of the Bible, and by no means as a description of a journey of three or four months' duration."<sup>52</sup> Whiteman called Leeser's elegant version of Schwarz's *Geography* "the most important Jewish book that appeared in America up to that time," with respect to the high quality of the publication and, especially, because everything in it, maps and all, had been prepared by American Jews.<sup>53</sup>

Having thoroughly reviewed biblical history, geography, and the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, Leeser was now ready to begin his *magnum opus* in earnest. He no longer had to contend with the exigencies of congregational life nor did he have any desire for a quick return to the pulpit. "I have refused advantageous positions besides Charleston [i.e., Shearith Israel], which could have been mine by the mere asking for them," Leeser wrote in the *Occident*, and "it is true, that the Rev. Dr.

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N. M. Adler, of London, the Grand Rabbi of England, wished me, in April, 1850, to accept the situation of Assistant Rabbi of Australia, which I twice declined."<sup>51</sup>

Leeser, however, was also aware that he was in no position to finance the Bible translation project alone. He decided to appeal directly to his large body of supporters scattered throughout the United States by taking a railroad tour of the eastern half of the nation. Travel would also allow the wounds from his fight with Mickveh Israel to heal and enable him to promote the *Occident*, now his chief source of income. "We set out on the 9th of November [1851], and returned on the 27th of February [1852], after an absence of nearly sixteen weeks during which we travelled upwards of five thousand two hundred miles, and visited at least twenty-five settlements or congregations of Israelites, from the shores of Lake Erie to the Gulf of Mexico, and were about forty-one entire or parts of days actually in motion."<sup>52</sup> In April, 1852, he announced that "we have received a fair portion of public support, so that we hope soon to commence the proposed NEW TRANSLATION of the Scriptures."<sup>53</sup>

During the next nineteen months, Leeser worked diligently on the translation. He carefully edited his earlier work on the Pentateuch, *haf-taret*, and Psalms. Obtruse passages were subjected to substantial revisions and the "explanatory notes" were greatly expanded.<sup>54</sup> In September 1853, Leeser wrote with satisfaction that "the translator surrenders a labour in which he has been engaged, occasionally, for more than fifteen years" and sent his finished manuscript to the printer."<sup>55</sup> The January issue of the *Occident* included a "Literary Notice" that *The Twenty-Four Books of Holy Scriptures* "which has been so long announced, is at length completed . . . [and] we may be permitted to state, that as far as a mechanical execution is concerned, it may freely challenge comparison with any work of the kind ever issued in America."<sup>56</sup>

The original quarto edition of the Leeser Bible, although it probably made a handsome pulpit Bible, was basically "intended to supply families with a plain version of the Word of God" for home study. It also included "four pages of FAMILY RECORD, printed in a neat manner on very strong paper . . . at the end of the canon, in which marriages, births, and deaths can be recorded."<sup>57</sup> American Jews finally had a Bible they could call their own.

The Leeser Bible marked the ascension of American Jewry to a new level of cultural activity. By 1854, America's Jewish population was larger than that of England, and there were more than one hundred synagogues scattered throughout the land. Well-known rabbis such as David Einhorn and Samuel Hirsch now chose to settle in what had heretofore been considered a Jewish wilderness. In 1855, the first national conference of rabbis and religious leaders was held in Cleveland. Four years later, the Board of Delegates of American Israelites was organized to work for Jewish civil and religious rights in the United States and abroad. The Jewish press, previously the exclusive domain of Isaac Leeser, had become fiercely competitive with numerous papers, English and German, struggling for a share of the readers' market.<sup>58</sup>

However, the ultimate success of the Leeser Bible was not just a matter of good advance work. "Throughout the millennia," writes Matitiah Tsevat, "prominent versions of the Bible have often been distinguished or properly appraised not by the linguistic accuracy with which they rendered difficult passages, but by their achievement of a specific synthesis between the ancient book and the genius of their times."<sup>59</sup> In many ways, Leeser, and, by extension, his Bible, represented the "specific synthesis" of the American Jewish experience during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. He was at once an American, Sephardic, and German Jew. The Bible was the centerpiece of his religion, an orientation few people of his time or place would have contested. His Orthodoxy was also an asset. Reform was still in its infancy and, in any event, it might be assumed that most American Jews would have wanted the translation of the Bible to be entrusted to a staunch guardian of tradition.

#### LEESER'S THEOLOGICAL VIEWS

In attempting to understand the Leeser Bible, it is also necessary to explore the weltanschauung which, a priori, determined the nature of

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the translation. Leeser is best identified as a modern Orthodox Jew. His modern Orthodoxy is distinct from Neo-Orthodoxy in that Leeser emphasized the credal aspects of Judaism to a much greater extent than he stressed the observance of the *mitzvot* (commandments). In this sense, Leeser advocated a true orthodoxy as opposed to an orthopraxy. However, he did not question the authority of the *Halacha* as stated in the *Shulchan Aruch*. Both Leeser's brand of modern Orthodoxy and Neo-Orthodoxy promoted the idea of combining Jewish religious education with secular studies with the hope of creating a dynamic symbiosis of contemporary culture and Jewish tradition.<sup>63</sup>

Many assessments of Leeser maintain that he was guided by a twofold credo: traditionalism and rationalism.<sup>64</sup> Without question, he was a traditionalist who believed in both a supernaturalistic monotheism and the rabbinical view of the "chain of tradition." In the mind of Isaac Leeser, not only was the Bible true but no later Jewish religious teaching could possibly contradict it. To Leeser, Judaism, from the time of Moses to his own day, was absolutely monolithic.<sup>65</sup>

Rationalism, on the other hand, is a protean term and is applicable to Leeser only in a highly qualified sense. In light of his view of Jewish intellectual history, it would be more accurate to call Leeser a rationalizer than a rationalist in any philosophical sense of the word. In his mind, neither human reason nor intuition could ever independently discover eternal truth without the benefit of historical revelation. Thus, he had little connection to the Rationalism of Descartes, Spinoza, or Leibnitz. He also took great exception to both Deism and the *Philosophe* tradition of the Enlightenment. To Leeser, the only source of religious truth was the Bible.<sup>66</sup> Its proper explication was a function of faith and not philosophical training. The radical reformer, Samuel Hirsch, contemptuously, but in part correctly, called Leeser's Bibliocentric theology an "Abklatsch" (poor imitation) of English-Christian Methodism.<sup>67</sup>

To Leeser, the Bible was a correct account, written in plain language, of extraordinary events that actually happened and were witnessed by the ancient Israelites. Behind these "extraordinary events," especially the Sinaitic revelation, was a merciful Deity Who sought to teach man the path to eternal happiness. In order that everyone should clearly understand the biblical message, Leeser deemed it necessary to state explicitly and tersely the Bible's teaching in the form of dogma. As a preacher in a Sephardic congregation, he naturally turned to Maimonides and Albo to find both a model and an authoritative basis for his creed.

On many occasions, Leeser attempted to articulate the credal elements of his modern Orthodoxy. In his final sermon of 1847, "Judaism and Its Doctrines," he listed five basic dogmas.

The main principles of our belief, then, are first, the existence of God, including his unity, eternity; unchangeability, incorporeality, and sole claim to worship; secondly, the existence of revelation from the God of all nature, including the confidence in the truth of the prophets, especially the great teacher of Israel, Moses, the son of Amram, and the certainty that this revelation is yet in our possession, and that it will not be exchanged for any other by the Power who bestowed it on us; thirdly, the existence of rewards and punishments, including the inherent power of God to know all that is done in any part of his world by beings whom He has created; fourthly, the coming of a messenger to be specifically deputed by God to fulfill all the promises which have ever been made, respecting the regeneration of mankind, and their being ultimately brought to a true knowledge of the God-head, by which means much happiness is to accrue to the people of Israel; and fifthly, the resurrection of the dead, embracing the spiritual perfection of all the intelligent beings that ever emanated from the creative hand of God, and the perpetual abolition of all imperfections, sufferings, sinful inclinations, and death, from the face of the earth, a state in which righteousness shall be supremely rewarded, and guilt be exhibited in its fullest and most hideous complexions.<sup>68</sup>

Leeser's emphasis on, and understanding of, eschatological matters, made him view Jewish unity as a historical necessity. Ultimately, the

Jewish nation would be restored to the land of Israel, and unity was essential to its preservation until that time. Even his translation was meant, in part, to help promote Jewish unity for restorationist purposes. However, Leeser's devotion to *Kelal Yisrael* (pan-Jewish unity) should not be mistaken as a form of Zecharias Frankel's positive-historical Judaism. Without question, Leeser believed the true Jewish religion to be immutable both in practice and doctrine.<sup>69</sup>

Leeser's belief in Restorationism constitutes a major organizing principle in his personal religion. As early as 1829, he wrote, "I would only remind my brethren, that their abode in any country, other than Judea, is against their will."<sup>70</sup> His close friend and disciple, Judge Mayer Sulzberger, even maintained:

For him, Palestine was still the country to which the Jews had a divine right, which God, in his own good time, would assert—it might be in a day or in a millenium. He believed it necessary to hold one's self in readiness for the call, and this belief doubtless influenced the determination, to which he inflexibly adhered, never to become a citizen of the United States.<sup>71</sup>

In the meantime, Leeser was equally convinced that America was the best possible place of domicile for Jews. On a special "Thanksgiving Day," December 21, 1843, Leeser spoke at Mickveh Israel and extolled America's virtues. "If ever a country," he told his congregants, "other than the blessed commonwealth of Israel, had especial cause for glorifying the most holy Name, it is surely the republic of the United States."<sup>72</sup> America's greatness, according to Leeser, lay in the fact that it approximated the ancient biblical polity more than any other government in modern history. "It has been intimated," he wrote in *Jews and the Mosaic Law*, "that the institutions of the republic of the North American confederacy are of modern invention; but this cannot be admitted as altogether founded on fact, for the Mosaic code was evidently intended to form a republic of freemen, who were all equally entitled to protection from the government."<sup>73</sup>

Leeser's belief in "the existence of revelation from the God of all nature" is particularly relevant to an accurate understanding of his Bible translation. Without revelation, Leeser argued, man would be eternally confined to the chaos resultant from moral relativism. "Our own reason is not sufficient to show us the path," he maintained, "for what is called conscience does not, cannot, influence all alike, and consequently cannot be the universal standard of right, since it leads different persons to different conclusions." Therefore, "unless there be a revelation, that is to say, a declared and known law proceeding from God, the world is left without knowledge of right and wrong." God, according to Leeser, would not abandon man to the fate of "a ship, tossed upon the billows of the tempestuous ocean, without rudder or compass."<sup>74</sup>

The record of revelation was faithfully recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch. "The Holy Spirit," Leeser maintained, "was Moses' instructor, which would have prevented him from committing any error."<sup>75</sup> He defined "holy spirit" or "inspiration" as "the endowment of superior knowledge proceeding from God as a special gift."<sup>76</sup> Likewise, he believed that his own work as a Bible translator was carefully guarded over by Heaven. In the preface to the *Pentateuch*, he wrote that "together with the little knowledge I have myself of the Sacred Tongue, I thought, in all due humility, that I might safely do the task, confidently relying upon that superior aid which is never withheld from the inquirer after truth."<sup>77</sup>

He also minimally endorsed the idea that the Pentateuch was of multiple authorship. "Moses," he wrote, "was the *bona fide* author of the last four books of the Pentateuch, comprising the history of the Israelites during his lifetime." However, "it is nevertheless more than probable that the Book of Genesis was in existence before Moses, and if not in its present form, at least it may be presumed that he had ample materials in his possession, from which he compiled it." On the other hand, Leeser vigorously argued against the existence of anachronisms in the biblical text.<sup>78</sup>

#### ANALYSIS OF THE LEESER BIBLE

To Leeser, the only correct understanding of Scripture was a Jewish one. He openly declared (in the preface to his Bible) that "he always studied

the Scripture to find a confirmation for his faith and hope . . . [and] no perversion or forced rendering of any text was needed to bear out his opinions or those of other Israelites."<sup>79</sup> Like other literalists, Leeser was basically concerned with theological correctness. "Most often," writes one historian, "calls for 'literalism,' or movements 'back to the Bible,' really seek to cloak with legitimacy efforts aimed at replacing one mode of interpretation with another."<sup>80</sup> So Isaac Leeser in his translation of the Bible sought to provide American Jews with an authentic Jewish version of Scripture and free them from their reliance on the Authorized Version.

Under the guise of literalism, Leeser used different methods to introduce rabbinic exegesis into his translation. For example, he used parentheses to indicate words he added to elliptical verses "to make the sense clear."<sup>81</sup> Instead of having Samuel "lying down in the temple of the Lord," he had him "sleep in [the hall of] the temple" (1 Samuel 3:3), a correction that brought the translation into agreement with a rabbinic understanding of priestly protocol but, nevertheless, was a non-literal addendum.

In some instances, Leeser went significantly beyond literalism and actually sought to harmonize conflicting passages. Such bold emendations of the text are not without precedent in the history of Bible translations. Even in a recent Orthodox English-language version of the Pentateuch, the translator forthrightly states that "we have consistently translated passages so that they reflect the final decision in Jewish law."<sup>82</sup> Leeser translated the end of Exodus 21:6 as "he [i.e., the servant] shall serve him till the Jubilee," although the Hebrew reads "forever," in order to have the verse agree with Leviticus 25:10. In modifying Exodus 21:6 in his Bible, however, Leeser was also influenced by the Ante-bellum debate over slavery. Although discretely pro-South, he believed that ancient Hebrew slavery differed from its practice in the United States. Like other like-minded *chazanim* of the period, Leeser believed that biblical legislation mandated the humane treatment of slaves and provided liberal terms for manumission, whereas the American system of slavery was harsh by comparison.<sup>83</sup>

With regard to style, Leeser endeavoured "to adhere closely to the ordinary English version, which for simplicity cannot be surpassed."<sup>84</sup> "Though the slight verbal changes grated upon the ears of us the older generation," a sympathetic Rosa Mordecai recollected in 1901, "the constant reading/reciting from it in Sunday Schools made it familiar to the young."<sup>85</sup> Some changes were easily accepted, such as his version of Psalm 90:3, "Thou turnest man to contrition" instead of the Authorized Version's "Thou turnest man to destruction." However, his modification of other familiar passages (for example, Psalm 23:2, "In pastures of tender grass he causeth me to lie down: beside still waters he leadeth me") proved less than successful.<sup>86</sup>

In preparing the translation of the Bible, Leeser made extensive comparative studies of a wide variety of other Jewish versions of the Bible and, where available, traditional commentaries as well. While working on the Pentateuch, he also maintained that he had "not looked at a single work issued by the English Jews," and hence had "not borrowed a single idea or suggestion from any of them, living or dead."<sup>87</sup> Actually, there was little material to consult. David Levi's Pentateuch with *hastarot*, published in London in 1787, was the best known Anglo-Jewish translation, but it closely followed the King James version. In 1844, David de Sola and Morris J. Raphael, then headmaster of the Hebrew National School at Birmingham, England, published a new translation of Genesis with extensive annotations. Finally, Leeser probably did not have immediate access to the *Jewish School and Family Bible* (1851-61) prepared by Dr. Abraham Benisch and officially approved of by the chief rabbi of the United Congregations of the British Empire. In any event, Leeser had finished a significant amount of his own work before the Benisch Bible appeared.<sup>88</sup>

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In general, it appears that Leeser was better versed in Christian biblical translations and exegetical literature than he cared to acknowledge in public. He was familiar with the Vulgate and Luther's Bible.<sup>97</sup> On occasion, he also referred to the biblical commentaries of the English Non-Conformist, Matthew Henry.<sup>98</sup> From the British firm of Samuel Bagster and Sons, he obtained Hebrew Bibles, Polyglots, and various reprints of the Authorized Version. In one instance, he even incorporated "a few notes" from an uncited Bagster Bible into his own commentary.<sup>99</sup>

The Jewish prototype for the Leeser Bible was Zunz's *Die vier und zwanzig Bücher der Heiligen Schrift* (1838). Leeser even used the English equivalent, *The Twenty-Four Books of the Holy Scriptures*, for his Bible.<sup>100</sup> "As respects the translation," Leeser wrote in the postscript to his Pentateuch, "he feels it his duty to acknowledge that he has received the greatest aid from the Pentateuch of Arnheim, and the Bible of Zunz, even to a greater degree than from the works of Mendelssohn, Hochstatter, Johnson, Heineman, and several anonymous contributors to our biblical literature."<sup>101</sup> Where Leeser did not follow the Zunz Bible, he frequently cited the "Zunz" rendition in his notes.

Leeser's use of the Mendelssohn Bible (1783-91) and its commentaries (*Be-ur*) was much more complex. He primarily viewed Mendelssohn as a symbol and the leading proponent of Jewish emancipation. "Moses Mendelssohn," Leeser wrote in 1829, "has done more than any other individual who has lived since the days of Maimonides and Yarchi (i.e., Rashi), for the improvement of his fellow believers."<sup>102</sup> Nine years later, in 1838, Leeser made an independent translation of Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* merely "to give a friend some idea of what M. thought on certain points."<sup>103</sup> However, when Leeser later published his version of *Jerusalem* as a supplement to the *Occident* in 1852, he did so to refute claims by Reform Jews that Mendelssohn was one of their own. "Our philosopher is often invoked in defence of reform, so-called, and, at times, of absolute infidelity," Leeser contended, "when, in point of fact, nothing can be farther from the truth, than that he coincided with the wild schemes of our moderns, who reject rabbinical authority and tradition, not to mention that he had the fullest faith in the absolute inspiration of the Scriptures." However, in his zeal to defend Mendelssohn, Leeser also failed to understand him. "He only wanted to advance the idea," Leeser concluded, "which, for one at least, I also share, that the whole Bible is fundamental."<sup>104</sup>

Although he admired Mendelssohn as the champion *par excellence* of Jewish civil rights and diligently defended his "Orthodoxy," Leeser was unsatisfied with Mendelssohn's Bible translation because it sought "to avoid difficulties and to improve the style" at the expense of "a close, literal rendering."<sup>105</sup> Of course, Leeser understood the magnitude of Mendelssohn's contribution. "Mendelssohn, though he has since been excelled by others, who have built on his foundation," Leeser wrote in the *Occident*, "paved the way which has been made comparatively easy by his pious labours. So, no one will be apt to pay more homage to his genius than myself; but, as a rule of faith, he cannot be regarded."<sup>106</sup> Occasionally, however, Mendelssohnian influences are apparent, especially where the tetragrammaton is translated as "the Eternal."<sup>107</sup>

Even more surprising is the fact that Leeser made liberal use of the translation and commentary of the moderate German reformer, Ludwig Philipson (1811-89). Isaac M. Wise claimed credit for persuading Leeser to look at the Philipson Bible. "The year before he published his translation of the Bible," Wise recalled at the time of Leeser's death, "we saw him in his house. He informed us of his enterprise and of the German translations which he consulted. . . . Why do you not use Philipson's? we asked; because he is a reformer, was his reply. We convinced him, however, to the contrary in regard to that Bible and he bought a copy. With admirable skill, he used Philipson without betraying with one word that this was his main authority, in the notes especially."<sup>108</sup>

Wise, however, greatly overstated his case. Leeser openly acknowledged his use of Philipson both in the preface to his Bible and throughout his notes. In the *Occident*, Leeser also mentioned his indebtedness to "the Rabbi of Magdeburg, in Prussia, whose work I only for the first time read last summer (1852), and it is up to this date, not quite finished."<sup>109</sup> Moreover, Leeser and Philipson corresponded. Philipson wrote a favorable review of Leeser's *Discourses* and *Jews and the Mosaic Law* in his news-

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paper, the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, in 1839. Leeser, in turn, announced his plans to publish the *Occident* in Philipson's journal in October 1842.<sup>102</sup> As late as 1866, Leeser arranged for the private publication of M. Meyer's English translation of Philipson's *The Crucifixion and the Jews*.

Leeser studied "the ancient versions, also, of Onkelos, Jonathan, and the Jerusalem Targumist . . . and wherever accessible, the comments of the great expounders Rashi (Rabbi Shelomoh Yitzchaki), Redak (Rabbi David Kinchi), Aben Ezra (Rabbi Abraham ben Meir ben Ezra), Rashbam (Rabbi Shelomoh ben Meir, the grandson of Rashi), Ralbag (Rabbi Levi ben Gershon) and Rabbenu Sa'adyah (Saadiah) Gaon."<sup>103</sup> A lengthy and somewhat heated discussion on the value of a literal translation of Exodus 3:14 in the *Occident* suggests that Leeser did, in fact, consult a wide spectrum of rabbinic literature in connection with his Bible translation.<sup>104</sup> "The commentary of Rashi has been of the utmost service in this work, as it has been to all previous ones," Leeser wrote of his *Law of God*, "and the authority of the Neginoth (the musical accents) were also adhered to wherever practicable, it being the oldest and best among us."<sup>105</sup> However, with the exception of Rashi, Leeser's knowledge of medieval commentaries was largely based on secondary sources.

While the Authorized Version and the Zunz Bible provided Leeser with literary models, Rashi, in the words of Jakob Petuchowski, was his "link to the event at Sinai."<sup>106</sup> Not only did Leeser translate many of Rashi's comments and include them, or parts of them, in his own "short explanatory notes," he would frequently use Rashi's perspective as a guide to a revised rendering of a given text. Thus, Leeser interprets Ezekiel 20:25 as "And also I let them follow statutes that were not good . . ." instead of the Authorized Version's more literal "Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good. . . ." In this manner he solved theological problems in a traditional Jewish fashion but at the expense of an accurate translation. In other cases, the Rashi-based Leeser version corrects non-literal interpolations of the Authorized Version. For example, Leeser renders Exodus 25:17 as "And thou shalt make a cover . . ." whereas the King James reads "And thou shalt make a mercy seat. . . ." Most often, however, he would simply use Rashi to give a traditional Jewish perspective on a selected verse. The Authorized Version renders the end of Jeremiah 52:13 as "and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire." Leeser retains the translation, drops the emphasis on "men," and adds a comment after the word "great." "The Rabbins [i.e., Rashi]," he reports, "take this to mean either the synagogues where the prayers were offered, or the schools where the law was taught."

Most of Leeser's notes, however, simply reported variant translations that he did not use in his version but, nonetheless, considered significant.<sup>107</sup> These selections from German/Jewish sources were familiar to many readers of the Leeser Bible who had recently emigrated from Central Europe and, therefore, those passages were welcome additions.<sup>108</sup> Like Mendelssohn, Leeser believed in linguistic assimilation and, thus, viewed his Bible as an instrument in teaching recent immigrants English. Later editions of the Leeser Bible, however, were greatly reduced in the number of "notes" containing translations from Zunz, Philipson, and others, and retained mainly the substantiative comments.

A close reading of Leeser's notes confirms that his Bible was meant to be, above all, an *Apoligia Judaica*. Leeser frequently explained biblical passages that might have appeared objectionable to a modern person in a way that made them more acceptable. Likewise, he defended the actions of ancient Israelites whenever their honor was at stake. "The Law knows of no distinction between the Israelite and the foreigner," Leeser says of Deuteronomy 1:16, "all are alike before the Supreme Judge of the world." Concerning Deuteronomy 14:21, "Ye shall not eat anything that dieth of itself: unto the stranger that is in thy gates canst thou give it, that he may eat it . . ." Leeser maintained that "these things [were] not being interdicted for their unhealthiness, but because God chose to forbid them to Israel, they may be eaten by others, if they will." Likewise, he explains that Jeremiah 37:16 ("when Jeremiah had been placed in the dungeon, within the traders' shops . . .") shows that ancient Israel was virtually a crime-free society because "there were probably no regular prison-buildings in Palestine." A note to Esther 9:5 ("And the Jews smote all their enemies . . .") asserts that "it must not be supposed that this was indiscriminate slaughter of all against whom the Jews had conceived hatred, but it only says that those perished who had actually been prepared to extermi-

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nate the Jews."<sup>99</sup> He also listed the talmudic explanation of an "eye for an eye" (Exodus 21:24), and even claimed that Isaac blessed Jacob because he recognized the superior merit of his younger son (Genesis 28:1). Likewise, he often softened the tone of a biblical text. For example, he rendered Leviticus 25:14 as "ye shall not overreach one another" (after Onkelos), whereas the Authorized Version reads "ye shall not oppress one another."

Apologetics and polemics are, of course, different sides of the same coin. Just as the Leeser Bible sought to give an authentic Jewish rendition of Scripture, so it actively refuted Christian exegetical traditions.<sup>100</sup> The first alleged christological reference in Scripture, "until Shiloh come" (Genesis 49:10), received, perhaps, the longest comment in Leeser's notes.<sup>101</sup> "Since Judah had no rule during the second temple, and with the blinding of Zedekiah, in the year of the world 3402, prior to the common era 586 years, the kingdom or sceptre of David became extinct," he argued, "the alleged fulfillment came five hundred and eighty-six years too late." The true fulfillment, however, was still to come. "But believing Israelites, who confide in prophecy," Leeser added, "do not think the sceptre totally departed from Judah, . . . the sceptre will return when the Shiloh, the King Messiah, shall come." Likewise, Leeser translates Isaiah 7:14 as "this young woman shall conceive" and explains that "Immanu-el" (Isaiah 8:8) is a symbolic name "for the land of Judah, which notwithstanding the danger predicted, should still be delivered."<sup>102</sup> In some cases, he even admits to giving a nonliteral translation of a verse to distance the text from Christian interpretation. Thus, he renders Deuteronomy 10:16 as "Remove therefore the obdurancy of your heart," instead of the Authorized Version's more literal, "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart" and appends the note that "whatever is odious among the Israelites is called 'uncircumcised.'"<sup>103</sup>

Leeser also sought to distinguish between what he considered a legitimate explanation of biblical miracles and Christianity's misunderstanding of the same. In a comment on false prophets (Deuteronomy 13:2-4), he wrote, "the Divine legislation is the standard of truth; consequently no miracle, should such be wrought, can be considered as an evidence of Divine mission if it contradict the law. The will of God is expressed in his revelation, and he is no man, that he should change."<sup>104</sup> In other places, however, Leeser was content to give a naturalistic explanation of miracles.<sup>105</sup> Similarly, he frequently referred to reports of ancient and contemporary travelers in the Middle East to confirm the accuracy of Scriptures.<sup>106</sup>

In conformity with his brand of modern Orthodoxy, Leeser offered only a few "notes" on Jewish practice. About Joshua 24:19, "Ye will not be able to serve the Lord," he explained that "it is not an easy thing to comply with the demands of religion," an idea frequently taken up in his *Discourses*.<sup>107</sup> He linked Leviticus 23:27 with the practice of fasting on the Day of Atonement. In a note to Esther 9:22, he pointed out that "the poor should of right therefore be remembered on this day [i.e., Purim] especially by their more wealthy neighbors, so that they too may bless the Lord in joy and plenty," perhaps as a criticism of the extravagant Purim Balls popular in his own day. However, the most poignant remark was directed at Reform Judaism. In an otherwise obscure discussion of a special dispensation given to the princes so that they could individually offer incense at the consecration of the Tabernacle (Numbers 7:86), Leeser concluded that "it will always be seen that there were weighty reasons for the suspensions,—that they were sanctioned or ordained by the Holy Spirit; and that consequently we are from such premises not authorized to suspend any precept by our own authority, except there be an absolute necessity which compels us to disobey."

#### POST-PUBLICATION HISTORY OF LEESER BIBLE

Both Leeser and his opponents knew that the success of his Bible primarily depended on its acceptance among Jews, although he warmly welcomed praise from Christian scholars. An attempt was made to discredit the Leeser Bible by several Reform rabbis. Writing in Wise's

newly founded *Israelite* in 1854, Isidor Kalisch concluded that he would have to "write as thick a book as Mr. Leeser's biblical translation is, if I should point out all the gross errors and mistakes."<sup>118</sup> Leeser, however, was not easily intimidated. "The best of this transaction," he replied in the *Occident*, "is that Mr. Kalisch pretends to judge the English style of the work, when he is confessedly unable to write his own thoughts in this language."<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, Leeser invited Rev. Dr. I. Mayer of Cincinnati to refute Kalisch's "groundless and illogical censures" point by point.<sup>120</sup>

Fortunately, Wise decided not to sustain the controversy, although he might have wanted to do so. Leeser's Bible and Wise's *History of the Israelitish Nation* (1854) were published simultaneously. After promoting Wise's book in the *Occident*, Leeser found the finished work unacceptable. Shocked at the non-Orthodox character of Wise's *History*, Leeser immediately warned the readers of his newspaper of its heterodoxy. "Dr. W. has spoken out so plainly against the inspiration of the Bible and the truth of the miracles, or even the facts as there plainly recorded," Leeser asserted in the *Occident*, "that no one who believes in the ancient method can be deceived."<sup>121</sup>

This and other disputes between Wise and Leeser early in the 1850s permanently damaged their personal relationship. When Wise first arrived in America, he quickly befriended Leeser and became a contributor to the *Occident*, whose editorial policy allowed for divergent theological views. Both men were deeply committed to promoting unity in American Jewish life and even worked on several projects together toward that end. Catholicity of intent, however, was not enough to hold the two together. Ambition, distance, and, finally, theology, drove them apart. But Wise was also pragmatic. He knew he had no choice but to accept the Leeser Bible as the standard version among American Jews. Later, as we have already seen, he even tried to claim partial credit for its success.

The Leeser Bible drew high praise from important people in the broader American community. Reverend Charles Hodge, a leading "Old School Presbyterian" theologian at Princeton Theological Seminary, applauded Leeser in his *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* (July 1854) and called for "a work on a similar plan, from a competent Christian scholar."<sup>122</sup> Similarly, Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell (1829-1914), a physician and author of *Hugh Wynne, Free Quaker* (1898), is reported to have stated publicly that "when I want to get at the true meaning of the Psalms and Prophets—I go to my friend Rev'd Isaac Leeser's translation as the most satisfying."<sup>123</sup>

Two years after the Bible first appeared, Leeser admitted that "the translator cannot flatter himself that it has met with such a reception as would have gratified his ambition."<sup>124</sup> He decided to work on a revised edition, which he completed early in 1856. Several changes were made. First, he decided to use a smaller format because the quarto proved too expensive for mass distribution. Second, the new size demanded an abridgement of his notes and their reproduction at the end of the book instead of at the bottom of each page.<sup>125</sup> Last and most importantly, the Leeser Bible would not be explicitly promoted as the Jewish successor to the King James version.

The new preface sounded the battlecry. "It would be", Leeser told his readers, "a species of mental slavery to rely for ever upon the arbitrary decree of a deceased King of England, who certainly was no prophet for the correct understanding of the Scriptures." He also noted that "although those who assisted in furnishing the common version may have been as honest as men writing for their sect are ever likely to be," they still colored the work to "confirm their peculiar views." Worse, "most of the editions in use are disfigured by chapter and page headings . . . and the merest inspection will at once show that these expositions are perfectly arbitrary. Finally, Leeser observed that "since the time of King James the world has likewise progressed in biblical knowledge no less than in all other branches of science."<sup>126</sup> In an "Advertisement to the London Edition of his Bible, Leeser even maintains that the need for a new English translation "has long been recognized by the highest dignitaries and most accomplished scholars in the Anglican Church itself."<sup>127</sup>

By the time Leeser died, on February 1, 1868, his Bible had won wide acceptance among American Jews. Subsequently, much of the promo-

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tional work was done by the Reform movement. In fact, "the only literary work which the Union of American Hebrew Congregations published between the years 1873-1903 was the 'Leeser' Bible." On February 10, 1874, a UAHC committee was appointed "to determine how cheaply the Union could obtain an English Bible for Jewish homes and Sabbath-Schools." After looking into the matter, the committee decided that the Leeser Bible could be sold for \$1.00 per copy. Arrangements were made with Dr. Abraham de Sola, a close friend of the late Isaac Leeser and owner of the copyright to the Leeser Bible, and by 1880, and UAHC had sold 2,000-Leeser Bibles.<sup>128</sup> "This is the right step in the right direction," Wise wrote in the *Israelite*, "and thousands of these Bibles ought to be sold, in fact, they should be in every Jewish home."<sup>129</sup>

By 1888, the Bloch Publishing and Printing Company had secured the copyright to the Leeser Bible from de Sola. The Bloch Company reissued it with great frequency. Until 1914, sacramental editions bound in white leather for weddings and confirmations were also very popular.<sup>130</sup> However, the literary and theological shortcomings of the Leeser Bible became increasingly manifest toward the end of the nineteenth century, especially after the publication of the Revised Standard Version in 1885.

At first, interest was only expressed in revising Leeser's work. "The project was conceived," Max Margolis reported, "at the second biennial convention (1892) of the Jewish Publication Society of America [reorganized in 1888]." However, "as the work progressed, it became evident that the undertaking was more in the nature of a fresh attempt at translation than of revision of a previous effort."<sup>131</sup> Committee work proceeded very slowly. Twenty-five years passed before the Jewish Publication Society Bible appeared in 1917.

The new translation was vastly superior. "Leeser's Bible," Israel Abrahams predicted in 1920, "is more or less doomed. It cannot but pass out of general use."<sup>132</sup> Yet, it did not immediately disappear from the scene. After Bloch discontinued publishing the Leeser Bible, the Hebrew Publishing Company began printing and distributing it, particularly among the East European Jews who began immigrating to America in large numbers after 1881. However, Abrahams was correct, and the Leeser Bible gradually fell into disuse.

Furthermore, in the past fifty years, few Orthodox authorities have acknowledged Leeser's contribution. Dr. J. H. Hertz paid tribute to Leeser as an important translator and commentator, but actually only referred to Leeser four times in the commentary to his popular *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (1929-36), usually referred to as the "Hertz Chumash."<sup>133</sup> Likewise, Harold Fisch, editor of the English-language Koren Bible, sponsored by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, consulted "the interesting nineteenth century Jewish Bible of Isaac Leeser."<sup>134</sup> However, he primarily based his work on M. Friedlander's *Jewish Family Bible* (1881).

More than the fate of the Leeser Bible was at stake. "We shall soon be thinking of putting Isaac Leeser's memory in a museum of Jewish antiquities as a specimen of a lost type," Abrahams concluded sardonically.<sup>135</sup> In 1918, on the fiftieth anniversary of Leeser's death and in wake of the new Jewish Publication Society's Bible, several articles on Leeser's life and career were published, the most important by a Reform Rabbi, Henry Englander, in the *Yearbook* of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.<sup>136</sup> Thereafter, virtually no new historical research on Leeser was conducted for thirty years. Beginning in the 1980s, Emily Solis-Cohen, Jr., a scion of a leading Jewish family in Philadelphia who still had access to an oral tradition about Leeser, attempted to write a popular biography of Leeser. However, she totally abandoned the project after two decades of research and never published her work on Leeser.<sup>137</sup>

Even though Leeser faded from public view, he has a lasting place in the history of Judaism. Among his many accomplishments, his Bible served as an important vehicle for the acculturation of American Jews. Moreover, by providing an authentic Jewish version of the Bible and retaining the King James style in his English translation, Leeser also helped bring the Protestantization of American Judaism to completion. Thus, in effect, he was greatly responsible for the transformation and perpetuation of the Jewish heritage in America.

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## NOTES

1. There is no standard biography of Leeser. For the first account of his life, see Mayer Sulzberger, "The Late Rev. Isaac Leeser," *Occident*, Vol. 25 (1868), pp. 593-611, republished in *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. 21 (1969), pp. 140-148 (hereafter: *AJA*). Book-length studies on Leeser include: Lance J. Sussman, "Confidence in God": *The Life and Preaching of Isaac Leeser (1806-1868)* (ordination thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1980) (hereafter: *Confidence*); E. Bennett, *An Evaluation of the Life of Isaac Leeser* (Ph.D. dissertation, Yeshiva University, 1959); and Maxine Seller, *Isaac Leeser: Architect of the American Jewish Community* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1965). Also see Bertram W. Korn, "Isaac Leeser: Centennial Reflections," *AJA*, Vol. 19 (1967), pp. 127-141. On Leeser's opposition to Reform Judaism, see Henry Englander, "Isaac Leeser," *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook*, Vol. 28 (1918), pp. 213-252. On Leeser in the context of the Philadelphia Jewish community, see Maxwell Whiteman, "Isaac Leeser and the Jews of Philadelphia," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. 48 (1959), pp. 207-244 (hereafter: *PAJHS*). Whiteman's article complements E. Digby Baltzell's *Philadelphia Gentlemen, The Making of a National Upper Class* (Glencoe [IL], 1958). Also, see his "The Legacy of Isaac Leeser," in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830-1940*, Murray Friedman (ed.), Philadelphia, 1983, pp. 26-47.

2. Bertram W. Korn, "Centennial Reflections," p. 133.

3. Maxwell Whiteman and Edwin Wolf, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson* (Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 372-373.

4. Harry M. Orlinsky, "Jewish Biblical Scholarship in America," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, N.S., Vol. 45 (1955), p. 380. See also his "Some Recent Jewish Translations of the Bible," *McCormick Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1966), p. 2.

5. Israel Abrahams, "Isaac Leeser's Bible," *By-Paths in Hebrew Bookland* (Philadelphia, 1920), pp. 254-259, and Matitiah Tsevat, "A Retrospective View of Isaac Leeser's Biblical Work," *Essays in American Jewish History*, Bertram W. Korn (ed.) (Cincinnati, 1958), pp. 295-313.

6. *Occident*, Vol. 10 (1852), pp. 23, 524; Vol. 16 (1858), p. 485; Vol. 25 (1867), pp. 537-538; and Isaac Leeser, *Jews and the Mosaic Law* (Philadelphia, 1854), pp. iii, 234. Also see Arno Hertzog, *Judentum und Emanzipation in Westfalen* (Aschendorf, 1973); Mordecai Eliahu, *Jewish Education in the Enlightenment and Emancipatory Periods* (Jerusalem, 1960) [in Hebrew]; Jacob Rader Marcus, *Israel Jacobson: The Founder of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Cincinnati, 1972), reprinted from *Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis*, Vol. 38; and Jakob J. Petuchowski, "Manuals and Catechisms of the Jewish Religion in the Early Period of Emancipation," in *Studies in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Intellectual History* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 47-64. Leeser published two catechisms: *Instruction in the Mosaic Religion* (Philadelphia, 1830) and *Catechism for Jewish Children* (Philadelphia, 1839).

7. Leeser, *Jews and The Mosaic Law*, p. 243. W. Engelkemper, "University of Muenster," *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1911), Vol. 10, p. 639. Also, see Maxine Seller, "Isaac Leeser: A Jewish-Christian Dialogue in Ante-Bellum Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania History*, Vol. 35 (July 1968), pp. 231-242.

8. Lawrence Grossman, "Isaac Leeser's Mentor: Rabbi Abraham Sutro, 1784-1869," in *Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein Memorial Volume*, Leo Landman (ed.) (New York, 1980), p. 156; and Bernhard Brilling, "Abraham Sutro (1784-1869)," *Westfälische Zeitschrift*, Vol. 123 (1973), pp. 51-64, and "Beiträge zur Biographie des letzten Landrabbiners von Muenster, Abraham Sutro (1784-1869)," *Uchim III* (1972), pp. 31-64. Also, see Leeser, *Jews and The Mosaic Law*, p. iii; *Discourses on The Jewish Religion* (Philadelphia, 1867), Vol. 1, dedication page; and *Occident*, Vol. 18 (1860), p. 274. Abraham Sutro to Isaac Leeser, Muenster to Richmond, February 24, 1829; Isaac Leeser to Abraham Sutro, Richmond to Muenster, November 1825; Esther Sutro to Isaac Leeser, Muenster (?) to Philadelphia, July 17, 1864; Esther Faber Sutro to Isaac Leeser, Ochtending (Coblenz) to Philadelphia, October 19, 1865; and Esther Sutro Faber to Isaac Leeser, Muenster to Philadelphia, December 2, 1866 (photostatic copies in the possession of Jacob Rader Marcus. A small collection of Sutro papers is housed at Leo Baeck Institute, New York City.)

9. H. Englander, "Isaac Leeser," p. 214. Leeser claimed to have received a secular education equivalent to an A.M. in an American university, see *Occident*, Vol. 10 (1852), p. 23. Isaac M. Wise maintained he earned both rabbinical ordination and a doctorate. However, none of these claims can be substantiated.

10. *Occident*, Vol. 10, p. 23, note. On Rehine, see Myron Berman, *Richmond's Jewry: 1769-1976* (Charlottesville, 1979); H. T. Ezekiel and G. Lichtenstein, *The History of the Jews of Richmond: 1769-1917* (Richmond, 1917); and Isaac M. Fein, *The Making of an American Jewish Community* (Philadelphia, 1971).

11. On Mordecai, see Berman, *Richmond*, *passim*, and Lance J. Sussman, "'Our Little World': The Early Years at Warrenton" (typescript, American Jewish Ar-

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chives, 1974). On The Reformed Society of Israelites, see Lou Silberman, "American Impact of Judaism in the United States in the Early Nineteenth Century," *B. G. Rudolph Lectures in Judaic Studies* (Syracuse, 1964).

12. *Occident*, Vol. 9 (1851), pp. 210-211. During the 1830s, Mordecai also prepared several lengthy manuscripts, including a 200-page polemic against Christianity entitled "Introduction to the New Testament," as well as critiques of Harriet Martineau's 1832 missionary tract, *Providence as Manifested Through Israel*, and Rev. Alexander Keith's *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion* (unpublished holographs, American Jewish Archives).

13. William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform* (Chicago, 1978), p. 139. Also, see Donald G. Matthews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 21 (1969), pp. 23-43.

14. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* I, Phillips Bradley (ed.), (New York, 1945), p. 303.

15. Abigail Franks to Naphtali Franks, New York to London, October 17, 1739, in *Letters of the Franks Family (1733-1748)*, Leo Hershkowitz and Isidore S. Meyer, eds., (Waltham [Mass.], 1968), p. 66.

16. Isaac Leeser, *Jews and the Mosaic Law*, p. vi (hereafter: *JML*).

17. Several times during the course of his career, Leeser referred to *Jews and the Mosaic Law* as a definitive statement of his belief in revelation and a summary of his view of the Bible, see *Occident*, Vol. 3, p. 189, and Vol. 12, p. 539.

18. *JML*, p. vii.

19. Isaac Leeser, "Preface," in *The Twenty-Four Books of the Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia, 1853) (hereafter "Bible [1853]"), p. iii.

20. Isaac Leeser, "Preface," in *The Law of God* (Philadelphia, 1845), Vol. 1, p. vi (hereafter: *Pentateuch*).

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21. Rosa Mordecai, "Personal Recollections of Rev. Isaac Leeser" (typescript, 1901), Englander Papers, American Jewish Archives, n.p.

22. *Occident*, Vol. 11, p. 523. Although Leeser decided to work on the Bible alone, he was offered assistance. For example, see Morris Jacob Raphall to Isaac Leeser, March 16, 1854, New York to Philadelphia, Microfilm 199, American Jewish Archives.

23. On Leeser's relation to Mickveh Israel, see Isaac Leeser, "To the Parness and Members of the Congregation Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia," May 15, 1840 (typescript, Dropsie College Library), 15 pp.; *A Review of the Late Controversies Between The Rev. Isaac Leeser and The Congregation Mikveh Israel* (pamphlet, Philadelphia, 1850), 18 pp.; and *A Review of "The Review"* (pamphlet, New York, 185), 11 pp., copy in Korn Papers, American Jewish Archives.

24. Isaac Leeser, *Instruction in the Mosaic Religion* (Philadelphia, 1830). Also, see David Uriah Todes, *The History of Jewish Education in Philadelphia* (Ph.D. dissertation, Dropsie College 1952), pp. 43-56, and Sussman, *Confidence*, pp. 34-42.

25. Isaac Leeser, "Preface (to Jerusalem)," *Occident*, Vol. 14. Part of Leeser's first sermon, "Confidence in God," is reprinted in Joseph Blau and Salo W. Baron (eds.), *The Jews of the United States, 1790-1840* (New York, 1964), Vol. 2, pp. 578-582.

26. Volumes 1 and 2 of Leeser's *Discourses* were first published in 1837, volume 3 in 1841, and the complete set, volumes 1 to 10, in 1867. In the preface to volume 3, Leeser places his interest in renewing Jewish preaching in America in a historical perspective. Leeser was heavily influenced by Protestant preaching in the United States, see *Occident*, Vol. 9 (1852), "Supplement," p. xiv, and Lewis O. Brastow, *The Modern Pulpit: A Study of Homiletic Sources and Characteristics* (New York, 1906), and also by developments in Germany, see Alexander Altmann, "The New Style of Preaching in Nineteenth-Century German Jewry," in *Studies in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Intellectual History*, pp. 65-116.

27. On the Literary style of Leeser's *Discourses*, see Blau and Baron, *Jews of the United States*, p. 579. Although modern scholars generally take a negative view of Leeser's sermons qua religious literature, he was, nevertheless, encouraged by sympathetic congregants to continue his preaching, see *Discourses* I, p. 2.

28. Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz, Philadelphia to Lexington, Ky., February 2, 1834, quoted in David Phillipson, *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* (Philadelphia, 1929), p. 193. Leeser, who remained a bachelor his entire life, had extremely poor eyesight and frequently suffered from ill-health, see Whitman, "Leeser," in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia*, p. 28.

29. Isaac Leeser, *Discourses* II, p. 34.

30. Sussman, *Confidence*, pp. 80-93.

31. Leeser, *Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, p. vi. Also see *Occident*, Vol. 9, Supplement A, p. xv.

32. Isaac Leeser, *The Form of Prayers According to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews* (Philadelphia, 1838), Vol. 1, p. vi.

33. Joseph R. Rosenbloom, "Rebecca Gratz and the Jewish Sunday School

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Movement in Philadelphia," *PAJHS*, Vol. 48 (1958), p. 71, and also his *And She Had Compassion* (D.H.L. dissertation, Hebrew Union College, 1957); and Sussman, *Confidence*, pp. 94-117.

34. *Die vier und zwanzig Bucher der Heiligen Schrift* (Berlin, 1838), Leopold Zunz, ed. On Leeser's indebtedness to Arnheim and Zunz, see *Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, p. 146.

35. Korn, "Centennial Reflections," p. 33.

36. Leeser, *Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, p. viii.

37. Leeser, *Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, p. v, and Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Politics of Scripture: Jewish Bible Translations and Jewish-Christian relations in the United States" (typescript, American Jewish Archives, 1983), p. 12.

38. According to Whiteman, Leeser's *Pentateuch* met with "even greater approval than he had anticipated . . . [and] a pirated edition appeared in Germany and was sold in England" ("Leeser," in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia*, p. 35). However, Max J. Kohler reports: Soon after Leeser's Bible translation appeared, a pirated edition was also published and he brought suit for infringement of copyright in the Federal Court in Philadelphia. The claims of the defense were, of course, overruled, on the ground that there could be no copyright even in a new translation, made from the Hebrew, because the Bible itself is common property and the defendant could have made an independent translation of his own. The case is reported in the series entitled "Federal Cases," which is alphabetically arranged, in volume "L," containing this report under the plaintiff's name "Leeser"; undated holograph (1919?), Englander Papers, American Jewish Archives. Also, see Albert M. Friedenberg to Dr. Henry Englander, New York to Cincinnati, January 7, 1919 (Englander Papers, American Jewish Archives).

39. Isaac Leeser to Rev. Nathaniel Hewitt, Bridgeport, Conn., July 11, 1839, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. On Joseph Jacquett, see Franklin Spencer Edmonds, *History of St. Matthew's Church, Francisville, Philadelphia, 1822-1925* (Philadelphia, 1925), pp. 72-73, copy at Archives of the Episcopal Church, Austin, TX. The Leeser-Jacquett, *Biblia Hebraica* (1848), was probably based on a Hebrew Bible published by Samuel Bagster (London, 1824 and 1844), see T. H. Darlow and H. F. Moule, *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture* (London, 1903), Vol. 2, pp. 725, 729. Leeser also edited a Hebrew edition of Job for the American Bible Union, see William H. Wyckoff to Isaac Leeser, New York to Philadelphia, March 11, 1857 (Leeser Papers, Dropsie College Library).

40. Sarna, "The Politics of Scripture," p. 1.

41. Tsevat, "A Retrospective View of Isaac Leeser's Biblical Work," p. 297.

42. Tsevat, p. 297, and Wolf and Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia*, p. 310.

43. *The Twenty-Four Books of the Holy Bible: Hebrew and English* (New York, 1912).

44. Abraham Rice to Isaac Leeser, May, 1849, Baltimore to Philadelphia, Microfilm 199, American Jewish Archives. Also, Grace Aguilar, a Jewish author in England, wrote to Leeser lamenting the lack of a translation of the Bible by a "faithful Hebrew" and also discussed the feasibility of writing and publishing such a work, August 13, 1846, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

45. *Charter and By-Laws of Kahal Kadosh Mickve Israel* (Philadelphia, 1841), by-laws XXVII and XXVIII, p. 23, copy at Dropsie College Library. Also, see *Occident*, Vol. 20 (1862), pp. 340, 343.

46. Gershom Kursheedt to Isaac Leeser, December 10, 1849, New Orleans to Philadelphia, Korn Papers, American Jewish Archives.

47. On Leeser's view of the "Jewish Ministry," see *Occident*, Vol. 3 (1845-46), pp. 218-221, 577-583; Vol. 9 (1851), pp. 385-394, 433-443; Vol. 10 (1852), pp. 177-187 and 225-38; Vol. 15 (1857-58), pp. 493-496; and Vol. 18 (1860-61), p. 304. More broadly, see Burton S. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and The Development of Higher Education in the United States* (New York, 1976).

48. *Occident*, Vol. 7 (October 1949), p. 377.

49. *A Review of the Late Controversies*, p. 17.

50. Joseph Schwarz, *A Descriptive Geography and Brief Historical Sketch of Palestine* (Philadelphia, 1850). Isaac Leeser, translator; "Jerusalem: A Treatise on Religious Power and Judaism by Rabbi Moses Mendelssohn," Isaac Leeser, translator, published as a supplement to *Occident*, Vol. 9 (1852); and, Leeser, *Bible* (1853).

51. Schwarz, *Palestine*, p. v.

52. Schwarz, p. xii. Leeser frequently referred to Schwarz in the notes to his *Bible* (1853), see comments to Genesis 50:11, Deuteronomy 2:23, and Judges 7:3.

53. Whiteman, "Leeser," *PAJHS*, p. 183, and "Leeser," *Jewish Life in Philadelphia*, p. 40.

54. *Occident*, Vol. 10, p. 535.

55. *Occident*, Vol. 10, p. 2. Also, see Jacob Rader Marcus, "Isaac Leeser, American Jewish Missionary," *Memoirs of American Jews: 1775-1865* (Philadelphia, 1955), Vol. 2, pp. 58-87.

56. *Occident*, Vol. 10, p. 2.
57. Leeser, *Bible* (1853), p. iv; *Occident*, Vol. 11, p. 523; and, Tsevat, "Retrospective," p. 300.
58. Leeser, *Bible* (1853), p. iv.
59. *Occident*, Vol. 11, pp. 521-522.
60. *Occident*, Vol. 11, pp. 521-522. For a typical reaction to the announcement of the publication of the Leeser Bible, see Isaac Jalonick to Isaac Leeser, Belton Bell Co., Texas, to Philadelphia, May 28, 1853, *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. 8 (1956), no. 2, p. 75.
61. *Discourses* 10, p. 256. On organized Jewish life in 1854, see Jacques J. Lyons and Abraham de Sola, *A Jewish Calendar for Fifty Years* (Montreal, 1854), pp. 148-173. Also, compare Bertram W. Korn, "American Jewish Life in 1849," in *Eventful Years and Experiences* (Cincinnati, 1954), pp. 27-57, to Leon Jick, *The Americanization of the Synagogue* (Hanover [New Hampshire], 1976), pp. 172-173. On the general proliferation of private organizations during this period, see Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Growth* (Philadelphia, 1968), pp. 61-2.
62. Tsevat, "Retrospective," p. 302.
63. "The Jewish Faith," *Discourses*, Vol. 2, no. 36; Moshe Shraga Samet, "Neo-Orthodoxy," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1972), Vol. 12, cols. 956-958; and Charles Liebman, "Orthodoxy in Nineteenth Century America," *Tradition*, Vol. 6 (Spring-Summer 1964), pp. 132-140. On the concept of "modernity" in Jewish history, see Michael A. Meyer, "Where Does the Modern Period of Jewish History Begin," *Judaism* (Summer 1975), pp. 329-338, and Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, "Introduction," *The Jew in the Modern World* (New York, 1980), pp. 3-6.
64. Abrahams, "Isaac Leeser's Bible," p. 259; Tsevat, "Retrospective," pp. 310-311; and Sella, "Isaac Leeser: Architect of the American Jewish Community," *passim*.
65. Leeser, *JML*, pp. 169, 186, and 190. Also, see note to Jeremiah 52:13 in *Bible* (1853), a rendition of Rashi's comment.
66. Isaac Leeser, "The Jews and Their Religion," in *He Pasa Ekklesia* 1, Daniel Rupp (ed.), (Philadelphia, 1844), pp. 362-366. Also, see *Discourses*, Vol. 6, p. 195; Vol. 7, pp. 157, and 262; Vol. 8, p. 103; and Vol. 9, p. 21. For a different view, see Jonathan D. Sarna, *Jacksonian Jew: The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah* (New York, 1981), p. 139.
67. *Die Deborah*, Vol. 13 (December 27, 1867), p. 98.
68. *Discourses*, Vol. 7, pp. 251-252. On "Resurrection of the Dead," see note to Psalm 78:39 in *Bible* (1853).
69. The thesis that Leeser advocated Positive-Historical Judaism (Conservative) was first advanced by Moshe Davis, *The Development of American Judaism* (New York, 1951) [in Hebrew], *passim*. Also, see Herbert Parzen, *Architects of Conservative Judaism* (New York, 1964), *passim*, and Arthur Hertzberg, "Conservative Judaism," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1972), Vol. 5, cols. 901-902.
70. Leeser, *JML*, p. 175.
71. Mayer Sulzberger, "Isaac Leeser" (pamphlet, Philadelphia, 1881), p. 5. Sulzberger read this short biography of Leeser before the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia in April, 1881. Copy in Abraham de Sola Papers, American Jewish Archives, and Mayer Sulzberger, "Isaac Leeser," in *American Hebrew*, Vol. 7, May 27, 1881, pp. 15-16, and June 2, 1881, pp. 28-29. Also, see Maxine Sella, "Isaac Leeser's Views on the Restoration of a Jewish Palestine," *PAJHS*, Vol. 68 (1968), pp. 118, 135.
72. *Discourses* 5, p. 121 or p. 138 (?).
73. *JML*, pp. 77-78.
74. *Ibid.*
75. Quoted from *JML*, p. 21. Also, see pp. 9, 13, 15-20.
76. *Op. cit.*, p. 137.
77. *Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, p. vii.
78. *JML*, pp. 10, 167, 200 ff.
79. *Bible* (1853), p. iii.
80. *Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, p. vii; Sarna, "The Politics of Scripture," p. 11; and *Occident*, Vol. 12, p. 406.
81. *Bible* (1853), p. iv.
82. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, "Translator's Introduction," *The Living Torah* (New York, 1981), p. vii. On making translations conform with Jewish law, Kaplan adds that "this means following Maimonides' Code (the *Yad*) where law is concerned, literary considerations are secondary" (p. vii). On the problem of ~~normalization~~ *harmonization* in the Leeser Bible, see *Occident*, Vol. 10, p. 527.
83. On Leeser's views on slavery, see Bertram W. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (New York, 1970?), pp. 15-55 and, more broadly, David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Ithaca, 1975), pp. 523-556. On the politics of slavery in Philadelphia, see Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *The Private City*, pp. 126, 130-137, 153.

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84. *Bible* (1853), p. iv.
85. R. Mordecai, "Personal Recollections," n.p.
86. Abrahams, "Isaac Leeser's Bible," pp. 256-257.
87. *Bible* (1853), p. x.
88. On Anglo-Jewish translations of the Bible, see Raphael Lowe, "Bible: Modern Versions—English," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1972), Vol. 4, cols. 868-872. Leeser, however, did correspond with Benisch, see A. Benisch to Isaac Leeser, London to Philadelphia, November 27, 1848, photostatic copy in the possession of Jacob Rader Marcus.
89. Leeser, *Bible* (1853), note to Exodus 25:17.
90. *Discourses* 2, p. 272.
91. *Bible* (1853), p. iv. The Raphael-de Sola version of Genesis was also published by Samuel Bagster and Sons. Leeser's preference for British Bibles may stem from the strong Episcopalian influence in Virginia as well as in Philadelphia; see E. Digby Baltzell, *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia* (New York, 1979), pp. 363-368.
92. On the general influence of German-Jewish culture, see Bertram W. Korn, "German-Jewish Intellectual Influence on American Jewish Life," Syracuse University, B. G. Rudolph Lecture, 1972.
93. *Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, p. 146.
94. *JMI*, p. 228.
95. "Supplement," *Occident*, Vol. 9, p. vi. A comparison of Leeser's version of *Jerusalem* with the translation prepared by Moses Samuels, *Jerusalem: A Treatise on Ecclesiastical Authority and Judaism* (London, 1838) leaves little doubt that Leeser independently prepared his rendition of Mendelssohn's classic work. Leeser's rendition is very "wordy" and also includes the translator's glosses.
96. "Supplement," *Occident*, Vol. 4, p. v. However, see "Revealed Truths," in *Discourses*, Vol. 9, pp. 216-217 and *Occident*, Vol. 23, p. 487.
97. *Bible* (1853), p. iii. Also, see "note" at the bottom of that page.
98. *Occident*, Vol. 10 (February 1853), p. 531.
99. In *Bible* (1853), see notes to Genesis 2:4 and Deuteronomy 6:4.
100. *Israelite*, Vol. 14 (February 14, 1868).
101. *Occident*, Vol. 10, p. 534. Leeser also occasionally consulted Dr. Gotthold Salomon's Bible, see *Occident*, Vol. 10, p. 533.
102. *Allegemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* (November 14, 1839, and October 1842), pp. 618-619, and L. Philipson to Isaac Leeser, Magdeburg to Philadelphia, August 22, 1854, photostatic copy in possession of Jacob Rader Marcus. For an extensive listing of Leeser references in European Jewish periodicals, see "Deutsch File" at the American Jewish Archives.
103. *Bible* (1853), p. iii.
104. *Occident*, Vol. 10, pp. 525-535. Charges by Leeser's opponents from the Reform movement that he could not read unvocalized Hebrew are overblown. However, he often relied on the *Be-ur* and L. Philipson's biblical notes when he did not have access to select material in rabbinic literature.
105. *Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, p. 147.
106. Jakob J. Petuchowski, "The Bible of the Synagogue," *Commentary* (February, 1959), p. 150. Reprinted in his *Heirs of the Pharisees* (New York, 1970), p. 37.
107. *Bible* (1853), p. iv. Unlike other biblical commentaries of the period, Leeser's does not include "Introductions" to individual books of the Bible, except for a short overview of "The Song of Solomon" and "Koheleth," the latter in a note to Koheleth 12:13.
108. Tsvet, however, maintains that "Leeser referred to Philipson and Zunz more than was necessary in an edition for popular and liturgical use," in "Retrospect," p. 302, note 27. However, in general, Protestant Bibliocentrism in America, unlike the medieval Jewish tradition, inhibited the publication of exegetical commentaries with popular Bibles.
109. Also, see notes to Numbers 25:11, Judges 11:39, and Esther 8:8 in *Bible* (1853).
110. Also, see E. I. Rosenthal, "Anti-Christian Polemic in Medieval Bible Commentaries," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, Vol. 11 (1960), pp. 115-135.
111. Leeser's comment on Genesis 44:10 is an expansion of an earlier note in his *Pentateuch*. Also, see his "The Messiah, No. 3," *Discourses*, Vol. 2, p. 46. Similarly, see Dr. J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (2nd ed., 1973), pp. 201-202.
112. On the "Suffering Servant" (Isaiah 52:13), Leeser simply translates a lengthy note from L. Philipson.
113. Also, see notes to Exodus 6:11 and Numbers 25:11 in *Bible* (1853).
114. Also, see "On Miracles, No. 3" in *Discourses*, Vol. 4, p. 20, *Occident*, Vol. 1, pp. 7-21; and "note" to Jeremiah 23:28 in *Bible* (1853).
115. "Notes" to Joshua 10:12 and 11 Kings 20:7 in *Bible* (1853).
116. Following Philipson, Leeser explains in his "note" that the mode of hos-

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pitality discussed in Genesis 43:34 is "yet prevailing in Persia." Also, see "notes" to 1 Samuel 6:5, Jeremiah 25:10, and 35:2. In the *Occident*, Leeser frequently reported on distant Jewish communities. For instance, on the Jews of Persia, see *Occident*, Vol. 7, pp. 317, 504-507, 549-554, 596-601, and Vol. 8, pp. 43-48 and 141-45.

117. On difficulty in being a religious Jew in the thought of Leeser, see "The Dangers and Defences of Judaism," *Discourses*, Vol. 5, pp. 389-406 and "The Requirements of Faith," *Discourses*, Vol. 7, pp. 87-101.

118. Isidor Kalisch, "English Versions of the Bible," *Israelite*, Vol. 1 (July 28, 1854), pp. 211f, and especially p. 170.

119. *Occident*, Vol. 12, p. 357.

120. *Occident*, Vol. 12, pp. 358-364.

121. *Occident*, Vol. 12, pp. 520-521.

122. *Occident*, Vol. 12, p. 360. Also, see Alexander A. Hodge, *The Life of Charles Hodge* (New York, 1880, reprinted 1959), and Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life* (New York, 1973<sup>2</sup>), pp. 162-168.

123. R. Mordecai, "Personal Recollections," n.p. Also, see Anna Robeson Burr, *Weir Mitchell, His Life and Letters* (New York, 1929).

124. *Bible* (1856), p. viii.

125. A quarto edition with notes was printed as late as 1914, copy at Klau Library (HUC-Cincinnati), Rare Book Room. On Pocket Edition, see Advertising Supplement to *Occident*, Vol. 13, p. 2.

126. *Bible* (1856), pp. iii-iv.

127. Quoted in Leeser Bible, Pocket Edition (1856, 1869), after p. xii.

128. Steve Fox, *A Detailed Analysis of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Its Structure, Its Goals, and Its Accomplishments, 1873-1903* (ordination thesis, HUC, 1980), pp. 122-123. Moses Dropsie prepared an agreement to transfer the copyright of the Leeser Bible to Abraham de Sola on January 6, 1873. Subsequently, de Sola printed a "Public Notice" including a "Deed of Transfer" on May 1, 1875 (de Sola Papers, Misc. File, American Jewish Archives). On how Leeser sold his Bibles, see Isaac Leeser to H. H. Kayton (?), Philadelphia to Baltimore, November 4, 1864, copy at Jewish Historical Society of Maryland.

129. *American Israelite* (August 21, 1874).

130. The Klau Library has Bloch Publishing and Printing Company editions of the Leeser Bible from 1888, 1891 (fourth edition), 1894, 1897, 1899, 1901, 1905, 1907, 1912, and 1914.

131. Max Margolis, *The Story of Bible Translations* (Philadelphia, 1917), pp. 91-101 and "Preface," *Jewish Publication Society Bible* (1917), p. v. However, the Revised Standard Version was not an independent translation, see Miller Burrows, *Diligently Compared: The Revised Standard Version and the King James Version of the Old Testament* (New York, 1964), p. 1.

132. Israel Abrahams, "Isaac Leeser's Bible," p. 258.

133. Dr. J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorah* (London, 1960<sup>2</sup>), pp. 1050-1051, and his notes to Leviticus 1:3, 4:22, 25:46, and 26:34.

134. *Koren Bible* (Jerusalem, 1969), p. vii. On Harold Fisch, see *Decennial Volume 1973-1982: Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 189, 247.

135. I. Abrahams, "Isaac Leeser's Bible," p. 259.

136. Henry Englander, "Isaac Leeser," p. 213.

137. Emily Solis-Cohen, Jr., made two attempts to write a biography of Leeser: *Leeser, A Beginner in America* and *Leeser, A Man and His Destiny*. Her unpublished and incomplete manuscripts are part of the Leeser Papers at Dropsie College. She employed Solomon Grayzel to translate Hebrew, Yiddish, and Judeo-German correspondence received by Leeser. These translations, handwritten and typescript, are scattered throughout the Leeser Papers at Dropsie. Furthermore, Solis-Cohen and Grayzel typed and annotated much of Leeser's correspondence with both Mickveh Israel and Beth El Emeth as well as some congregational minutes. Also, see Emily Solis-Cohen, Jr., to Henry Englander, July 12, 1933; July 25, 1933; July 28, 1933; and August 8, 1933; Philadelphia to Cincinnati, Englander Papers, American Jewish Archives.

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