The Religious and Social Life of the Sephardic Jews in the United States, 1654-1840

by

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Digest of Thesis:

The Religious and Social Life of the Sephardic Jews in the United States, 1654-1840.

With the settlement of the Sephardim in New Amsterdam in 1654, a congregation was privately formed, later known as Shearith Israel, which is regarded as the first Jewish congregation established in this country. Our study leads to the conclusion that from earliest times in New York, the majority of the members of this Spanish and Portuguese congregation were not Sephardic but Ashkenazic Jews. The Sephardim, nevertheless, continued to play a dominant role because of their wealth and affluence, and the Sephardic Minhag was tenaciously adhered to, as it was at the other Sephardic congregations in Newport, R.I., Philadelphia, Pa., Richmond, Va., Charleston, S.C., and Savannah, Ga.

The Sephardim in America were greatly influenced by the older Spanish and Portuguese congregations in London and Amsterdam, and with some modifications forced by the American environment, carried on the religious traditions of Europe. A study of these Sephardic congregations in America reveals that they were well-organized, and that in the early period the synagogue dominated Jewish communal life. The lay leadership of the synagogue was vested in an all-powerful Parnass and his assistants. The government was in the hands of the Elders and the Adjunta. The Trustees saw to the temporal affairs of the congregation, taking care of the real estate and expenditures. A Gaboy and Clerk played a minor role among the lay officers. The Parnass ruled over all with an iron hand, until after the Revolution, when he lost his power, and became merely the president of the board of trustees.

The spiritual leader of the congregation was the Hazzan. Kashruth was observed, and a Shochet and Bodeck were hired by the synagogue to supply the markets with kosher meat. The duties of the Shammash were many, and he was often regarded as a menial.

The Sephardim showed exceptional insight in their broad vision of social welfare, establishing charitable institutions, a system of alms, and pensions for the infirm and widowed. Like their Christian contemporaries, they enjoyed a good time at social occasions, such as synagogue consecrations and Jewish festivals. Their cultural life was not very prominent, as may be judged by their limited literary activity, but education of the young played a very important role, and was carefully supervised by the synagogue.

The rest of our study concerns itself with a detailed account of the religious practices of the Sephardim in the synagogue and at home. This includes conduct of services, customs and ceremonies of worship, religious articles, marriage customs, attitudes toward intermarriage and proselytes, and funeral customs.

The last section treats of inter-congregational aid and cooperation of the Sephardim among themselves in America, and their relationship to their Jewish brethren in Europe and Palestine, concluding with the Damascus affair of 1840.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction - Historical Orientation

Escaping the destruction by the Portuguese of the Dutch settlement in Brazil, a small group of about twenty-three Sephardim arrived in New Amsterdam in the early fall of 1654.[1] A few intrepid Jewish souls had already made their way to the shores of the new world. One of these, an Ashkenazi, Jacob Barsimson, had arrived some time earlier, as is recorded in Governor Stuyvesant's letter of September 22, 1654.[2] In April of 1655, the Directors in Holland informed Stuyvesant that "Portuguese Jews" were permitted the right "to sail and to trade" in the New Netherlands.[3] Thus Jews were granted several civil and political rights, but freedom of religious worship was denied them. Soon after their arrival, the Jews attempted to secure their religious life by planning to establish a regular public place of worship. A letter from the Classis of Amsterdam to the consistory in "New Netherlands" [May 26, 1656] reads in part: "... we are informed that even the Jews have also attempted ... to erect a synagogue for the exercise of their blasphemous religion."[4] This was forbidden in a letter by the authorities in Holland, stating that no Jews shall be "entitled to a license to exercise and carry on their religion in synagogues or gatherings ..." but "exercise in all quietness their religion within their homes close together in a convenient place ..."[5] In consequence of this religious bigotry on the part of Governor Stuyvesant and the Directors of the Dutch West India Company, Jewish public religious services were prohibited.

Congregation Shearith Israel is regarded as the first synagogue established in this country, and may be identical with that congregation of which Saul Brown was reader in 1695.[6] Although the records now extant begin with 1728, references to earlier years are made in the Minute Books

of Shearith Israel, indicating the existence of the congregation in 1706.[7]

An examination of the lists of members in 1728, reveals the interesting fact that even at this early date, a goodly portion of the congregational members were not Spanish or Portuguese (Sephardim) but German Jews (Ashkenazim). The large number of Ashkenazim in their midst remained a threat to Spanish and Portuguese dominance in Jewish religious and communal matters. This may be seen from the letter received in 1729 by the Parnass of Congregation Shearith Israel from the Hacham of the Sephardic congregation in Curacao, from whom the New York congregation had asked financial aid. "... as you know that the (asquenazim) or Germans, are more in Number than Wee there [N.Y.], the desire of you not to Let them have any More Votes nor Authority than they have had hitherto and for the performance of Which you are to get them to Signe an agreement of the Same by all of them..."[8] This is ample proof that in the early part of the eighteenth century the Ashkenazim constituted a majority of New York Jewry, and it is erroneous to believe that the Sephardim held sway in all matters.

Other Jewish communities such as Newport, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Pa., Richmond, Va., Charleston, S.C., and Savannah, Ga., were also of Sephardic origin, yet a goodly portion of the Synagogue membership was made up of Jews from German, Polish, and English backgrounds. These "Tedescos" (Jews of German origin) often outnumbered[9] the more aristocratic and socially acceptable Sephardim,[10] who rarely mixed with their Ashkenazic brethren except in religious worship and congregational responsibilities.[11]

In religious worship and institutions the Sephardic tradition was maintained. Yet, already in the beginning of the eighteenth century,

the Ashkenazim began to influence the daily life of their more cultured Sephardic brethren. Such inroads are reflected in congregational records and fundamental habits of speech, although in the beginning, congregational minutes and announcements were written in both Portuguese and English.[12] The slow but steady "infiltration" of Yiddish in the life of the Jewish community may be deduced from the following two examples of congregational minutes of Shearith Israel in New York. "Resolved that a Well in Shool yard be repaired," and use of the Yiddish "ס'איז נויט"[13] Even "Sephardic" Gershom Mendes Seixas, Hazzan of the Spanish and Portuguese congregation Shearith Israel could not resist the use of "momoloshen."[14] Thus when we speak of the "Sephardim" in this paper, we do not refer to those Jews of Spanish and Portuguese nationality exclusively, but merely to those Jews and their institutions that perpetuated and followed the Spanish and Portuguese ritual ("Minhag Sephardim").

II. Synagogue Organization
A. Introduction

The Sephardic congregations scattered along the Atlantic coast from Rhode Island to Georgia modeled their form of synagogue government, religious practices and rituals, and institutional organization upon their religious experiences and memories of the old world as exemplified in the venerated and influential Spanish and Portuguese congregations of London and Amsterdam.[15] The American congregations often appealed to these two European Sephardic communities for rabbinical decisions involving Jewish law, or for aid in finding qualified religious leaders, and at times received gifts of religious articles from them or from private individuals belonging to these congregations.[16] The new American environment, however, modified their traditional patterns of communal government, as they were soon imitating American societies and organizations.[17] An illustration of such a process is shown in the changes introduced in Shearith Israel of New York, whose members soon found the old congregational laws impractical and unwieldy, and were forced to make "amendments and additions" in order to "Preserve Peace, Tranquility and good Government" in the congregation.[18]

II. Synagogue Organization
B. Membership

All persons paying a specified sum in "offerings", or, later, in payment for seats occupied, were known as "electors." Those unable to pay the required sums were designated "seatholders" or "congregators." When their financial position allowed them to increase their "offerings" they too were entitled to take part in congregational elections, and were eligible to hold the office of "Parnass" (president) or to be elected as a member of the "Adjunta" (governing body of the synagogue).[19]

The procedure of becoming a "Yechid" (member) varied. In Savannah, anyone desirous of being affiliated with the congregation, notified by letter the Parnass, who after one month called the General Adjunta, who then voted by ballot on the applicant. If a majority voted in his favor he was considered a Yechid on the condition that he paid "one Guinea" for the congregational charity fund, and had been resident of the city for six months previous to his application.[20] In Charleston, the residence requirement was two years, and the applicant was admitted only upon the approval of the "Public Adjunta," provided a sum of $20 was paid. Sons of regular members were required to pay only $10.[21]

In addition to these initial fees, members were expected to support the synagogue with additional "offerings", and on the High Holidays the sum to be offered was increased from sixpence to one shilling. At the end of the year these sums were deducted from the assessment on seats. Anyone not settling his financial affairs with the synagogue before Rosh Hashonah forfeited his seat, and was denied the customary honors and privileges accorded to "Yechidim" (members) in good standing.[22] Anyone called to the Torah who made an offering of less than the required amount

specified by each congregation for the Parnass and congregation could be denied all honors and even be removed from the rolls of the congregation.[23] The poor financial condition of the congregation often forced them to place a higher tax on seats, or to raise their prices in accordance with the depleted condition of the congregational treasury.[24] The name of the person and the amount he was taxed were entered in a special book.[25]

It appears from extant congregational tax lists containing the congregant's name and sum subscribed, that the seats were numbered, and the synagogue divided into sections for the special seating of women, children, and strangers. An examination of a tax list for seats at Shearith Israel in New York for the year 1750 reveals the following interesting item:

> "From No. 35 to 40 for strangers
> from 41 to 51 with 2 Banches [sic] adjoining for children
> & 3 seats vacant No. 11.89 & 90 at no less than 40/each."[26]

Following traditional custom, the women were seated apart from the men. The men were seated below, and the women above in a gallery.[27] It was the practice also to sell seats reserved for ladies at public auction after they had been classified and re-assessed by a committee. These seats could be held by the leasee for a period of three years. Any married man belonging to the congregation was "compelled" to buy a seat for his wife, unless he wished to incur the penalty of being deprived of all his rights and privileges in the congregation. As the seats were called off aloud, an immediate bid was made by the member, who had to announce the name of the lady for whom he was purchasing, provided she was related to him (e.g. wife, sisters, aunts, etc.) on the condition that she also be a "subscribing member", and a resident or intended resident of the city. The wives and daughters of non-members could not obtain seats by having them purchased for them by members.[28]

While the seats for women could be leased over a period of three years, seats for men were leased for a two year period, from the first day of the month "Nissan". At one time, the money for men's seats were deducted from the amount of yearly offerings given to the congregation, but this rule was altered, and both sums had to be paid in quarterly installments. The assessments varied according to congregations and condition of the congregational treasuries. According to the terms of renting seats at Congregation Shearith Israel in New York, persons unable to afford the £4 per year could obtain a seat gratis by applying to the Parnass. No children could occupy the seats purchased or leased, lest they disturb those in neighboring seats. Any person could have a lock affixed to his seat, upon receiving permission from the Parnass. Failure to pay for seats within eight days of sale would result in loss of the same, and the seats would then be re-leased.[29] Strangers residing in the city who did not join the congregation after the time of residence was fulfilled could not enjoy any of the congregational advantages (i.e., marriage, funerals, seats) unless a specified sum was paid to the "Gaboy" (treasurer) and even then the final decision lay in the hands of the Parnass and Private Adjunta.[30]

II. Synagogue Organization
C. Lay Officials of the Congregation
1. Parnass

In the early period of organization, the voting members elected for a period of one year a President (Parnass) and his two assistants (Hatan Torah and Hatan Bereshith). Afterwards, he was given the privilege of selecting his own assistants, and also of appointing his successor. These officials belonged to the governing body (Mahamad or Adjunta) of the congregation.[31] The time for electing congregational officials seems to have varied. On one hand we find evidence that it took place in the third week of August, and, in other congregations, on the first day of Rosh Hashonah itself.[32]

It was customary in the early period of some congregations to elect two Parnassim, who divided their time in office as follows: the first one, known as the Parnass Presidente, officiated from Rosh Hashonah to Passover; the other, called Parnass Residente, began his duties from Passover until the next Rosh Hashonah.[33] Anyone elected to such an office who refused to accept was liable to a fine.[34] This custom of electing two Parnassim, however, was again changed, and the older usage of electing only one Parnass and two assistants was restored, because of the difficulty of finding persons willing to fill this office.[35] Other Sephardic congregations seem to have used only the older system of electing one Parnass, two Hatanim, Adjunta, and other officers, without any additions or changes.[36]

After the President (Parnass) completed his year in office, the first assistant (Hatan Torah) became Parnass, and the second assistant (Hatan Bereshith) attained the rank of first assistant. The new Hatan Bereshith was then nominated by the Parnass and his assistants.[37]

Before a man was eligible to be elected to the office of Parnass, he had to meet certain requirements as specified in the congregational constitutions. According to one rule, only married men could be elected to this office, provided that they had already served either as a Hatan Torah or Hatan Bereshith. In another congregation, any male could be elected to any of the congregational offices, who was in good standing and over twenty-one years of age.[38]

The office of President (Parnass) of the governing body of the synagogue invested the Parnass with great power. In the eighteenth century, the predecessor was permitted to appoint his own successor. After 1805, the Parnass was elected as president of the Board of Trustees. The nineteenth century saw a diminishing of his power, and he no longer possessed the personal prerogatives of his earlier forerunners, becoming merely a member and the presiding officer of the Trustees, carrying out their desires and orders, without special powers vested in the office itself.[39]

An examination of the minute books of early congregations reveals that the Parnass convened and presided at congregational meetings, and was entrusted with the executive duty of enforcing the various articles of the constitution. Anyone infringing upon these had to answer to the Parnass and the governing board. Both within the synagogue and without, the Jewish community was firmly under his thumb. A list of some of his innumerable duties gives some insight as to his vast powers.

1. Dispense charity to the needy, and to destitute travelers.[40]
2. Collect congregational offerings every three months.
3. Act as judge and arbitrator in matters of dispute.
4. Set tax for new seats in synagogue.

5. Dispense congregational "mitzvoths", or delegate congregational officials to officiate at marriages, funerals, etc.

6. Have the articles of the constitution read twice a year in the synagogue in both Portuguese and English.

7. Send the Shammash to call congregants to services.[41]

8. Impose fines on the Hazzan, Schochet, and Shammash if he finds any of them remiss in his duties, and to supervise their duties.[42]

9. Care for the repair of the cemetery.[43]

10. Have sole direction of synagogue during religious services.

11. Preside at all public meetings.

12. Inspect the Gaboy's accounts.

13. Convene the Private and General Adjuntas.[44]

14. Build a Succah, with the assistance of the Gaboy.[45]

15. Impose fines on all persons causing disturbance within the synagogue.[46]

16. Accept the "pointer" at reading of the Torah.[47]

17. Sit in the "banco", the seat of honor in which the president and other officials sat during services in the synagogue.

In the event that both Parnassim were absent from the synagogue, the senior member among the Elders present would preside, and "accept the pointer" at the Torah reading. If no Elders were present, then the Hatan Torah did so; if not, the Hatan Bereshith accepted the powers of Parnass pro-tem. If the Hatan Bereshith was also absent, then the senior among the Yechidim (congregational members) accepted the office of Parnass Presidente for that emergency. Anyone refusing to accept the responsibilities of that office during such time of emergency was liable to a twenty shilling fine.[48] The power and the glory of the office of Parnass was symbolized in the "koved" that went with that

exalted office. During services the Parnass or his substitute sat in a special chair or bench of honor called the "banca."[49]

II. Synagogue Organization
C. Lay Officials of the Congregation
2. Elders

The Elders at Congregation Shearith Israel were a peculiar phenomenon adopted from the Spanish and Portuguese congregation of Bevis Marks in London, and will, therefore, be discussed separately. The Body of Elders at Shearith Israel was composed of the former members who had served on the Adjunta. They met with the rest of the governing body, receiving reports on the financial status of the congregation, and drawing up the rules and regulations that governed the congregation.[50] Voting members participated only in elections of the religious officials (e.g., Hazan, Shochet, etc.) while the Elders chose the Parnass and his assistants. When they were unable to arrive at any unanimity among themselves on the choice of a candidate, the congregation was then summoned and decided the issue. They also supervised the Shochet and saw that Kashruth was maintained, controlled the salary of the synagogue officials, decided matters of internal disagreement among the members, and supervised education of the children at the congregational school.[51] They had the authority to make the Parnass "render an exact and particular account of his disbursements for the use of the congregation to the Elders every six months or oftener," and keep his accounts in a book, showing his expenditures, and sums of money received and from what persons.[52]

II. Synagogue Organization
C. Lay Officials of the Congregation
3. Adjunta

Each congregation appears to have possessed a governing body in addition to the Parnassim, two assistants (Hatan Torah and Hatan Bereshith), Gaboy and Secretary. This governing council in some congregations was composed of a General and Private Adjunta.

The General Adjunta contained "the fundamental power" of the congregation. It consisted of as many as twenty-five "Yechidim" (members) who remained in office for a period of three years. The Parnassim, General and Private Adjunta formed a virtual triumvirate with the power to manage all temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation.[53]

In some congregations these three bodies had more power than the trustees, for they as a unit had the right to elect all the religious officials (e.g., Hazzan, Schochet, Shammash), lay officers of the congregation (Secretary, Hatanim, Gaboy, Parnass of the cemetery) and even the trustees themselves.[54] The power of these governing bodies was zealously guarded and self-perpetuating. For the General Adjunta in Charleston, S.C., had the power to elect seven members from its own group, or the general membership, to serve on the Private Adjunta. This smaller body, in turn, chose the Parnassim by ballot for the coming year.[55]

The Private Adjunta also had the power to suspend salaried officials, to inflict fines as high as $100, and to deprive a guilty party of the rights and privileges to which members in good standing were entitled.[56]

The General council had more judicial power than the smaller private one. As a higher court of appeals, it could either sustain or reject the

decisions of the Private Adjunta.[57] Also it had tight control of the congregational treasury and decided how much compensation salaried officers should receive, with due consideration as to available congregational funds.[58]

II. Synagogue Organization
C. Lay Officials of the Congregation
4. Trustees

The trustees were primarily supposed to look after the "temporal" affairs of the congregation, while the Adjunta and Parnass concerned themselves with the congregation's spiritual needs. At Shearith Israel in New York, these two bodies often conflicted with one another,[59] claiming jurisdiction, and nullifying each other's decisions. The Adjunta was finally abolished, and the Trustees usurped the Adjunta's prerogatives, investing themselves with the power to act as judge and regulator in both temporal and spiritual matters of the congregation.[60]

The number of trustees elected seems to vary from six to nine, and they served for a period of three years. Elections for trustees took place on Sunday, as did other congregational meetings. The polls were open all day from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M.[61] The primary purpose of the trustees was to protect and administer the congregational "real estate."[62] This included the synagogue itself, the cemetery, and all other properties owned by the congregation, such as parsonage for the Hazzan, Shammash, and school teacher, besides a number of other brick and wooden properties from which rentals were received which helped to fill the congregational treasury. Some of these properties yielded from $100 to $500 per annum.[63] They also took care of all synagogue expenditures, including charities, rent of congregational seats, burial in the cemetery, congregational offerings, and surveillance of "Kashruth."[64] The members chosen to serve on the board of trustees were required to give some form of "security" to persons appointed by the Parnass, assistants, and other members.[65]

II. Synagogue Organization
C. Lay Officials of the Congregation
5. Gaboy

Almost every congregation had a special treasurer, known as the "Gaboy." At times the Shammash also shared this responsibility, but in most congregations the office of Treasurer was a separate one.[66] Any "Yechid" (voting member) over twenty-one years of age was eligible for this office, and was chosen from one of the six members serving on the Private Adjunta, provided he was elected by a majority of votes. If he refused to serve in the office of Gaboy after being elected, he was fined thirty shillings.

The Gaboy had the following responsibilities:

1. Keeping a proper set of books.
2. Collecting all offerings and fines.
3. Balancing his accounts yearly.
4. Submitting his accounts to the "Yechidim" and "Congregators" on a quarterly basis.[67]
5. Sharing the responsibility with the Parnass of building a Sukkah.
6. Hiring a Shammash and paying his salary.[68]
7. Caring for the cemetery, and repairing its gates and painting its walls.[69]
8. Selling of seats, "about a fortnight before Rosanna [sic] in every year".
9. Opening "subscription list" for seats for the coming year.
10. Rendering all his yearly accounts to the Private Adjunta, within one month after his term of office has expired.[70]

II. Synagogue Organization
C. Lay Officials of the Congregation
6. Secretary or Clerk

The clerk, or secretary, as he was called in different congregations, was, in some cases, annually chosen by the Trustees; while, in others, he was elected by ballot like other congregational officers, provided the person running for the office received a majority of the votes.[71]

In spite of the clerk's many duties and small salary, it appears to have been a coveted honorary post, for the annual remuneration was negligible, and certainly the sum paid seems insufficient to have given anyone a livelihood.[72]

The duties of the clerk included:

1. Recording the congregational minutes.
2. Keeping a register of vital statistics, such as marriages, births, circumcisions, and deaths as they occurred in the congregation.
3. Recording any "legacies bequeathed" the congregation.
4. Attending the synagogue services to learn of the "offerings" made.
5. Collecting all monies due the congregation.
6. Turning such accounts over to the Gaboy.
7. Keeping books open at all times that they might be inspected.
8. Keeping a record of all rules and proceedings of the Adjunta.[73]
9. Bringing books up-to-date and delivering them to his successor. (Failure to comply with this rule carried a fine of £5.)
10. Keeping his books in English.[74]
11. Signing contracts drawn up between congregational salaried officers.[75]
12. Clerking for congregational school, in addition to regular congregational duties.
13. Posting of notices in synagogue, as ordered by trustees.
14. Notifying members by letter of any action concerning them taken by the trustees.[76]

15. Handling other congregational correspondence.

It is to these overworked and underpaid clerks that we owe a great debt of gratitude, for our knowledge of congregational events and vital Jewish affairs would be lacking, and any clear understanding of those bygone years would have been impossible. Reading such congregational records through the maze of script, now scribbled and scrawled, now beautiful, bold, and clear, gives us an invaluable fund of source material, and creates for us a sense of continuity in American Jewish history.

II. Synagogue Organization
D. Religious Officials of the Synagogue
1. Hazzan

The Hazzan (Reader), Shochet (Ritual-slaughterer), and Shammash (Sexton) were all under the control of the Parnass and the trustees. The Shochet, however, at Congregation Shearith Israel was chosen by the "electors."[77] Special articles in the congregational constitution[78] specified the duties and salaries of each religious official so that they "may not at any time Pretend Ygnorance [sic] of what is at their charge to observe..."[79]

If any of the above-mentioned officials were negligent in their duties and responsibilities, the Parnass and his assistants were empowered to impose a fine of not more than £3 upon any one of them. If the offense was of a particularly serious nature, then the Parnass and assistants were to call a meeting of the Yechidim, who would vote whether or not to discharge the culprit. In such cases the Parnass had the privilege of casting two votes.[80] These officials often assumed another duty besides their own in times of congregational emergency.[81]

The Reader was expected to attend the synagogue at the regular worship hours, namely, twice every weekday, and three times on the Sabbath and holidays, to read the prayers, and do whatever else was appropriate "to his functions as is custumary [sic] in othere [sic] congregation." He was also expected to take the place of the "Bodeck" (examiner of ritually slaughtered meat) if the necessity ever arose. The salary offered for this position in New York City in 1728 was £50 and six cords of "Wallnut Wood" with "Passover Cakes for his family." All this was paid out of the congregational charity fund.[82]

A further duty of the Hazzan was the reading of public notices during

congregational services, whenever this was ordered by the ever-powerful Parnass.[83] New readers coming from other congregations were paid their traveling expenses, and added privileges were granted in order to attract a man for the position, as good Hazzanim appear to have been scarce. The Hazzan was also in charge of supervising the kosher beef for export: the revenue for all such certificates belonged to him, in addition to all other perquisites for officiating at various public and private occasions. The offerings made at the Torah in his name also belonged to him.[84] In a letter written by the Parnass Isaac Gomez of Shearith Israel to the Portuguese congregation in London, asking for a Hazzan, we learn of another task expected of this official, namely, to "teach the poor children Hebrew, English & Spanish."

Between the years 1766 and 1768, the salary of the Hazzan was raised to £80, with the following benefits added: firewood, matzoth, perquisites, and "if he pleases the use of the House Belonging to the Synegogue [sic]." When Gershom Mendes Seixas's application was unanimously accepted in 1768, all these privileges were his, with the exception that "no allowance for house rent" was given in his first year.[85]

The Hazzan also served as the spiritual "gadfly" of the congregation, who at special congregational meetings, usually held in the late afternoon on the Sabbath, consulted with the congregants as to the ways by which the peace and unity of the congregation could be further promoted, and discussed what appears to be a very modern problem, that of better attendance at worship.[86] This was no doubt the beginning of the Hazzan's assuming the role of preacher, since the Spanish and Portuguese congregations in the eighteenth century had no permanently hired and ordained Hacham to act as rabbi, preacher, and teacher.[87]

For officiating at a marriage ceremony, the Hazzan was to receive no less than $10, to be paid to him previous to the marriage! No other officer was permitted to perform this ceremony, unless legally authorized to do so by the Parnass and Adjunta. Even so, the Hazzan was "not to be deprived of his lawful fees."[88] In addition to the duties already mentioned, the Hazzan acted as the "Baal Koreh" when the Torah was read at services,[89] and as a Barmitzvah teacher.[90] In the early part of the eighteenth century, the duties of the Hazzan at Shearith Israel did not call for preaching, save perhaps on some extraordinary occasion. The use of the vernacular at such times was considered in bad taste. An innovation in this regards was made by order of the Board of Trustees during the early nineteenth century, when the Hazzan (or any other suitable person) was directed to deliver an address, sermon, or lecture in English, whenever the occasion might arise.[91]

Whether or not it was the practice for the Hazzan at all Sephardic congregations to wear a special garb while officiating during services cannot be fully proven. Yet it is safe to conjecture from available evidence that this was the practice: at Congregation Shearith Israel it became the custom for the Hazzan to wear a special cloak and hat while officiating, and since this was the oldest and most powerful Sephardic congregation in the United States, this precedent may be assumed to have spread to other Sephardic congregations, since even Ashkenazic congregations in New York adopted this practice from Shearith Israel.[92]

Some of the Hazzanim not only acted as reader, teacher, and preacher, but also were called upon at times to decide matters of Jewish law and ritual, although in most cases such questions were sent to rabbinical courts abroad. Certainly, however, the Hazzan possessed a knowledge of

the laws of "gittin and kiddushin."[93] He usually was the most learned man in the community concerning Jewish matters, with the possible exception of some laymen of Ashkenazic background.

Joseph Jeshurun Pinto, the seventh Hazzan of Congregation Shearith Israel, seems to have been a man of parts. Shortly after assuming his duties at the congregation he took it upon himself to establish the times for the "holy services." He also prepared a "luach" or table fixing the exact time on which the Sabbath was to commence, a decision which hitherto had been left to the judgment of the individual, and also set the times for beginning services at the synagogue on Sabbaths, holidays, and fasts, which formerly had been at the discretion of each officiating minister. J. J. Pinto created order out of chaos, and thus strengthened Jewish religious life at a time when anarchy reigned. His "reforms" have become his lasting memorial, for they are still being followed more than a century and a half after his death.[94]

One of the most important epochs in the history of Congregation Shearith Israel commenced with the ministry of Gershom Mendes Seixas who, in the year 1766, was elected to the position of Hazzan. His services to the congregation and community covered approximately half a century, filled with extraordinary events. He was the first Hazzan and Jewish scholar born on American soil. His father, like other Sephardim, had fled from the Inquisition in Portugal. Hazzan Gershom M. Seixas may even have received his Hebrew education at the congregational school. He was a great patriot and during the Revolutionary War closed the synagogue and fled to Philadelphia rather than continue services under British protection. He took the precaution of stripping the synagogue of its holy articles, and entrusted them to the care of various

congregants. While in Philadelphia he continued his ministerial functions as Hazzan at the Spanish and Portuguese congregation Mikve Israel, from 1780 to the end of the war, when he returned to New York in March of 1784. His ministry was renowned not only for his service to the Jewish people but also to his community as an American citizen. Through his efforts and interest, the Hazzan's function was again broadened into what has since become a vital and necessary part of the modern rabbi's function, namely, to serve as an ambassador of good will, and representative of the Jewish community at communal and civic endeavors. His interest in higher education resulted in his being chosen a trustee of Columbia College (1787-1815) and up until 1897, he was the only Jew so honored. He participated and represented the congregation in all public functions, being officially recognized and given equal honors with clergymen of other denominations at the inaugural ceremonies of George Washington at New York in 1789.[95]

Another Hazzan of note was Jacques J. Lyons, a native of Surinam, Dutch Guiana. Before coming to Congregation Shearith Israel, he officiated as reader at the Congregation Berachah Ve-Shalom in Richmond, Va., and elsewhere. He was "remembered as a man of great culture, dignity and piety."[96] Hazzan J. J. Lyons made application for the position of reader at Congregation Shearith Israel in 1839, and in 1840 was elected. Although he did not preach, he engaged in a great deal of pastoral work - visiting the sick, comforting the sorrowing, and counseling those in need of advice. Thus J. J. Lyons added one more feature to the Hazzan's duties - pastoral work.[97]

He also had historical interests, especially in the field of American Jewish history. It was his intention to write an all-embracing work on American Jewish history. Accordingly, he set about collecting various

items of interest, either copying or clipping them, gathering leaflets, making extracts of valuable facts from various books and manuscripts, collecting old account books, portraits and sketches, and placing them for safe keeping in notebooks and scrap books. Scholars interested in this Jewish Americana are highly indebted to Lyons's industry and indefatigable efforts in preserving such valuable information for posterity. His desire to write a history of the Jews from their earliest settlement in the United States down to his own times was frustrated by his death in 1877. Two volumes (volumes 21 and 27 respectively of the American Jewish Historical Society Publications) are part of his huge collection. Volume 21 contains the earliest extant minute books of the oldest Jewish congregation in North America, Shearith Israel of New York, commonly known as the Portuguese and Spanish congregation. Volume 27 contains documents, notes, and manuscripts concerning Jewish congregations and their relations to other Jewish congregations "aver l'yam," as well as many highly interesting facts concerning Jewish life and practice in America. J. J. Lyons will always be remembered as a pioneer in the field of American Jewish history.[98]

II. Synagogue Organization
D. Religious Officials of the Synagogue
2. Rabbi

In our discussion of the Hazzan, it was pointed out that the Sephardic congregations in North America did not seem to have engaged a regularly ordained rabbi or Hacham to guide their religious life. It is not known whether this was due to the financial inability of the various congregations to support a rabbi, or to the fact that America still was looked upon by European Jewry as an impious and godless country, where Jewish observances were honored more in the breach.[99] There is ample evidence in our sources, however, to prove that transient rabbis, both Sephardic and Ashkenazic, ordained by recognized authorities abroad, paused in their travels and visited such Jewish communities as Newport, New York, and Philadelphia for a few months before continuing their journeys to other Jewish centers in the new world - Jamaica, Surinam, Curacao, and St. Eustacia. While sojourning in American communities they often functioned as rabbis, preaching on the Sabbath and holidays, and deciding moot questions of Jewish law and practice.[100]

In the absence of such "Rabbonim" or "Hachamim", the Hazzan, as already mentioned, and learned Jewish laymen like I. B. Kursheedt of Richmond and New York, and Manuel Josephson of Philadelphia were frequently sought for opinions and decisions by other Jewish communities, in order to aid them in following correct Jewish procedures.[101]

The following evidence will show that rabbinical authority was at times bestowed upon learned Jewish laymen by various congregations, but this authority was recognized only by that congregation. This seems to be in accordance with Jewish tradition whereby any layman possessing a knowledge of legal traditions could act as judge and teacher. When

K. K. Beth Elohim, Charleston, South Carolina, was organized in 1750, the Spanish and Portuguese ritual as practiced in London and Amsterdam was accepted as their norm. Moses Cohen was elected "Chief Rabbi," and Isaac da Costa, reader. Although Moses Cohen played a leading role in organizing this congregation, he was not chosen for this very important post as a reward for his communal services. He must have been a man of great learning to warrant such trust and confidence, for his full title was "Hacham V'Abb Beth Din." This imposing title of "Hacham" and "Father of the Jewish Court" was bestowed upon him in recognition of his piety, learning, and wisdom. Yet it is entirely possible that he had at one time received rabbinical ordination in Europe, and, after coming to the new world, had engaged in commercial enterprises, as did other religious officials, for the early ministers at Beth Elohim and other congregations served without any salary, and were thereby forced to earn their livelihood by trade and commerce. It was, therefore, only natural that the congregation should capitalize on so extraordinary a stroke of good fortune.[102]

The minutes of Congregation Shearith Israel speak of a "Ribbi," "Riby," and "Rabbi." One might conclude that the congregation actually employed a rabbi to decide ritual and legal matters. This conclusion, however, would be utterly false, when we recall that such a person would have been alluded to as a "Hacham," in accordance with Sephardic tradition. One might argue that the official called by these various titles was an Ashkenazi, since it has already been demonstrated that at Shearith Israel, the Sephardim were actually in the minority, and so the dominant Ashkenazim could have had the right to engage a Polish or German rabbinical authority to decide religious matters. This may be probable, but it

is hardly possible for three reasons. First, the constitution of the congregation explicitly stated that the Sephardic minhag was to be preserved.[103] Second, the dignity and "koved" of the office of rabbi, especially in those days, would never have permitted the "Riby" or "Ribbi" to be treated so shabbily, nor would he have been asked, Heaven forfend, to take the place of the Shammash, who seems to have occupied the lowest rung of the congregational social ladder![104] Third, the force of internal evidence precludes the possibility that the title "Ribby" or "Ribbi" refers to an ordained Talmudic scholar, competent to judge and decide legal and ritual questions. Abraham Israel Abrahams was with Shearith Israel for seven years, and is frequently referred to as the "Ribbi."[105] An examination of his duties reveals that he was the teacher at the congregational school,[106] served the Jewish communities of New York and Newport, Rhode Island, as a mohel,[107] and on occasion acted as sexton.[108] From the foregoing evidence, we must conclude that the term "Ribby" or "Ribbi" refers to one commonly known as a "Rebbi" or a "Melamed," a teacher of children. The further duties of the "Ribby" will be discussed in this paper in the section on "Education."

Among the privileges extended to the "Ribby" was the liberty of dwelling in one of the houses owned by the congregation. He had to pay the taxes and a nominal sum for yearly rent. Permission to enjoy this privilege had to be obtained from the Parnass.[109]

II. Synagogue Organization
D. Religious Officials of the Synagogue
3. Shochet and Bodeck

The offices of Shochet and Bodeck were often combined, and the person who performed "Shechitah" for the community also acted as examiner (Bodeck).[110] The chief duty of the Shochet was to see that a sufficient supply of various meats was available at the market for the congregation. Apparently he slaughtered at various places in the city, so as to enable Jews to buy kosher meat at convenient places near their homes, also "to see a particular Quarter of Beeff [sic] and half of the gutt fatt of each quarter to be cut from each Butcher for the use of the Market." If any butcher refused, the Shochet was ordered not to slaughter any more animals for him until he complied. The butchers referred to were in all likelihood non-Jews. In order to guard Jews against any infraction of the laws of Kashruth, the Shochet had to place at least three seals on each quarter of beef, and two seals upon each fore quarter of mutton and veal. The freshness of the meat was further guaranteed by the practice of placing a letter for each day of the week upon the seal.

The Shochet, like other salaried officials, was under the supervision of the Parnass and Adjunta, and could not prepare any quantity of meat without first receiving their permission.[111]

Further duties of the Shochet, as extended in a meeting, February 4, 1796, and amplified in an agreement of November 11, 1805, include the following: to supply the market for the congregation with a sufficient supply of large and small animals ("Dakos and Gasos"), to use a plain seal that shall be placed on the "hind" as well as "forequarter," to remove the seals whenever he judged the meat had become "trefah," "the crantz fat shall be sealed when requested by the butcher or a

congregator."[112]

To guard the Jewish community against any infringement of the Jewish laws of Kashruth, the Shochet had to submit to an examination every six months concerning the "dinimz" of "Shechita." This "b'chinah" was conducted by the Hazzan, and any other Bodeck that the Hazzan desired to be present.[113]

A strict watch was kept upon the Shochet and Bodeck, and any suspicion of carelessness resulted in swift and prompt action. Thus we find that a complaint was lodged against a Bodeck, for leaving "the pinchers at the Butchers." This Bodeck was suspended from his duties.[114] At one time, a widow Hetty Hays purchased some meat at the market that was properly sealed, but apparently not slaughtered and examined according to Jewish practice. The Parnass summoned his assistants and a transient Rabbi, Samuel Bar Isaac of London, to assist them with his advice. Since sufficient evidence could not be found pointing to the Shochet's negligence, the charges against him were dismissed, but not before the Shochet Hart Jacobs agreed to attend the Rabbi's house for an examination on the "Dinim" of "Shechita," with the proviso that if he passed the examination he could continue to slaughter for the congregation.[115] After this incident the Shochet Hart Jacobs was not fully trusted, for we learn that three months later he was allowed to slaughter under the supervision of a Mr. Raphael Jacobs. The congregation agreed to reinstate him with a good salary on condition that the visiting Hacham Hiam Carregal approve of him.[116]

During the latter half of the eighteenth century the salary of the Shochet fluctuated between £20 to £35 per annum; while during the second decade of the nineteenth century the salary in New York City was

set at $400 yearly, "including all emoluments and perquisites." This change was no doubt due to the increased amount of slaughtering necessitated by the steady multiplication of the seed of Abraham in that city, and also by the steady rise in the standard of living.[117]

By the year 1812, the old established Jewish communities seem to have been a closely knit group in matters religious. For in that year, a committee at Congregation Shearith Israel, empowered to elect a shochet, recommended that a public notice be sent to the Jewish congregations of Philadelphia, Richmond, and Charleston, and read to the members of these congregations publicizing the coming elections for a Shochet, in the hope that anyone interested and qualified should submit his application. It was also recommended that the notice contain the following information: the Shochet would be under the control of the Trustees, kill with as many butchers as the trustees would designate and as often as required. The salary was to be $400 per year, and a Beth-Din of Shochtim would pass upon the qualifications of the shochet-elect. This court was composed of six men, "any three of them to act." Such outstanding Jewish laymen as I. B. Kursheedt, Naphtali Phillips, and Moses Gomez formed part of the acting judges of this Beth-Din, and a few months later Hazzan Gershom Mendes Seixas was also made a member.[118] In 1736, seventy-six years before this event, another Hazzan, David Mendez Machado, a shochet himself, had the authority to grant licenses to other qualified men to slaughter and inspect cattle according to the Jewish laws of Shechita and Bedeka. It is of interest to note that this Hazzan-Shochet possessed a book Dinim on Shechita, by Aaron Mendoza, printed in London in 1733, written in Spanish, and on the fly-leaf had recorded the names of those men to whom he had granted permission to

practice Shechita and Bedeka. Eleven names are listed for Shechita, one for Bedeka, and seven for Shechita and Bedeka. Solomon Hart and Abraham Pinto were granted a license to practice as Shochet and Bodek for the "Kaal." The others presumably were qualified merely to slaughter for their own use. Hazzan Machado's Hebrew learning may be presumed not to have been too erudite, as he probably had frequent recourse to the "Dinim" through the use of his Spanish pony, and found the "Hilchoth Shechitah" in the "Shulchan Aruk" beyond his ken.[119]

Jews living on the periphery of American-Jewish cities or in distant places were deeply concerned about observing the laws of Shechitah, and as instanced above, were granted a "Kaballah" (license) by some other qualified person. Thus, Bernard Gratz, living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, far from the large Jewish settlement in Philadelphia, was a qualified Shochet, and slaughtered for his own use. He also trained a pupil, Solomon Etting, and in 1782, granted him the authority to practice ritual slaughtering at the tender age of eight, the minimum legal age for such a function. Thus Etting had a double honor bestowed upon him, being the first native-born American Jew to be granted ordination for Shechitah, and also the first American Jew who was ordained by another American on American soil![120]

II. Synagogue Organization
D. Religious Officials of the Synagogue
4. Shammash

Although the Shammash at Shearith Israel was chosen and dismissed by the "electors" (in earliest times, this was the privilege of the "congregators" rather than electors) he was nevertheless controlled by Parnass and Trustees. A social hierarchy seems to have existed in the congregation wherein the President, Trustees, and electors formed the highest rung, then the Hazzan, the "seatholders" and indigent next, with the Shammash at the very bottom of the social ladder.[121]

The articles of the constitution written in 1728 enumerated the duties of the Sexton as follows:

1. "To atend at the Sinagog,"
2. "To call the Yechidimz that they may assemble togethere at the usuall hours,"
3. "He likewise be oblidged to call to Selichat such persons as shall be given him by the Parnaz in List."
4. To keep the candlesticks and lamp clean.
5. To make the candles.
6. To "keep the Sestern supplied with watter."

In 1729, the salary for the Sexton was £16 per year, a supply of matzoth for Passover (this was given gratis to all congregational officials) and two cords of wood.[122] Naphtali Phillips, who became Parnass of Congregation Shearith Israel in 1816 and served for fourteen terms in that capacity, comments in his Historical Sketch on the duties of the Shammash in this early period, that he called the members to Selichos services before daylight. It is of interest to note that Phillips mentions that the floor of the synagogue was "stone, and no

fire therein."[123]

From the minutes of May 14, 1753, we learn that Elias Solomons was elected to serve as sexton in place of Asher Companel who had died. The duties of the sexton were extended to include:

7. Keeping the synagogue clean.

8. Attending "Berritts & Funeralls."

9. Calling "at the Yehidims houses on fryday afternoons & Ereb Yomtobs."

10. Keeping the cemetery clean.

11. Obeying "the parnazes orders in Everything that relates to the Synagogues affairs and act in the office of Samaz in every shape whatsoever."

The salary was raised from £16 to £20 per annum, matzoth, "but no wood," no doubt because of the increase in salary.[124] Six years later, in 1759, the salary arrangements were fixed by the Parnass and Elders to allow the Sexton £10 per annum, plus £7/10s to purchase wood, matzoth and rent free, but with the following restrictions: that at the proper time for baking the Passover matzoth, the Sexton was obliged to "prepare any part of sd House the Parnassim shall think most suitable to make them in," and in addition that he be ready at any time when ordered by the President and Elders to "lodge and board in sd House" any person, "they making sufficient allowance for their board." The Sexton's life was certainly not his own![125]

In 1760, the meager salary of the Sexton, and his inability to support his family on such a pittance moved the hard hearts of the Parnass and Elders to increase the Sexton's salary by £10, but this entailed even more duties. He was instructed

12. "To be particularly carefull in keeping the Bath in good order by cleaning it from time to time."

13. To heat the water for it when necessary.

The wood necessary to keep the fire going for this purpose, fortunately, was not furnished at his own expense, for he was given an allowance of fifty shillings for this purpose by the Parnass and Elders.[126]

The Sexton was, as previously mentioned, allowed to live rent free in one of the houses owned by the congregation. By 1765, however, he was charged the nominal sum of two shillings, and was permitted to make any changes in the building that improved his own comfort. In 1766 he was granted the right to build a "Chimney or any other Conviniency at his own Expense, behind his house" (an out-house?) with the understanding, however, that it became the property of the synagogue.[127]

In 1768, the Shammash was entrusted with the keys of the synagogue, and while hitherto it had been his duty to clean only the lamp and candlesticks, to this was now added the cleaning of "all the Brasses twice in every year."

At no time was he to spend any money for the use of the synagogue beyond eight shillings, without the authorization of the Parnass.[128] For all services rendered, the Shammash received in addition to his regular salary all perquisites given him. In later times, gifts given him by the congregants augmented his salary, and all offerings made at the Torah specifying him as the beneficiary were announced.[129] While the office of Shammash was certainly not an enviable or lucrative position, yet in later times at Shearith Israel, the sexton had the advantage of tenure of his position. At other synagogues he was elected on a yearly basis.[130]

III. Social Welfare
A. Charitable Societies

The age-old Jewish concern for the welfare of the poor and sick, and the desire for decent burial according to Jewish custom, made it only natural for Jewish immigrants to these shores to set up the same type of organizations as they had known in Europe. The "Hebra Kaddisha" and the "Hebra Gemilut Hasadim" played as vital a role among the Sephardim as it did among the Ashkenazim. Many of these "chevroth" date back to the founding of the congregation itself. In Charleston, South Carolina, the Hebrew Benevolent Society was founded simultaneously with the Congregation Beth Elohim in 1750, and is supposed to be the oldest institution of its kind in America.[131] The exact dates when many of these societies originated are difficult to ascertain, since a few continued for a short while, disbanded, and then after a few years, were reorganized under a new name, but continuing the charitable work of its defunct predecessor. Mention of a "chevra" is made in Shearith Israel's early minutes of 1758. No indication is given as to whether the Hebra was a burial society or a charitable organization. Although it apparently met on synagogue premises, the Hebra appears to have been completely independent of that institution, having its own officers - a Parnass and assistants. Yet, it was financially dependent upon, or subsidized by the congregation, since its officers were able to borrow money not exceeding £10 from the congregational "sedaka" (charity) fund.[132]

The "Hebra Gemilut Hasadim" is thought to be the second oldest society of Shearith Israel, and was founded about 1785.[133] J. J. Lyons, Reader for the congregation, collected valuable information concerning this organization. In his opinion, this Hebra was the first charitable

society at Shearith Israel. In account books for the years 1786 and 1790, references are made to earlier books; Lyons concludes from this evidence that the society existed at a much earlier period but was disbanded, and reorganized at a later time. Like the Hebra mentioned in the minutes of 1758, this society also had its own officers, consisting of a Gaboy, Shammash, and four directors known as "Arba [sic] Anashim." This society also had recourse to the congregational "sedaka" funds. A letter from the Gaboy of this Hebra in 1786 to the Parnass of the congregation requested permission from the congregation that "offerings" be allowed for the Society's benefit. This request was granted with the condition that no person would be permitted to contribute more than one offering to the Society, and at the same time would be obliged to contribute also to the Synagogue charity fund. This society was warned that if the above privileges endangered the financial standing of the congregation, they would be rescinded.[134]

The autonomous nature of the "Hebra Gemilut Hasadim" is further revealed by the following methods of financial support:

1. An initiation fee for new members, which was payable in monthly installments of four shillings each.
2. A yearly tax to defray expenses of celebrating a "festival"
3. Fine from any member who absented himself from minyan during "shiva" period.
4. Fine for non-attendance at minyan during "yahrzeit" for morning and afternoon prayers.
5. Fine for not sitting up with the sick when summoned.
6. Fine for not attending general meeting.
7. Fine for insulting officers.

The characteristics of this Hebra make it appear to be a mutual benefit society, yet it did not limit itself to its membership alone, but carried on the work of a general charity, ameliorating the pains of the needy by giving assistance in money or by securing the objects needed, nursing the sick, securing medical attention for those in dire circumstances, directing all funerals in accordance with established Jewish practice, visiting and consoling mourners.[135]

The benefits offered by this society were no doubt extremely liberal and helpful in those days, especially considering its destitute members. Every member during "abelus" (mourning) received the sum of £1.4.0 called "abel money," and during the mourning period was entitled to have a minyan for prayers. In sickness, a member was entitled to have his fellows assist in nursing him. J. J. Lyons extracted two items from the account books of the society which demonstrate its benevolent character:

"1788 March 19 Mrs Myers for 17 weeks boarding of Mr. Nettling £8.10.0

1789 Doctor Cogsdel Receipt for attending the sick £7.10.0."[136]

Since it partook also of the nature of a burial society, this "Hebra Gemilut Hasadim" owned a hearse, and such implements as a bier, spades, shovels, and picks. A shed was constructed at the "Beth Haim" in 1789, to house these tools. A copper vase used at the cemetery for the washing of hands after burial, two brass candlesticks which were lit at the hour of death, and used in the synagogue on the evening of "Tishabeav," were part of the Hebra's equipment, and were later in possession of another society, the "Hebra Hased Vaamet" to which we now turn our attention.[137]

During those early days in New York City, no Jewish burial society was entirely independent of the synagogue. It was only natural, therefore,

that when the "Hebra Gemilut Hasadim" disbanded in 1790, Shearith Israel assumed its assets. For approximately twelve years no burial or mutual aid society functioned at Congregation Shearith Israel, and all funeral matters were supervised by the congregation itself. A change occurred in 1800 when Gershom Mendes Seixas founded the "Hebra Hased Vaamet." This was organized, according to tradition, to serve as a free burial society for the poor. In reality it served as a burial society for its own members, and those of Shearith Israel. The congregation officially recognized the Hebra as its burial society in 1805.[138] In 1830, a group of men drew up a circular, and through a special committee of the "Hebra Hased Vaamet," appealed to the women of Congregation Shearith Israel to found a woman's auxiliary of the Hebra, to minister to the sick and dying, and attend "to the dead of their own sex."[139]

Many of these societies, as we have already noted, were independent bodies of the synagogue with their own officers, constitutions, and treasuries, although they did meet on the congregational premises. As time went on this autonomy among the Hebroth continued to increase, and all of the early societies with the exception of "Hased Vaamet" severed all affiliations with the synagogue.[140]

III. Social Welfare
B. Philanthropy

The arrival of the twenty-three Sephardim at New Amsterdam in 1654 created quite a stir among the Dutch settlers, for apparently the former were a poor lot who needed help quite urgently. In an extract from a letter of Rev. John Megapolensis, dated March 18, 1655, and sent from New Netherlands to the Classis of Amsterdam, we learn of the poor financial circumstances of this Jewish group. This clergyman describes the manner in which some of the Jews came to his home "weeping and bewailing their misery." He directed them to the Jewish merchant, in all probability Jacob Barsimson, "but he would not lend them a single stiver." If the facts are truthfully related, the Jews became a public charge, and had to be supported by public funds. The merchant referred to in the letter was none other than Barsimson, who could hardly have been in a position to accept the financial responsibility for so large a number.[141]

On April 26, 1655, the Directors of the Dutch West India Company informed Governor Stuyvesant that permission had been granted to "Portuguese Jews ... to sail to and trade in New Netherland and to live and remain there, provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the Company or the community but be supported by their own nation..."[142] This concluding condition has been faithfully kept by the Jewish people since that day, which was exceptional in circumstances. The several Jewish congregations soon organized an effective system of caring for their needy brethren. Regular funds were established for that purpose, and also strangers were well taken care of, being sent at congregational expense to their destinations, or to other communities where further

help would be forthcoming.[143]

The expense accounts of "The Holy Sedaka" at Shearith Israel show large expenditures by the congregation for "obras pius" (Portuguese for pious works or charity). It is significant to note the large sums spent in relief of the poor of the city, for helping travelers to the extent of paying passage for a whole family, free burial of the indigent, and support of the widowed.[144] In earliest times the Parnass was the sole administrator of the Zedakah (charity) and any person in poor circumstances could apply to him for relief. Eight shillings per week were given for maintenance, but this sum could last for a period not exceeding twelve weeks.[145] In other congregations the Parnass had to inform the Adjunta of the plight of a needy person and the Gaboy was then directed by them to pay the sum needed.[146] Boarders were put up at the house of the Shammash, who was reimbursed for his expenses by the Parnass.[147] The sick were cared for by paying their board and lodgings, and also their doctor bills.[148]

The minutes of November 17, 1765, reveal that "three Corse Shirts be made & sent to Aaron Pinto as he is almost naked."[149] The naked were clothed, and the hungry were fed also with "a Loaf of Bread per day" if needed.

The early nineteenth century saw a change in policy at Shearith Israel in the manner of extending its charity. Committees were appointed to investigate unknown applicants who sued for help. A regulation was adopted in 1805 that made it necessary for all future applications to be in writing, and to be given to the trustees or Parnass.[150]

A system of "warrants" for pensions and alms seems to have been in current usage between 1804-1829. The "warrant" probably contained the

signature of the Parnass, and the authorization to the Gaboy of the Zedakah to give a specified sum of money to the bearer. The following example gives a clearer idea of a warrant.

"Mr. Cary Judah
Please let the bearer from Tunis have five dollars
& I will furnish you with a warrant when I have same printed
$5 N. Phillips
N Yk. Aug. 24, 1815" 151

Strangers and travellers were quickly taken care of and sent packing with all possible speed. The Parnass was "to use his utmost endeavors to dispatch them to sum othere place as soon as Possible." The Parnass could allow a single person in such a predicament forty shillings. A family stranded in the community while enroute to its destination was helped by the Parnass, after he consulted with his assistants and arrived at a sum needed for their maintenance "whilst ashore" and also when they left.[152]

The colonial congregations were in contact with one another, and functioned as a federation of charity. Thus many were able to make their way from community to community only by the recommendations for aid given at the previous stopping-place. That this was one of the functions of colonial congregations is aptly illustrated by the following letter:

"Newport RHode Island
26th May 1761

Gentlemen -
The Bearers Mess[rs] Abraham & Mathias Cohen Arrived here Last Week in Cap[t] Cuzzins from Savanah Lmar in the Island of Jamaica, and were recommended to us by the Gaboy of that Congregation as Objects of Charity, and as such I take the Liberty to recommend 'em to you & your Congregation - They have with them their Credentials from the Several Congregat[s] to the Same Effect, We on our parts have Contributed as much as the Nature of our affairs would admitt at this time and Considering we Our Selves Are petitioners,

hope their Successes in this Undertaking May Answer their Expectations - wch is the Sincear wishes of
Gentlemen your Most Obedient & humble Sev^ts
Naph Hart Parnass
To Mess^rs
Daniel Gomez & Samuel Hart." 153

A large number of transients during this early period were rabbis and teachers. A good number of these were, no doubt, traveling preachers following the old profession of "maggid." The minutes of Shearith Israel for November 17, 1765, record that a certain "Ribby" Joseph Israel was to be sent on his way, after "he has preached his Sermon," to Newport, so that he might take a vessel for Surinam. The above-mentioned "Ribby" must have been a nuisance, for the minutes tell us that if he remained any longer it was to be at his own expense.[154]

There are innumerable examples of travelling rabbis and teachers who visited such communities as New York, Philadelphia, and Newport. The Jewish congregations in these cities cooperated with one another in helping to defray the expenses of such travellers by "chipping in" and sharing the cost of passage.[155] Travel from the Barbadoes, Jamaica, and St. Eustacia was common. Passage for such islands could be secured from Philadelphia or Newport. At times, these Jewish communities were visited by learned men from London, who carried credentials from such recognized Sephardic Hachamim as Moses Cohen de Asavado of London and other noted rabbinical leaders. These visiting rabbis were often consulted for their advice on points of Jewish law.[156]

The Wandering Jew found his way to the Jewish communities of America from all climes and countries. "Kol Israel Haverim," "All Israelites are brothers" was proved time and again. None who stretched out a hand for aid seem ever to have been turned away. An interesting case-history is

provided for us in the minutes of Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, where the Parnass received a letter from a poor French boy, Solomon Rivera, petitioning the congregation for "some winter clothing and a blanket, having taken his passage on board a French Frigate." The Adjunta directed the Gaboy to purchase "a blanket and check shirt, and charge the same to the Sedakah."[157] Messengers from the Holy Land also reached these shores and visited the Jewish communities to gather monies for relief of the destitute in "Eretz Israel."[158]

Even the "mitzvah" of "Pidyon Shevooyim" (redemption of captives) was added to their long list of benefactions. In 1823, the Hacham Aaron Judah Corcas arrived from Curacao with letters and credentials, for the purpose of collecting money to ransom his wife and six children, who had been captured by the Greeks on their way from Constantinople to Smyrna. The unfortunate rabbi had sold all his property, and travelled to many places in order to obtain the necessary ransom money.[159]

The Spanish and Portuguese Congregation Shearith Israel, in caring for the poor and unfortunate, displayed a social vision and philanthropic wisdom far in advance of the times. The intercongregational cooperation in helping Jewish transients and immigrants reach their ultimate destinations without becoming public charges speaks highly of their humanitarian concern for brother-Jews.

The system of pensions established at Shearith Israel again reveals an insight and humanity unparalleled until the rise of modern social legislation. Pensions were granted to men and women too ill or too old to care for themselves. Many were widows of congregational officials who had served the synagogue faithfully. The widows of deceased members in poor circumstances were also eligible to apply for a stipend. The

system of life pensions, however, is recorded as early as 1760, and was firmly established by the nineteenth century. All payments came from the congregation charity fund in quarterly payments.[160] Aged officials who had served the congregation well were not only given money but also wood and matzoth.[161]

The minutes of October 13, 1743, tell us that the "Yechidim" of the congregation agreed to pay"the widow Judith Myers and Family £30 annually" and eight cords of wood in consideration of the fact that "her husband Solomon Myers Deceased, did serve as Soket [sic] and Bodech for some years past to our congregation."[162] The number of widows helped by the congregation in the form of yearly pensions or weekly stipends was numerous. Many of them were the widows of the deceased Hazzanim, Shochtim or Bodekim. Some of these widows were aided by paying their passage and providing for the whole family's journey to other communities such as Lancaster, Pennsylvania, or "the Jerseys." In the case of one family, the small son remained behind in New York and was maintained by the congregation who paid for his board and lodgings.[163] The "Widdow Solomons" was aided by being granted £5 for house rent.[164] Between 1819 and 1821, the records show four widows being supported on pensions by the congregation.[165]

Occasionally an aged couple - man and wife - were awarded an old age pension, but at times this did not suffice for their needs, as is evidenced by the case of a "Mr. D -- H --" who made application to the congregation to pay board for the two of them at some private family, as "at May next he must move & Rents high." The congregation at this time could not extend any aid to this inform and aged couple, since the "Sedaka" could not afford this extra expense beyond the pension already

awarded them.[166]

The financial resources of the synagogue were often severely taxed, and Shearith Israel was at times forced to limit or stop its charitable work because of depleted funds. The funds for these charitable enterprises were raised by the "offerings" given in the synagogue, the charity boxes placed at conspicuous places in the vestibule or on columns,[167] money bequeathed to the congregations,[168] and long term loans to the congregation by wealthy individuals. In January of 1819, Abraham Touro made "offerings" of $500 as a loan for ten years on the condition that the interest of this sum be accumulated yearly over a ten-year period and placed in a permanent fund. The interest was to be used for the free burial of poor Israelites, while $250 subject to the same conditions was to be used for the care of the sick, and another $250 for the "education of the poor in the Holy Land."[169]

As the philanthropic work of the various Sephardic congregations expanded, larger funds were needed to care for their many and varied benevolences of caring for the sick, indigent and aged, and providing honorable burial for the deceased. Various benevolent organizations were therefore founded to aid the synagogue in its many-sided philanthropic endeavors.[170] One of the earliest auxiliary charity societies at Shearith Israel was "Kalfe Zedakah Matan Beseter," which was founded by Gershom Mendes Seixas around 1798 or 1799, and was no doubt based on the older but no longer active Hebroth "Gemilut Hasedim" and "Hased Vaamet." During this period, the scourge of yellow fever raged in New York City, and Seixas realized that the regular charity funds of the congregation would not be sufficient to meet this dreadful emergency. The Society "Matan Beseter" was born in that hour of crisis. Its

managers were composed of two members of the congregation, one trustee, and one treasurer - Seixas himself. The names of the contributors and recipients remained anonymous, hence the society's name - "Matan Beseter," "Gift in secret."[171]

On December 20, 1805, its founder G. M. Seixas delivered a sermon in the synagogue pleading for contributions in order that the noble work of the society might be continued. Seixas concluded his appeal, saying, "Much will depend on the offerings of this day and it is to be hoped that every man will be recompensed according to the goodness of his works." Two days after this sermon was delivered, a committee of three was established to revise and amend the rules and regulations of the society. The spirited and far-sighted social vision of this committee was indeed prophetic when they said: "We beg to lay before you an enlarged plan of charity ... your charities heretofore have been considerable, but applied in such manner, as to have been productive of a limited effect, and that only for the present time.

In an increasing Congregation like ours, considering the local situation, it is time that the foundation of a permanent charitable institution should be laid ... We are inhabitants of a populous city, nearly in the centre of the United States; its commerce extended to all parts of the globe; ... the commercial advantages of our city over most others ... are all powerful reasons that this City in the course of time will contain the largest Congregation in the New World ... if you admit the probability of such an increase in members will you hesitate to admit also that it is time the foundation of a great and charitable institution should be laid, which will naturally progress with the increase of the Congregation, and be an honor to every member of it? ... you could lay the foundation of a Poor house and Hospital, forward the same and become incorporated without any great exertion."[172]

This Society continued its righteous endeavors until 1816.[173]

Another charitable society organized at Shearith Israel was the "Society for the Education of Poor Children and Relief of Indigent Persons of the Jewish Persuasion." The first anniversary of its founding was held on Sunday, January 18, 1829, at which time the assembled guests contributed $400 for the continuance of its work.

This society had several combined philanthropic characteristics:

1. it aided widows and orphans of members by distributing annual stipends when the necessity occurred;

2. it endeavored to give an education to poor children;

3. it administered relief to the city's Jewish poor.

The society possessed a unique system in that it bestowed upon the needy "bread tickets and food cards," that were redeemable at certain specified shops.[174]

The members of the Spanish and Portuguese congregation Mikve Israel in Philadelphia also organized themselves into a separate charitable organization to aid the synagogue in dispensing its ever-growing benevolences. The first Jewish charitable organization in Philadelphia was organized by the members of Congregation Mikve Israel about 1783. It was known as the "Society of Ezrath Orchim," or the "Society for the Relief of Destitute Strangers." There were three officers of the society - a President, Secretary, and Treasurer.[175] One of the earliest mutual aid societies of Mikve Israel, however, was the "Hebra Shel Bikur Cholim U'Gimilut Hasedim" ("Hebrew Society for Visitation of Sick and Mutual Assistance") founded in October, 1813. This society also busied itself alleviating the pains of the sick and helping the poor and destitute.[176]

A better understanding of this and other benevolent societies operating as auxiliary "arms" of the Sephardic congregations will be gained by an examination of this Society's constitution as it existed at Mikve Israel at Philadelphia, for it may be assumed that these organizations generally followed the same pattern, differing only slightly in minor details.

A. Membership Eligibility:

1. Only Jews were eligible for membership.

2. No person could be admitted as a member who had married in violation of Jewish law.

3. Only members of congregation Mikve Israel were admitted.

4. No one under twenty-one years of age could become a member.[177]

B. Dues:

1. Any person elected to the society had to sign the constitution and pay the Treasurer the sum of two dollars before he could be entitled to any of the benefits.

2. Every member was obliged to pay dues of twenty-five cents per month.[178]

C. Officers - Election of:

1. The Society elected five officers: a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two"Kavronim" who respectively held office for one year.

2. Election of officers took place in the month of "Tebat," and those receiving a majority of votes of the members present occupied the office.

3. If a vacancy in office was caused by the death or resignation of an officer, then it was the duty of the President or senior "Kavron" to call a meeting and elect someone to fill the vacancy.[179]

D. Duties of the "Kavronim" at the time of a death:

The Duty of the "Kavronim," or any other persons who were appointed by the board, at the demise of a member, was to direct and supervise all details concerning the "Taharah" and burial. The "Kavronim" were also empowered to call on any of the other members for assistance.[180]

E. Care of the Sick:

1. No member of the Society was compelled to attend a sick man if the doctor diagnosed the ailment to be of a contagious or malignant nature.

2. The board of the society, however, supplied the patient with nurses at the "Hebra's" expense.[181]

3. The President of the Hebra was empowered to aid any sick stranger, provided the sum given was not in excess of $5.00.[182]

F. Benefits of the Society:

1. Members who were confined to their homes, as "certified by a physician," and who had a family, were entitled to receive $5.00 a week for the first four weeks of their confinement and even afterwards, but the amount was not to exceed $5.00.

2. Under the same circumstances, a single man was entitled only to $3.00 per week, for the first four weeks, and could not exceed this sum if he were confined for a longer period.

3. Widows received $25.00 plus $20.00 to pay the funeral costs of a deceased member.

4. If a member died leaving no widow, then the children were aided with a sum not exceeding $25.00.

5. Members received $10.00 to help pay the funeral expenses of close relatives and family.

6. Any member observing "Shiva" was entitled to receive $5.00 aid during that mourning period.[183]

G. Investments and Finances:

The constitution specified that the sum of $400 be invested in stock or other securities as the principal. The dividends and profits of such an investment was to be used by the "Hebra." The principal could be increased only by a "majority of two-thirds of the members of the Hebra." The finances of this society were increased from time to time by bequests left to them in wills. Thus, in the will of Jacob J.Cohen of Richmond and Philadelphia, the 21st item states: "I give and bequeath to Chebra Bekur Cholim of Philadelphia one hundred dollars."[184]

By-Laws: H. Rites and Customs:

1. The prayers and rites on behalf of the sick and dead were to be performed according to the "Minhag Sephardim."[185]

2. Two members were chosen for a night watch of the dead, lasting from 10 P.M. to 6 A.M.

3. One member was to be on duty for each day watch of four hours.

4. No two "Cohanim" were to be on the same watch!! (What was the difference: according to Jewish law, a "Cohen" is not permitted to come in contact with the dead, unless it be a member of his immediate family.)

5. It was the duty of members to attend the funeral of a deceased member, or any of his family.

6. Members were obliged to attend "Minyan" at house or mourning, or the synagogue.

7. In order to make certain that a "Minyan" would be present on such occasions, the President and Secretary arranged the members so that thirteen men were present at each service.[186]

8. Religious meetings of the society were held on "Shabuoth" and "Hosanna raba" night, when special memorial prayers ("escobas") were said for the deceased members.

I. Supplies:

1. The Society had the following supplies on hand in order to meet any emergency that might arise: two sets of "Tachlehin" [sic - Tachrehin?] ; six linen and three muslin sheets, six linen shirts and six towels.

2. If a Jew died and the congregation paid for his funeral, the board furnished the corpse with "Tachlehine."[187]

The Jewish women of Congregation Mikve Israel also participated in the charity work of Philadelphia Jewry. The "Female Hebrew Benevolent Society" was founded in the fall of 1819 by two women who felt keenly the great need of relieving the poverty of many Philadelphia Jews. This society was governed by a President, Treasurer (Miss Rebecca Gratz was the first to hold that office) and two Board of Managers. The organization was "regularly instituted" in 1820, and in 1837 received its articles of incorporation. It is now the oldest surviving Jewish charitable organization in the city of Philadelphia.[188]

IV. Social and Cultural Life
A. Social Activities

At the very outset of our study, it was demonstrated that the Sephardim in New York City were from early times in the minority, and the "Tedescos" (Ashkenazim) were, numerically speaking, the more powerful group, not only in New York City, but also in other Spanish and Portuguese congregations scattered throughout the colonies. The Portuguese Jews remained aloof from the culturally and socially less acceptable Ashkenazim. The Sephardim remained dominant in the synagogue through the maintenance of the Sephardic "minhag." In time, however, they were forced to capitulate in matters concerning the social and cultural life of the Jewish community. The social exclusiveness of the Sephardim during the early eighteenth century had been fostered in Europe, and transplanted to the American colonies. The breach between these two groups was so great that marriage between them was regarded almost in the same light as an intermarriage. The Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of London allowed such marriages only as a last resort, under the most shameful and degrading conditions: no minister could be present to solemnize the ceremony, the bridegroom could not be honored by being called up to the Torah the Sabbath before his wedding, nor was any celebration allowed in the synagogue.[189] The barriers separating the Sephardim and Ashkenazim are further evidenced in a letter written by the Rev. Mr. Bolzius, a Protestant divine, in 1739, from the colony of Georgia. This clergyman tells us that the Jews in the colony enjoyed all privileges equally with the other colonists. Describing the Jews themselves, he said, "Some call themselves Spanish and Portuguese others call themselves German Jews. The latter speak High German and differ from the former in their religious services and to some extent in other matters as well ... They have no Synagogue which is their own fault;

the one element hindering the other in this regard. The German Jews believe themselves entitled to build a Synagogue and are willing to allow the Spanish Jews to use it with them in common, the latter, however, reject any such arrangement and demand the preference for themselves."[190]

The limited immigration of Sephardim in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries weakened the already small Sephardic community in America, so that they were ultimately forced to mix and even intermarry with the Ashkenazim, whose numbers had been considerably multiplied by natural fructification and large-scale immigration to these shores. The pressures of biological necessity and historic circumstances seem to have conspired against the Sephardim, virtually forcing them to accept "intermarriage" with the "Tedescos." The large majority of Sephardim chose the course most beneficial to Judaism, marrying Ashkenazim until "there were virtually no real Portuguese left. The earlier families disappeared completely through assimilation or the natural extinction of their lines." I. B. Kursheedt, one of the few laymen well-learned in Jewish lore, was a German Jew who married the daughter of the Sephardic Hazzan Gershom Mendes Seixas. Such phenomena were not limited to New York City, but likewise occurred in other American-Jewish communities. After 1825, the ranks of the Ashkenazim had so increased in New York City that they seceded from Congregation Shearith Israel, and thus the unity of the community was broken. The Sephardim once again severed their social relations with the Ashkenazim and after a few years of such exclusion, formed the "upper crust" of the city's Jewish society, a situation which continued through the third, fourth, and fifth decades of the nineteenth century.[191]

During the early part of the eighteenth century the social life of

the Sephardim seems to have centered about the synagogue and home. The congregants gathered together occasionally to enjoy an evening of good music. Thus, the minutes of Shearith Israel for 1738 indicate that one of the expenses listed on the accounts of the congregation were "for sundry expenses 'en concierto' as per agreement for the synagogue."[192] The celebration of such joyous holidays as Succoth, Passover, Purim, and Chanukah were occasions of rejoicing and merrymaking, and was utilized as a good opportunity for family reunions. David Hays, writing to his brother Michael in New Castle, reminds him of the approach of various Jewish festivals, saying:

"Bedford February 20th 1785."

"To Michael Hays
in North Castle
Dear Brother,
I hope this may find you well as we are at Present. I just let you know that thursday ye 24 is Purim and we shall be glad to see you here; also that Saturday March the 26th is Pisack [sic] and would be glad of your Good Company then. We all joyn In love to you from your afft. Brother - David Hays."[193]

A touching picture of a beautiful family life and the spiritual warmth that Jewish festivals have the power to arouse in Jewish hearts can be appreciated from the following excerpt from one of the letters of Gershom Mendes Seixas, written in 1813, describing the Purim celebration at his home with the family and children. He recalls that the occasion was filled "with all the merriment & festivity usually practiced in my family, the Children seated at a large table, in the Parlour with two lighted Candles, & a great display of FAIR Tea ... a sweet Loaf, gingerbread, and some few nic-nacs from our friend L --- in Broad St. - sent in the morning for Shelach Manos."[194]

Social events of great importance were occasioned with laying the cornerstones and consecration of synagogues. Prominent Jews and Christians representing church and state attended these functions. Dr. Stiles, who was present at the dedication of the Synagogue Jeshuat Israel at Newport, on December 2, 1763, entered the following account in his diary:

"December 2, 1763, Friday. In the afternoon was the dedication of the new Synagogue in this Town. It began by a handsome procession in which were carried the Books of the Law, to be deposited in the Ark. Several Portions of Scriptures, & of their Service with a Prayer for the Royal Family, were read and finely sung by the priest [sic] & people. There were present many Gentlemen & Ladies. The Order and Decorum, the Harmony & Solemnity of the Musick, together with a handsom Assembly of People, in a Edifice the most perfect of the Temple kind perhaps in America & Splendidly illuminated, could not but raise in Mind a faint Idea of the Majesty & Grandeur of the Ancient Jewish Worship, mentioned in Scripture."[195]

When Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, was to be dedicated on September 13, 1782, a "memorial" was sent to "His Excellency the President, His Honour the Vice President, and the Honourable the Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," inviting these honored gentlemen in the following manner: "... The Congregation Mickve Israel ... will deem themselves highly honored by their presence in the synagogue, whenever they judge proper to favor them. The doors will be opened at three o'clock, and the service will continue till seven."[196]

The ceremony of laying the corner stone of Congregation Beth Elohim, Charleston, was not only a religious ceremony but also a social gathering. On Friday, September 19, 1794, the Governor, with civil and military officers of the state, municipal authorities, clergy and citizenry attended. In 1799, the edifice was consecrated, and the ceremony of erecting the ark took place, at which time "eight stones

were deposited under each column of the Ark."[197]

The consecration service itself seems to have followed the same pattern in all congregations, with only slight minor variations. The consecration service of the third synagogue of Congregation Shearith Israel on Crosby Street, New York City, in 1834, was a great event in the social life of the city, and was reported in great detail in the New York Times:

"The anxiety to witness the consecration being so great it was found necessary to issue tickets of admission, and long before the hour appointed for the service, the building was crowded in every part; not only with Israelites, but the clergy of all denominations, the mayor of the city ... etc ... A procession entered consisting of the Rev. Mr. Seixas [J. B. Seixas], and the Rev. Messrs. Metz and Cohen and nine gentlemen bearing the sacred rolls ... The sacred lamp, which is kept perpetually burning, by the contributions of the pious, was newly lighted and the procession proceeded in its circuit around the Tebah, or altar ... the circuits were repeated seven times, each time the laws being borne by different individuals, at one period entirely by young men; during each of these circuits the choirester continued chanting appropriate Psalms ... At the conclusion of the seventh circuit, the laws were deposited in the Ark, after which a very impressive and interesting oration was delivered by M. M. Noah Esq."

After the sermon, the service was concluded by the choir.[198] The service at Mikve Israel on February 27, 1825, was very similar to that which took place at Shearith Israel. The one exceptional event at Mikve Israel was that a woman sang in the choir accompanying the cantor.[199]

The Americanization of the Sephardim proceeded at an accelerated pace, and in social manners and customs they soon equalled their Christian neighbors. Quickly adopting the latest style and fashion in their apparel, the more wealthy of the Sephardic Jews wore the "aristocratic dress with the usual white wig," and the majority of Jews were clean shaven. The women, likewise, followed the latest fashion styles of the day, being as eager in those days as now to acquire the "new look."[200] In cultural matters, also, the Sephardim appear to have been

no different from their neighbors. The traditional Jewish zeal for book learning, and the high degree of intellectual attainments of their forbears in the Iberian peninsula, did not animate these Sephardim. Their chief interests appear to have been commercial and mercantile, rather than scholarly. They nevertheless played a prominent role in founding and supporting public institutions dispensing culture.[201]

IV. Social and Cultural Activities
B. Literary Activities

The literary activitiesof the Sephardim seem to have been limited to translations of prayer books into English, composition of prayers in the vernacular for special patriotic occasions, the publications of some sermons in translation, and religious calendars. Jewish literary activity on the North American continent was almost nil. The knowledge and use of Hebrew outside of its religious sphere was negligible among Jews. The ignorance of Hebrew has already been alluded to, in reference to the Hebrew letter that came to Isaac Hart of Newport, who had to consult Dr. Ezra Stiles, the Christian Hebraist, as to the letter's contents. The shift of emphasis from Hebrew to the vernacular English can be judged from its use in marriage contracts ("Ketubat"), bills of divorce, and tombstone inscriptions.

Of great interest in this regard is the publication of Isaac Pinto's English version of the Sephardic ritual in 1766. The title of this "mahzor" was: "Prayers for Sabbath, Rosh-Hashonah and Kippur, or the Sabbath, the beginning of the year and the Day of Atonements; with the Amidah and Musaph of the Moodim, or solemn seasons; according to the order of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews."[202] The purpose and necessity of this work is most interestingly justified in the editor's preface:

"A veneration for the Language, sacred by being that in which it pleased Almighty God to reveal himself to our Ancestors, and a desire to preserve it, in firm persuasion that it will again be re-established in Israel; are probably leading Reasons for our performing divine Service in Hebrew: But being imperfectly understood by many, by some, not at all; it has been necessary to translate our Prayers, in the Language of the Country wherein it hath pleased the divine Providence to appoint our Lot. In Europe, the Spanish and Portuguese have a translation in Spanish, which as they generally understand, may be sufficient; but that not being the Case in the British Dominions in America, has induced me to attempt a translation in English, not without Hope that it will tend to

the Improvement of many of my Brethren in their Devotion, and if it answer that Good Intention, it will afford me Satisfaction of having contributed towards it ..."[203]

Hacham Hiam I. Carregal, visiting rabbi at Newport, Rhode Island, preached a sermon in the synagogue in Spanish, called the "Salvation of Israel" on the Shabuoth holiday on May 28, 1773. It was translated into English by Abraham Lopez (a relative of Aaron Lopez) and "Sold by S. Southwick, in Queen Street 1773." This was quite an event for colonial Jewry, as it was the first publication of a sermon delivered in an American synagogue.[204]

In 1806, Newport Jewry, now almost entirely extinct, consisted of only four Jewish families. One of the surviving Jews of this once flourishing community was Moses Lopez, who in that year published the first American Jewish calendar. It was a lunar calendar of the Jewish festivals, covering a period of fifty-four years, 1805 to 1859, and was published under the advise and "approbation" of Hazzan G. M. Seixas of New York City.

The years 1816 to 1820 saw no Jewish scholarly work of any depth or originality worthy of publication. Sermons, discourses, and translations from Hebrew works of a minor character continued to be published periodically.[205]

IV. Social and Cultural Activities
C. Education

The ignorance of early American Jewry concerning Jewish matters is indeed surprising, yet quite understandable in view of the fact that immigrants cannot be too concerned with book learning, but rather must face the first demands of life - "food, clothing, and shelter." With economic security, and with civil and political liberties assured, the Sephardim acquired cemeteries, established synagogues, and hastened to foster Jewish education for the young, in the early seventeenth century. The school itself was often a room in the synagogue, or at the home of the teacher. In some communities the congregants were farsighted enough when first constructing the synagogue "to leave ground behind, Sufficient ... to build a School House to serve for a Hebrg [sic] ."[206]

Jewish education in the colonies may be divided into two periods: the first began in the early seventeenth century and continued until the Revolutionary War, the second extended from the Revolution into the late nineteenth century. The Jewish community, during pre-Revolutionary times, assumed the burden of educating the young, since all schools at that period were parochial in nature. Jewish children, therefore, met with private tutors for instruction in secular subjects; and by the middle of the eighteenth century attended private schools. Secular training was under the auspices of denominational groups, and children of the Jewish faith absented themselves from attending such institutions. Jewish education from 1654 to 1755 merely imitated European methodology, and probably conducted the Jewish school in the old "Heder" fashion, giving instruction in Siddur, Pentateuch, and Rashi, with perhaps a little Gemara. After 1755, Hebrew and secular studies were combined. The post-Revolutionary years witnessed a change in emphasis: Hebrew,

which hitherto had been the main subject, was relegated to a minor role, and the three R's became primary, with other subjects being added in due course of time.

Shearith Israel after the Revolution attempted to establish a parochial school providing instruction in Hebrew and secular subjects. This first attempt lasted only thirteen years (1808-1821) and a second trial in the first half of the nineteenth century ended after only one year, in miserable failure.[207]

An analysis of our source material for the periods mentioned above reveals that the state of Jewish education for those days was at a high level. The hours of study were long and all-embracing for the needs of the day, and at Shearith Israel, during the eighteenth century, the school closely approximated our own system of public schooling.[208]

The zeal for "Talmud Torah" is revealed in the early minutes of Shearith Israel. On the first anniversary celebrating the opening of the synagogue in 1731, the Yeshiva "Minhat Areb" was consecrated "for the use of this congregation ... as a Beth Hamidras for the pupils." The Hazzan also acted at times as the teacher. In 1736-37, Mr. David Mendez Machado, the Reader, was hired by the congregation on condition that he "keep a publick School in due form for teaching the Hebrew Language, either the whole morning or afternoon as he shall think proper."[209] Ten years later, the hours for teaching Hebrew were from 9 to 12 o'clock each morning, and 2 to 5 o'clock each Thursday afternoon. During the summer months, however, school was held only during the morning, and on Friday and Sunday from 10 to 1 P.M.[210] On the Sabbath, all festivals and fasts, Erev Yomtov, and minor joyous holidays such as Purim and one day of Chanukah, no sessions were held.[211]

The subjects taught at the congregational school, at times held in a room of the Hazzan's house, were, prior to 1755, chiefly the Hebrew language and other kindred traditional subjects. From 1755 to 1762, the minutes of Shearith Israel witness a revealing change, for in addition to Hebrew, the translation of the same into English was taught, with such other subjects as Spanish-English reading, writing, and "Arithmetick."[212]

The tuition fee for attending the congregational school was payable directly to the teacher, being eight shillings per quarter, or any other agreement made with the parents or guardian. In the post-Revolutionary period (1793) the subscribers of the congregation paid the trustees a rate of £4 per year, that was to be paid also in quarterly installments for each child that was sent to "the Public School of the congregation."[213]

All poor children were taught gratis, but they had to receive a written order from the "Parnas Presidente" before being admitted to the classroom. No distinction between rich and poor was made in the type of instruction or the classrooms attended.[214] Widows with children were allotted separate sums for their children's schooling.[215] Needy students were also supplied by the congregation with a load of wood. Probably each student had to share the expense of heating the school, or else be seated in a corner of the room far from the stove.[216]

In 1801 Myer Polonies died, leaving the sum of $900 to Shearith Israel for the purpose of founding a free school. With this fund the Yeshiva "Minhat Areb" which had been founded in 1731, became known as the Polonies Talmud Torah, a name it has borne ever since. This school was opened on Sunday, May 2, 1802; and, five years later, in 1808, the Hazzan announced at services during the Shabuoth festival that school

would be opened on Sunday, June 5, for the registration of students, with the added inducement that "5 free scholars to be admitted" upon application "for these 5 free scholarships."[217]

The ages of the pupils ranged from five years up until Bar Mitzvah. The teacher could not "exact any extra pay for a scholar" who had to be prepared for his Bar Mitzvah, but was obliged "to teach him everything requisite," according to the student's capacity.[218] As the school was conducted at various periods in the Hazzan's own home, an anecdote concerning Gershom Mendes Seixas tells us that he was often seen "shelling peas" while instructing the boys in their Bar Mitzvah portion.[219] The Hazzan not only gave instruction in Hebrew to the younger children, but also prepared the older boys to recite the blessings over the Torah, the Mafter, and Haftorah. In fact, it seems that one indication of a Hazzan's ability was not only his sweet voice, as Rebecca Gratz wrote in 1825 concerning Hazzan Keys at Mikve Israel, Philadelphia: " ... one very important talent he certainly possesses - he is a good Hebrew teacher - yesterday one of his pupils read a barmitzvah portion very handsomely altho' he had only a few weeks instruction."[220]

In order for the instruction to be most effective, the school at Shearith Israel was limited to thirty pupils. During the years 1793 to 1795, thirty-six students were on roll as receiving instruction in Hebrew and secular studies. Of the total number of names appearing on the roll, seven were girls;[221] in 1808, out of a total enrollment of twenty-two six were girls. Jewish education for girls was sadly neglected during this period, probably in keeping with the European Jewish attitude that Jewish religious training was only necessary for boys. The attendance of girls at the Polonies Talmud Torah is not mentioned again until the

fourth decade of the eighteenth century.[222]

Students were obliged to supply their own school needs such as books, writing implements and stationary, and during some years their own firewood. Ink, however, was supplied by the school.[223] The teacher, likewise, had certain obligations that he was expected to fulfill as specified in the contract between the trustees and himself. His duties included the following:

1. He had to be present at the hours set aside for instruction.
2. To teach poor children gratis.
3. To "pay strict attention to the morals as well as the religious duties of all the Youths that Shall be Committed to his Care."
4. To provide for a convenient schoolroom.
5. To supply firewood for the winter.
6. To bar the admission of any student who did not have the Parnass' permission to attend class.
7. To notify the Parnass of any students who left the school, and to "note the time" of such.
8. Not to employ any student for "domestic or menial services under any pretence" except for making the fire for the use of the students while at school.
9. To prepare students approaching their thirteenth year for Bar Mitzvah.[224]

The trustees on their part agreed to procure tables, benches, and a stove for the room, and at times the wood was supplied by the trustees.

The amount of salary which the teacher received varied during the years. In the earliest period, the congregation does not appear to have paid him a salary at all, but the tuition fee of eight shillings per quarter for each child was given to him directly by each student. By 1755, when the Hazzan established a school in his own home, an additional £20 per year was added to his regular salary. Five years later, in 1760,

the school teacher was offered £40, half of which sum was to be taken out of the Reader's salary, and the other half from the congregational "sedaka." In 1762, Mr. Abraham Isaac Abrahams was hired "to keep a publick school," and is often referred to in the minutes of the congregation by the title of "Ribby." He made his living by teaching, and was also the famous "mohel" of New York City. At this time the congregation compensated him for teaching with £20 yearly, in addition to all the offerings made for him in the synagogue, and the income from students who could afford to pay him an agreed rate in quarterly installments.[225] Twenty years later, in 1792, the dignity of the teaching profession afforded the teacher the sum of £80 yearly, payable in quarterly installments. The following year, Hazzan G. M. Seixas became instructor at the congregational school, and was paid £130.[226] After the Polonies Talmud Torah was established in 1802, Seixas was hired at a salary of $350 per annum. He later refused to serve for less than $300. The board of trustees did not desire to meet his demands, and his contract was not renewed, with the result that the school was closed down, and between the years 1802 and 1846 led a rather precarious and irregular existence.[227]

From earliest days, a close relationship was always maintained between the school and congregation. The teacher's efficiency and pupils' progress was always under the watchful eyes of the congregational authorities. It was the practice in 1747, for the Parnass and one of the Adjunta to visit the school weekly and to observe how matters progressed. Later, in 1755, the Parnass and one of the Elders, according to their seniority, represented the congregation and visited the school on a monthly basis, examining the children and judging "if the Scholars

under the Hazans care advanced in their learning."[228] As time passed the periods of inspection were divided into longer intervals. In the earliest period it was weekly; just before the Revolution, it was customary for the authorities to visit the school at a four-week interval; while in the post-Revolutionary period the inspection intervals were expanded to six-week checkups. Not only was there a change in the length of periodic checkup, but also the number of persons and type chosen also changed. In the pre-war period, the president was accompanied by one of the members of the governing body on his tour of inspection; at a later period, it was the president and one of the Elders according to seniority; while, in a yet later period, two members of the congregation were delegated by the trustees, either from their own board or from among the parents or guardians of the students. This committee of two was empowered "to examine and inspect the conduct and progress of the school," and then report to the trustees on their findings, certainly a more democratic procedure than the earlier ones.[229]

In 1804, an address by the trustees was read to the congregation during Sabbath worship, appealing for their aid in continuing the maintenance of the Polonies Talmud Torah. Jewish education, it was pointed out, was necessary for the true happiness of their children, and it was the parents' duty to rear their children in accordance with the principles of Judaism, an impossibility if the children were unable to understand what they say when at prayer. The appeal continued, saying that religion in joy and sorrow alike is the true source which alone enables man to understand the purposes of God in the world. The first aim of life is the pursuit of education, so that we may become rational beings, but in addition to this, a knowledge of the Hebrew

language enables one to understand prayer. Yet very few people are concerned about this. It is a mistake, continued the address, to assume that "children are incapable of profiting by Instruction 'till their reason is matured." Children are greatly influenced by example, therefore the necessity of an early education is stressed in Scripture: "train up a child in the way he shall go and when he is old he will not depart from it." The address concluded with the following appeal to those present: "Let us wisely begin early to plant those seeds from which we wish to reap fruit, let us root up the Weeds and Prune off what might hinder the growth. But these things must be done at a proper time, for if the season be suffered to Slip away, much, if not all may be lost." The address was signed by such prominent and well-educated Jewish laymen as I. B. Kursheedt and Naphtali Phillips.[230]

At Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society sponsored the cause of Jewish education in that city. On February 4, 1838, at this Sephardic congregation, the first Hebrew Sunday-School in America was founded. The person chiefly responsible was the talented and cultured Miss Rebecca Gratz, who, with the guidance and advice of the Rev. Isaac Leeser assisted in the education program by issuing catechisms, which were later published as textbooks.[231]

In summarizing Jewish education among the Sephardim, we have seen that Hebrew was the only subject taught before the Revolution. At a later period, the study of Hebrew language and basic secular subjects such as English, writing, and arithmetic were introduced. The all-day parochial school with its morning and afternoon sessions did not succeed too well. The general level of Jewish knowledge among the masses was rather low, as was demonstrated by the mediocrity of American-Jewish

literary activities. Rabbinic knowledge was rare, and the Sephardim depended on the Beth Din in London for more complicated decisions. This was all no doubt due to the more insistent material demands of daily life, so basic for the security of these new Americans. They at least did not desist from making a beginning!

V. Religious Practices

A. Ritual Questions Concerning the Synagogue

Whenever questions of correct Jewish practice arose, as has already been mentioned, they were submitted to scholarly Jewish laymen, transient rabbis, or sent to the Beth Din abroad.

In a letter sent by the Parnass and Adjunta of Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, to a committee composed of Manuel Josephson, Isaac Decosta, and Rev. G. M. Seixas, they requested the "Din" regarding the correct location of the door in the synagogue.

"Gentlemen Philadelphia 29 May 1782"
whereas a doubt has arisen in respect to the rule in placing a door in the west of the Synagogue, shall be obliged to you, if you will examine the Dinim relative thereto, ... whether such a din is obsolete or not provided there is a Space sufficient & Convenient for the purpose..."[232]

The next day, the three men replied:

"Sir Philadelphia 30th May 1782
... we examined the denim [sic] respecting that matter and are fully Satisfied and convinced Therefrom, that a door of a Synagogue (in places where our prayers are said to the Eastward) ought to be in the West, and it is not to be deviated from where There's a Sufficiency of Ground for that Purpose, and altho we mnow [sic] that there are Several Synagogues, that have not their Entrances at the West, we are Confident it must have been oweing to the Scantiness of the Lott..."[233]

After the Revolution, Newport Jewry faced extinction with the death and dispersion of its members. In 1790 there were only about twenty Jewish families in the city, which was not much more than the number recorded by Dr. Stiles on May 19, 1769, who noted: "There are now about Twenty-five Families of Jews."[234] The re-established community of Jews did not compare in commercial magnitude and affluence with the first settlement of Jews. The religious life of the Jewish community also suffered a reversal, as the departure of the shochet, Mr. Judah, left the community not only without a ritual slaughterer, but also the

services at the synagogue itself came virtually to a standstill, for there was no one to read the Torah on the Sabbaths and holidays, nor to conduct other vital parts of the ritual. Moses Seixas, warden of the synagogue, alarmed at the ever-growing laxity of Jewish practice and spiritual disintegration, wrote in 1789 to Manuel Josephson, then President of Mikve Israel in Philadelphia, petitioning for advice on the correct procedure of conducting the synagogue service and other matters of religious import.[235] In his "Responsum" of February 4, 1790, Josephson revealed not only his knowledge of Jewish law, but also his religious zeal in preserving the established order of the Jewish service. He discussed the question whether it is permitted to take out the Torah, put it aside, and read the portion out of a printed book, and was emphatically against such a practice. The letter reads in part as follows:

"Mr. Moses Seixas — Philadelphia 4th February 1790
Dear Sir

... You said Mr Rivera reads Hebrew perfectly, surely then it cant be so mighty a task for him to read from the Sepher a few chapters occasionally; common report says him a man of understanding & docility of disposition; he was bred to the strict rules of Judaism ... I therefore have no doubt, that on his being made acquainted with the preceeding passages, which shew that reading the Parasah from the Sepher [Torah] is essentially & strictly commanded by our Laws, that he will not hesitate to perform that part of the service, especially when it can be done so easily by means of a Prompter; or if that should not be agreeable, to read the words altho' without 'Ta'amim' would still be prefferable to your present mode."

Josephson then went on to answer the question, "Why it is more wrong to take out a Sepher without reading from it, at Sabbaths & Holidays than on Kippur Night & Hosannah Rabba?"[236]

Discussing the chaos of ceremonial customs in the synagogues of North America, Josephson found these facts responsible for such conditions:

1. "Ceremonial customs" were established only by the "fancy and opinion of the Head Men."

2. "North American congregations" have no system at all because of the "smallness of their numbers," and the frequent moving-about of the members.

3. Even when congregations were first established, they had no rules to go by, and have ever since remained in a chaotic state.

4. Every new Hazzan made innovations according to "his own conceit and fancy," or from the custom of the congregation in which he grew up, or the last one he served.

5. Every new Hazzan "the present one not excepted" [G.M.Seixas] collected material from one another "and patched up a system of ceremonies of his own, which will be followed during the time he remains in office, but no sooner another one succeeds, some new customs & formalities will be introduced, especially if he happens to be a European."[237] The European Hazzan "will allege (as most of the Narrow Minded part of them are apt to do) what did your late Hazzan know about matters or indeed how should he? seeing he never was out of America, etc. etc. I say such arrogant Language is common among the unpolished Europeans, more especially among Our People, who suppose it next to impossible any knowledge can be obtained out of Europe: whereupon the Rulers who mostly are Men of yesterday, strangers to the Portuguese Minhag altho bred to it, because having been of little Consequence in their own Country."

These chaotic circumstances, according to Josephson, did not prevail "in the large old established congregations abroad, as they have their Customs & ceremonies even the most Minute, reduced to a regular system, from which they do not deviate on any account, and if a Hazzan either a travelling or established one should perform publick service, he must conform to the rules & customs of the Congregation, not they to the new fangled rules & whims of the Hazan."[238]

Josephson's "Responsum" continued, discussing the laws governing the blowing of the Shofar:

"... respecting the blowing of the Shophar, your reasons for not performing that solemn & strictly enjoined service are beyond doubt of great weight; for there is no Din to be found that insists on blowing a

Shophar where there is none ... By your Letter it appears that you have instructed M^r David Lopez Jun^r to procure you one at Hamburg ... if it should not arrive in time against the next Season, I doubt not you might procure the Loan of one from New York nay the Cracked one you have might be made to answer in case of need ... There are many rules laid down how to manage in case a Shophar is cracked or otherwise defective to make it fit for use ..."[239]

The liberality of Josephson's interpretation is most gratifying. What became the norm for American Reform Judaism in synagogue practice was advocated by Josephson in the following:

"Making offerings at the Sepher or Hechal (Ark) altho no command, is nevertheless practiced all over the world, and is mentioned in several Books of high estimation, as an ancient Custom & practice; the mode however varies in different Congregations; yet notwithstanding if you find it inconvenient & can support the service without it, as appears by your Subscription List, you are at full liberty, without being guilty of any infringent [sic] to dispense with it, more especially in the Manner those offerings are conducted in these parts & in the West Indies; and on this subject I sincerely join in your ejaculation that 'it is to be regretted it could not be generally adopted.' But as I remarked Several times before the old established congregations are very tenacious of their customs."

After some personal regards Josephson concluded his letter of advice and counsel.[240]

A dispute arose among the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim who followed Polish "minhag," in regard to the religious obligation of wearing a "talith" during services. This issue raged between 1824 and 1827, arising from the refusal of certain unmarried men to wear a "talith" during worship. The Sephardim, however, desired to enforce the Sephardic "minhag" by having all men wear "taletim" during services. A committee was finally appointed to investigate Jewish law and ascertain whether the congregation could compel its worshippers to do so on the basis of Jewish religious authority. The committee reported to the congregation that after searching the constitution and bye-laws of the congregation, they could not find any congregational law relating to it,

nor that "the Wearing of the Talet is a law of imperative religious obligation..." Thus, although the committee admitted that there was no religious obligation from the point of view of "din" to wear "taletim" during services, they feared that failure to wear them would "if permitted to pass unnoticed, may lead to other deviations and ultimately to the subversion of all the venerable and established usages of this Congregation." The Board of Trustees, therefore, empowered the Parnass not to call any person not wearing a "talith" to the Torah, nor to partake in performing any "mitzvah," nor to make any offering in the synagogue, until the guilty person "shall have for three successive Sabbaths conformed to the Custom of Wearing the Taleth in Synagogue."

There can be doubt that the committee's strong feeling in regard to this issue of "talith" on or off, and their fear that it would ultimately lead "to the subversion" of all time-honored customs practiced at Shearith Israel was the complete and devastating effect of the new reform movement that suddenly arose during this time (1824) and uprooted the strict orthodoxy of Congregation Beth Elohim, Charleston, South Carolina. This spearhead of liberal thought and rebellion against the narrow dogmatism and dictatorial power of Parnass and Adjunta, must have been a premonition to the authorities at Shearith Israel that a new day was dawning for American Israel, and in their efforts to stem the flood-waters of change, they attempted to enforce that which had neither authority in Jewish law nor the congregational constitution.[241]

In 1825, an opinion on the law relating to Kohanim was prepared by Rev. M. L. M. Peixotto, Abraham Cohen (son of Hazzan Cohen of Philadelphia) and Joseph Samuels.[242] Thirty years later, the congregation sought the opinion of Hazzan J. J. Lyons as to whether Jewish law

required that a Kohen and Levi be called to the Torah, and secondly, whether the Parnass could rely on a person's claim that he was a Kohen or Levi. The answers to these questions were, first, that the Parnass was obliged to call only a Kohen or Levi to the Torah for the first and second "aleoths," unless no such persons were in the synagogue; and second, as to the validity of a person's claim to his priestly or levitical descent, the authorities agreed that a man's word was sufficient.[243]

In 1832, during the cholera season, a printed circular containing medical advice not to observe the Fast of Tisbah B'Av, was printed by Dr. Daniel L. M. Peixotto, whose father was then reader at Shearith Israel. Although there is no evidence that this was sanctioned by the synagogue authorities, it is safe to assume that the good doctor first consulted his father; and, besides, in matters of "Pekuach Nefesh," Jewish law and custom may be broken when human life is in jeopardy. The circular follows:

"Sir, New York August 1, 1832

I deem it my duty to call your attention to the propriety of so modifying the observance of the Fast, which takes place on the ninth of Ab (Sunday next) as not to expose those who strictly keep it, to incur the pestilential disease which has been, and still is devastating our once healthy metropolis... The benign spirit of our laws, if I am not much mistaken, authorises a latitude in the construction of its letter, whenever the lives, healths, or important interests of the community require it. There never was a more imperative necessity for such liberal interpretation than exists at the present moment. It is a notorious fact, that cholera first broke out in Smyrna among our people after their strict observance of a Fast Day.

Allow me to suggest, that on the present occasion a slight meal, say of coffee, tea or cocoa, with dry toast, be allowed at early rising, and a few draughts through the day of toast-water, or tea. This will obviate any mischief which might otherwise result from severe abstemiousness in the first place; or secondly, from too sudden repletion occasionally indulged on the breaking of the fast.

Very respectfully,
Daniel L. M. Peixotto, M.D."[244]

When an epidemic of smallpox broke out, and the house of the Shammash, situated in the "synagogue yard" was infected, resulting in the death of two of his children, the fear of spreading this contagion among others caused the synagogue to be closed. The Shammash's family was temporarily removed, and the house was "properly purified" (fumigated) in accordance with the Trustees' orders.[245]

V. Religious Practices
B. Conduct of Services

The control of the congregation over its members through the agencies of the Parnass and Adjunta, was extended in a most strict and vigorous manner during worship. Utmost decorum at services was upheld by a system of fines and punishments. The guilty were disciplined not only by fines, but also were often deprived of certain privileges and Mitzvoth. Persons guilty of abusing others either by words or actions within the synagogue were fined twenty shillings. If an individual proved guilty of such unbecoming behavior refused to pay the fine, then the whole congregation was duty bound "to assist the Parnaz and assistants to recover the same."[246]

The Parnass could instruct the Shammash to order persons disturbing the worship to leave the synagogue, and they could not return until they had paid a fine not to exceed £5. If one disturbed the congregation during divine services, and was ordered to leave the premises but refused, then the whole congregation could turn upon "the agressors" and expel them "without respect to persons." One fined for such misconduct could be forced to pay the sum of £10 in any "court of record or equity."[247] Any person who regularly worshipped with the congregation and refused, when called by the Parnass, going "to the Sepher," was subject to a fine of twenty shillings.[248]

The minutes of Congregation Shearith Israel for June 24, 1760, reveal an interesting case involving the women. It appears that a certain Mr. Judah Mears went to the Women's Gallery during worship one Sabbath, and turned a Miss Josse Hays from her seat, which was claimed by his daughter Miss Mears. The above-mentioned Mr. Mears was fined

forty shillings for presuming to assume authority over synagogue seats, and the young ladies were ordered to resume their former seats. Mr. Judah Hays, the father of the young woman forcibly ejected from her seat by the contentious Mr. Mears, did not comply with the orders of the Parnass, and refused to allow his daughter to take the seat appointed for her. This rebel was therefore fined forty shillings, with the added onerous conditions: that until he paid the fine, and caused his daughter to be seated as directed by the Parnass, he was not to be regarded as "a Member of our Society ... be Excluded from the Rights and Ceremonies of the Synagogue." The culprit was given ten days to make up his mind or suffer the consequences of his dastardly deeds.[249]

The members of Congregation Shearith Israel must have been a very quarrelsome lot, for in the minutes of September 30, 1765, a resolution was passed, ruling that any person of the congregation who caused a disturbance by "quarreling, abuse or indecent behavior" in the Synagogue, the yard, the street leading thereto, going or coming from worship, was subject to that penalty which the Parnass and assistants thought proper. Any Parnass showing favoritism or partiality to such offenders was subject to the same penalty as the guilty person.[250]

Other Spanish and Portuguese congregations had similar regulations and fines penalizing offenders who made public nuisances of themselves in or on synagogue premises during regular worship services or congregational meetings. At Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, no person could speak to another during a congregational meeting, but had to first address the Parnass. Anyone violating this rule was subject to a half-crown penalty for every such offense.[251] Beth Elohim, Charleston, South Carolina, fined miscreants for refusing 1/ to accept an office, 2/ to go

up to the Torah when called, 3/ for absenting oneself from the synagogue when due to be called to the Torah, 4/ not attending congregational or committee meetings, 5/ "for not being present to answer to one's name" when it was called, 6/ leaving before a meeting was over, without first obtaining the President's permission.[252]

The dignity of the services was maintained at all times, and punishment was not only meted out to those who acted in a vulgar and offensive manner, but also against those who detracted from the beauty of the services by raising their voices above that of the Reader. At Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia, anyone so doing was liable to a fine of forty shillings.[253] At Shearith Israel, New York, it was incumbent upon each congregant, before engaging in any congregational singing, to refrain until the Hazzan first signified the key or tone in which the prayer or psalm was to be rendered. Those who were desirous of joining in might do so "with an equal voice, but neither higher or louder," than the Hazzan.[254]

No children "of either sex" under three years of age were admitted into the synagogue during services, except in cases of circumcision, "Birkas Gomel," or the naming of a child. All girls were "confined" to the women's part of the synagogue.[255]

Older children were permitted to attend worship, nay, more were encouraged to take part with their elders in the services, in order that they might learn to participate intelligently. For the purpose, special seats were reserved in the synagogue for the use of the children - presumably just boys, as the girls joined the other Jewesses in the woman's section. At Shearith Israel benches were marked off with seats numbering "from (No) 41 to (No) 51 with 2 benches adjoining for children." These benches

were placed "in the corner" and "appropriated for them while there."[256]

It later became the Hazzan's duty, when acting as school teacher to supervise the behavior of all boys under thirteen years of age, who were accustomed to sit in one group "on the South-West corner of the Synagogue" during worship services.[257] The children were initiated not only into the mechanics of the Jewish service, but also were taught to respect the dignity of the service.itself. No false barrier was raised, by dividing the children from the adults; they apparently felt no need to form a "Junior Congregation." The Jewish child learned Judaism by practicing it under the guidance and supervision of his elders.

To prevent the synagogue from becoming cluttered up in an unbecoming manner with the worshippers' coats piled on every seat, such garments if taken off had "to be deposited in the free seats near the door." All umbrellas and canes "excepting canes carried by lame persons," also had to be disposed of at the door of the synagogue.[258] This no doubt prevented the services from being interrupted by the loud noises of falling canes, and perhaps was even enforced as a safety precaution, protecting fellow congregants from being pummelled by the canes and umbrellas of short-tempered and bellicose worshippers.

The synagogue authorities appear to have been forced to call the worshippers' attention to the rather shocking fact that they came to synagogue in an improperly attired manner. Whether this was due to such practical necessities of coming into the synagogue directly from work, poor financial circumstances, or the current standards of dress fashion is not known, but the authorities at one of our Sephardic congregations found it necessary to adopt the following rule: "every person shall appear in Synagogue in as decent apparel, as his abilities admit, & that

no person shall be called to Seipher in Boots."[259]

By 1825, the conduct of the Jewish service seems to have so improved that Miss Rebecca Gratz, in a letter to her brother Benjamin, describing the dedication services of Mikve Israel in Philadelphia, remarked that the "services continue to be finely performed and the congregation behave with the utmost decorum and propriety during the service."[260]

Services at the synagogue were held daily during the summer months at 7 o'clock in the morning, and in the winter at 8 A.M. On the Sabbath, the worship started at 8 o'clock, while on the "Yomim Naroyim," the services started earlier than usual due to the length of the liturgy - Rosh Hashonah morning at 7 A.M., and Yom Kippur at 6. This was the practice at Shearith Israel in New York.[261]

While there is no exact indication in the sources examined, whether other Sephardic congregations followed Shearith Israel in this schedule, it may be concluded that such was the case, and the variations of an hour here or there were slight. From the diary of Dr. Ezra Stiles we learn that he visited the Newport Synagogue on "Pentecost" (Shabuoth) at 9 A.M. Whether this was the actual starting time of the congregation as a whole, or that Stiles merely arrived at that hour cannot be fully determined. Stiles concludes his entry with the interesting fact that "The whole service ended a quarter after Twelve." Assuming that Stiles was late, and they actually started at 7 o'clock, between four and five hours appears sufficiently ample for the entire service.[262] Stiles again visited the synagogue on Tishah b'Av at which time he noted, "They began at VII and held till Noon."[263]

During the 1840's, Shearith Israel experienced great difficulty in maintaining daily services, for a "minyan" could not be secured. Daily

services were therefore abolished, and morning worship was held only twice a week, when it was customary to read the Torah on the second and fourth day of the week - Monday and Thursday. The struggle against the secularization of Jewish life, and the ever-present economic struggles made strict Sabbath observance difficult. Consequently, Sabbath services also suffered, for congregants were tardy in attending. As the adults became increasingly lax in their synagogue attendance, a special appeal was made to young people over thirteen years of age, and countable for a "minyan" to come in time for the "zemiroth."[264] Synagogue services continued only because New York City had such large Jewish numbers. The congregation at Rhode Island, which had once flourished as a center of Jewish religious life and commercial enterprise was by the 1800's almost entirely extinct. Services were held in the historic Newport synagogue only when funeral services were conducted for those deceased members who through sentimental attachment to the community, desired to be re-united with their friends and loved ones by interment in the old Jewish cemetery. In 1830, when Mrs. Rebecca Lopez (daughter of the Rev. Isaac Lopez, one of the early readers of the Newport Synagogue) was buried in the local cemetery, the Rhode Island Republican reported: "This is the first time for the last forty years that the ceremony of the Jews has been performed in the Synagogue."[265]

Laxity in regard to Jewish matters existed generally throughout the Sephardic congregations. As "absenteeism" increased in the synagogue, it became necessary to fine members if they did not appear when they were due to be called to the Torah. Such steps had to be taken, because the maintenance of a "minyan" could no longer be left to voluntary attendance,

but had to be enforced through what remained of synagogue authority.[266]

V. Religious Practices
C. Customs and Ceremonies of Worship

We shall now attempt to push aside the veil of time, journeying into the past to visit our Sephardic brethren at worship. Most of our sojourn will be spent in Newport, at Congregation Jeshuat Israel, observing the ritual and customs of that Spanish and Portuguese congregation. Our good Christian friend Dr. Ezra Stiles will personally conduct us on this tour to the Sephardic congregation, and will introduce us to the charming and learned Hacham Hiam Carregal, who spent a little time at Newport as the spiritual mentor of the Jewish community.

Jewish boys in Newport received a satisfactory religious education, and, as at Shearith Israel, they learned by taking part in the regular adult service. Dr. Stiles reports that when at the synagogue, he asked "a little Jew Boy the use of the strings at the Corner of the White Surplus [Talit] worn by all Jews in their Worship: - he said, they kissed the strings three times at the Repetition of the great שכוה [sic] or Hear O Israel the L[d] Our God is One Lord."[267]

That the elders lost little time in training the Jewish youth of Newport in the practical knowledge of Jewish life and as intelligent laymen will be recognized from the following episode recorded by Dr. Stiles, who, on January 12, 1770, "Went to the Synagogue this Evening and heard a Son of M[r] Moses Lopez deceased Aet. 13, read the Evening Service, M[r] Touro the Chuzzan present. It is the Custom in the foreign Synagogues to initiate Boys Aet. 13, thus to read publickly. This is the first Instance in the Synagogue at Newport."[268] The "Evening" referred to by Dr. Stiles was in all probability Friday ("erev Shabbos") since under January 13, he notes "Went to the Synagogue A.M." Stiles refers to a Bar-mitzvah "Bachur," yet there is no mention by him that

Moses Lopez's son took part in the Saturday morning service in any way. It is also a rather startling statement on his part to say that it was a European custom to introduce boys at thirteen years of age in such a fashion, and that it was the first time that this rite was observed at Newport. It is hard to believe that the Sephardim, so exacting and orthodox in their Jewish observances would fail to observe such an important occasion as formal initiation into the Jewish faith. Again, on May 28, 1773, Dr. Stiles, while visiting the Newport Synagogue during "Pentecost," recorded that "Mr. Rivera's little son 8 or 9 aet. read the first chapter of Ezekiel."[269] The reading and cantillation of Ezekiel I by a child so young, speaks very well not only of the child's intelligence, but also of the praiseworthy efforts of the Jewish school and teacher.

It was the custom of the Hazzan to read the Torah. When Rabbi Carregal was in the synagogue he sat "at the upper end of the Synagogue [east], the Huzzan[sic] pronounced a word wrong Levit. 25, 29, upon which the Rabbi corrected him publicly, and called out Gaulto, Gaulto, and obliged the Huzzan to correct himself. The Rabbi appears to have great authority."[270] It is of interest to learn how an eighteenth century Sephardic rabbi pronounced Hebrew!

While it is evident from the above that the Torah was read in Hebrew, the prophetic portion was read in Spanish. In keeping with Jewish tradition, the Pentateuch had more sanctity and authority than the other Biblical books, hence this less stringent practice. Thanks to the observant Dr. Stiles we learn that on one of his regular visits to the Jewish service on July 10, 1733, he noted: "Instead of reading the prophets, the Hazan [sic] chaunted [sic] the Chapter, which was the

first chapter of Jeremiah. But what was more remarkable was that, after chaunting a period in Hebrew, he chaunted the same in Spanish. I believe it was so done here before."[271] This liberality of view in permitting the use of the vernacular for the Haftorah reading is singular in a day when such practices were looked upon as heretical. Apparently the congregation composed of many Spanish and Portuguese Jews who had fled from the Inquisition in an earlier day, was ignorant of the Hebrew, for we cannot but recall that when a letter came from Palestine written in Hebrew, no one among the Jews could read it, and the epistle was brought to Stiles for interpretation.[272]

Services were conducted daily during the weekdays, both morning and evening, at the Newport Synagogue. This assumption is based on an entry in Stiles' diary for August 27, 1770, which was a Monday, since he notes August 26, as "Lds dy [Sunday]." This Even^g (August 27) I went to the Synagogue, & heard Mr. Satius perform prayers. He is a young man of about 22 aet. & a Chussan of the Synagogue at N. York."[273] G. M. Seixas stayed in the community for a month as Stiles records that on September 1, 1770, he again visited the synagogue on Sabbath afternoon and "heard M^r Satius read the Law & Service." This "mincha l'Shabbos" caused Stiles, who at time had not as yet formed any intimate friendships with Jews, to exclaim, "How melancholy to behold an Assembly of Worshippers of Jehovah, Open & Professed Enemies to a crucified Jesus."[274]

Many rabbis stopped at Newport, pausing to rest amid their long journeys, but of all six rabbinical acquaintances whom Stiles met, the most interesting was Hiam Isaac Carregal (Karigal or Carigal as Stiles records the name). The Christian clergyman first met this rabbi at Newport during the celebration of the Purim festival, at the evening

services. Carregal had arrived at Newport on March 3, 1773, but the two did not meet until March 8, at the above-mentioned occasion. The indefatigable Stiles wrote in his diary: "This Evening I went to the Synagogue it being the Eve of Purim. The Chuzan read thro' the Book of Esther. There I saw Rabbi Carigal I judge aet. 45. lately from the city of Hebron, the cave of Macpelah in the Holy Land. He was one of the two persons that stood by the Chuzan at the Taubah or reading Desk while the Book of Esther was read. He was dressed in a red Garment with the usual Phylacteries [?] and habiliments, the while silk Surplice [Talith] ; he wore a high brown furr Cap, had a long Beard."[275] Carregal remained in Newport only a few months, sailing for the Barbadoes in July 1773, where he died in 1778.[276] During his stay in Newport, the Rabbi and Stiles spent many hours together, discussing theological matters. Their acquaintance developed into a lasting and most intimate friendship, kept up by a voluminous correspondence.

The Jewish festivals afforded Stiles many an opportunity to learn of Jewish rites and practices, and he availed himself of this opportunity religiously. He attended synagogue both evening and morning, and describes the morning Passover scriptural reading "from two Vellum Copies or Rolls of the Law in the Forenoon. In the Afternoon they began to read a portion out of Solomons Song. This was new to me." Stiles was rewarded for his faithful attendance by the Jews there, as he says, "They shewed me a Copy of the Canticles with a Spanish Translation; & also subjoyned was a Spanish Translation of the Chaldee Targum on the Canticles."[277]

The next year, Stiles again visited the Synagogue during the Sabbath of Passover, and in the course of the service, "They read in the

Law the passages which give an Account of the Exodus and Institution of the passover; and also a passage about V^th of Joshua concerning Circumcision and rolling away the Reproach of Egypt." It was customary to remember the departed on the seventh day of Passover. Stiles probably has in mind the "Haskorath N'Shemoth" for he continues his account by saying, "Several mentioned over the Names of their dead friends, for whom prayers were immediately made. Large offerings or Alms were made to probably forty dollars as one of the Jews estimated, and I believe true; for sundry offered Chai Livre i.e. £16 or two Dollars - and I judge Mr. Aaron Lopez offered 10 or a dozen of these Chai." Stiles' opinion of the Jews concerning their knowledge of Judaism is reflected in the same passage: "I asked one when they should have killed the Paschal Lambs if they had been at Jerusalem? he replied, today. But I dout [sic] it; he was ignorant."[278]

The distinctive manner of "aleoth" or calling members up to the Torah is preserved for us by Stiles in his entry of April 8, 1773, when he again attended the synagogue during Passover. In his usual observant way, he wrote: "This day is Passover with the Jews. I went to the Synagogue. The Chocham Rabbi Carregal was there; he was one called up to the Reading of the Law - but I observed that he DID NOT READ HIS OWN PORTION OF THE LAW ... however he audibly pronounced the short prayer instead of the Huzzan before reading his part, and after the Huzzan had read the portion, the Rabbi alone and without the Chuzan lift up his voice and pronounced the Blessing. This is repeated by the Chuzan usually for everyone of the 7 persons - but this part the Rabbi did for himself; and he performed no other part of the Service as distinct from the Congregation."[279]

How did this eighteenth century Palestinian rabbi dress in comparison with his contemporary American congregants? We have learned elsewhere in this paper, that the Jews did not differ from their Christian neighbors in style of dress, and it was customary for them to be clean-shaven, while the women followed the latest fads of the day, dressing according to the French style. Rabbi Carregal must have made a unique and fanciful appearance in the Newport Synagogue, for Stiles tells us that "His general Habit was Turkish." The cleric's keen powers of observation noted the following details:

"Common English shoes, black leather, Silver flowered Buckles, White Stockings ... Green Silk Vest or long under Garment reaching down more than half the legs or within 3 inches of the Ankles, the ends of the Sleeves of this Vest appeared on the Wrists in a foliage Turn-up of 3 inches, & the Opening little larger than the hand might pass freely. A Girdle or Sash of different Colors red and green girt the Vest around his Body. It appeared not to be open at the bottom but to come down like a petticoat; and no Breeches could be discovered. This vest however had an opening above the Girdle - and he put in his Handkerchief, and Snuff-box, and a Watch. Under this was an inner Vest of Calico, besides other Jewish Talismans. Upon the vest first mentioned was a scarlet outer Garment of Cloth, one side of it was Blue, the outside Scarlet; it reached down but an Inch lower than the Vest. It was open before, no range of Buttons &c. along the Edge, but like many a Scholars Gown in the Body but plain and without many gatherings at the Neck, the sleeves strait and narrow and slit open 4 or 5 inches at the End, and turned up with a blue silk Quarter Cuff, higher up than at the End of the sleeve of the Vest. When he came into the Synagogue he put over all, the usual Alb or white Surplice, which was like that of other Jews, except that its Edge was striped with Blue straiks, and had more Fringe. He had a White Cravat round his Neck ... a long black Beard, the upper Lip partly shaven - His head shaved all over. On his Head a high Fur Cap, exactly like a Woman's Muff, and about 9 or 10 Inches high, the Aperture atop was closed with green cloth. He behaved modestly and reverently."[280]

The next holiday on the Jewish religious calendar described by our diarist was Pentecost (Shabuoth). Accompanying Stiles, we enter the "Synagogue at IX^{h} A.M." and observe the following: "At reading the Law the Rabbi was desired and read the Ten Commandments. But before reading the Law and the prophets the Rabbi went to the Desk or Taubah

and preached a sermon about 47 minutes long in Spanish. It was interspersed with Hebrew." Stiles now proceeds to describe the Rabbi's oratorical powers. "His Oratory, Elocution and Gestures were fine and oriental. It was very animated ... The Affinity of the Spanish and Latin enabled me to understand something of the Discourse ... He wore Spectacles thro the whole Sermon, and frequently looked down on the Desk before him as if he had the Discourse written, but I dont know that he had any Writing. The Jews intend to print it." Here again he interjects a few words concerning the Rabbi's reading and speaking abilities and frankly tells us, "The Jews dont admire his reading [the Torah] and indeed speaks off with much greater Fluency and Ease than he reads, tho' he reads correctly." Stiles was impressed by the Rabbi's personality, and considered him a man with "Dignity and Authority ... mixt with Modesty." After the sermon, the service continued with the Torah reading for the day from "the XXth Chapter of Genesis [sic: should be Exodus, giving of the Ten Commandments] as usual: at reading the X Commandments the whole Congregation rose up and stood. After which Mr. Rivera's little son 8 or 9 aet. read the first Chapter of Ezekiel - then Prayers for all Nations, for the Jews, for the King and Royal Family, for the Magistrates of Rhode Island. The Law was then returned in solemn procession, singing the Usual Psalm: then Alms Prayers and Singing concluded the Whole. The Synagogue was decorated with Flowers &c."[281]

The Rabbi began to preach his Shabuoth sermon "a few minutes before X^{h}" when three Christian guests of high civic import and prominence entered the synagogue, namely, "Gov. Wanton & Judge Oliver and afterwards Judge Auchmuty." These highly respected personages were honored by being seated in the "banco," "the Seat of the Parnass or President of the

Synagogue." Stiles as usual did not miss the slightest detail, for he ended this account of the "Pentecost" service by concluding, "The whole service ended a quarter after Twelve."[282]

Stiles was much impressed by the Rabbi's oratorical powers, and when he questioned Carregal as to whether the latter had preached from a written manuscript, the Rabbi informed him "that he had Sealed it first in his head and so delivered it." Carregal also informed Stiles that among Jews "none but Rabbis preached, and they usually preached on all the Holidays, but not every Sabbath, talking without notes." At the request of the congregation, Carregal recollected his sermon, which he had apparently preached without notes or manuscript, wrote it in Spanish, which was then translated by Abraham Lopez into English, and published.[283]

Stiles visited the congregation during the Fast of Tishab B'Av in 1770, with several Christian friends, at which time he heard the "Book of Lamentations & a mournful Service, it being the Eve before the Anniversy of the Destruction of the Temple."[284] Three years later, on July 29, 1773, even more fascinated and intrigued with his studies of Hebrew and Judaism, Stiles again was present at the Synagogue "it being the Anniversary Fast for the Destruction of the Temple both by Nebuchadnezzar and Titus." The service was very lengthy, as he records "They began at VII and held till Noon..."[285] In a note taken from Rev. Abiel Homes' biography of his father-in-law (Stiles) the following description of the Tishah B'Av service is given, preserving for us the solemnity of the occasion and the age-old Jewish pathos as expressed in the mourning rites for that black day in Jewish history.

"The place of the Ark was covered with a black curtain, and the lamp was put out. A table, covered with black, stood before the Taubah; and on a low bench sat the Parnass and the Huzzan. [Usually these officials sat

in the "banco," the special seat of honor reserved for the Parnass, but on this sad day, as a sign of mourning as during "shiva," no chair was permitted. The prayers were exceedingly melancholy, particularly when the Huzzan rose up and went to the place of the Holy of Holies, or the Ark and mercy seat, where he wrapped himself up in the black curtain, and slowly mourned out a solemn, weeping and doleful lamentation, for the absence of the Debir and the Shekkinah, for the cessation of the oracle, and for the destruction of the Holy of Holies. The roll of the Law was brought out, without any ceremony, covered with black, and read at the foot of the Tabauh; the portion was from Deuteronomy. Then the fourth chapter of Jeremiah was read, three or four other chapters; then the book of Lamentations; then the beginning and end of Job."[286]

Thanks to the curiosity and observation of Dr. Ezra Stiles, a valuable storehouse of Jewish knowledge has been preserved for us, enabling us to partake almost as spectators in the colorful life of our Sephardic brethren as it existed on these American shores more than two hundred and fifty years ago.

Some of the ritual and custom concerning Yom Kippur has been preserved for us by J. J. Lyons and G. M. Seixas. On Kol Nidre Eve, it was the custom to offer up special prayers for those who had served well the cause of the synagogue and of Judaism. The benevolences of the pious were acknowledged, and the contributors blessed by name. Contributions to the Newport Synagogue were mentioned from members of such widely scattered congregations as Shearith Israel in New York, "Shangar Hashamayim in Jamaica, Mikvey Israel in Curacao, and Nevay Shalem in Paramaribo, Surinam." Special prayers also were offered in behalf of the persecuted, the imperiled, and sick of Israel:

> "For all our brethren held by the Inquisition and who are captives.
> For all our brethren who are at sea or on journeys.
> For all our sick brethren."[287]

It was also customary on Yom Kippur night to recite prayers in memory of the departed. Individuals desiring to perpetuate their own memory, or that of loved ones by the recital of a "hascabah," prayer

recited in memory of the dead, were required to leave a legacy to the synagogue "of no less than Five Pounds." This entitled them to have "a particular Escava" recited within the first year of death, on "Kippur Night," and every Yom Kippur Eve after that.[288] Religious officials and outstanding Readers who had endeared themselves to the congregation were honored by having their memories perpetuated with the "hascabah" on "Kippur afternoon."[289] Everyone desiring to have "hascaboth" made on Kippur evening in honor of friends or relatives was required to prepare a list of the names and to give them to the Hazzan within "48 hours previous to that Evening."[290]

From one of Rev. Gershom Mendes Seixas' letters written in September, 1814, we gain an inkling as to the liturgical order of the day. In passing, we also note the self-pride and self-appreciation of the Hazzan, as he describes the services of Yom Kippur Eve and the following day: "After the Sefarim were deposited in the Hechal, I made the usual Hashcaboth, & Mr. A. Levy read the Arbith - Mr. Zuntz the Shachrith - the Parshoth & until the Musaf - I performed - A. Levy the Musaph - Mr. J. Hart the Minchah excepting the Sefar & offerings &c, &c. then I commenced again with the stated Hashcaboth & concluded the service of the day in a most masterly manner that is the Neilah & Arbith."[291]

Our study of the religious practices of the Sephardim in colonial and Revolutionary times, and in the early nineteenth century, in matters concerning the synagogue worship and ritual do not show any great deviation or schism from the laws and traditions of the Jewish people, yet the American environment challenged and stimulated them towards changes. Since they were newcomers, and far from the traditional centers of the old world, the inevitable conflicts, compromises, and changes occurred.

All these were part of the turmoil of the American scene, which inevitably forced the "minhag Sephardim" to become a "minhag America" for Sephardim.

V. Religious Practices
D. Religious Articles

The lack of various religious articles for the ceremonial of the synagogue was severely felt in some communities. "Sepher Torahs," Chanukah lamps, "shofars" and furniture were loaned or donated by the individual members belonging to the congregation, at times borrowed from other synagogues in America, or given as gifts from abroad. As early as 1737, a "Sepher Torah," Chanukah lamp, and religious books were sent to Congregation Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia, by a Mr. Benjamin Mendez of London.[292] A quarter of a century later, in 1760, Congregation Shearith Israel agreed to allow the Newport congregation to borrow the "Sepher Torah" belonging to the Georgia congregation, and which it held in trust on condition that it be returned when demanded.[293] These are only a few examples of the shortage in religious articles in the early American congregations, which could only be alleviated by inter-congregational cooperation.

The use of religious articles, such as scrolls of the law, in the synagogue during religious services were often the occasion of outbursts of indecorum and interruption of the services, as some persons seem to have been offended because the particular Torah which they had lent was passed over in favor of someone else's. As early as 1765, the authorities at Shearith Israel took steps to correct this fault by deciding that "for the Sake of Peace" in the congregation the sacred scrolls in the future should be used only in "their Turns," and be read on proper days for a period of two weeks (excluding holidays) "beginning with those belonging to the Congregation according to the Seniority of the owners of each Sepher." The Hazzan was penalized twenty shillings if he failed

to observe this regulation. Such action by the authorities prevented any partiality or favoritism on the part of the officiating Hazzan.[294] The need for scrolls was so great that they were purchased abroad, and brought to this country by Jewish immigrants.

"Tefillin," "talesim," "siddurim," and "esrogim" were also imported from Europe during the early period. Reference has already been made to Manuel Josephson's letter of advice on the conduct of the synagogue service to Moses Lopez, warden of the Newport Synagogue, from which we learn that arrangements for a "shofar" to be used on the high holidays, were made with David Lopez Jr. who was to bring one from Hamburg; but if it should not arrive in time, Josephson advised that one be borrowed from New York.[295]

The shortage in religious articles such as "Sepher Torahs" was also lessened in many congregations through bequests of charitable minded individuals who bequeathed to the synagogue sums of money for the purchase of such articles. Such provision was made by Jacob J. Cohen who had been a resident of Richmond, Virginia, and affiliated with the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation Beth Shalome in that city, and who, later, while living in Philadelphia, took an active interest in Congregation Mikve Israel, which he served as Parnass for one term from 1810 to 1811. The eleventh item of his will specified: "... for the use of the said congregation forever, the Parchment Folio called the Five Books of Moses and the furniture belonging thereto. Also a Migello and Shaupha and Copper Kettle utensil for baking Passover Cakes."[296] The will of Rachel Lewis provided that her "goods and chattels" were to be sold, and the money to be used "to purchase a Shefer Toro," for the use of Shearith Israel in New York City.[297]

V. Religious Practices
E. Marriage Customs

The return of Spanish and Portuguese Marranos to the Jewish faith during the middle of the seventeenth century was celebrated not only by a change to Hebrew names (e.g., among women - Abigail, Sarah, Rebecca; among men - Isaac, Jacob, etc.) but also by the performing of a marriage ceremony according to Jewish custom, notwithstanding the fact that many already had grown or almost grown children.[298]

The synagogue appears to have supplied the "ketubah," which, in the early eighteenth century, was written in Hebrew and Spanish. Full directions were given on the blank form to the officiating minister, as to the correct manner of writing the document for various situations.[299] Several Hebrew "ketuboth" extant, in possession of the American Jewish Historical Society, and dating from the last quarter of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, reveal that the signatures of the bridegroom and minister were written on some marriage documents in English instead of the traditional Hebrew.[300]

An interesting marriage agreement of the third decade of the eighteenth century, mentions that Abraham Da Costo, Reader at Beth Elohim, Charleston, South Carolina, entered into a marriage agreement with Rebecca Pimento and her mother Leah. Da Costo "with the consent and good liking of the said Leah, covenants, promises and agrees to take Rebecca Pimento to wife according to the rights and ceremonies of the Jews without portion to be demanded or required, within the space of three months from the date of these presents ... the said parties binding themselves each to the other in the sum or penalty of £300 current money of South Carolina."[301]

A "ketubah" dating from 1801, and written in New York, follows the traditional form, in which the groom agreed to support his wife with "decency and marriage," allowing her "virgin dowry of 200 zuzim." The bride's marriage portion was $800, consisting of "silver, dresses, household linen etc." A provision was made that in case of the husband's demise, the wife was to regain her marriage portion of $1200. If the reverse occurred, the husband was to become sole heir of his wife in accordance with Jewish law.[302]

All persons who desired to marry had to notify the Parnass, requesting the Hazzan's attendance at the ceremony. This was granted provided the wedding was "with a Female of our religion."[303] The parties to a marriage were always investigated by the synagogue authorities, and if their relationship was forbidden by Jewish law, the marriage was not performed. Thus, in 1782, Mr. Jacob Cohen of Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, notified the Parnass of "his Intentions to marry" the widow of the late Moses Mordecai, and requested all the privileges be granted and that the authorities "consider his particular situation."[304] After an investigation of the "Subject in Question," they rejected J. Cohen's marriage on the ground that Jewish law stipulated that "no Cohen can marry a woman situate as the Widow Mordecai is..."[305] The Adjunta then moved that the congregation be informed that the Parnass and Adjunta had forbidden the Hazzan to mention the name of Jacob Cohen and wife "in Shull" and also informed that "the wedding is contrary to the Dinim."[306]

Engagements and marriages were publicized in the daily papers. In October, 1759, the following notice was published in New York City under "Marriages:"

"Mr. Moses Lopez, a gentleman of very large fortune, from the West Indies, to Miss Maria Lopez, daughter of Mr. Aaron Lopez.

Her Beauty, Innocence, and Truth
Unite to bless the happy Youth,
And in return we too shall find
Sound Judgement, Reason, Sense refined
In him are happily Combined;
Which, with £5000 a year
Are well bestowed upon the Fair." 307

The following newspaper account appeared in the True Son, New York, in 1843. Its similarity to the modern social columns that appear in our daily papers is startling.

" ... four persons, whom we understood were the groomsmen, took up a real dâmask canopy, which was fostered upon four staves, and held it over the heads of the Reader and the Groom - all wearing their hats. This canopy is one hundred and twenty years old. The Bride was brought in by her bridesmaids and family, and closely veiled, took her place also under the canopy. The Priest [sic] then chaunted [sic] a prayer, and after that a glass of wine was brought him, which he tasted, and then the bridegroom and bride. The wedding ring was then placed by the groom on the finger of the bride, accompanied by the admission, that it was the evidence of their betrothing. The Priest then chaunted the seven blessings from the prayers ... The wine was again tasted, and after that, the glass in which it was contained was dashed to the ground and broken in pieces. It was done as an emblem of the mortality of our race, and memento of the destruction of the Temple. This ended the ceremony, and the married couple immediately left the Synagogue." 308

Young people in the eighteenth century did not possess the freedom that they do today, but were under strict paternal control. When a young man and woman desired to marry, they left it up to the parents to arrange such matters. Isaac Seixas of Philadelphia, in 1778 sent a letter to Hayman Levy of Stratford, Connecticut, father of Zipporah, in which he spoke for his son Ben Seixas, concluding, "We have no manner of objection thereto, & most certainly wish it may meet with your Paternal approbation."309

From an early period of Jewish settlement in America, Jewish law was modified by the laws of the colony or state. Thus, as early as 1684,

New York civil law insisted that only ministers of religion and justices of the peace be allowed to perform wedding ceremonies, whereas according to Jewish law, any Jewish adult possessing knowledge of the laws of "kiddushin" was qualified to conduct this ceremony. The civil law also stipulated that the names of bride and groom had to be publicized at the parish church, or posted at the office of the constable. The Jews of New York were forced to follow this law, and therefore the names of the bride and groom were publicly proclaimed during services. The Hazzan as an officially recognized religious minister performed the marriage ceremony.[310]

The care taken by the Parnass to investigate persons contemplating marriage was because such ceremonies were conducted in strict accordance with Jewish tradition, and he prohibited unions proscribed by Jewish law, such as a Kohen marrying a divorcee, etc. The ceremony of "halizah" was observed in America by the Sephardim in spite of the inroads of increased chaos in Jewish religious practice and loss of synagogue authority. This ceremony was observed in eighteenth century Savannah, at Mikva Israel, where the Parnass called the Adjunta together to discuss the application of a Mr. Israel De Saben, who requested the presence of the Hazzan to marry him to "Mrs. Hart Widow of Hart deceased." The Parnass stated that he had doubts as to whether the marriage should be performed as "the Said Hart having died without Issue by the said Mrs Hart and the Brother of the deceased now living in Charleston having refused to give Chalitsa although it was required of him ..." The Adjunta was of the opinion that the surviving brother "ought so to have done he being married to the Sister of the above Mrs. Hart ...," and in view of the foregoing circumstances, concluded that "Mr.Saben and his intended Bride [were] Intitled

to the Usual Honors on such Occasions."[311] Since a "shetar halizah" was still observed in New York City during the late nineteenth century, we may assume that it was observed by the pious during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also.[312]

Persons desiring their marriage to be blessed by the synagogue and the privileges of "benefit of Clergy" not only had to observe the letter of the written law but also had to meet certain ethical and moral qualifications. Any Jew who desired to consummate a marriage with a woman who had "lived as a prostitute, or kept a disorderly house" could not receive the sanction of the congregation. If they married without its jurisdiction, they still had a chance to return to the Jewish fold, provided that over a period of several years, they led "a moral and decent life." They were then as eligible to become "Yechidim" as were any strangers who settled in the city.[313]

V. Religious Practices
F. Intermarriage and Proselytes

Shearith Israel from earliest times refused Christians admittance to Judaism, not only because of a traditional reluctance but also because of practical necessity, since the involved procedure of the rite had to be conducted by an especially qualified person, and no fit authority resided in New York. Another reason for this negative attitude was one forced by historic circumstances in that one of the conditions for the Jews' re-entry to England had been the promise that they cease to proselyte Christians. These conditions were considered binding upon Jews also living in English colonies. Even after the Revolution, congregations were extremely reluctant to carry on any Jewish missionary activity.[314] As early as 1763, Shearith Israel prohibited any of its officers by law from aiding or assisting in making proselytes, under penalty of a $100 fine.[315]

A request for admission into the Jewish fold at Shearith Israel was made about 1775 or earlier. The petitioner was Benjamin Jacobs who "upon the point of marriage" asked the officials of the congregation to accept his intended wife as she was "desirous to live as a Jewess" who "Begs that she may be married according to the manners and custom of the Jews," as it was "her desire to live in the strict observance" of Jewish law and custom.[316] The Adjunta did not look with favor upon Jacob's petition, possibly because conversion to Judaism was not desired in itself but only as a means to an end; and the petition was rejected in conformity with the law passed by the congregation in 1763.[317] A few years later, in 1788, James Foster, having been refused conversion to Judaism appealed to the Trustees for a letter of introduction to the

congregation in Amsterdam where he hoped his desire would be granted. He wrote passionately, with zeal and feeling, begging the trustees to "give me leave to make use of Ruth's reply to Naomi entreat me not to leave thee or to Return from following after thee."[318]

Other congregations were not as strict as Shearith Israel after the Revolution, and although persons seeking admittance to Judaism for themselves or a Christian fiancee or wife were not refused in all cases, such intricate matters were referred to more competent Jewish authorities abroad. Benjamin Nones, Parnass of Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, wrote to the Beth Din of the Sephardic Congregation in London for guidance and advice in the matter of a Jew who had married a Christian woman, who now desired to enter the Jewish faith, after she had borne him two sons, who were afterwards circumcised. Though he had married a Christian woman, this man still remained attached to the Synagogue and Jewish people; and the officials of the congregation vouched for his otherwise good behavior and fidelity. This interesting letter follows:

"To the Beth din of K.K.Sha..nar a Shamaim of London, whom God augment.
Philadelphia Aug^{t} 7th,1793

Gent^{n}.

We the Parnass and Adjuntas of K.K.Mikvey Israel of this City have the honor to address your respectable Board on the Business of Importance to Jewdaisme at Large, and to our Young and Rising Congregation in - .. Particular; and we flatter ourself you will as Soon as it may be Convenient favor this Congregation with your answer and advise, the case is this --

A (Yechid) of this Congregation has Lived in a Public way with a (Goyeh) woman who has Kept --- (house) for him about (eig)ht Years and has had By her Three Children two of which are boys which he had (Ga-mul-im) at the 8th day, the Same Person now applies to us with the Consent of the Woman to make her a (g-yo-reth) as also grant him Permission to marry Said woman with (Chupah u-Kidushin). We may say in favor of the above (Yihid) that he has and does Keep up as far as we know to our Rules; and Contributed toward -- Support of our Cong^{on}. as others do.

We have represented to the best of our Knowledge the Case and Conduct of the person, and theretofore request your opinion on the -- Subject and what we have to do, your answer will much oblidge this Congregation in whose -- Behalf we are

Gent^{n}. Your most obed^{t}. H^{ble}.Serv^{ts}.

Benjamin Nones Esq. Parnass." 319

As there is no indication in the minutes of Mikve Israel concerning the reply of the London Beth Din, we do not know the ultimate solution to this intricate yet highly interesting problem.

On November 13, 1794, the congregation was petitioned by a Christian woman who desired to convert to Judaism. There does not appear to be any hidden or ulterior motive such as marriage in her mind. This woman, Anna Barnett, addressed her plea to the congregation in the following manner:

"Philadelphia November 13,1794

Gentlemen

Permit one who has not the Happiness to be Born a Jewess Favoured Imediatly from the God of Israll as you to Request your Attention to my Particular Case & trust that Nothing has been or Shall be Wanting on my part to Render me Worthy of Admitted an associate of your Congregation & to become a Jewess this, I ask not as a Favour, but as a Right feeling as I do the —— of living up to the Divine precepts of the Bible —— I am Ready & Willing to Submit to Such Ceremonies as are Necessary to optain this my demand the greatest of all my Worldly wishes & may the God of Abraham Isaac & Jacob take you under his Holy Protection & Instill into your minds to do what is Just & Right & Grant a Speedy Answer to this the Petition of your ——

Humble Fr——id
Anna Barnett" 320

It is difficult to see how the congregation could deny so earnest and soulful a petition as that made in the above letter. Again, we are doomed to disappointment, as the minutes of Mikve Israel contain no further record on this case.

The reluctance against proselytism so prevalent among the Sephardic congregations during colonial days was somewhat relaxed in the early nineteenth century. The former negative attitude towards conversion was modified by the forces of circumstance. Thus, while such a practice was discouraged "L'Hathila," it was accepted "B'diavad." This more conciliatory policy is demonstrated by the constitutional ruling of one congregation which stated that while the congregation itself would not

encourage or interfere with making converts "under any pretence whatever," persons in such a category would be admitted to the congregation when they were able to show satisfactory legal credentials from another congregation, where a recognized "Chief, or Rabbi and Hebrew Consistory" presided, on condition however, that the proselytes to Judaism seeking admission into the congregation were "not people of Colour."[321] This last statement is highly interesting and most understandable in the light of the southern prejudices towards negroes, and amply demonstrates that the Jews, also in a minority status and therefore feeling insecure, adopted the dominant white southern attitude towards such questions. Secondly, the very fact that this statement was entered into the constitution of the congregation shows presumably that Negroes, in large or small numbers, at some time or other, were attracted to Judaism and desired to enter the Jewish fold.

The influence of American life steadily broke down the old Jewish European traditions. Cultural and social assimilation continued, with the result that Jews and Christians intermarried, or maintained mixed unions. This state of affairs was not only found among the most assimilated of Jews, but also occurred even among the observant and orthodox, as is exemplified by the case of Rev. Abraham Hyam Cohen, who succeeded I. B. Kursheedt as Reader at Congregation Beth Shalome. In his youth Cohen fell in love with, and married a Christian woman, who had been reared in the faith of the Episcopal Church. They were married in 1806 in Philadelphia where she had been converted to Judaism. The ceremony of conversion was by "tevelah" in a natural stream which flowed towards the east. A little room was built over the stream, and a flight of stairs descended into the water. The convert was pressed under the water,

and allowed to rise; this process was repeated three times. In 1828 Cohen accepted the pulpit at Beth Shalome, but in 1831, husband and wife were separated, after which Mrs. Cohen left Judaism to return to Christianity.[322]

Male converts to Judaism had to undergo the ceremony of circumcision and also the ritual bath before witnesses. The following translation of a Hebrew certificate of conversion will better enable us to understand the form of such a document.

"Philadelphia, November 22, 1819

I do hereby certify that in the presence of the undersigned witnesses I did on the 19th day of the hebrew month Heshvan 5580 corresponding with the 7th day of November 1819 circumcise the bearer of this and named him Jacob Bar Abraham Abinu and on the 22nd day of the same month he went to Bath and was regularly admitted (after complying with all the regulations and ceremonies enjoined by our laws) a member of our holy religion (the Hebrew) he being fully sensible of the truth of the Jewish faith and the Unity of the Divine Being.
Signed and Sealed in the Presence of

Signed Manuel Phillips M.D.
Seal

Signed
Jacob Lipman
A.W.Phillips
Solomon Mordecai

NAPHTALI SON OF JUDAH
PARNAS OF THE HOLY CONGREGATION
SHEARITH ISRAEL
NEW YORK" [323]

According to one authority, intermarriage of Jews and Christians in the eighteenth century was not merely a result of intimate social relations, but was also due to the limited number of marriageable men and women within the Jewish community, a situation especially found in New York City. Native Jewish men, living in this city, appear to have intermarried out of choice rather than necessity, for there seems to have been a large selection of single women at Shearith Israel, from whom they could have selected mates. Jewish women, however, were inclined to

remain single rather than intermarry.[324]

The By-laws of Shearith Israel for 1790, denied those Jews who intermarried the privileges belonging to electors; although the Jewish partner to such marriage could still rent a seat in the synagogue. In 1805, under the new constitution, the policy was changed, since no provision was made for Jews who intermarried, yet it was intimated that those who intermarried could rent seats and also become electors. A reaction to this liberal view, however, began in the 1830's, and by 1836, the old attitude concerning intermarriage was again-re-enforced. The consequence of this law was that any person marrying contrary to Judaism or converting to another faith could no longer be considered an elector or member of the congregation. Burial of such persons was allowed, but with certain disqualifications. Thus, the children of Jews who intermarried, were not considered Jewish, and were disqualified from being buried in the Jewish manner.[325]

As in most cases of intermarriage, children seemed to have suffered the most, followed to the grave by the act of their parents. The following record is offered as testimony to the above statement, and also as an example of the operation of Jewish law according to the force of the new American environment. On October 13, 1793, the Parnass of Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia, called a meeting of the Adjunta in "Consequence of an application made to him by Mr. Isaac Attais, informing him that his Son was dead and that he wished to have him buried a jew as he was made one by being circumcised at eight days old, he being born of a Christian woman." The Parnass then called on a Mr. Deleiben who gave as his opinion on the application that although "the Child was Circumcised on the 8th day yet having been born of a Christian

woman and not undergoing the Ceremony of Tobeloh before its death it could not be considered as a jew being imperfect." The Adjunta was equally divided as to "whether the child should be buried a jew or not." The Parnass then ordered that a meeting of the "Yechidim" be held at three o'clock the same afternoon, at which time he informed the congregation of the situation and the question to be decided. A vote was taken of all present, the result being "a Majority of nine to four against its being buried a jew."[326]

In other congregations, those who "married contrary to the Mosaical Law" or turned apostate were cut off with their children from the congregation, and could not be buried "within the Beth-Haim," unless such persons "reformed" at least one year previous to their demise, and did such penance as was prescribed by the religious law.[327]

V. Religious Practices
G. Beliefs, Observances, and Customs

The Jewish belief in the Messiah's coming "though he tarry" seems to have played quite an important role in the religious thinking of the Sephardim. Stiles reports that on August 10, 1769, a Jew showed him a calculation computed by one of the "Rabbins of Germany" who interpreted the words "Time, times, and half, to denote the space from the last Destruct^{n} of the Temple to its Restor^{n} & Return of XII tribes." According to this rabbi and his interpretation "Time is equal to seventy Semitats or 490 years, times 980, half 245, total 1715 years, ending he says A.D. 1783, when the Messias is expected." The Jews of Newport awaited the Messiah with genuine pleasure and expectancy, patiently standing by during atmospheric disturbances to welcome him. Stiles reports this most unusual occurrence among the Sephardim: "The Jews are wont in Thunder Storms to set open all their Doors & Windows for the coming of the Messias. Last Hail Storm 31 July, when Thunder, Rain & Hail were amazingly violent, the Jews in Newport threw open Doors, Windows, and employed themselves in Singing & repeating Prayers, &c. for meeting Messias."[328]

Stiles himself was much interested in Messianism, and spoke of this subject frequently. On March 16, 1770, he was visited by a Jew from Lissa, Poland, named Abraham Levi, with whom Stiles also discussed the "computations of the coming of the Messiah due to come in 1783" in accordance with the calculations of the German rabbi as given above. When Sniles sneezed, he reports that this Jew "prayed instantly;" and "At Sunset he excused himself & rose up & went to my East Study Window and prayed by himself..."[329]

The Sabbath and Jewish holidays were observed in Newport with the closing of stores and factories. Aaron Lopez, merchant-prince of Newport, not only observed the Sabbath personally, but also closed his entire place of business. His shipping books from 1771-1773 show that his regard for the Jewish Sabbath caused him to prohibit any of his ships from leaving "port on a Saturday."[330] Joseph Lopez, cousin of Moses and Aaron Lopez was also an observant Jew, who left the bank where he was chief clerk, on Friday afternoons "at 3 P.M. in winter and at 5 in the summer" so that he might make the necessary preparations for the Sabbath, and also absented himself from the bank "Passover Week and on the great day of Atonement," always scrupulous to make up to his employer the time he thus lost.[331]

The beauty of Jewish family life, sanctified by Sabbath peace and spiritual quickening, as it existed in those days, is recaptured for us in an account of Stiles for July 27, 1772, when he recorded: "It is customary with the Jews for Parents to lay their hands on the Heads of their Children and give them their Blessing. If it be a son, the father laying his hands upon him says, '... The Lord make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh.!... If a daughter 'The Lord make thee as Sarah, Rachel and Leah.' This is frequently done at Meals and Friday Evening after Supper, when the Children come to the parent for the Blessing. I have seen old Mr. Moses Lopez do it to his Boys in the Synagogue, after Service."[332]

The custom of washing before breaking bread is reported by Stiles, who in 1773, made the acquaintance of another visiting Rabbi at Newport. This Rabbi, Tobiah Ben Jehudah, came from Cracow, Poland. The Rabbi visited Stiles' home, but the latter was out. In the evening, he returned the Rabbi's call, visiting him at the home of Hazzan Touro, where

Stiles reports: "I supped with them, the only Time I ever happened at Meal with a Jew. Just before they sat down to supper, Water was bro't by the Maid in a white earthen Bottle which stood in a Vase or Basin: They two washed their hands, taking up the bottle and pouring the Water on the ground. I asked if this was §26 ... they said yes & quoted a passage of the Talmud that none can eat till they had thus washed themselves in which I recollect the word §26 was twice repeated. I did not wash, but sat down and ate with them. After sitting, each in a whispering voice said Grace for himself."[333]

Freedom of conscience and religious belief was one of the great principles that motivated the American colonies in their struggles for liberty, and the right of every individual to lead his own way of life was insured by the attitude of the framers of the American Constitution. To the Jew, the blessings of liberty and freedom of religious worship were the more appreciated, and while the new American environment did much to break down age-old Jewish customs and practices as observed in Europe, it also, if he so desired, made it possible to be even a better Jew. Thus, in 1776, Hart Jacobs, a Jew, petitioned the Committee of Safety and Council of Safety of the state of New York that he be exempt from military duty on Friday nights, since this was part of his Sabbath. The Committee granted him a certificate which states: "Hart Jacobs of the Jewish Religion having signified to this Committee, that it is inconsistent with his religious profession to perform military duty on Friday, being part of the Jewish Sabbath; it is Ordered, that he be exempted from military duty on that night of the week, to be subject nevertheless to the performance of his full tour of duties on other nights."[334]

Sabbath services in the Synagogue Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, seem to have been well attended by the women as by the men. Rebecca Gratz testifies that in 1825, for Friday evening and Saturday morning services the gallery was "as well filled as the other portion of the house."[335]

The Jews, like all peoples, also had their folk-superstitions, and it is reported that when the General Assembly on June 1, 1774, ordered a census of Newport to be taken, only about twenty-five families of 158 people were identified as Jews. The census is not regarded as complete in this particular, since a number of people of the Jewish religion refused to be counted because of religious reasons.[336] (This is no doubt due to the Biblical account that a plague broke out among the Hebrews, when David ordered a census taken of the Israelites.)

The following letter is illustrative of the great affection which Jews felt for the scattered members of their families in the young days of our country, and also their consciousness of the Jewish way of life, and their concern for the preservation of their religious traditions.

"To Mr. Michael Hays
Merchant
In North Castle

Bedford Septemb' 22, 1784

Dear Brother
I send you by Jacob 1/4 mutton kill'd yesterday also your Deed; & I wish you a good fast Shabos [probably Yom Kippur] also Monday is yorsite for Mother ש"י Esther and Family Desire to be remembered to you & wishes you would Come & Keep Yomtob with us. Next thursday 31st of September & friday ye 1st of October is the two first Days of Sucoth; wednesday Oshinarabah the 6 & thursday & friday the 7 & 8th of October is the 2 last days ... In haste as Jacob is waiting from your aff

Brother David Hays" [337]

The celebration of the various Jewish festivals has already been dealt with in our section on social life. Yet it would not be amiss

to recall at this time the Purim celebration at the home of Hazzan Gershom Mendes Seixas, with his family and grandchildren gathered in the parlour around a large table, the lighted tapers, the sweetmeats for the children, and the practice of sending "shelach manos."

Not all Jews, however, were observant or faithful attendants of the synagogue. As early as 1757, Shearith Israel was deeply concerned with those Jews living in the "county," who far from the main stream of Jewish life and synagogue contacts were exhibiting a mounting laxity in matters of Jewish law and ritual. The congregation on testimony of witnesses to this situation, issued a warning to those offenders who "dayly violate the principles of our holy religion such as Trading on the Sabath, Eating of forbidden Meats & other Henious Crimes..." The offenders, according to scriptural and rabbinical admonition, were first warned as to their misdeeds, but continues the notice, those who continue to act contrary to Jewish law "by breaching any of the principles commanded will not be deem'd a member of our Congregation, & when Dead will not be buried according to the manner of our brethren."[338]

At various periods, regulations were adopted against those who refused to follow traditional Jewish practice; a virtual "herem" was imposed upon such violators. They were disqualified from certain religious benefits, and social intercourse was forbidden with them under penalty of being considered in the same category as the disqualified persons. A list of such persons was published every three months in the synagogue until the guilty party repented of his misdeeds.[339] The authority of the synagogue against religious non-conformists, even during post-Revolutionary times, resulted in a "herem" so complete and authoritarian that not only the "culprit" suffered for his misconduct, but also those

closely related to him. There is a record of a letter dated April 26, 1796, addressed to the Parnass and Trustees of Shearith Israel, from a congregant's wife protesting the congregation's punishment of her husband, by having him imprisoned at home because of misbehavior in the synagogue, resulting in her own severe distress, since she had no one to provide her with the necessities of life.[340]

The same religious authority held sway in other Sephardic synagogues, and Sabbath and holiday violators had to appear before the Adjunta within four days. If found guilty they were deprived of "every honor in the Synagogue," until they had made "such concessions as may appear satisfactory to the Parnas and Adjunta."[341] The authorities were not devoid of justice or understanding, as the minutes of March 13, 1792, reveal. A certain Mr. Isaac Polock was summoned before the Adjunta for violating the Sabbath by keeping his store open on that sacred day. Upon his appearance before the Adjunta, Mr. Polock pleaded "that it was unavoidable, as he had Sundry Goods consigned to him from Charleston, and the Capt. of the Nepal [?] sent them to his house, without his knowledge, and ordered his [???] to store them." After a vote, the Adjunta declared that because of these extenuating circumstances "Mr. Polock had not violated the 12th rule."[342] As late as 1820, Congregation Beth Elohim, in Charleston, deprived persons "publickly violating the Sabbath or other sacred days" from holding office, enjoying the privileges of the synagogue, or the services of its officers, and in addition, made them subject to any fine fixed by the authorities.[343]

The ritual bath was as much a part of the early synagogue property as was the school. The concern for such a place was evinced as early as 1759, when the "Parnassim and Elders" of Shearith Israel decided "that a

proper bathing place shall be built of stone for the use of the Congregation."[344] A kettle was part of the "mikvah" installations, and was perhaps used to heat hot water. A different issue arose in 1774, as to whether the "Kittle of the Bath ... being worn out, and very leaky..." it could "be mended, at a small expense." Otherwise a Mr. Asher Myers, no doubt (?) a coppersmith, could "make a new one, and take the old one in part payment."[345] The "mikvah" was thought to be an important part of Jewish observance, especially for the women, and when the public bath needed repairs in 1783, a motion was carried to the effect that the "mikvah" was to be fixed as soon as possible.[346]

Naphtali Phillips, in his Historical Sketch, says that in 1836, a laborer digging on the site of the old Millstreet Synagogue, found a plain gold ring with the inscription "Isaac Lopez 1728." Phillips recalls that according to tradition, previous to the building of the synagogue, "there was a fine run of water on Mill Street, over which a bathing house was erected, where the females of our nation performed their ablutions." He is of the opinion that the ring inscribed with the name of "Isaac Lopez" was lost by one of the women while bathing.[347]

The "mikvoth" in New York City were supervised by the wives of the sextons of the different synagogues. The observance of visiting the ritual bath seems to have declined among native Jews, and flourished more among new immigrants. The decline of this ritual was so prevalent that when Shearith Israel built its third synagogue on Crosby Street in 1834, no "mikvah" was installed within the premises. Obviously, the ritual had ceased to have any significance among the women of even this venerable Spanish and Portuguese congregation.[348]

The dietary laws were often honored more in the breach than the

observance. For as early as 1734, Rev. Bolzius, writing from Savannah, Georgia, observed, "There are Jews here who do not observe the regulations as to food and the Sabbath."[349] This was not an isolated instance of religious laxity in observance of the dietary laws, for in 1748, a Swedish teacher, Peter Kalm, then visiting New York City, remarked concerning the Jews and their religious customs: "During my residence at New York I was informed among other things that these people Jews never boiled any meat for themselves on Saturday ... They commonly eat no pork; yet I have been told by several men of credit, that many of them (especially among the young Jews) when traveling, did not make the least difficulty about eating this, or any other meat that was put before them."[350]

It was only natural that Jews far from home amid the wilderness that was then America, found the observance of the Jewish ritual not merely difficult but almost impossible. Approximately ten years later, in 1757, the authorities at Shearith Israel were forced to deal with Jews living in the "county," who violated Jewish law and ritual by "Eating of Forbidden Meats."[351] In the cities, the established congregations were better able to deal with this problem, yet as time went on, even the synagogue was not able to control the growing laxity of its members in regards to the ritual aspect of "kashruth."

The role of the Shochet, his duties, privileges, and responsibilities have already been dealt with under "Synagogue Organization." It shall now be our task to see how the synagogue controlled the preparation and sale of kosher meat for domestic and foreign consumption. A memorandum in the minutes of Shearith Israel for October 9, 1747, reads "no Casheer Beef to be Shipt or sent away from this place ... by any person ... belonging to this Congregation, without first applying to the Hazan or

person properly appointed for a Certificate for said Beef." These certificates testifying "kashruth" could be purchased at the rate of "Six shillings for twenty half barrels." The money accruing from the sale of such certificates went to the Hazzan, since the congregation at that time was not financially able to pay his entire salary.[352]

The export of kosher beef in such large quantities often resulted in a scarcity for domestic consumption, so that at times the congregation found itself "without Beef & fatt." In order to remedy this situation, and to save the "Kaal" from such embarrassment, the Parnassim and Elders in 1752 agreed "that whoever takes any beef or fatt on any fryday or Hereb Yomtob for Exportation or Sale," was liable to a fine of forty shillings. The congregational officers also authorized that no "beef or fatt be taken on a Thursday Evening that is intended for frydays Market." The punishment for violating the above rule was a fine of forty shillings and suspension of the privilege of applying for "certificates" indicating kashruth.[353]

Metal indicators made of lead were also used to identify kosher meat products for export. As this metal became too expensive for such use, it was authorized that all beef shipped from New York and "exported beyond the Sea" was to be branded with a special branding-iron bearing in Hebrew "K.Sh.I. Casher." This instrument was under the Hazzan's charge, and the use of it could be had by any person wishing to export kosher meat, by paying "threepence currt: money of New York," on condition such persons were "living and residing in this Colony." Non-residents were charged "six pence like money for the same." The supervision of kosher meat for foreign trade was strictly controlled by the simple fact that all meat leaving the port without being first branded, and

having the duty paid according to the above sums was "deem'd and lookt upon as treffa Beef."[354]

This synagogue control, however, was not without its weaknesses, and "treffa" products succeeded in evading the close scrutiny of the Parnass and Elders. A letter protesting the carelessness in this ritual matter was sent by the Hacham of Curacao in 1753 to the officers of Shearith Israel. It appears that this was not the first offence, for the Rabbi warns: "I have made an announcement that the meats which come from your place without the certificate of the Hazan and without your prescribed brand, shall be considered as prohibited." There can be no doubt that in this respect the Hazzan was remiss in his duties, and probably made a handsome sum for himself, for the letter points out: "... the only thing I have been able to ascertain from some Jews from your place who have sold meat, is that your Hazan neither sees the meat nor knows whether it has been properly or improperly killed and that your Somer, in order to have it passed or for his own profit, pretends that said Hazan has duly signed the certificates." This system was certainly unworkable when left in charge of men without moral integrity or responsibility. The almost criminal negligence of the Hazzan in this matter is illustrated by the Hacham's further remarks on the same subject: "When I enquired how the Hazan could brand so many casks and yet give the Semaha for only so few, the answer was that the Hazan neither brands nor sees them, and that whoever ships meat simply goes to the Hazan's house for the brander and puts the brands on himself in his own house as suits his convenience." Not only was meat shipped from New York to other Jewish communities, but also fish, as the Hacham concludes: "At different times pieces of pork have also been found in some casks of macheral coming from your place.

These I have declared as prohibited ... Again imploring you to find some means of preventing such great abuses, if you possibly can ... I am

Your most affectionate friend and servant,
Sem^{L} Mendes de Solla

Curacao K.K.Mikve Israel
Sivan 5513 [1753] " 355

The Hacham of Curacao was not the only one to complain concerning the negligence of Congregation Shearith Israel in this ritual matter, for five years later a letter was sent to the congregation from the Hacham of Kingston, Jamaica, advising that in view of the sad state of affairs in New York, the situation could only be corrected by having "a Sohet and Bodek who is a good Jew, who has Semaha from some Portuguese Haham, and that you ought to have ... some person who knows how to porge meat ... a Somer in the slaughter-house and said Somer shall put his seal upon every piece of meat ... If it should be found that salting has been omitted in the meat, putting in the salting [afterwards] leaves it trefah nevertheless. You should see to it, moreover, that no Goy has a concern in the meat, as otherwise it will be trefah ...

Your humble servant,
Jeoshua His: de Cordova

Kingston Jamaica
8 April 1758" 356

The above letters reveal more concerning the observance of "kashruth" in New York City than any source material from the city itself. The officers of Shearith Israel, as a result of this last letter referred to above, sent a reply to the Hacham of Jamaica defending their attempts to supervise "kashruth" in the most efficient manner, and assuring the Hacham that the persons engaged in the work were authorized men, the Bodech in particular having "a Semaha from the Rev: M^{r} Nieto." After explaining that the place of individual lead markers on every piece of

beef would be too expensive, they reiterated the plan then in current use, namely that the beef was "generally tied up after being pack'd in the Barrels with a seal of wax at each head, so that none can be taken out without its being perceivable." The officials agreed with the Hacham that no "Goy" should have anything to do with the meat, nor have any certificates sold to him. The Parnass concluded his letter by assuring the Jamaica congregation that everything would be done to correct the situation.[357]

Another Jewish community which supplied kosher food within colonial American territories and abroad was Newport, Rhode Island. From this port kosher products were exported to Surinam, Barbados and Jamaica. Jewish merchants such as Lopez and Rivera sent their ships with "Jew Beef to the Barbadoes," and kosher fat and tongues and cheeses to Surinam. The inspection and certification of these food-stuffs was done in the synagogue, and usually signed by the Hazzan or Shochet. The following certificate of "kashruth" was issued in Newport, and sent to Surinam, and is a translation from the original written in Portuguese (as were the letters written to Congregation Shearith Israel from Curacao and Jamaica.) This certificate had no signature but was addressed to "Mr. Jacob Rod[s] Rivers Mercht Newport. pr Capt...

I undersigned certify that the 40 kegs of beef and two geese pickled, that are shipped by Mr. David Lopez on the board of the brigintine called Hannah, Capt. Willm. Howland, and from this port to Surinam, marked over the covers with the mark stamped Kosher [Hebrew] M.B. and inside with four pieces of tape with the mark Kosher [Hebrew] on each cover, are casser and that any Jew may without the least scruple eat of them; as they are prepared according to our holy law, and that this is true I sign this with my hand in Newport Rhode Island on the 23rd of Elul of the year 5547 [1787] in the Holy Congregation Jeshuat Israel."[358]

While the ritual control of kosher meat was from earliest times in New York City under the control of the synagogue, the municipal authorities as far back as 1796 protected Jews from unscrupulous butchers who endeavored to sell "trefah" meat as kosher.[359] Kosher meat brought to the market was not only furnished with seals, but also stamped with letters to designate the time when the meat was prepared.[360] There were no butcher shops kept by Jews in New York City prior to 1813, save that of Asser Levy who died in 1682. Jews were not greatly attracted to butchering, since they could not "profitably dispose of trefah parts" if they owned the whole animal.[361] In 1660, under the Dutch, Asser Levy and Moses Lucena were granted permission to slaughter animals. In 1665, Asser Levy was allowed to continue his profession under the English. Until recent times there are no records of Jews engaged in keeping butcher shops, or owning slaughtering houses.[362]

Neither the congregation nor trustees as a body dealt in meat, or derived any profit from it as merchandise. In 1805, an agreement was made with the Shochet whereby he was permitted to collect a fifty cent fee for each animal that he killed for export. Thus it may be noted that kosher meat continued to be shipped from New York harbor from 1758 to 1805.[363]

To insure the small Jewish community of New York City an adequate supply of kosher meat, the trustees of Shearith Israel engaged non-Jewish butchers, with the understanding that an authorized Shochet be permitted to slaughter animals for them; and after the parts were duly inspected, they were to be certified with seals, indicating that they were permissible for Jewish use. The sealing arrangements, as mentioned in the minutes of 1758, dispensed with the need of a watchman ("shomer")

during business hours, since the sealed pieces of kosher meat were segregated from other types of meat, and were only available for sale at hours specified by the butchers. The time was usually set early in the day, for the supply of kosher meat was inadequate to meet the demand.[364] The butchers were naturally selected on the basis of good character and honesty. In 1805, the butchers gave the Shochet a perquisite in the form of small cuts of meat or tongues. The trustees, however, required that the Shochet sell these through the butcher at market value "to a congregator at the latters request."[365] In the 1830's and early 1840's, the Shochet was still under the jurisdiction of the synagogue, although he was paid by the butchers.

The baking of matzoh for Passover use was, like other ritual practices, under the control and supervision of the congregation. In early times it was customary for Shearith Israel to have the matzoh baked in any part of the Sexton's house which the Parnass thought suitable.[366] It was more customary, however, for the congregation to engage a non-Jewish baker, and a supervisor over the matzoh's ritual fitness was appointed by the congregation. Each congregant then gave his own order to the baker, and the congregation itself always purchased matzoth for distribution to the poor and the salaried officials.[367] A committee on baking of matzoh,in 1819 reported that a Mr. Hunter was to be appointed congregational baker, and the matzoth were to be made in "his new patent bakery." Two or more persons were to be appointed as supervisors and paid for such work by the trustees. The matzoth, we learn, were to cost $8.50 per one hundred pounds, which was $2.50 cheaper than the previous year, for the new machine method was less expensive.[368]

George C. Mason, describing the Newport synagogue, wrote: "... and

in the wing one may see the oven in which the Jews once baked unleaven bread."[369] We may conclude that some Sephardic congregations thus baked their own matzoth, while others had them made under supervision by non-Jewish bakers. At Newport, the supervision was done by the Hazzan. There also is a tradition that Newport Jews gathered within the synagogue for a "community seder."[370]

V. Religious Practices
H. Cemetery and Funeral Customs

The tombstones of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of the seventeenth century were of a unique type in that they measured almost six feet square, and reposed flat on the ground, covering the grave. It was the custom in early days to send a "special order" to Europe for each stone. Since they were very expensive they were erected only by the wealthy. Such tombstones are found in the old New Bowery Cemetery in New York City, belonging to the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation Shearith Israel.[371] During the early period, grave-stones were also ordered from local non-Jews, and the Hebrew lettering was provided by some learned Jewish individual. No congregational permission was needed; relatives merely ordered a monument and placed it on the grave. In the 1830's, however, the permission of the President or trustees had to be secured first for such a purpose.[372]

Burial at the Shearith Israel cemetery was in regularly laid out rows, without regard to sex. The congregation did not allow members to reserve in advance any plot or grave. Following Jewish tradition, suicides were buried near the fence; and a special section of the Beth Haim was designated for the non-conformists who in their lifetime had intermarried or kept themselves estranged from the synagogue. "In the demise of any person, that in his life time absented himself from the Synagogue or was no ways a benefactor to the Congregation, His Corps or the Corps of his wife or Children under thirteen years of age shall not be laid & Buried within the walls of our Burying Ground without leave and License first had and obtain'd from the Elders."[373]

The care of the cemetery was in the hands of a delegate appointed by

the congregation, known as the "Parnas of the Beth Haim." He was also in charge of the hearse, and was obligated to keep the ground in good order, and to keep a book "wherein the Carrears" were noted. He also had at all times to attend burials, and to designate the proper grave.[374]

It was customary for congregations to engage guards or keepers for the cemetery. Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, held a special meeting on July 19, 1789, wherein "the segan" informed the congregation that whereas "the burying-place had been opened several times, and wishing to remedy the evil, a person was willing to build a habitation near it at his own expense, and that he would use his endeavors to hinder such depredations in future." There is a tradition that the British, when in Philadelphia during the Revolution, "shot deserters at the gates of the Jewish graveyard."[375] While in New York, the British used the old Oliver Street Cemetery belonging to Shearith Israel, as a parade ground. It was only in the early nineteenth century that the congregation employed keepers.[376]

The following description of a Jewish burial service dates from 1796:

"After the funeral dirge is sung, and just before the corpse is deposited in the grave, the coffin is opened, and a small bag of earth, taken from the grave, is carefully put under the head of the deceased; the same powder said to be earth brought from Jerusalem, and carefully kept for this purpose, is taken and put upon the eyes of the corpse, in token of their remembrance of the holy land, and their expectations of returning thither in God's appointed time."[377]

Special honors were shown to the deceased when they had led a noteworthy and honorable life of service to both religious and civic causes. When Abraham Mendes Seixas died in Charleston in 1799, he was then magistrate of the city, warden of the Work House, and Parnass of Congregation Beth Elohim. His body was taken from the house and carried to "the snogar [sic] and all around outside, while prayers were sung

adapted to the occasion after once going round, it was carried in & lodged in front, while the Kinah of Kol ol le lah was sung."[378] When the Parnass Jaques Ruden of Shearith Israel passed away in 1806, the "banco" was covered with black crepe for a period of four Sabbaths to designate public mourning of the congregation. In 1828, when the Hazzan Moses Levy Moduro Peixotto died, the synagogue was shrouded in black, and the remains of the deceased were carried around the inside of the synagogue seven times. It is of interest to note that although the deceased passed away at midnight Wednesday, funeral services were not held until 5 o'clock Friday afternoon. Apparently the Sephardim did not follow the traditional custom of burial on the same day, especially since the law allows delay if it adds to the honor of the deceased. The remains of Rev. M. L. M. Peixotto were taken to the synagogue on Thursday evening and deposited in the Trustees' room until a few hours before burial.[379]

It was the custom to dedicate cemeteries soon after their purchase. Congregation Shearith Israel followed this practice in respect to their second and third burial grounds purchased in 1805 and 1829, respectively. A similar consecration formula was used on both occasions, which stated:

"... We do this day, appropriate and Sanctify this piece or parcel of ground or such part of it as may be found necessary for the interment of such of our brethren the House of Israel as it may please God to call to Himself, according to His divine will in His own good time to be known and distinguished by the name of ———. And it is hereby Consecrated consonant to the rule agreed to and entered on the trustees books, that the remains of our deceased brethren may lie at rest until the day of resurrection..."[380]

VI. Inter-Congregational Aid and Cooperation
A. American

We have already noted several congregational contacts between Jewish communities during the early eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in correspondence seeking information on ritual questions, requests for shochtim, and Hebrew teachers. The Jewish congregations of New York and Newport shipped kosher meats and other food products to Jewish communities in the West Indies. Frequent appeals for financial aid in building a synagogue were made among the American congregations, both to each other, and also abroad.

One of the earliest appeals of this type was made by Congregation Shearith Israel to the Mahamad (Governing Council) of the Jewish congregation in Jamaica in 5489 [1728-29]. The text of the letter reveals an important historical fact relative to the early history of Shearith Israel. Evidently this Sephardic congregation in New York City was at that date known as "Shearith Jacob" and not Shearith Israel, for the officers refer to themselves as "Parnassim and Adjunta of this holy K.K.Shearith Jacob for the present year 5489 place before you this petition in the name of all the holy Kaal."[381] The request for aid is addressed thus: "We earnestly request you as well as your Haham to communicate it to the members of your holy Kaal, so that they may contribute all they can to the building of a holy synagogue which we have decided with the help of God to erect." The letter continued with the explanation that because of the few number of "Yehudim," their hopes were frustrated. At that time the Sephardim met in "a Synagogue rented from a Goy." The letter, written in Spanish, was signed by the Parnassim Louis and Daniel Gomez.[382]

On March 21, 1759, Newport Jewry wrote to then well-established Shearith Israel for a similar purpose "to establish a regular Congregation in this Town." The poor financial status of the Newport Jewish community could not provide for so ambitious a project. They therefore "resolved to crave the Assistance of the several Congregations in America, and as the Feast of the Passover is near at Hand, a time when there will be the greatest appearance of Brethren at New York; we embrace this opportunity to acquaint you with our proceedings and Intentions." The Jews of Newport further emphasized a traditional concern "on how much it is our Duty, to Instruct Children, in the Path of Vertuous Religion" and "our Duty to assist the Distressed." They could not understand how New York Jewry could fail to aid them in fulfilling so noble a goal.[383]

A short time after the receipt of this appeal, the members of Shearith Israel answered the Newport congregation with the following good news:

"Gent^n.

Conformable to your desire a Nedaba was made in our Synagogue the Seventh day of Pesach when a contribution of £149:6^D was offered towards building at New Port a place of worship to Almighty God. Your pious design was a sufficient inducement to promote the Success of your request, we heartily wish our mite may enable you to go on with the Holy building and that you may be a Religious & prosperous Congregation.

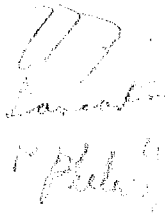
We must now desire you will send orders for the money. We sincerely wish you success in all your Laudable undertakings, and that our God may graciously enable his People to do MITSVOTH is the unfeign'd prayer of Gent^n." [384]

A year later, we learn that the New York congregation agreed to allow the Newport congregation to borrow a "Sepher Torah," formerly belonging to the Savannah congregation. The holy Scroll of the Law was shipped "by the Sloop Hanover Capt. Stephen Wanton," on condition that it be returned to New York "when demanded."[385]

By 1762, the work on the Newport synagogue was almost complete, with

the exception of the "Hechal, Tebah, & Benches." As the congregation hoped to be able to use the synagogue for Rosh Hashonah services, a letter was again dispatched to Shearith Israel, asking "offerings of Furniture & Ornaments," in the hope that these would be forwarded "with convenient speed ... against the Time of Consecrating the holy Fabrick." The Parnass (Moses Lopez) of Jeshuat Israel in Newport also stated that "timely notice" of the "Dedication Day" would be given so that visitors from New York might be present to participate in the consecration service. This appeal was likewise answered, when a "Ner Tamid," candlesticks for the Hechal and Tebah, and one hundred pounds of wax were sent from New York.[386] By 1818, only a few families were left in the Newport community. The scrolls of the Torah which had been previously sent there from New York many years before were now returned, and the congregation disbanded.[387]

The shortage of religious articles in colonial and post-Revolutionary America created a difficult problem even for the larger and older congregations. In 1761, a number of distinguished members of Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, wrote to Shearith Israel for the loan of a "Sepher Torah," on behalf of the Jewish community of Reading, Pennsylvania. It appears from the receipt, originally written in Hebrew, that this scroll was procured through the influence of the leaders of Mikve Israel, who guaranteed its return.[388]



When Congregation Beth Elohim purchased a cemetery in 1767, a copy of the deed was sent in trust to Shearith Israel for safe keeping, and was there deposited "in the chest" belonging to the congregation.[389]

Congregations cooperated with one another for the purpose of securing religious officials in an attempt to procure badly-needed personnel vital to the religious life of the Jewish community. Thus, in 1775, the "Parnas

Presidente" of Shearith Israel was instructed to write to Rhode Island, and the "Parnas Residente" to communicate with Philadelphia, asking their friends in these two congregations to make public announcement of the need for a Shochet in New York.[390] During this same year, Shearith Israel received a letter from the Charleston congregation requesting funds for building a synagogue.[391]

When Mikve Israel of Philadelphia desired to erect a new synagogue, the small membership composed of thirty-seven souls could not undertake such an enterprise, and in 1782, the trustees sent several letters to sister-congregations appealing for aid. A Hebrew letter was written by Mr. Mordecai Mordecai to the Jewish congregation in Surinam, and Mr. Isaac Moses sent one in English to the Jews of Rhode Island and Lancaster. Other letters were posted to the Jews in the West Indies on Cape Francois, St. Thomas, and St.Croix.[392]

The year 1790 was not only a memorable one for all Americans, but expecially for the Jews, as that year witnessed the first united action of all the Jewish congregations in the United States. The six-American-Jewish communities wrote to each other, endeavoring to join in a common declaration of loyalty and admiration by writing a joint letter of congratulation to George Washington on his election as President of the newly-created United States. However, fears, suspicions, and misunderstandings soon wrecked the original idea of all Jewish communities sending one letter of felicitation to the new President, and instead the Jewish congregations of New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Richmond sent one letter representing that group, while the Jews of Savannah and Newport each sent a separate letter. In Washington's reply to the Newport congregation, he penned the now famous words, "To bigotry no sanction, to

persecution no assistance."[393]

The most common type of inter-congregational cooperation in the United States continued to center on the appeals of various congregations for financial aid. Thus, in 1792, Congregation Beth Elohim of Charleston sent to Mikva Israel of Savannah, asking for funds.[394] In 1809, Beth Shalome of Richmond, Virginia, asked Shearith Israel for assistance in building a synagogue, and subscription of $260 was collected within a few weeks.[395]

By 1812, the Sephardic congregations depended a good deal on each other not only for financial, but also for spiritual aid as well. Shochtim must have been difficult to secure, for a committee at Shearith Israel recommended that notice of an intended election for a Shochet be publicized among the Spanish and Portuguese congregations in Philadelphia, Richmond, and Charleston. The qualifications of candidates for the position of Shochet were to be decided by a "Beth-Din" of Shochtim.[396]

When Shearith Israel consecrated its second synagogue in 1818, and gaslight was introduced in the new house of worship, the old chandeliers were lent "to congn in Cincinnati." The minutes for 1835 show that again in that year, five brass chandeliers were sent to "Messrs Joseph Jonas, Elias Mayer & Phineas Moses in Cincinnati, Ohio, to be used in their Synagogue and to be returned when no longer in use." [397]

At special congregational functions, synagogues gave permission for their Hazzans to participate. In 1825, when Mikve Israel consecrated its new synagogue, the Rev. M. L. M. Peixotto went to that city and assisted the new Rev. Mr. Keys, who had recently come to Philadelphia from Barbados.[398]

Congregational cooperation and aid was not limited to Sephardim

alone, but in many cases, was extended to the Ashkenazim, who in an earlier period, had been regarded as inferior. In 1825, a group of Dutch, Polish, and English Jews seceded from Shearith Israel, and formed a second congregation, Bnai Jeshuran. In 1827, when this new congregation was to be consecrated, it requested Shearith Israel to lend them "five scrolls and seven sets of ornaments" for that occasion.[399] Further evidence of better understanding and a more tolerant point of view between these two groups, enabling them to cooperate and to submerge their petty differences, is found in the part played by Congregation Bnai Jeshuran in honoring the memory of the Rev. M. L. M. Peixotto, Reader of Shearith Israel, who died in 1828. Afternoon services were conducted in both synagogues, and later the Ashkenazic Jews from the newly organized German congregation joined their Sephardic brethren in a joint service.[400]

It may thus be concluded that from earliest times, the various Spanish and Portuguese congregations in America were closely united, cooperating, serving, and aiding each other in charitable, financial, patriotic, and religious endeavors. Shearith Israel, in this regard, was looked upon as a mother-congregation, since it was the oldest Jewish congregation in America, and the younger and weaker congregations sought her aid. To her redounding honor, it may be said that the instances of refusal are most rare, and occur only because Shearith Israel was often financially embarrassed itself.

VI. Inter-Congregational Aid and Cooperation
B. Foreign

We shall now turn our attention to the aid, assistance, and interest displayed by the Sephardic congregations in America towards world Jewry, and also the help rendered by some of these foreign congregations to those situated in the United States. In 1729, Shearith Israel was forced to petition the Hacham of Curacao for financial assistance, an appeal which was promptly answered.[401] When the newly established Jewish congregation, Mikva Israel in Savannah, Georgia, was without any religious articles, it received a Scroll of the Law, Chanukah lamp, and books from London as the gift of a private benefactor.[402]

The need for religious officials caused Shearith Israel in 1757, to seek the aid of the Sephardic congregation in London in finding a suitable person to fill the vacant position of Hazzan. The requirements for this office may be noted in this letter sent from London, on October 28, 1757:

"...You desire us to recommend you a Young Man, of good Morals & strictly religious, with the advantage of an agreeable Voice & Capacity for teaching of Hebrew & translating it into English as well as Spanish ... reading the prayers & the Law, as also for instructing the poor Boys ... we forsee that who ever presents himself as a Candidate, will insist that his Passage and Charges be defray'd & will expect that an Agreement be made for a certain Term of Years."

In 1758 Shearith Israel again communicated with the Porguguese congregation in London, agreeing to pay a salary of £50 per year, and all travelling expenses.[403]

In 1761, a letter was sent by Haim Mudahay of London, asking Shearith Israel to aid the Jews of Safed, who had suffered greatly as a result of an earthquake. This Hacham and Dayan of Constantinople had already visited the Jewish communities of London, France, Italy, and Amsterdam.

The letter sent by him from London was written originally in Spanish.[404]

Religious articles were frequently presented to a new American congregation, and Ezra Stiles reports that when he visited the Newport Synagogue in 1769, he saw "two Copies of the Law deposited there," one "a present from the Portuguese Synagogue in London." [405]

The West Indies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were heavily settled by Portuguese Jews. A large and prosperous community, with a beautiful synagogue, was the one situated on the island of St. Eustacia. In 1772, a hurricane swept over the island, leaving death and ruin in its wake. The synagogue was destroyed, but the pious Jews' first thought was to re-establish their religious life, and thus they addressed a letter to Shearith Israel, seeking funds. The Jewish congregation Honem Dalem, on St. Eustacia, was answered with a donation of £38.10.6, with the desire expressed to be of further assistance if necessary.[406]

A letter from Hebron, Palestine, was sent to the Newport congregation, which in turn sent it on to Shearith Israel. Several papers from Hebron were included in this letter, one of them from the Rev. H. H. Samuel Cohen of London "requesting the Assistance of this Congregation to relieve our distressed brethren of Hebron."[407]

A wide interest in Jews remotely settled in faraway places prompted some American Jews of imagination to contact the Jews of Cochin India. Solomon Simson (father of Sampson Simson), in 1787 corresponded with the Jews of that area. In 1794, Solomon Simson's attention again turned eastward to China, in an attempt to contact the Jews of Honan Province. Simson addressed a letter in Hebrew to the Chinese Jews, entrusting it to the care of a Captain Howell, who was setting sail for the Orient. The Captain, however, failed to locate these Jews of Honan.[408]

Extracts from the minute books of Congregation K. K. Nidhi Israel on Barbados shows that, in 1792, £25 was sent by its members to Charleston, South Carolina, to assist the Jews there to erect a synagogue. An entry for 1819 reveals that the Jews of Philadelphia also requested aid to build a house of worship, and the record states that $500 was forwarded to them.

The ties that bound American Jewry to world Jewry are not demonstrated adequately by these few examples of brotherly concern and charitable benevolence. Not until 1840, however, with the shaking episode of the Damascus Affair did American Jewry really rouse itself to aid Jews scattered throughout the world. The Damascus Affair brought world Jewries together, awakening the Jews of America and Europe for the first time to their true responsibilities toward their needy brethren. Some of the Sephardic congregations took a most active part in this issue. For some unknown reason, Shearith Israel remained aloof and silent;[409] but Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, on the other hand, played an important role. A mass meeting was held at the synagogue on August 27, 1840, at which both Christians and Jews protested the false blood accusation. The address of the Rev. Isaac Leeser, and the resolutions adopted were later printed under the title Persecution of the Jews in the East, etc. A committee of five, including Isaac Leeser, sent a letter to the President of the United States, and on September 2, 1840, this committee was answered by John Forsyth, then Secretary of State, informing them that he had already contacted the American consul at Alexandria.[410] Congregation Beth Shalome in Richmond, Virginia, also took action, and sent I. B. Kursheedt to New York to participate at the public meeting protesting the Damascus affair.[411] This "cause celebre" profoundly affected American Jewry in that it revealed to them the supreme need of a national organization to meet such emergencies in the future.

FOOTNOTES

1. American Jewish Historical Society. Publications. Vol.21, p.XIV; v.2, p.77; v.9, p.75; v.18, p.4; v.29, p.31; C.P.Daly, ed.by K.J.Kohler. The Settlement of the Jews in North America. p.5 ff.

2. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.18, p.49.

3. Ibid. v.1, p.47.

4. Ibid. v.18, p.20.

5. Ibid. v.18, p.21, 33.

6. Ibid. v.2, p.87; v.21, p.XV.

7. Ibid. v.21, p.XVI, 1, 181.

8. Ibid. v.27, p.3-4.

9. H.T.Ezekiel & G.Lichtenstein. The History of the Jews of Richmond. p.239;
B.A.Elzas. The Jews of South Carolina. p.147.

10. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.11, p.70-71.

11. H.M.Gutstein. The Story of the Jews of Newport. p.115;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.53, 63; v.11, p.70, note 1.

12. Ibid. v.21, p.XVI-XVII, 8-16, 25-29, 30, 32-35, 38-44.

13. Ibid. v.21, p.143;
Pro-Laws of Constitution of Congregation Shearith Israel, 1805. Rule V.

14. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.35, p.101-102;
P.Philipson. Letters of Rebecca Gratz. p.73.

15. B.A. Elzas. op.cit. p.147;
Constitution of the Hebrew Congregation of K.K.Beth Elohim, Charleston, S.C., 1820. Rule I;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.4, p.21;
H.B.Grinstein. The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York. p.270-271;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.11, p.70.

16. Ezra Stiles. Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles. v.1, p.11;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.75; v.27, p.8-9; v.10, p.82;
The Occident. v.1, no.8, p.384.

17. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.58.

18. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.1, 81.

19. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.60-61;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.3, 52-53, 63;
A.S.W.Rosenbach. Congregation Mikveh Israel. p.8.

20. Minute Book of Congregation Mikve Israel, Savannah, Georgia, 1790. Rule 13.

21. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XII.

22. Ibid. Rule XI.

23. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.98;
Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XIII.

24. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.63, 93.

25. Ibid. v.21, p.52.

26. Ibid. v.21, p.63-64.

27. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.6.
("A Gallery for Women runs around the whole Inside except the East End.");
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.82, 199, 216;
D.Philipson. op.cit. p.76;
Minute Books, Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia. No.11, p.16.

28. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule IV;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.97.
(In Congregation Shearith Israel women's seats leased for a period of two years to the highest bidder.)

29. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.97-99.

30. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rules XII, XXVI.

31. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.1-2.

32. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 3;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.65.

33. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 3.
(Congregational officials began their duties on the Jewish New Year.);
H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.65.

34. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 3.

35. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.110.

36. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Minutes of August 20, 1792;
M.Gutstein. op.cit. p.115;
A.S.W.Rosenbach. op.cit. p.6-8.

37. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.182.

38. Ibid. v.21, p.2;
Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 3.

39. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.73-74.

40. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 13.

41. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.2-4.

42. Ibid. v.21, p.4;
Bye-Laws of Constitution of Congregation Shearith Israel. Article I, Section II.

43. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.85.

44. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule VI.

45. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Meeting of September 24, 1797.

46. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.2, 89.

47. Ibid. v.21, p.68.

48. Ibid. v.21, p.68.

49. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.6.
("On the middle of the North Side & affixed to the Wall is a raised Seat for the Parnass or Ruler ...");
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.61; v.27, p.336.

50. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.68.

51. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.1, 59-61, 70-76.

52. Ibid. v.21, p.83-84, 64, 66.

53. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule II.

54. Ibid. Rule V.

55. Ibid. Rule III.

56. Ibid. Rule VII.

57. Ibid. Rule VII.

58. Ibid. Rule X.

59. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.184-185.

60. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.68-69.

61. A.J.H.S. ob.cit. v.27, p.85.

62. Ibid. v.21, p.130.

63. Ibid. v.27, p.106.

64. Ibid. v.21, p.150-155.

65. Ibid. v.21, p.130.

66. A.C.M.Rosenbach. op.cit. p.8;
H.P.Rosenbach. The Jews of Philadelphia Prior to 1800. p.16-17;
Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 2;
Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XI;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.30, 142.

67. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rules 2,3,7

68. Ibid. Meeting of October 2, 1791; September 24, 1797.

69. Ibid. Meeting of June 9, 1814.

70. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rules XI, XXVII.

71. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.78;
Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XXVIII.

72. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.170.

73. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XXVIII.

74. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 11.

75. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.161.

76. Ibid. v.27, p.99-100.

77. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.68.

78. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.3-4;
Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XVIII.

79. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.3.

80. Ibid. v.21, p.5.

81. Ibid. v.21, p.4, 91.

82. Ibid. v.21, p.4.

83. Ibid. v.21, p.12.

84. Ibid. v.21, p.57, 75; v.27, p.114.

85. Ibid. v.21, p.99, 100-101.

86. Ibid. v.21, p.103.

87. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.84:
Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.302.
("June 28, 1773: ... There are now three Rabbis settled in America. There are none on the continent of North America.")

88. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XXIX.

89. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.68, 362, 374.
("... went to the Synagogue & heard Mr.Latius read the Law and Service." - p.68)

90. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.35, p.194;
D.Philipson. op.cit. p.75.

91. Bye-Laws of Constitution of Congregation Shearith Israel. Article III.

92. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.96, 545 (note 39)

93. Minute Books, Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, Pa. No.11, p.16;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.115, 172.

94. Ibid. v.6, p.126 ff.

95. Ibid. v.6, p.126 ff.

96. Ibid. v.6, p.136.

97. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.89.

98. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, 27.

99. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.84.

100. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.299, 374, 378-379, 392, 423; v.2, p.97;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.91, 123.

101. Ibid. v.21, p.163; v.27, p.69, 173, 185 ff., 229.

102. P.A.Elzas. op.cit. p.33-34;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.6, p.126 ff.

103. Bye-Laws of Constitution of Congregation Shearith Israel. p.6;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.6, p.131; v.27, p.3-4.

104. Ibid. v.21, p.95, 99;
H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.76.

105. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.97; v.27, p.28.

106. Ibid. v.21, p.89.

107. Ibid. v.27, p.150-156.

108. Ibid. v.21, p.95.

109. Ibid. v.21, p.89-90, 97.

110. Ibid. v.21, p.4, 13-14, 45, 108; v.2, p.48.

111. Ibid. v.21, p.4, 45, 76, 90.

112. Ibid. v.25, p.46.

113. Ibid. v.21, p.4.

114. Ibid. v.21, p.94.

115. Ibid. v.21, p.123-124.

116. Ibid. v.21, p.115.
(This was reported in the minutes of January 7, 1774, at which time it was also agreed that "the Expenses of the Vacham Hiam I.Carregal shall be paid with his Passage to Rhode Island." Carregal arrived in Newport in June of 1773, where he guided the Newport Congregation— and became an intimate friend of Dr.Ezra Stiles, the Christian minister.)

117. Ibid. v.21, p.4, 80, 90, 108; v.25, p.50-51.

118. Ibid. v.25, p.50-51.

119. Ibid. v.2, p.48.

120. Ibid. v.34, p.68.

121. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.76-77, 541 (note 50)

122. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.4; v.2, p.90.

123. Ibid. v.21, p.216.

124. Ibid. v.21, p.69.

125. Ibid. v.21, p.80.

126. Ibid. v.21, p.83;
Minute Books, Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, Pa. No.25, p.34.
(To this list of the sexton's duties may be added that, at Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, he was expected not only to make the candles but also to light them as wanted, extinguish them, and lock up "the Shull" after services.)

127. A.J.H.S. OP.CIT. v.21, p.93.

128. Ibid. v.21, p.96.

129. Ibid. v.27, p.114.

130. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.77.

131. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.12, p.44;
B.A.Elzas. op.cit. p.120, 282.
(Disputes this date, setting its establishment in 1784. He nevertheless agrees with I.Huhner that the society is the oldest of its kind in America.)

132. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.78.
(An older society than this Hebra was the "Mezion Teza Torah" established for the object of perpetuating the old ritual, in 1731. - v.6, p.131)

133. Ibid. v.6, p.131.

134. Ibid. v.27, p.253; v.21, p.151.

135. Ibid. v.27, p.253-254.

136. Ibid. v.27, p.254.

137. Ibid. v.27, p.254-255.

138. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.105;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.6, p.131.

139. Ibid. v.27, p.113.

140. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.109.

141. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.18, p.73-74, Appendix II, p.49-59.

142. Ibid. v.1, p.47.

143. Ibid. v.21, p.XVIII; v.1, p.17.

144. Ibid. v.21, p.15, 26, 43, 47.

145. Ibid. v.2, p.88; v.21, p.2.

146. Minute Books, Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, Pa.
No.16, p.24. June 16, 1782.

147. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.87.

148. Ibid. v.21, p.88, 91; v.27, p.22.

149. Ibid. v.21, p.91.

150. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.139.

151. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.81.

152. Ibid. v.21, p.3.

153. Ibid. v.27, p.182-183.

154. Ibid. v.21, p.91.

155. Ibid. v.27, p.184.

156. Ibid. v.21, p.99, 116-117, 123, 127.

157. Minute Books, Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, Pa. No.22, p.29. Sunday 26th Heshvan 5543; also minutes for Elul 5542.

158. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.98.

159. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.107.

160. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.135;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.2, p.90; v.21, p.57.

161. Ibid. v.21, p.4.

162. Ibid. v.21, p.46.

163. Ibid. v.21, p.56-57, 70-71, 72-73, 81.

164. Ibid. v.21, p.86.

165. Ibid. v.27, p.103.

166. Ibid. v.21, p.135.

167. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.139;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.406.

168. Ibid. v.23, p.147-149;
H.T.Ezekiel & G.Lichtenstein. op.cit. p.332, Appendix C.

169. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.107.

170. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.144;
A.S.W.Rosenbach. op.cit. p.13;
H.S.Morais. The Jews of Philadelphia. p.144;
Constitution and By-Laws of "Hebra Shel Pikur Holem U'Gimilut Hasedem", Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia.

171. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.140-143, 255;
H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.144.

172. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.256-257. (Italics mine)

173. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.145.

174. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27. p.311;
H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.149.

175. A.S.W.Rosenbach. op.cit. p.13.

176. H.S.Morais. op.cit. p.144.

177. Constitution ... "Hebra Shel Pikur Holem U'Gimilut Hasedem." Article 2.

178. Ibid. Article 3.

179. Ibid. Article 4.

180. Ibid. Article 8.

181. Ibid. Article 11.

182. Ibid. Article 13.

183. Ibid. Article 14.

184. Ibid. Article 17;
H.M.Ezekiel & C.Lichtenstein. op.cit. p.332, Appendix C.

185. Constitution ... "Hebra Shel Bikur Holem U'Gimilut Hasadem." By-Laws, Article 21.

186. Ibid. p.10-14.

187. Ibid. p.13.
(This Hebra celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1867, and its work continued for only a few years after that date. - H.S.Morais. op.cit. p.145)

188. H.S.Morais. op.cit. p.127;
A.C.H.Rosenbach. op.cit. p.17-18.

189. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.10, p.70, note 1.

190. Ibid. v.10, p.69-71, 76-77.

191. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.167-169;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.35, p.102;
B.A.Elzas. op.cit. p.13.

192. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.34, 38.
("Concierto" or "consento" is Portuguese for "music" or "concert.")

193. Ibid. v.2, p.70.

194. Ibid. v.35, p.105-106.

195. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.6.

196. H.B.Rosenbach. op.cit. p.20-21.

197. B.A.Elzas. op.cit. p.121-122.
(For other dedicatory services see Minutes of Congregation Mikve Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Meetings of June 18 ff., and July 23, 1820; also A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.195-196, 198-201.)

198. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.204-205.

199. D.Philipson. op.cit. p.74.

200. M.Gutstein. op.cit. p.137.

201. C.C.Mason. Reminiscences of Newport. p.54.

202. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.3, p.118.

203. Ibid. v.3, p.119.

204. Ibid. v.3, p.122-123; v.10, p.26.

205. Ibid. v.3, p.133.

206. Ibid. v.21, p.14, 72;
Minute Books, Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, Pa. No.13, p.18. Meeting of May, 1782;
M.Gutstein. op.cit. p.103.

207. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.228-230;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.162.

208. Ibid. v.2, p.89.

209. Ibid. v.21, p.14.

210. Ibid. v.21, p.35-36, 54, 72.

211. Ibid. v.27, p.52-53.

212. Ibid. v.21, p.84-85.

213. Ibid. v.21, p.54, 72, 85; v.27, p.54.

214. Ibid. v.21, p.35-36, 54, 72; v.2, p.89.
(V.23, p.152: Money was often willed to the congregation for the support of poor children at the congregational school. Joshua Isaacs, a New York merchant, left £50 to Shearith Israel, the income of which was to be applied towards the "support of a Hebrew School to teach poor children the Hebrew Tongue.")

215. Ibid. v.21, p.78.

216. Ibid. v.21, p.81.

217. Ibid. v.6, p.131; v.21, p.162; v.34, p.123.

218. Ibid. v.21, p.52-53.

219. Ibid. v.35, p.194.

220. D.Philipson. op.cit. p.75.

221. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27. p.55.

222. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.246.

223. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.52-53; v.21, p.163.

224. Ibid. v.21, p.72; v.27, p.52-53.

225. Ibid. v.21, p.54, 72, 84-85.

226. Ibid. v.27, p.52.

227. Ibid. v.34, p.124.

228. Ibid. v.21, p.54, 72.

229. Ibid. v.27, p.53.

230. Ibid. v.27, p.82-83.

231. H.S.Morais. op.cit. p.146-147, 149.

232. Minute Books, Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, Pa. No.11, p.16.

233. Ibid. No.13, p.18.

234. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.11.
(See Note 2 also for the list of families by name, and the number in each family.)

235. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.185.

236. Ibid. v.27, p.187.
("Ta'amim" means without chanting, as is done at present in most Reform temples in America.)

237. Ibid. v.27, p.187-188.

238. Ibid. v.27, p.188.

239. Ibid. v.27, p.189.

240. Ibid. v.27, p.189-190.

241. Ibid. v.27, p.107-108;
H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.286;
B.A.Elzas. op.cit. p.146;
The Occident. v.1, no.9, p.437.
(Viz. the Charleston Reform Movement: "A spirit of innovation raised its 'miscreated front' among our people. Several members of the congregation became dissatisfied with the ritual ... rejected the oral law, and all rabbinical authority.")

242. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.109.

243. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.284-285.

244. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.159.

245. Ibid. v.21, p.220.

246. Ibid. v.21, p.2.

247. Ibid. v.21, p.50.

248. Ibid. v.21, p.66; v.2, p.90.

249. Ibid. v.21, p.82-84.

250. Ibid. v.21, p.89.

251. Ibid. v.1, p.17; v.21, p.56.

252. B.A.Elzas. op.cit. p.148.

253. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 7.

254. Bye-Laws of Constitution of Congregation Shearith Israel. Article VIII, Section I.

255. Ibid. Article VIII, Section II.

256. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.64, 89.

257. Ibid. v.27, p.52.

258. Bye-Laws of Constitution of Congregation Shearith Israel. Article VIII, Section III.

259. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 15.

260. D.Philipson. op.cit. p.74.

261. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.268.

262. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.376-377.

263. Ibid. v.1, p.403.

264. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.268.

265. M.Gutstein. op.cit. p.239-241.

266. B.A.Elzas. op.cit. p.148.

267. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.36.
(Dr.Stiles for all of his erudition misspelled this Hebrew word.)

268. Ibid. v.1, p.32.

269. Ibid. v.1, p.376.

270. Ibid. v.1, p.374.

271. Ibid. v.1, p.397.

272. Ibid. v.1, p.97.

273. Ibid. v.1, p.66.
(Mr.Getius is Rev.Stiles' spelling of Geixas.)

274. Ibid. v.1, p.68.

275. Ibid. v.1, p.354.

276. Ibid. v.1, p.395-396.

277. Ibid. v.1, p.98-99.

278. Ibid. v.1, p.221.
(Stiles seems confused concerning the offering of "Chai Tyme" as he ignorantly assumed that this designated a type or amount of money equivalent to the sum of $2. We did not realize that "Chai" is the Hebrew word meaning "Life" and is numerically equivalent to the number eighteen, which it is customary to offer as a free will offering at the Torah.)

279. Ibid. v.1, p.362.

280. Ibid. v.1, p.362-363.

281. Ibid. v.1, p.376;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.3, p.120.
(The Sephardic congregations in each colony recited the prayer for the government known in the Siddur as "Nosen Teshua." When the colonies were under the domination of the English Crown, Isaac Pinto's first English translation of the Sephardic prayerbook has a "Prayer for the King," invoking the blessing and protection of God for "our most gracious Sovereign Lord, King George, our gracious Queen Charlotte, their Royal Highnesses George Prince of Wales, the Princess Dowager of Wales, and all the Royal Family." A footnote to this last phrase says that "in the Colonies, after the King and Royal Family, the Governor and Magistrates are added." At Shearith Israel this prayer referring to the Royal Family and Governor was recited in Spanish.
On July 11, 1776, the New York Convention suggested in a letter to the Continental Congress that some measure be adopted to eliminate the prayer recited for the Royal Family in all American congregations, a suggestion which was later adopted. - A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.392-3.)

282. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.376-377.
(An interesting comment by Stiles on the pronunciation of Hebrew by the Jews of different nationalities follows: "...I can better understand the English pronunciation of Hebrew than the Spanish, German, or Polish; every nation pronounces a little differently ... the Jews whose vernacular Tongue is English pronounces so that I understand it better than ... by a Jew whose vernacular Tongue is dutch &c... I easily perceive the Words, when Riveras son (born here) reads, tho' he is taught by a Dutch Master. But when this Jerusalem Rabbi read the Law I could understand it as well as if I read it myself, and much better than I can understand Mr.Touro the Huzzan, tho' I have been used to his reading 13 or

14 years. I must say, however, that tho' the Rabbi reads more correctly than Touro, yet the latter exceeds him in a certain Grandeur of Utterance, and a more bold and lofty Sonitus Verborum.")

283. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.3, p.122-123; v.6, p.79; Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.378-379.

284. Ibid. v.1, p.60.

285. Ibid. v.1, p.403.

286. Ibid. v.1, p.403; A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.8, p.125.

287. Ibid. v.27, p.407-409; Minute Books, Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, Pa. No.9, p.11.

288. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.65.

289. Ibid. v.2, p.50-51.

290. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Minutes of September 20, 1792.

291. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.35, p.200.

292. The Occident. v.1, no.8, p.384; A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.10, p.82.

293. Ibid. v.21, p.81.

294. Ibid. v.21, p.90.

295. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.285; A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.189.

296. H.T.Ezekiel & G.Lichtenstein. op.cit. p.332.

297. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.23, p.151; v.21, p.37.

298. Ibid. v.2, p.101-104.

299. Ibid. v.27, p.6.

300. Ibid. v.34, p.56, note 9.

301. B.A.Elzas. op.cit. p.38.

302. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.172.

303. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 16.

304. Minute Books, Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, Pa. No.14, p.21.

305. Ibid. No.22, p.29.

306. Ibid. No.28, p.37.

307. G.C.Mason. op.cit. p.56-57.
(Moses Lopez was the nephew of Aaron Lopez, who came to America from Portugal in 1746.)

308. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.227.

309. Ibid. v.27, p.170-172.

310. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.288-289.

311. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Minutes of May 9, 1793.
(Halizah is the ceremony performed by the brother of a man who died without leaving any offspring. This ceremony frees the brother from his obligation to marry the widow. - See Deut.25:5-10)

312. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.174.

313. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XXIV.

314. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.294.

315. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.217.

316. Ibid. v.27, p.29-30.

317. Ibid. v.21, p.143.

318. Ibid. v.27, p.44.

319. Minute Books, Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia, Pa. "A True Copy of Correspondence", Part Two, b28-b29.

320. Ibid. Part Two, b13, No.53.

321. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XVIII.

322. M.T.Ezekiel & G.Lichtenstein. op.cit. p.219-221, 243.

323. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.232.
(The words in italics at the end of this letter appear in Hebrew in the original.)

324. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.373.

325. Ibid. p.377.

326. Minute Book ... Mikve Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Meeting of October 13, 1793.

327. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XVIV.

328. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.19.

329. Ibid. v.1, p.42.

330. M.Gutstein. op.cit. p.132.

331. Ibid. p.133.

332. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.256.

333. Ibid. v.1, p.422.

334. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.391.

335. D.Philipson. op.cit. p.76.

336. M.Gutstein. op.cit. p.114.

337. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.2, p.60.

338. Ibid. v.21, p.74-75.

339. Ibid. v.21, p.217-218.

340. Ibid. v.27, p.64.

341. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Rule 12.

342. Ibid. Meeting of March 13, 1792.

343. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XXV.

344. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.81.

345. Ibid. v.21, p.128.

346. Ibid. v.21, p.143.

347. Ibid. v.21, p.194.

348. M.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.298.

349. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.10, p.76.

350. C.P.Daly, op.cit. p.50.

351. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.74.

352. Ibid. v.21, p.56.

353. Ibid. v.21, p.68-69.

354. Ibid. v.21, p.67-68.

355. Ibid. v.27, p.7-8.

356. Ibid. v.27, p.12-13.

357. Ibid. v.21, p.77.

358. Ibid. v.27, p.457-458.

359. Ibid. v.25, p.31.

360. Ibid. v.25, p.33.

361. Ibid. v.25, p.41.

362. Ibid. v.25, p.42.

363. Ibid. v.25, p.43-44.

364. Ibid. v.25, p.45.

365. Ibid. v.25, p.46.

366. Ibid. v.21, p.80.

367. Ibid. v.21, p.170-171.

368. Ibid. v.27, p.104.

369. C.C.Mason. op.cit. p.55.

370. M.Gutstein. op.cit. p.143-144.

371. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.1, p.91-92.

372. Ibid. v.18, p.95;
H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.323.

373. Ibid. p.317, 319;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.67.

374. Constitution ... K.K.Beth Elohim. Rule XXXI.

375. H.P.Rosenbach. op.cit. p.38-39.

376. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.323, 325.

377. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.23, p.131.

378. B.A.Elzas. op.cit. p.128.

379. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.312.

380. Ibid. v.21, p.191-192.

381. Ibid. v.27, p.2.

382. Ibid. v.27, p.2-3.

383. Ibid. v.27, p.177-178.

384. Ibid. v.27, p.179.
(The words in italics appear in Hebrew in the original letter.)

385. Ibid. v.21, p.81.

386. Ibid. v.27, p.183-184.

387. Ibid. v.6, p.138-139.

388. Ibid. v.27, p.21.

389. Ibid. v.21, p.94.

390. Ibid. v.21, p.135.

391. Ibid. v.21, p.139.

392. A.S.W.Rosenbach. op.cit. p.9;
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.1, p.15-16.

393. For: Correspondence between the various Jewish congregations relating to Geroge Washington, see
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.27, p.217-222;
and for Letters between the various congregations and George Washington's reply to each, see
A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.3, p.87-94.

394. Minute Book ... Mikva Israel, Savannah, Georgia. Meeting of April 29, 1792.

395. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.21, p.165.

396. Ibid. v.25, p.50-51.

397. Ibid. v.27, p.251, 259.

398. Ibid. v.27, p.316.

399. Ibid. v.27, p.109.

400. Ibid. v.27, p.342-343.

401. Ibid. v.21, p.20.

402. Ibid. v.10, p.82.

403. Ibid. v.27, p.8-9; v.21, p.75.

404. Ibid. v.27, p.19-20.

405. Ezra Stiles. op.cit. v.1, p.11.

406. A.J.H.S. op.cit. v.11, p.151; v.21, p.115.

407. Ibid. v.21, p.139.

408. H.B.Grinstein. op.cit. p.418-419.

409. Ibid. p.422.

410. A.S.W.Rosenbach. op.cit. p.18-19.

411. H.T.Ezekiel & G.Lichtenstein. op.cit. p.241.

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