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H I S I N F L U E N C E U P O N T H E

H A S K A L A H M O V E M E N T .

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AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF JEWISH CONDITIONS IN RUSSIA
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Writers on history have maintained that there are no sharp lines of demarcation between successive periods of events. One period rolls into the other. One age is a bridge for those events which have passed and for those which must follow. To understand, therefore, the conditions of the Jew in the nineteenth century we must consider their life and the conditions leading up to the period under study.

The Jew was considered by his masters as an instrumentality through which money might be obtained. The Poriz extorted from these victims the money he required for his necessities. Whether it be true that the Jew also acted in the capacity of a buffoon to amuse the despotic Poriz is questionable, yet from the character of the Poriz who was despotic, the Jew had, no doubt, to submit to all kinds of humiliation and mortifications. Add to all this, the religious propaganda by the Jesuits in the eighteenth century. The Jew had his share of persecution, also on their account. Besides, the Jew could not engage in handicrafts, he could not live with Christians, nor could he employ Christian servants. As Rabin puts it, the Jews were "treated like outlaws". Such was the condition of the Jew in Poland in the latter part of the seventeenth and in the eighteenth century. Later, at the time of the partition of Poland in 1794, conditions began to look gloomier. Accusations became current that the Jews used Christian blood for Passover and that they were magicians. This resulted in the death of thousands of Jews. The massacre of Uman in 1768, was perpetrated by that bandit group of Haidamacks who repeated their violent acts in different cities.

In Lithuania and Great Russia, the Jew was also maltreated. Many privileges were denied him. Numerous lives were lost in 1648, in Volbynia, Podolia and other parts of Lithuania. But as soon as they were given a rest from their persecutions they would regain all that they had lost. It resulted, however, in the disintegration of the religious life of people. In the South, sects arose in Israel. Kabbala was infused in some of their beliefs. Hasidim arose with Israel Baal Shem or Besht (1698-1759) as their leader.

In the North in Lithuania, persecutions led the Jews to a more ardent study of the Talmud and they looked with disdain upon Sabbatai Zebi and Jacob Frank. These Talmudic scholars became known as Mithnaggedim. Their main exponent was Elijah Wilna (1720-97).

It was in the eighteenth century as we shall see in the following chapter that Jews began to go from Poland and Lithuania into Germany, there to acquire all learning that was offered them. Solomon Dubnow (1738-1813), and Solomon Maimon (1754-1800) were of that type who turned to Germany for learning. Hundreds of young Jews from Poland and Lithuania went to Germany and on their return came back with freer minds and more liberal ideas.

Early in the nineteenth century, Czar Alexander I decided to execute his own theories of education in the enlightenment of his subjects, the Jews. Dyerzhavin, Minister of Justice, had drawn up certain charges of which the Jews were guilty. Alexander I appointed in November 1802 a "Committee for the Amelioration of the Jews" which should investigate these charges with the ulterior purpose of bettering the conditions of the Jews in Russia as well as in the other governments acquired from Poland. The committee set about to do its task; from November 1802 until October 1804, almost two years they investigated. Meanwhile, the Jews, all over Russia, were in a quandary.

They did not know what Alexander's plans were. They apprehended radical changes in their life. Many cities, despite assurances from governmental authorities to the contrary, petitioned that no innovations be introduced. The Jews of Minsk fasted to avert the calamity. In 1803, deputies from the Kahals of the various cities were invited to give their opinions on certain questions. In St. Petersburg, some of the wealthy Jews acted in advisory capacities to the deputies from the different cities. Nota Shklover and Abraham Peretz were among the prominent workers. The former acted as an official adviser to the deputies and the committee. He had, also, at one time, offered Dyerzhavin a program for reforming the Jews in Russia.

"The Committee for the Amelioration of the Jews" submitted their plans to the deputies of the Kahals for suggestions. After some bickering, the committee resolved to submit, through the medium of the governmental authorities, their reforms to the various Kahals. It was their intention to have the government present the reforms to the Kahals and the Kahals were to suggest the means of making the reforms effectual. The Kahals, on reading of the reform measures, requested that the Government postpone the execution of the plans for twenty years as the economic structure of Jewish life would crumble as a result. But the members of the committee and the government were too utilitarian and considered themselves too humanitarian to permit the Jews to live as they had been living. They had their own absolutistic ideas of emancipation. They did not look at the Jews and observe their movements from a distance. They wanted to force new conditions upon them. In 1804, when the report was presented, it embodied the ensuing facts and suggestions:

- (1) The entire mass of Jews are huddled in Polish and Lithuanian provinces and in little Russia and Courland. They cannot settle in the governments of the interior.

The Jews had never been allowed to settle in Russia.

(2) The Jews have to pay double taxes.

(3) The **Kahals** should be subordinate to the police.

(4) The sale of liquors by the Jews should be discontinued.

It is apparent from this investigation there was nothing ev-
idently that echoed forth the notes of enlightenment which Alexander
I sounded two years before. The Jew was restricted in his settlement.
He could live in thirteen governments only. Two governments in Lith-
uania, White Russia and Little Russia, three governments in New Russia
and the governments of Minsk, Volhynia, Kiev and Podolia could be set-
tled by the Jews. However, those who wished to be farmers were to get
larger areas in Astrakhan and Caucasia.

Beginning with January 1, 1808 no one among the Jews in the
villages would be permitted to hold any leases on hand, to keep taverns,
saloons or inns. These occupations had been the main means of gaining
a livelihood for centuries and Alexander I was disappointed in find-
ing a feeble response from among the Jews to his call for agricultur-
alists. However, in the chapter "On Enlightenment", submitted by the
committee, the Jews were given free access to the schools, gymnasiums
and Universities. If the Jews should want to establish their own
schools they would be obliged to teach Russian, Polish or German.
Rabbis, and Jewish Municipal members should also learn one of these
three languages and should dress according to Polish, German or Russian
styles.

In 1808, however, when the plans for the expulsion of the
Jews were to be carried out, Alexander deemed it wise to postpone the
execution of the Ukase. Napoleon, in 1808, had convened the "Great
Synhedrion" and Alexander feared lest the expulsion of the Jews re-

sult in Napoleon's espousing their cause. A committee, which had met in St. Petersburg to reconsider the plans of 1804, reported in favor of extending greater freedom to the Jews, but after the peace of Tilsit, October 19, 1807, Alexander again ordered the expulsion of the Jews but at the expense of Kahals. The idea of enlightenment prompting the expulsion failed to provide for new homes for the Jews and much distressful confusion resulted for the Government as well as for Jews. Later some other committee acted more favorably toward the Jews. Later the government yielded to the suggestion in favor of the Jews following their former pursuits.

Russian Jewry displayed great patriotism during the War of 1812. Dubnow says in this regard "Jews were on the side of Russia for they were convinced that Alexander I's government was on the whole favorably disposed toward the Jews and its mistakes were merely an outcome of wrong system of state patronage by compulsory and correctional measures". Alexander was proud of the patriotism shown by the Jews and decided to better their condition but after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 matters changed again for the worse.

After the war markets were opened in Poland and the Jews flocked there. They did business on such a large scale that the Polish merchants began to appeal to the government for the suppression of business enterprises conducted by Jews. Those Jews who were laborers encountered obstacles in the guilds of the various cities. They were poor yet their habits of life in former more prosperous years enabled them to struggle along in life. After the many changes by the government in its policy toward the Jews, the Jew was finally re-established in the old businesses in which he was engaged, commerce, handicrafts and rural occupations.

The Jews were dreaming of becoming Russified. They began

to acquire Russian ideas. They read Russian literature; Baruch Czatzskes translated into Hebrew the poems of Kharsakov; Manasseh of Ilye (1767-1831) wrote a book on strategies. The privilege of attending the Universities caused many Jews to take up the study of law and medicine. Prominent among these Jews were Isaac Markusevich, Joseph Rosensohn and Kusselyeosky of Meivicz.

But the Jews again met a reversal in conditions. They were like a vessel buffeted about by the waves of the ocean and winds of the air. Alexander was not firm in his ways. He was easily influenced. Baroness Krüdener caused him to change his mind and attitude toward the Jews. In 1818, the Jews were expelled from the capitol. They were forbidden to reside in Mohilev and Vitebsk. Besides this, missionary organizations were active. Rev. Lewis Way advocated the enfranchisement of the Jews. Way was the founder of the "London Society for Promoting Christianity". He claimed that Israel must be set free materially before it could be set free spiritually. Graetz considers Way as having made a favorable impression upon Alexander but Dubnow remarks that Way was not heeded at all by the Czar. In March 25, 1817, a Christian Missionary organization called "The Society of Israelitish Christians" enticed many Maskillim among whom were Abraham Perez, the financier and Löb Nebakhovich the theatrical director.

The Jewish questions and problems in the latter part of Alexander's reign were not considered by any special committees but they were connected with the department of ecclesiastical affairs. There was a special department for foreign denominations. An advisory council, "Deputies of the Jewish Communities" was established. But their advice was never sought. They were mere figureheads.

With the death of Alexander I, a new autocratic despot arose. Nicholas I(1820-1855),intended to diminish the number of Jews in Russia by force. The Jews were to be baptised. The Jews had to give a

greater proportion of recruits than the Gentiles. Criminals could gain freedom by baptism. This was the terrible age of "catchers". Young children cantonists were sent away from their homes to distant districts never to return to their hearths and homes.

Besides this scheme, he favored the colonizing of the Jew in frigid Siberia. But as his ideas were being carried into effect he decided that it would be better not to colonize them. He seized the prospective settlers and sent away their children as cantonists.

In Lithuania, Solomon Posner (1780-1840) carried out some of his dreams of enlightenment that were in consonance with Nicholas' views. He erected cloth factories for Jews. Provided them with land. Urged them to live a simple life so as ^{not} to be at strife with their neighbors.

In spite of Christianizing endeavor also in Lithuania, their Yeshiboths increased and became famous. The government's plans were frustrated and the Anti-Talmudic aspersive writers failed in their attempts. In anger at its own failure Russia dealt its most tyrannical blow. In 1843, fifty thousand families were expelled from the villages within the pale. Russia acted in the most despotic manner maintaining all along that it was ^{in the} interest of the Jew whom it desired to enlighten.

The Jews wanted to be enlightened but not by force. They tried of their own accord to enlighten themselves although with mild success. It was far from just on the part of the government to accuse the Jews of refusing to be educated when schools were being erected by the Jews at their own expense.

In 1840, in Riga, a Jewish school with Dr. Max Lillienthal as its head was organized. There were three Jews and one Christian on the faculty. A committee called by Basilius Stern, in 1840, sug-

gested the establishment of Rabbinical seminaries in several cities. In 1841, forty-five delegates met in Vilna, representing the organization "Lovers of Enlightenment" with the following platform for their aim:

- (1) The Jew should follow a useful trade.
- (2) The education of the young generation should be reformed to meet the new conditions.
- (3) Hasidism should be eradicated.
- (4) Seminaries for modern Rabbis should be established.
- (5) A consistory should be established to advise and see to it that schools be established wherever necessary.

Schools were being erected everywhere. Secular subjects were being taught in Jewish institutions even to the exclusion of religious matters. Hebrew was even neglected to give preference to yiddish as a better means for the interchange of ideas. Men of prominence in Germany were consulted by Russia as to Jewish questions. David Friedlander's advice to deprive the Rabbis of power was heeded by Russia more than his advice to show no discrimination between the laws applying to Jews and Gentiles. Dr. Lilienthal was called from Riga to St. Petersburg to superintend Jewish educational matters. At first, he was welcomed by all the people as a deliverer. The Maskilim considered him a champion. But later on he was eyed with suspicion. Whom did he serve? The Czar or the Jews? The Maskilim failed to look up to him because he identified himself with the Hasidim as well as with the Methnaggedim. The people did not know to whom he belonged. His life at times was in danger. In Minsk he had to be safeguarded by the police.

He called a conference of representatives from all Jews to meet in St. Petersburg and discuss Jewish educational matters. In

1843, there came to the capitol R. Isaac Volozhin, **Menahem**, Mendel Schneersohn, Lubovich of the Hasidim, the financier Joseph Heilprin and Bezalel Stern, the principal of the Jewish school in Odessa. They decided upon some reforms but they were of the same nature as those suggested in previous years. Schools and Seminaries should be established. The clothes to be worn by Jews should be of Polish style.

Lilienthal found no response in those whom he desired to educate. He was a powerful leader but his task was Herculean and he was a stranger in a foreign land. The seminaries which were later built failed in their purpose. The educational system in the schools was demoralized. Instead of a Russification of the Hasidim, Mith-naggedim and **Maskillim** there resulted a still greater separation. Lilienthal was compelled to leave Russia and find a haven of safety in America.

We have thus far given a survey of conditions in Russia during Levinsohn's time. Confusion and chaos marked the plans of Alexander I and Nicholas, his successor. Russia was trying to blind the seeing eyes of the world into believing that the government was desirous of solving the Jewish problem. But it was motivated by absolutism and despotism. All her attempts proved a failure.

In this period of confusion, grew up the man who took part in the same task of enlightening his people. Isaac Baer Levinsohn lived in this land of darkness and gloom and gave his life for his nation. Some have considered him the father of the **Maskillim**. But say what one will, nobody in Russia in the first half of the eighteenth century did as much for his correligionists as Isaac Baer Levinsohn.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE HASKALAH MOVEMENT.

Haskalah means enlightenment. It had different meanings and stood for different ideas of enlightenment in different ages. In a general way, however, we can say that Haskalah, the Jewish movement of enlightenment is traceable to the spirit of democracy which began to make itself manifest in the early part of the eighteenth century in Europe at large.

In England, this spirit of freedom gained force in the time of John Locke (1632-1704). During this period men had advocated free thought and liberty of conscience in matters regarding the State and religion. Locke advocated tolerance because he realized the limits of human understanding. Persecution is a false way of propagating truths among men and women. Evidence alone should bring about the formation of beliefs. No man has a right to control the understandings and beliefs of another man. It was religious toleration that Locke, Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor and Glanvill urged in the state and in religion. These ideas had their influence in other lands, especially in France.

In France, Denis Diderot (1713-1784) the editor of the Encyclopedia, enlisted nearly all the important French writers of the time as contributors and produced an instrument of war for the "philosophe" party. This dictionary was the organ of the most advanced and revolutionary opinions of the time. It formed the basis of subsequent works of principles of equality and justice.

Montesquieu, in his piquant style, satirically described the contemporary manners, customs and institutions of French society. His monumental work on the spirit of the laws, "De l'Esprit des Loix" appeared in 1748. This had a great influence in a theoretical

way upon political and legal thought and in a practical way influenced directly the laws of the government.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) was of the same school as Montesquieu. In his works, he denounced society and its conventions. His works, though bringing him renown as a writer, were looked upon unfavorably by the government. His deistic teachings made him hateful to the church and called forth denunciatory remarks from many churchmen.

The encyclopedists with Diderot at their head, who were also imbued with imported English ideas at the time, Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau and a host of other writers, saturated with the spirit of democracy, sympathizing with the suffering of the masses, with the American War of Independence, yearning for the restoration of some of their long lost privileges, all united to sound the death knell of monarchical absolutism. People were to be equal in rank, in education, in freedom. All were to have the same opportunities.

In a more restricted Jewish sense, however, the Haskalah movement began in the eastern part of Europe about the middle of the eighteenth century. Its tendency was to abandon the exclusiveness and acquire the learning, manner and aspirations of the nations among whom they dwelt. Wiernick states that Haskalah in a restricted sense "denotes the study of Biblical Hebrew and of the poetical, scientific and cultural parts of Hebrew literature. It is identified with the substitution of modern Hebrew subjects for the study of the Talmud, opposition to fanaticism, superstition and Hasidism; with the adoption by Jews of agriculture and handicrafts and with a desire to keep in touch with the times".

Many writers on the Haskalah movement labor under the impression that the movement for enlightenment was brought about chief-

ly by a few individuals in Germany who translated Hebrew works into the German language. Some claim that Mendelssohn alone is responsible for the change brought about in the condition of the Jews in Russia. Even Graetz waxes overenthusiastic in respect to Mendelssohn. He considers him the savior of his people. Here is what he says in regard to the rejuvenescence of the Jew in Europe at that time. "It revived with marvellous rapidity from its abjection as if a prophet had called unto it 'Shake thyself from the dust; arise---loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion'! And who caused this revival? One man, Moses Mendelssohn, who may be considered the incarnation of his race".

Neither a Mendelssohn, a Friedländer nor any group of German writers could have accomplished much had it not been for certain internal conditions in Russian and Polish Jewry. Those who attribute the revival of the Jews in Russia and Poland solely to Germany lose sight of the important historical fact that there must be causes within the people as well as outside causes which bring about changes. Mendelssohn's translation may have been the bridge over which ambitious Jews could pass into the great world of secular knowledge but there had to be awakened in those Jews the realization of their need to acquire knowledge. In order, therefore, to understand the evolution of the Haskalah movement we must look first for the causes in Israel, and then we shall be able the better to understand how Mendelssohn and his disciples could have wrought the changes attributed to them.

The seeds of Haskalah were sown long before Mendelssohn's time. One of the causes can be traced back to the time of the rise of Hasidism with the Baal Shem Tov in Poland as its main exponent. Rassin considers Hasidism "an attempt at reform rendered imperative---

by the rigorism of the Rabbis, the superciliousness of the learned classes and superstition of the masses". Hasidism has as its aim the transformation of the life and conduct of the believer. The emotional side of the Jew was to be developed. The dialectics, the pilpul of the Talmud was of minor importance. As a result, Kabbalistic notions and conceptions in regard to God and salvation were introduced. The subtlety that formerly characterized the Jew in his Talmudic studies was to give place to the emotional side in the Jew. The religion became revivalistic and its great men could be considered Jewish Evangelists rather than expounders of the minutiae of the law.

As for the Jews in Lithuania, the study of the Talmud was deemed of extreme importance. They were opposed to the incorporation of Kabbalistic doctrines into their worship. The Zohar and the teachings of Sabbatai Zebi were not in accord with their ideas and accordingly were discountenanced. Their main exponent Elijah of Wilna (1720-97) believed in the study of the Talmud. He was confronted with the same problem in regard to the Talmud as were his Hasidic correligionists. He offered a different solution. If the Talmud is too rigorous and too difficult for study, it is unwise to abandon its study and take the path of least resistance. Rather make Talmudic study ring with a modern appeal. Present it in a more attractive form. In other words, Elijah Wilna and his followers were the opponents of the Hasidim, hence they were termed Mithnaggedim.

Raisin regards Elijah Wilna as the originator of the Haskalah. But we must understand this in the light of the conditions in Lithuania in the eighteenth century. Indeed, Elijah Wilna was very progressive in his views. He emphasized the application of reason to traditionalism. The customs and practises of the Jews were to be considered in the light of their "antiquity or primitivism". He

even went so far as to say that the customs, adopted after the Shulhan Aruch had been codified, are not binding at all. Those in the Bible and Talmud were to be unalterable, while those arising after the Talmud could be changed by the consent of an authoritative body.

Elijah Wilna could, therefore, in a limited sense be considered a Maskil.. His views as to the education of the youth show a conception of systematic teaching. The Jewish youths should not begin their education with the study of the Talmud, but they should first learn the Bible, etymology, syntax, Mishna and finally the Talmud. "Pilpul" was not of paramount importance. He himself was an embodiment of the ideas he advocated. His knowledge of things secular made him stand out prominently as a product of a different phase of Jewish life. He wrote on geometry, astronomy, trigonometry and grammar displaying remarkable versatility.

We see, therefore, that there were two main divisions among the Jews in Poland and Russia. Both grappled with the same problems. One preferred elevation of the soul above the subtleties of the mind. The other compromised by showing that the mind and soul could work together in harmony.

But a common enemy threatened them both. Both the Hasidim and Mithnaggedim had to contend with the new Haskalah entering from Germany. The rays of enlightenment entered through two channels. In the first place, new ideas came in via the Prussian border. On the second through Wohlin in South Russia to Galicia, Lemberg and Brody. Slavonic Jews of profound Hebrew erudition were pouring into Germany. Their capabilities were recognized. Some of these Jewish Rabbis who had emigrated from Russia into Germany received pulpits in various cities. Ezekiel Landau, Phinehas Horowitz and Aaron Halevi settled respectively in Prague, Frankfort on the Main and in Berlin.

Some of the Jews whose business carried them to Germany returned to their homes with different novel ideas. Others who went there to pursue courses of study for professional life or those who delved in philosophy came in contact with different ways and habits of living and on their homecoming helped disseminate the new culture which they had acquired. There in Germany, they had studied grammar and Biblical exegesis. They became familiar with Mendelssohn's translation. On their return they popularized those ideas and notions. Some of these men later gained prominence. Among them were men like --Solomon Dubnow (1738-1813) and Solomon Maimon (1754-1800). The latter especially was greatly influenced by his new life and surroundings. He was an example of that type of Lithuanian Jew who became imbued with the Philosophies current in Germany and who gave some of his own great contributions to the world. Most of these young men who traveled to Germany found cordial welcome from the Jews in Germany. Mendelssohn was particularly hospitable to these sojourners and they showed their gratitude by assiduously accomplishing all they could. These Jews from Poland and Lithuania wrote on all subjects of interest.

Indeed, Berlin was the center of learning. There the Jews learned all about Lessing, Schiller and Goethe, Kant, Fichte and Hegel. Mendelssohn's German translation of the Bible and Biur commentary published with it, was warmly received by the Maskillim. Livonia and Courland, the border cities, became the strongholds of this German learning. Warsaw and Odessa established schools. Later the cities in the interior like Zhitomir and Wilna began to work laboriously for the enlightenment of the Jews. In Byalestok, Vlotslavek and Zhagory schools were established. In the city of Byalestok sermons in German were delivered by Jehill Michael Zabłudovsky.

"Yankele" Kovner (1793-1833) could converse in Russian, German and French. When Montifiore traveled over Russia, he met in all the cities some with whom he was able to hold conversations in German or French. Jews were taking part in theatrical affairs. Among the prominent directors in the activities of the theatre were the Nebakovich brothers. In journalism Osip Rabinovich was prominent. Abraham Jacob Stern and Hayyim Selig Slonimsky were inventors, the latter receiving a price of 25,000 rubles for his invention. Cultural societies and organizations for the enlightenment of Jews cropped up here and there.

They did not neglect the learning which they had acquired in their mother country. They merely put that learning on more scientific grounds and viewed things in the light of reason and critically. In 1783, the first Hebrew Magazine "Hameassef" was published. Among those who contributed to this journal were Maimon, Dubnow and Isaac Halevi Satanow. Mendel Levin wanted to make Hebrew a living language and even went so far as to coin new words and expressions. Levin wrote, also, in Yiddish, believing that language a better vehicle for the enlightenment of the Jews. He presumed that they would view matters more favorably if those matters were to be presented in the language of the masses. Dr. Tobias Cohn wrote an encyclopedia *א' פ'ק א'לען* which he modelled after Chambers' Encyclopedia in England and Diderot's Encyclopedia in France.

We see, therefore, that the ideas for reform and enlightenment were not thrust upon the Jews from without. The Jew in Poland and Lithuania was struggling with himself and unconsciously was moulding and shaping himself to receive the full force of German progress. There was a difference, however, between the enlighten-

ment in its effect upon the German Jew and in its effect upon the Russian Jew. The German Jew was motivated by the idea (ONX) 2N

... "what will the nations say?" whereas the Slavonic Jews as Raisin puts it "eagerly sought the truth because they could better elucidate the Talmud or because it was their truth, of which the nations had deprived them during the exile".

Indeed viewed in this light we see the internal and external causes which worked to make the Jews in Poland and Russia better and broader in their life and views. Secular and religious ideas were to shapen their lives for better future lives.

In Russia, the Haskalah movement was a battle of religion against superstition by means of secular education. Translations and original works were encouraged. The Jews began to imitate other peoples and adopt their ideas. It is quite natural that such a movement should receive opposition. People are by nature conservative. Many Rabbis laid the ban on German "Aufklärung". The Hassidim and Mithnaggedim joined to fight it. The "Zaddik" Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk could not tolerate the grammatical works published by these Maskillim from Germany. Wessely's works and Mendelssohn's translation were burned in some cities. R. Hayyim of Wolozhim considered the Maskillim too radical. Yet, we see that their conflict was not so much against the ideas of enlightenment as against the personalities who tried to shed the light on the benighted masses. They did not like the Maskillim.

When Nicholas I (1820-55) planned to execute his scheme of colonizing the Jews, the Maskillim believed him sincere. They saw Rousseau's and Voltaire's ideas being carried out. A return to nature! It was hailed with glee by the Maskillim in Galicia and Russia. But their joy ceased when Nicholas changed his mind. The

Maskillim trusted Nicholas implicitly. They believed him to be fraught with humanitarian desires. They were blinded with enthusiasm.

In Lithuania the effects of enlightenment, despite opposition on the part of the Rabbis, were becoming evident. Factories were erected exclusively for Jews and the Jews were showing the Russians that they are more than mere people of the Spirit. They were manual laborers, earning their living by the sweat of their brow. Families were, also, provided with land implements for farming, horses and cows free for twenty-five years. Technical schools for boys and girls were organized and it looked as if the Jew were on the road to new life and vitality.

But the rejuvenating of the Jew by the Czar and his officials suffered many disappointments. From within the government, indirectly, and from outside sources, directly, attacks were being made upon works formerly held in great esteem by the Jews. Divinity professors and students with a smattering of Hebrew and Yiddish attacked the Talmud. They vilified the Jew and even caused the cry that the Jew used Christian blood for Passover. Eisenmenger's charges were renewed with greater vim. Temkin and Buchner did all they could to foment trouble.

Russia treated the Jew shamefully. Not understanding that the character of a nation cannot be modified with the mere drawing up of a program, a syllabus, they began to frown upon the Jew. Laws were passed withdrawing many of the privileges first granted the Jew. All that despotic Russia could do to make the Jews miserable, it did. In 1823, they were expelled from the farms to the city. In 1839, they were expelled from the cities and restricted in their rights of settlement.

The attitude of the government toward the Jews was that of a tyrannical step-father toward a child whom it could not understand. The Jews, when permitted, studied German, Russian and Polish and attended in large numbers the schools and universities of Nicholas I. Some wealthy Jews helped finance schools for the Jews in their cities. Among these were Joseph Perl of Tarnopol who organized a school in 1813. Moses Landau, Hirsh Hurwitz were active Maskillim in the Ukraine. Stern in Kishinev organized a school. In Odessa in 1826 there was a prominent educational institution known as Zittenfeld's school.

We have already stated in the first chapter the studies made by those who worked for the enlightenment of the Jews and especially the work of Lillienthal.

From the first chapter and from what has been said here we see that the movement for enlightenment was a result of the spirit of liberty which began with Locke. It challenged long standing authority. Haskalah had as its purpose the rejuvenation of the Jew. That the Jew should concern himself with this world and not bother about the future world is another way of stating its aim. In the words of Raisin, "It was a bitter and stubborn conflict between parents and children in the adjustment of old ideals to new environment."

Yes, the Haskalah, as a movement to change the life of the Jews had to deal with all the material and spiritual factors in life. Like every other movement it made new strides only to be repulsed. But finally it advanced with firmer movements and found its way into the rank and file of the people.

BIOGRAPHY OF ISAAC BAER LEVINSOHN.

Isaac Baer Levinsohn was born on Erev Rosh Hashano, September 2, 1788, in the city of Kremenitz, Wolin, Russia. He was the descendant of a family known for their good name and for their goodly wealth. His grandfather was Isaac, the son of the learned and wealthy Jekuthiel Zalman, of Ostra, in Wolin. Isaac married the daughter of Reb Zalman "der Reicher". To them a son was born, Judah. Judah's family name later became Levin.

Isaac, the father of Judah, died in 1767. Judah was reared by his mother and brothers. But his life was filled with misfortunes even at this early age. His older brother Haim was accused of ritual murder and in 1775 was imprisoned together with his wife and children. His imprisonment was due to the jealousy of Polish noblemen who could not tolerate the growing prosperity of the Jews.

Judah married Rachael, the daughter of the rich Reb Samuel. He was esteemed by Jews and Gentiles alike for he was a man reputed for his honesty and for his sterling character. A student of Hebrew literature - the Bible and Talmud, - he was also learned in Polish. This knowledge of Polish gave him some prominence among the people in whose midst he lived.

One day, as Judah was traveling on some business affair, his carriage met and obstructed the passage of the carriage of a nobleman coming in the opposite direction. The nobleman became enraged and lifting up his cane, wielded a blow on Judah's head that left him unconscious. But the stunning effect of the blow was not merely temporary. It had a permanent effect. His mind was thereby weakened. His doctors forbade him to do any reading. Even in praying he was told not to read the books of worship. But as the years

passed, he was able to read but with moderation, and only books of no depth, lest his mind be impaired. He was broad minded and judged a person on personal merits or faults. A member of the Mithnaggedim or Hasidim was all the same to him. He was of a melancholy nature, scrupulously clean in his clothes and manners. Although not wealthy, he always had others share his means. Charity he dispensed in greater proportion than permitted him by his means. He never proclaimed his acts of charity. He never meddled in ^{unlike} commercial affairs believing it his duty to take care, first, of his own household affairs. He never attended a brith or wedding. Never did he go to visit other people, not even his nearest neighbor. To the synagogue he would go very early and leave as soon as he concluded his prayer.

This brief family history will suffice to give us an idea of the influences exerted on the personality with whom we are concerned. From the qualities of the father we might be able to understand the inherited proclivities and tendencies of his mind.

Levinsohn studied Russian realizing the benefits to be gained by a knowledge thereof. He set about writing a Grammar in the Russian language. In his work, "Te' udah Beyisroel", we find a reference to the book "Yesode Leshon Russiya" which he wrote. However, we have no such book at present and the manuscript must have been lost.

Isaac Baer married at an early age and settled in Radvil. Here he was called by his full name, Isaac Baer Levinsohn. Until the age of 19, he read constantly and felt moved to put his ideas and feelings into words. Nathansohn, his biographer says: "like an ape did he imitate everything with the pen". He also wrote poetry during that time but his poems are not extant.

In 1812 he acted as an interpreter for the Russian Govern-

ment. He served in this capacity under General Girs. So strenuously did he work that he fell sick and had to make a change for a milder climate. He went to Galicia and there became acquainted with men like Krochmal, Eliezer Landau, Lib Meises, Joseph Perl and Isaac Erter.

On his way to Galicia, in 1813, he was apprised of the death of his mother. After returning to Kremenitz to attend her funeral, he left and decided to settle in Brode. Brode was the center of Haskalah at that time. In that city were men of great renown whose profound Jewish learning was the halo of Jewish life in Austria. While there he joined their ranks and was warmly received among them. The Trachtenbergs, who held open house for all who were interested in Jewish matters, also extended him a cordial welcome. Levinsohn identified himself with those Jews who had undertaken the project of founding a "Real schule" for the Jewish boys in Brode. It was in Brode, doubtless, that Levinsohn received the inspiration for his future endeavors and felt it his duty to do whatever was in his power for his correligionists. Men with such learning and such love for their people as those living in Brode at that time could inspire anyone and they inspired Levinsohn to dedicate his energies for the cause of Israel's enlightenment, and for the education of the younger generation.

Levinsohn was feeble in body and he began to show the strain on his health at a very early age. But he had a friend in Eliezer Landau who was also afflicted with ill health and there was sympathetic suffering between both. As the Hebrew saying runs, נ/ג/ג

נ/נ/ג י/ג/נ פ/י/נ, so was it between them. In 1817 while both young men were pondering over life and its beauties as well as their miseries, Levinsohn decided to write a poem on that subject. But

the poem was not written until after the death of Landau. Not for its poetic value as for the despondent feeling with which Levinsohn was obsessed at that time do we quote his words

תלמודיך כעל כן תהיה

לא תהיה כעל כן תהיה

לא תהיה כעל כן תהיה

לא תהיה כעל כן תהיה

לא תהיה כעל כן תהיה

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לא תהיה כעל כן תהיה

לא תהיה כעל כן תהיה

In 1817, he returned again to Kremenitz and served in the capacity of a tutor to the children of a certain Landesberg family. He did not confine himself to mere tutoring but he engaged in higher mental work at the same time. He began to work on his book "Teludah Beyisroel". This work was in reality the beacon light for benighted and unenlightened Israel in Russia. He initiated with force the movement for enlightenment. No more were the Jews to be handicapped in life. He would set them a path to follow. He would make them so proud of their heritage that they would live once more in consonance with the plans and purposes of their fathers as outlined in their books of learning.

Levinsohn was bitterly assailed for publishing this work but every leader has had to suffer because of the conservatism of

the people. Our leader came in for his share. This book "Te'udah Beyisroel" aroused a storm of protest. His life was embittered by the people in Kremenitz. Not only did he suffer insults and contumelies in Kremenitz but also from other parts of the country did he receive abusive letters. What right did he have to come to the people with ideas so radical? Besides to couch such enlightened ideas in Hebrew was insulting enough.

So uncomfortable did the people in Kremenitz make his life in Kremenitz that he felt constrained to leave that city and go elsewhere. At the invitation of some of his friends, who were in sympathy with his ideas of liberalism and enlightenment, he traveled to Berdichev. Here he was respected by all. They sought from him for a new method of teaching. Neither was Levinsohn unappreciative of the interest taken in him by the people. He set about rearranging the systems of study in the schools. In other cities to which he was invited, he did all he could to improve the conditions for the better Jewish educational work. At the same time, he was working assiduously on his prospective books. But his health was declining and he had to seek a better climate in which to live. He returned to Kremenitz in 1822.

There were many things wanting in a city like Kremenitz which was so indispensable for works of the nature of those produced by Levinsohn. Being unable to wield the pen, a scribe was necessary to rewrite the first brief. But there was no one fit in Kremenitz to do the task. Neither was Levinsohn in a position to defray all the expenses his living incurred. There was no library in the city which offered him new books for reading. Even Hebrew books were lacking, both old and new. Men with whom he might discuss certain problems were not to be found in the city. He was alone in the full

sense of the word, broken in health, and not even having the companionship of good books to nourish his mind. His biographer described the people rather harshly but at the same time truthfully. "The supposedly learned were not learned, the Maskillim were in no sense Maskillim and the "Boale Battim" were poverty stricken". That this was really the case has been declared by Levinsohn himself. The people were very poor. Their main business consisted in selling tobacco to the Christians who lived in the city and in the districts near by. Some were engaged also in liquor dealing. The greater portion were tailors and shoemakers. There were no big merchants in the city. Being secluded all their lives in Kremenitz and having never traveled to any other city, they were ignorant not only in literature and culture but were devoid of proper manners. As the same Biographer stated in another place, "Where one attained a thousand or two thousand dollars he was impertinent, considering himself a wealthy person. He coveted honor and sought some appointment in the city whereby he could extort money from the poor. If one was able to read a few words in a book he considered himself a learned man. Although unfit to be a 'tail to wolves he wanted to be the head of lions'".

Occasionally some of the people would pay him visits. There were Christians as well as Jews who would come to see him and converse with him. Some people traveling through the city and who had read his book "Te'udah Beyisroel" would call to see him. This was not very usual. Most of his life was spent in seclusion, away from the people in the city. It was hard for him to accustom himself to their ways. Furthermore, he suffered greatly because of his illness. Only once in thirty-five years did he go into the city.

In a letter to Israel Bohmer, in 1857, we read of Levin-

sohn's sad life. "On my sick bed I sit enjoying the words in your book.----I am in the midst of exile---no visitors, no writers, no books and no one to impart any news, no one to read books. All I hear is the groaning of the poor who are smarting under their Jewish oppressors, the guardians of the Jews and their leaders-----and hear the Hasidim who dance in the streets in groups."

Levinsohn received the tutorship of the two sons of a wealthy Jew, which enabled him to earn a meager livelihood. The money he earned enabled him to complete his writing of Te'udah Beyisroel". With the assistance of some of his friends the book made its appearance in 1828. The book made a very favorable impression on Bludolph, the minister of education, who called it to the attention of Czar Nicholas I. The Czar showed his appreciation by bestowing upon the author a gift of one thousand rubles. Levinsohn thanked the Czar for his munificent gift in a letter in which he discussed the remedial problems for his brethren in Russia. The Czar answered Levinsohn again thanking him for his advice.

The letter sent to the Czar is worthy of translation as there stands out in relief the plans for the enlightenment of the Jews. "My purpose is to stir up my brethren to improve the ways and means for their secular and moral education----educational methods for the enlightenment of the youths were heretofore on a very low plane. My hope rests on the youth of the coming generation-----, Unsystematic educational methods will be abolished and in their place studies of our father's faith, that are in consonance with reason, will be adopted so that they might grow up to be good Jews and at the same time good citizens. In the schools many of the poor people will be taught. They will be provided for by means of the communal purse or in some other private way so that they might be ser-

viceable to their country in manual labor, agriculture and in military duties.-----Our teachers will understand their duties in the way of educating and enlightening. They will endeavor to fire the heart of their people in talks and discussions as to how a citizen should conduct himself to do what is good and right in the eyes of God and man".

People began to realize his worth, and in 1827, when he received a letter from the "Committee of Jews who believe in the Mosaic law" they not only commended him for the great literary contribution but they suggested finding some kind of an appointment for him which should be proper for a man of his standing.

Levinsohn received letters from Jews far and wide. Schools were established in many cities and many Jews also bought tracts of land so that they might be able to work hard and earn a livelihood by the sweat of the brow.

In 1817, while in Brode, he wrote a pamphlet entitled, "Hamazkir", which was given over to Reb. Joseph Perl in Tarnopol. Although Nathanson claims that Levinsohn was urged by Nachman Krochmal to have the pamphlet published, yet it never appeared in print. However, parts of the book were embodied in some of his other works which followed.

About this time Levinsohn also contributed reviews of books written by other Rabbis. His criticism never bore any harshness. He never was bitter, merely looking for faults. However, he did show an unbearable tolerance for writers who plagiarized. Then he would vent his unabated fury upon those writers pointing out not what they took from other authors but quoting the exact pages and lines of those books. For example, in writing a letter of criticism to "Rsl" Rappoport, on the book "Shevile Olam", written by a

certain Bloch we read also an enumeration of the author's faults. The author is rebuked for not having quoted his sources, such practices should be discouraged. The author in his footnotes, claims them as his own, whereas the footnotes are pure plagiarisms from the references of other authors.

In 1827, Levinsohn received a letter from Emanuel Lieven, the Minister of Education in Russia, in which letter he was asked to give answers to certain questions about the Jews and Judaism. Aside from the importance attached to the authentic answers to these questions it showed also the important role played by Levinsohn at that time. He was the man, par excellence, who could give authoritative answers. He was considered the authority on such matters. The questions asked by Lieven were of the following character.

What is the basis of belief in Mosaic law according to the Talmudists and other Rabbinic scholars? ✓

Were there writers among the Jews prior to the time of the law of Moses and why are they not mentioned in Mosaic law and in the prophetic books? ✓

In what kind of script was the Torah written? ✓

Were there any books, other than the Bible, from Moses' time down to the end of the prophets?

Is it true that it is the opinion of Talmudists that the Mosaic laws are without foundation, when challenged by reason and if so, how can the nations praise Jewish wisdom if those laws cannot be substantiated, by reason?

Is it true that the Talmudists and Rabbis explain the laws and admonitions, in Mosaic law, ^{prohibitions} ~~that is, the laws of "man between man"~~ ^{and man} as applying only to Jews and not to people of other faiths?

Is the Jew permitted to do evil and harm to non Jews,

especially to the Christian whom he hates? Is it considered a good deed?

What is the basis of the Talmud in a general way? What is its content? Who composed it? Where^{where} and in what language was it written?

Which books are included in the Talmud? Are there other books of equal importance? Who composed them and what is their subject matter?

Is there any wisdom in the Talmud? According to hearsay, it is full of fantasies, tales and anecdotes not in accord with truth or reason? *Quest. 10 omitted?*

Are there any sects extant at present which existed in the time of the second Temple?

Who are the Karaites? When did they arise?

Of what use is it for you to be burdened with thousands and thousands of laws and prohibitions and thus waste your lives away? When do you attend to work?

Who established these thousands of stupid laws? ✓

What is the meaning of the feast on Passover and the strange customs which have caused you to be subject to suspicion for using the blood of Christians on that night?

Is it true that Jews are forbidden, according to the Talmud, to learn a foreign language or science or engage in some agricultural studies?

What is speculative and practical Kabbola? Who originated it and at what time? ✓

Have the Jews laws which they have established for the benefit of their poor, sick and for their poor students? ✓

Is there hope to better the condition of Israel and how?

How does the Jew expect to become a member of a Christian society, how can he acquire friends and how will he ever be able to get an appointment if he keeps himself so far away from the Christian and never tries to do anything good for the country in which he lives for which reason citizen privileges are denied him?

These varied questions asked by the Minister of Education evidently were not entirely of his own mind but no doubt emanated from the wells of hatred of some Gentiles or converts. Levinsohn referred him to his books for some of the answers. In Te'udah Beyisroel Levinsohn answered some of them. As for the others, Levinsohn referred him to Jewish and Christian sources. Those which were not to be found in books were answered by private correspondence. His undertaking of his later works Beth Yehudah and Zerubabel were stimulated in part by a desire to clear up all these points which were impediments in the way of Christian enlightenment. Levinsohn expected his works to be translated so that the Christians might see and understand the Jew.

The introduction of Te'udah Beyisroel intimates that it was fit for publication in 1823 but because of various reasons its appearance did not take place until 1828. However, when letters came pouring in to him from Jews all over the land asking various questions as to which course to follow in order to be able to live the proper kind of a life, he felt impelled to publish his work.

Levinsohn classified the questions asked of him and they seem to him to come under five categories as follows:

(1) Is it necessary for a Jew to study the Hebrew language according to grammatical laws?

(2) Is he permitted to study foreign languages?

(3) Should he study ^{secular} sciences?

(4) What benefit can he derive from a knowledge of foreign languages and from sciences?

(5) If beneficial as it might be, might not these studies be harmful to faith and religion?

The first edition of *Te'udah Beyisroel* appeared in 1828 and the second edition, with some corrections by the author, appeared in 1856. This book includes the principles of the Torah and learning with useful remarks on manners. It shows the necessity for Jews to study the Torah in the proper way; to study the Hebrew language by reason of his being a Jew. He should study grammatically. Foreign languages also should be studied but particularly the language of the country. He would be able to get on better in the world if he knew the vernacular. He should study sciences and other branches of learning by reason of his being an intelligent person. Handicrafts and agriculture as well as other businesses should be taken up by the Jews. Emphasis is placed on the obligations of the Jew to the rules of the land, the observance of all laws, and respect for those with whom you come in contact. Everything is explained by the presentation of honest statements based on foundations of reason either Scriptural or traditional. It also contains the histories of many great Jews of every age and their ideas as to the Torah, learning and manners.

Levinsohn shows by lucid examples that our sages of the Talmud were perfect in all esoteric learning, languages as well as in the Torah and in other Jewish learning. Of course, they were learned according to the degree, position and time in which they lived. Levinsohn cites the Talmudists in Chronological order, one or two to a generation, setting forth their accomplishments and achievements.

Levinsohn's aim was mainly to combine learning and culture ^{the} in general with Torah, to show that they are not incompatible and that the Jew would benefit greatly if he would try to be at the same time a good Jew and a good citizen.

Before giving the contents of his work, we can admire him for his modesty. He quotes the passages which he utilized from other sources saying that he wants the people to look and see for themselves whether he is right or not. "Do not judge hastily. Rather wait until you have weighed the words of both ----- I have paved a way for those who will follow me in such work. I tried to deal with the subject according to its time and place although I did not discuss it completely ----- I pray to God that the little which I mentioned in this book might effect abundant goodness. A little truth can dispel much falsehood".

In 1828, there appeared the first edition of his book Te'udah Beyisroel. Levinsohn received commendatory letters from many Rabbis at that time. Dr. D. Frankel, in the magazine Shulaimth, gave a review of the book and praised the author for his erudition. R. Berish Blumenfeld, of Brode, felt that the book made its appearance at the right time."Rs'l" Rapoport sent Levinsohn a letter of appreciation.

The first edition of "Eres Damim" appeared in Wilna in 1837. Levinsohn's name was very popular at that time. The author of books defending the Jew was asked to render his service in a more personal direct way. Communities in various cities appealed to him to intercede with the government on their behalf. From Lutzk, in 1837, he received a letter signed by the heads of the Kehillah, R. Isaac Landau and Issachar Bar Rosenblum and with the official community stamp, requesting him to write to the governmental authorities about

certain books.

In 1837 Levinsohn suffered another great grief when his father passed away. He was strongly attached to him and this loss added to his present physical condition caused him increased misery.

In spite of all the privations which Levinsohn suffered he never said halt. He occupied himself studying whatever books he could get in his own city. He was too poor to write for books to be sent to him for even in answering his many letters he had much trouble in paying for the postage. We have, before us, the spectacle of a man, broken in health, but dauntless in spirit. A library was not in Kremenitz and the people, as we said once before, were in no way fitted to help him buy what books he needed. If some of the people had a few books they prided themselves, believing that they were scholars. Nathansohn characterized them thus: "Those over-proud people are known among the ignorant people in the small village as boasters; they magnify and overestimate everything which they possess".

In spite of the few books which he found scattered here and there he did remarkably well. With the help of some books which came to him from friends from out of town at rare intervals he set about writing his work. Sometimes he waited months and months for the arrival of a book promised him by some friend, only to be disappointed in finding that it was the wrong book which he had received. Oftimes the books never reached him at all.

In 1828 he had finished writing Beth Yehudah and in 1829 he received the permission of the censor in Wilna to publish the book. The history of its publication is very interesting as it shows how hard it was for a book of this kind to finally appear in public. These are Levinsohn's words:

"In those days, having suffered severely for two years continuously, I was left completely destitute. I did not have even bread and water for sustenance. I had no help and was robbed of all hope.-----One day a letter came to me from the noted Moses Landau of Prague full of comforting words informing me that he wished to publish my book, "Beth Yehudah", but for some reason his plan never materialized.----I, then, sent the manuscript to Brode, in 1830, to my dear friend R. Berish Blumenfeld at his request, for he promised to have it published in his country. I, myself, did not have an extra copy of the manuscript for who was there to transcribe it for me? After much difficulty the book reached its destination in Brode. The book traveled everywhere from Brode to Hungary, thence to Prague, to Vienna, returning finally to Brode. Wherever it went it was kept for some time. While in Brode a fire broke out in the neighborhood of R. Berish Blumenfeld, consuming many houses. As the things saved in Blumenfeld's house were taken from one place to another, the manuscript was lost. It was given up for a long time, believing it to have been destroyed in the fire. However, after a long time it was found by a friend of Blumenfeld. My friends in Wilna, later, wrote to me informing me that a certain publisher decided to buy this book for a certain amount to be paid to the author in the form of a certain number of books. He was to receive a certain number of books and not money. In 1835 it was sent to Wilna, and in 1836 permission was again granted by the censor to publish the book. Two years later it appeared in published form. No sooner did I receive the payment in books and one hundred books had been distributed among the book sellers, when a fire broke out in the printing house, raising it to the dust. The loss was very great. Many books were lost among which were several hundred copies of Beth

Yehudah. God is just in all his ways! His justice is unfathomable".

Beth Yehudah had its origin in the answers which Levinsohn gave in 1827 to the questions propounded by Emanuel Lieven. It was first published in 1839 and with the author's corrections in 1858 in Wilna.

The book made a profound impression and Levinsohn received letters of praise from people far and wide. Even Geiger, the advocate of Reform, delivered in Breslau several sermons on certain chapters taken from Beth Yehudah.

The director of the Lyceum in Kremenitz, Dr. Levitzky, praised the work saying, "May God help you arrive at your goal, to teach your people everything concerning religion, knowledge and proper manners, and also to awaken in them the desire to till the earth and do other kinds of manual labor".

In 1840, Levinsohn sent a letter to a friend of his in answer to certain questions as to the appropriateness of changing and modifying Judaism. In this letter we see Levinsohn's attitude toward Judaism. Although he believed that modernism should go hand in hand with Judaism, yet he did not endorse radical changes. He says:

"Concerning that Rabbi of whom you said that he has decided to observe the Sabbath on Sunday, Woe, unto them who try to gain the fellowship and peace of their neighbors by the desecration of the Almighty's name! Woe unto that Rabbi, that old infidel whose arm is outstretched to uproot, destroy and tear down the foundations of the Torah! I have already told one of that sect who argued with me concerning this matter of changing the Sabbath observance to Sun-

day, saying to him, 'If you desecrate the Sabbath day, which was appointed by God, how much the more will you be lax in observing a day of your own appointment?' Either way is a desecration. On Sabbath you will conduct yourself as Gentile and on Sunday as Jews."

In 1840, Levinsohn received a syllabus from Vilna Jews. In that city certain Maskillim met to frame up a plan of study for the young Jewish element. Levinsohn was urged by the members of that gathering to continue to take an active part in Jewish life. The syllabus is a good index into the great change that was going on in the minds of the people at that time. The government had looked very favorably on Jews and established for them community houses. These community houses were erected to improve the conditions of the Jews by educating them there. The Maskillim of the Wilna community consulted as to the best means for educating the Jews. The methods of education were to be in harmony with the times as well as with governmental plans. This is a digest of methods suggested for the above mentioned purpose

The Rabbis and Hebrew teachers were responsible for the decline of the Jew heretofore. Instead of being educated in things secular, they were deeply ignorant of the ways of the world. They were unable, therefore, to take part in civic affairs. They could not represent the Jew at the proper occasion. In their stead other Jews who were not representative of Judaism took part in civic life. It rests with the teachers and Rabbis to correct the manners of the Jews and to reflect the light of learning. They should stir up the people to follow agricultural pursuits and handicrafts. The educational methods are defective. The teachers of the young people know very little of other studies. They merely know the Talmud and kindred subjects.

The condition of the Rabbinate should be improved by the establishment of Rabbinical seminaries on the plan of the Christian seminaries. In these seminaries the Rabbis should receive instructions in religion, Hebrew, Russian, German, religious philosophy and other important subjects. There they should grow up as Rabbis perfect in the laws of the Jews and in proper worldly manners. In this way, they would be able to serve as an inspiration to those to whom they minister. Until the graduation of these Rabbis, the government should invite German Rabbis to fill the vacancies. These Rabbis, together with other lay Maskillim should form a Consistory to take charge of communal and religious matters. They would have to systematize the course of studies and through them might Rabbis be appointed. This government, however, would have to sanction the appointments.

To better the bad methods in the education of the young it would be well to establish schools over the country, modelled after the schools in Odessa, Riga and Tarnopol. There they would study the Bible, Hebrew, Russian and German, Mishna, Talmud. These would serve as preparatory schools for the seminaries or Gymnasias. In this way the old fashioned Meilammedim would disappear and in their stead teachers from the seminaries would give all the instructions.

In order to better the economic condition of the Jews, support should be rendered to those who wish to colonize in certain parts of Russia. Technical schools, also, should be founded where boys might acquire instruction in trades.

These ideas were in harmony with the governmental plans of instruction. Men active in the same work among the Jews included Lillienthal, Tugendhold, Rosenthal and Klatzki.

This was a period of confusion for the Jews. They were at a loss as to how to act. They desired some change but they could not

accept what seemed to them to be ultra-radical. They were agreed as to the benefits to be derived from a change. But they were confused as to the proper procedure. It seems that they could not get along with men like Lillienthal. He did not understand them sufficiently and they considered him in league with the government. Again, they were not familiar with the requirements of the governmental statutes. For example, the people of Dubno wanted to effect some change. But they did not understand the laws passed concerning the Jews on April 3, 1835. They could not comprehend chapters five and six dealing respectively with religion, customs and education. They sought information from Jewish authorities in Wilna, Huradna and Bialystock. They did not know how to appoint teachers, which Rabbis they ought to elect and the like. Though their aim was good they knew not how to execute the realization of their aims.

These representative Jews from Dubno turned their eyes in the direction of Levinsohn. They begged him to help them for they knew his indefatigable interest in Jewish work especially work for the uplift of the condition of the Jew.

In 1841 he received a letter from the editors of the magazine, Pirhe Zafon, which had been published for the first time. The editors Eliezer Lippman Hurwitz and Samuel Joseph Fein of Wilna, requested him to send in some contributions for the coming numbers. His name had become widely known at that time and his influence would have meant much for the existence of the Hebrew magazine.

Many Rabbis would send their works to him for criticism. His opinion was valued highly. They knew that it was given by him honestly and with no flatteries. He not only pointed out all the mistakes, but gave his opinions as to what the author should have said. Above all, he insisted that the writer be honest and should

not plagiarize.

Shorshe Lebanon or Beth Ha'ozar appeared in Wilna in 1841.

Levinsohn displayed versatility in his works. Not only did he engage in literary work but he set about taking an active part in responding to the needs of cities when the communities appealed to him for help.

In the same year, he received a letter signed by the leaders of the community in Brisk. The Jews were in dire straits. A decree from the Czar ordered all the Jews of that city to vacate their homes and seek refuge in different cities. Not knowing how to appeal to the authorities for an annulment of that direful decree they turned to him, asking him to petition the government on their behalf. Their fate lay in his hands and they begged him to do whatever he could to help them.

Levinsohn responded to their petition. He sent a letter to the Czar's son on his birthday accompanied by a poem of congratulation in Hebrew. The poem was adapted to music and was sung in one of the large synagogues. The method was successful and the decree was annulled.

In 1841 Sir Moses Montifiore sent through his secretary, Dr. Eliezer Halevi Levy, a letter expressing his thanks to him for his good work Efes Damim and informing the author that the book would appear in an English translation. To this Levinsohn replied graciously, adding the following lines in honor of Montifiore's activities for the Jews at Damascus.

הַיְיטִיךְ לְיָדֶיךָ הַלֵּל (2)

וְיִזְכְּרְךָ לְיָדֶיךָ הַלֵּל

וְיִזְכְּרְךָ לְיָדֶיךָ הַלֵּל

וְיִזְכְּרְךָ לְיָדֶיךָ הַלֵּל (1)

וְיִזְכְּרְךָ לְיָדֶיךָ הַלֵּל

וְיִזְכְּרְךָ לְיָדֶיךָ הַלֵּל

Levinsohn was very progressive. His ideas as to Judaism and its observance are embodied in a letter which he sent to his friend Berish Trachtenberg of Odessa in the year 1842. Speaking about certain reforms which were introduced in a synagogue in Odessa, as, for example, refraining from conversation while praying, regular assigned seats for the members, permitting the cantor to sing without any accompaniment by the congregation at large, he says:

"There is nothing wrong in these things, even if you were to modify the order of prayer, or some custom that is antiquated that is not founded on anything sacred. Beginning with the time of the establishment of forms of prayer and customs these prayers and customs were never accepted by the people in one definite form or order. This we know from our Talmud, especially from the prayer books originated by the Gaonim. These prayer books vary one from the other. This holds true as well in regard to laws and customs.

"It is now twenty-five years since extreme radical changes have been made in Germany by some eminent Rabbis. And had they not overstepped the limits in many matters pertaining to our religion there would not even be the slightest murmuring against them. For modification of some of the customs and prayers do not fall in the category of *לעשות כח* .-----God wants the man to put his heart in his prayers".

Levinsohn kept abreast of the times and realized that the Jew must assimilate some of the broadness of the spirit of the times. Had Levinsohn been living in Germany there would not have been anything remarkable in giving such liberal interpretation to his religion, but in Russia the case was altogether different. It was with difficulty that some new reforms could be introduced and it meant great sacrifices for a man to undertake the enlightenment of his

people.

Levinsohn's case was different from that of Mendelssohn's. Mendelssohn lived in a country where culture surrounded all peoples. There it was not so hard to introduce new ideas and tendencies into Jewish life. But in Russia, all the Jews lived in darkness. Their surrounding neighbors could not serve as patterns for their way of living. The work in Russia had to be done within the people. In Germany outside influences helped exceedingly to effect a change in the Jews.

The government of Russia had decided to undertake its great task of Russianization. The Czar had called for a gathering of Jews in St. Petersburg. The Jews who were to form this committee were to meet and discuss with Dr. Lilienthal plans for the uplift of the Jews. These Jews were to be the most prominent members of their communities and were to receive their appointment by the General-Governor of each state.

Dr. Lilienthal was the governmental agent in this work. The people, it seems, did not know how to view his work. They did not look at him in the light of a savior. If they showed him respect it was more because they feared to displease the government than their appreciation of his intentions. This feeling can be read between the lines of a letter sent to Levinsohn by a certain Aryeh Lob Titkin of Odessa who wrote that in that city a suite of rooms had been engaged for Dr. Lilienthal, the service of a carriage was provided and they are going to spend 1500 rubles for his entertainment. Lilienthal was to be treated like some official whose power they dreaded. Titkin adds "Would that all this were founded on truth and peace, but in the sweet wine there seems mixed worm-wood, sycophancy, envy, honor abund everywhere".

In 1843 Levinsohn contemplated accepting the editorship of a magazine to be published co-jointly by Dr. Erter and himself. But the magazine never made its appearance. It is very doubtful whether Levinsohn would have been able to carry out his plan for his condition was becoming worse and worse. He was unable to wield the pen with his own hand and he did not have the means to engage someone else for that work.

He thought highly of Lillienthal, for in a letter to his friend Gottlober, he expresses himself favorably toward him. "That man, indeed, is a great student. God has chosen him to be a help for Israel.----He is by nature adapted for such work".

Levinsohn was asked to represent the Jews at the meeting called by the Czar but his feeble health prevented him from attending. What could he do? He was deprived of health, the priceless treasure of an active intellect. His eyes could no longer serve him as usefully as they had served him in the past. He apologizes, in his letters, for not being able to write much as his eyes pain him.

Nathansohn, his biographer, produces certain letters in which we read of Levinsohn's extreme poverty. Yet Levinsohn was offered positions that were quite flattering. He was asked to accept the office of Chief Rabbi which salary would be paid by the Government, but he did not have enough strength to attend to the tasks that it might involve.

Levinsohn received a letter in 1843 from Dr. Isaac Mordecai Jost in which we read of the esteem in which Levinsohn was held by this scholar. Jost volunteered to do all he could to have Levinsohn's book, Yemin Zidke, published. He told Levinsohn that were he himself (Jost) in a position to defray the expenses the book would appear soon, but unfortunately he is in financial straits and

will try to collect money for that purpose from some of the people in his city.

Levinsohn soon won a name all over for his reputation as a defender of the Jews. Letters of thanks poured into his home from all parts of the earth. Whenever a community in a city was charged with ritual murder they wrote to him. The Haham of Constantinople wrote to him asking him for the book, Efes Damim, and for permission to translate the work into Turkish.

Letters containing questions about his other works also poured in. He could not tolerate shallow criticism. Characteristic of his satire is the letter he sent to a friend about the self-styled critics.

"Tell your friend to change his calling as a critic for a better occupation. For "criticizing" is no art nor trade. If he is one of the Bahurim (young men) lolling about in the Beth Hamedrash, let him learn how to blow the Shofar, although it is no trade, yet it is still an art. If he be, perchance, a product of the modern times and frequents the "gardens", he would do well to assist the actors. If he be, perchance, one of the "Baale Batim" with new fangled notions who wishes to become respected in his city, let him train himself to be bold. Then he will succeed in everything. He could then be rich, wise; he could become a writer, a poet, a leader and a force in the city; he could become a councillor and a defender of his people".

Some of the Rabbis who corresponded with Levinsohn during these years included Berish Trachtenberg, Aryeh L^ob Mandelstamm, A. Trisker, Jost and Isaac Blumenfeld. A letter to the latter Rabbi casts light on the arguments prevailing between Levinsohn and some of those writers who did not agree with him. Nathansohn, his biographer, cites this letter, but aside from this source, we find in

some of his other works references to the controversy with Rabbi Rigau.

It appears that Levinsohn was angry at Rigan for having insulted him in public. Rigau was apprised of his error and did not possess the manliness to apologize for what he had said about Levinsohn. Rigau intentionally misinterpreted what Levinsohn said in his book Beth Yehudah. He accused Levinsohn of believing in devils. In Beth Yehudah nothing at all is said there of this kind. What Levinsohn said was that although some Jews believe in a devil, yet the belief was not Jewish but was borrowed from some other primitive nations. Rigau had been dishonest in his criticism. He has not only distorted what Levinsohn said but he put to shame many Rabbis of the past and present by attributing to them beliefs which they never entertained. This was due to Rigau's ignorance of Jewish learning.

Rigau acted in a mean way in his criticism. He quoted an article written in the Annalen of Jost in which a young scamp of a critic assailed Levinsohn. Rigau knew that the editor Jost had apologized for having permitted such an article to be published, yet Rigau brought up the same criticism again before the public. Levinsohn was greatly hurt by Rigau's words. Rigan derisively pointed to Levinsohn and marvelled, so to speak, how a man reputed as learned should not have read the work of Geiger. Levinsohn, in excusing himself for not having read Geiger told his friend that he was unable, both for financial reasons and otherwise, to get other books that had ~~ever~~ appeared years and years ago. Rigau, says Levinsohn, acted harshly in not considering how hard it is to get books in Kremenitz. Many days could pass ere Levinsohn would be able to get a Talmud or Mishnayoth for use.

These facts Levinsohn imparts to his friend. Yet how fair he is! In conclusion he shows his magnanimity.

"These, dear friend, will suffice as answers to those who will question you concerning myself. Especially will they suffice for Rigau. And our opinions, as to certain questions in his or my books, has nothing to do with love or hatred. That is learning and we must all learn.----I desire his friendship forever and I pray for his safety and health".

In 1847, Levinsohn received a letter from Dr. Reuben Kalisher, of Zhitomir, in which the writer expresses disappointment at Levinsohn for not coming to Zhitomir where the position of superintendent of education awaited him. This was a government position. If he could but come to Zhitomir he would receive all the respect and honor due a man who is sacrificing his very life for the cause. But Levinsohn was unable to accept the position on account of his health. How strange! When happiness awaited him and beckoned him to come, he was unable to enjoy it. His health was so poor that his life was miserable.

In this same letter from Dr. Kalisher there was an extract of a letter sent by one high up in educational work in the department in St. Petersburg, who wrote to the communal leaders in Zhitomir informing them that Levinsohn could come and settle in St. Petersburg and take charge there over Jewish education. He would get all his expenses defrayed beside a liberal salary.

His friend Aryeh Löb Mandelstamm of St. Petersburg wrote to Levinsohn in 1847 that the Minister of Education had appointed him as examiner of those who wished to qualify as teachers. The work is light and the salary liberal. If it is impossible for him to accept that position he must come to St. Petersburg for at least

two or three months so that his advice might be helpful. His counsel would be greatly appreciated. To all these invitations Levinsohn answered in the negative. He was unable to undertake anything at all. His life was doomed to be lived in misery in Kremenitz.

Levinsohn struggled all this time. His mind was always active. The fact that he was physically unable to take an active part in practical work did not deter him from continuing his research work. In 1851, in a letter to Samuel Fein of Vilna, he speaks of his yearning to help his people. Ever since he left Brode he has been trying to continue his studies. It seems that Levinsohn could never forget the inspiring days he spent in Brode. There he had books and libraries. His memory served him well. He passed judgment on Fein's book.

Levinsohn was continually writing. It took years for him to finish his works for whenever he suffered a relapse he had to discontinue writing. But he worked assiduously when he regained his vitality if but for a short time. By 1851, he had several manuscripts completed. Levinsohn considered them of greater value than his earlier works. He had done research work in all branches of knowledge. But he was worried as to how to get the means for its publication. He wrote to Rabbi Goldschmidt of Warsaw asking him to do his best to have money collected for the publication of his remaining books. Levinsohn could have had them published through the assistance of Jost but he was afraid to send the books out of the land. He had, in earlier years, great trouble in publishing his Te'udah Beyisroel and he wished to avoid further trouble in having them appear in print.

In 1852 Levinsohn received a letter from Eliezer Lippman Selzer of Witebsk, one of those appointed on the Committee for the

education of the Jews. His advice was sought by Selzer in regard to educational matters. Selzer had himself taken a great part in this work. He had written about the Jews and their duties toward their country. He had outlined courses of instruction in regard to farming, schools and seminaries but he needed some information to answer a certain official Galizen who had asked certain questions about the Jews. Some book was necessary which would deal with the discussion of the foundation of Judaism, the doctrines and principles. There should also be some discourse dealing with ^{the} Jewish conception of manners. Selzer wanted Levinsohn to point out to him some of his writings on those subjects. It would be well, thinks Selzer, if Levinsohn were able to arrange the discussion of these topics into chapters. In this way the reader would be able to understand that the Jews were well mannered and cultured.

In Selzer's letter ⁱⁿ 1853, to Levinsohn, there is exposed the deep ignorance by the Rabbis of a knowledge of worldly things. Selzer tells Levinsohn that he heard from Graf Adlerberg some very interesting news about the conference in St. Petersburg. The Rabbis were asked to present their views in regard to a permanent curriculum for the schools. They spent a long time thinking over the matter. The last question asked of the Rabbis referred to suggestions for the dissolution of groups of Hasidim. Says Selzer, "The Rabbis of Homel and Dinavitz answered that they could not see anything wrong with the Hasidim. The Rabbi of Mitau, on the other hand, together with the learned Bernstein of Odessa, pointed out six ways whereby these groups could be dissolved.-----The Rabbis went to the palace of the Minister Bibikov to bid him adieu. Bibikov wished to dilate in the discussion of certain questions but he did not have any one with whom to discuss. One Rabbi was deaf and could not hear; one

could hear but could not talk. They left as they had come. They accomplished nothing at all nor did they produce a favorable impression on the Minister. The glory of Israel was dimmed. It was due to the lack of foresight by those who should have learned Maskillim to represent them.

It is quite evident why the committee in St. Petersburg could accomplish nothing. The Rabbis were not sufficiently equipped to discuss those questions which were presented to them for solution. Selzer, who had written Levinsohn another letter, gave a fine description of the heterogeneous personnel of the committee. Among those who came was Rabbi Yitzhak Isaac Epstein from Homel, one of the select of the Hasidim, entirely ignorant of modern learning. There was also Rabbi Menahem of Lubowitz, who had studied at Wolozin; he was God-fearing and learned, knew "Deitsch" but could not say a word in Russian. Another Rabbi of Wolin, did not even know the existence of certain conditions as they were presented. He did not know what to answer when asked certain questions about the conditions of the Jews in Russia. On the other hand the merchant Bernstein of Odessa, who was also smooth-shaven, knew German, French and Russian, history and sciences. His views were utterly opposed to the views of the other Rabbis.

How matters progressed there in regard to the real problems of education Seltzer does not say. He merely says that measures were taken to raise the standard of Rabbis in every city. Thus a community would be served by Rabbis who possessed all the qualifications. New marriage laws were also established. Divorces were made more rigorous. Besides general subjects were discussed but these subjects terminated with the discussions and nothing was done to carry them into practice.

In 1853, Levinsohn had completed writing his book *Zerubabel*. The history and contents of this book will be discussed later. Levinsohn was declining rapidly in health. A letter in 1853 to his friend Joseph Zeiberling, tells of his increasing helplessness. He is unable to do anything but read and correct some of his old writings. His friends should not feel offended at him for not answering so soon. "I have neither brother, nor wife, nor children, nor money, nor health, nor friend".

His name, however, had penetrated all parts of Russia. In Bessarabia, there were beginning to appear the rays of light. A letter in 1856 sent to Levinsohn by a certain Flecksor tells of the deep ignorance in which the Jews were entombed. It was with difficulty that he was able to purchase the book *Te'udah Beyisroel* because the Hasidim would not permit such a book to be read by the young generation. But the books were being read, nevertheless, and even there people were beginning to see the folly of their ways and seek to improve them.

Baron Horace Ginzburg, the wealthy Russian Jew, was apprised of Levinsohn's condition. He agreed to fix upon the poor author a definite allowance so that he would suffer no want in his house.

Adam Hacoheh Lebensohn sent his first collection of poems "Shire Sefath Kodesh" to Levinsohn, asking the latter for his opinion. Levinsohn answered favorably and Adam Hacoheh admitted that Levinsohn's opinion of the work deserved all the hard labor he had expended.

In 1856, we hear of the conditions existing in the *Seminary* at Wilna which was established for the education of Rabbis along modern worldly lines. The letter was sent to Levinsohn by

Yitzbak Isaac Ben Jacob of Wilna. Although Nathansohn possesses the entire letter he does not give the contents. We read only concerning leaders of the community of Wilna who begged Levinsohn to petition the government to change the administrative officers. They claim that their teaching is not Jewish. It will prove harmful unless a change is made both in the studies and the teachers.

Now, we can learn from other historical sources an idea of the conditions which prevailed at the Seminary. The government was not entirely to blame. They meant well, at least, we can give her the benefit of the doubt. But when it came to the appointment of teachers, she naturally decided upon those who had a knowledge of the Russian language. The result was that the real learned Jews could not get to teach, whereas some Jews who had a little Hebrew knowledge but knew Russian were appointed. Some of these Jews who taught were converts. This was unbearable to the Jews and they appealed to Levinsohn for advice and help.

Levinsohn answered the writer and told him that they should be very careful as to what they do. They should remember that they should bide their time for new reforms to be introduced and prove effective. A petition to the government might bring about a breach in harmony between the government and her Jewish subjects.

In 1856 Levinsohn was recommended by one of the ministers of the government to be placed in some high official capacity. There were offered to him in his life before opportunities to take an official position but here was an honor and office far higher. The government even ordered a purchase of two thousand copies of his Beth Yehudah. All would have been happiness for him but his health militated against every honor and every offer.

In 1856, Levinsohn was asked to state definitely what

steps should be taken to remedy the disorder in the spiritual life of Israel in Russia. Levinsohn suggested five measures and it will be worth while mentioning them. They are the practical part of the meaning and theory of Haskalah. In other words, if the Jews were to do what is suggested they would be furthering the cause of Haskalah.

These were some of the plans and ideas of Levinsohn to be carried into effect if the Haskalah movement was to accomplish results:-

(1) Proper schools should be established for the instruction of small children in religion, manners and morals combined. The study should be systematic. Special text books should be used for the subjects. The boys and girls should be taught some trade. The teachers should be learned, well-mannered, and understand the science of pedagogy. The nation does not have to consist entirely of Rabbis, learned people, and philologists. All do not have to be physicians, philosophers or poets. A knowledge of the Bible is sufficient. The young student can study some commentary. He should be versed in Grammar. He should know how to speak and to write in the vernacular. He should study arithmetic. He should also know how to write in the Hebrew language. In the larger cities, colleges could be established where learned professors might give instructions on Jewish subjects. Other learned discussions could be carried on various subjects. Foreign languages might also be taught.

(2) A chief Rabbi should be appointed. He should have an advisory board. The board would be able to appoint Rabbis, preachers and teachers in the various cities. The Chief Rabbi would have supervision over all the synagogues and schools. Some uniform method of observance should be formulated. The advisory board should appoint some prominent wealthy men to take care of the needs of the

communities.

(3) Preachers should deliver discourses before the Jewish communities. They should talk on the needs of the communities. They should arouse them to abandon their bad ways. They should not waste time in Kabbalistic sermons but rather talk on the duties of the heart and the like.

(4) Petitions should be sent to the government asking for grants of land for agricultural purposes. The Jews should form colonies. They should have schools. In every village there should be a synagogue and a preacher who should expound the law every Sabbath.

(5) "The greater majority of Jews should, as the order of the Rabbis, resolve not to dress in expensive silk and not to wear silver, gold or diamonds. They should not use silver nor gold dishes nor expensive wares. It would be well for them not to ride in expensive carriages. In other words, they should set aside all the luxuries to which they are accustomed at present. For it is through luxurious living that Israel began to be spoiled. Especially should those of our brethren who are going to engage in farming, try to flee from all those luxuries. They should try to live a simple life and should clothe themselves in cheaply bought clothes, plain but clean."

Now these were the suggestions offered by Levinsohn for the betterment of the Jews. Some of them were practicable. The fifth one sounded ridiculous. It is time that education would make the Jew better so that he might be able to get along with his neighbors, yet it is asking too much of people to shun all those things which are second nature to men and women. The Jew, according to Levinsohn's ideas, is made to be in constant fear of his neighbors. He must always keep himself in the background. He must negate all good things. He must be on the alert lest he hurt his Gentile friend. This fifth

recommendation by Levinsohn makes the Jew a slinking, cowering creature.

Jehudah Löb Gordon held Levinsohn in high esteem. His first work in 1857 he sent to Levinsohn asking him for his criticism. Levinsohn's books made a profound impression on Gordon. When Gordon wrote his book of fables he wanted to know from Levinsohn whether such a book would prove beneficial. If Levinsohn would be pleased with his poems Gordon would be very grateful to him.

Levinsohn saw that the reforms which had been introduced were meeting with obstacles. He was the recipient of many letters which flowed in from all sources, all arraigning the Jew for the hostile attitude assumed toward the new reforms. Levinsohn was asked to explain Israel's virtues to the nations at large and he was asked to explain Israel's faults to the people within his own people. They all looked to him for an explanation. But Levinsohn was not bitter at the Jews because they rejected new ideas and plans. He knew that people are by nature conservative and as he said in a letter, "there is nothing strange in the people trying to find ways and means for the maintenance of the old and the rejection of the new". Levinsohn looks at their ways with sympathy. He knows that it takes time for the people to realize what is good for them. The leaders should be patient with the people. They should also study those reforms and find out if they are as good as they were intended to be. Perhaps there is not genuineness in the innovation. A Maskil, according to Levinsohn, is "one who directs all actions in order to know their purpose to God and man".

Levinsohn encouraged all those who worked for the enlightenment of the Jews. "Despair not, wait and consider the basis of this matter. How difficult it is to initiate things, especially that

which effects an entire nation. It is more difficult when you have to fight an ingrained habit".

Levinsohn had been, during all this time, writing and correcting his manuscripts. He said once in a letter to a friend that his illness had compelled him to read and re-read all that he had written and as he read he revised many parts of his books. Now he had many manuscripts which he desired to publish. His nephew, Jacob Israel Levinsohn of Odessa, had undertaken to publish them but he lacked the necessary funds. Levinsohn made an appeal to his brethren in Russia but his words failed to evoke a practical response. The only one who responded was Simhah Lipschitz who defrayed the expenses for the book "Ahijah Hoshiloni".

In 1858, Levinsohn received through Aaron Reich the sum of 750 Rubles which had been collected from some of the wealthy Jews in St. Petersburg. Among these contributors were the Ginzbergs and the Brodskis.

In the very same year he received from the Russian government the sum of three thousand rubles for two thousand copies of Te'udah Beyisroel and Beth Yehudah. Levinsohn was now seventy years of age. He had lived most of his life in poverty and want. When he had reached the declining years of life he began to get the means for better living. In his earlier days when he might have enjoyed life, he was forced to sit and wait for alms from his friends. His lingering illness was made worse by some misfortune which befel him a few nights before he had received the seven hundred Rubles from Aaron Reich. Some robbers broke into the house, robbed whatever was there and threatened to kill anyone who would move. This occurrence completely upset Levinsohn and his suffering increased. Levinsohn felt that his days were reaching their final goal and on December 13, 1859,

he drew up his will. He bequeathed eleven hundred Rubles to his nephew Jacob Israel Levensohn of Odessa. Also seven hundred books, of the value of seven hundred dollars, were being taken care of at the home of a certain Alexander Bernstein. These also he bequeathed to his nephew. Besides this, the poor should receive some money. The Minyan to pray for his soul after his death should be paid a certain sum for their services. Candles should be lighted for a full year in the synagogue. The hospital should receive fifty rubles. He requested his nephew to try and have the manuscripts published.

He died on the 24th of Shevat, 1860.

The following lines were written by Levinsohn to be inscribed on his own tombstone.

אָפֿט יאָ פֿאַרשטאָבן אַלע חַיִּים
 פֿאַר אַלע אַרְבֵּי עָלְמָא אַל תִּהְיֶה
 אַיִן אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה
 אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה
 אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה
 אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה
 אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה
 אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה אַל תִּהְיֶה

He was a noble character and practiced all his life what he preached. There were great truths in what he believed and he saw to it that his actions should bespeak truth. His last words which he wrote down as a philosophy of life for people to follow could be adopted even now by man. "Trust in God, for all that God does is done for the best. Never be angry. Speak the truth for truth is the seal of God. Whatever is hateful to thy neighbors, refrain from doing. Never be suspicious. Speak gently with everybody. Shun obstinacy and capriciousness. Be truthful in all things. Give people the benefit

- of the doubt. Do not seek honors. Never use oaths to affirm what
you have said for he who believes you will believe you without the
- oaths".

These were some of the characteristics of that noble soul who
- gave his life that his people might live.

REVIEW OF THE BOOKS OF ISAAC BAER
LEVINSOHN.

In the preface to the second edition of Te'udah Beyisroel, we get a list of the books which were written by Levinsohn. The second edition of Te'udah Beyisroel made its appearance in 1856. Until then, there had appeared Efes Damim, Beth Yehudah, and Shorshe Lebanon or Beth Ha'Ozar. But the following are the manuscripts which Levinsohn had in his possession relying upon the generosity of some people to finance their publication:-

Zerubabel, in six volumes, containing a pamphlet called Light to Fourteen; Ta-ar Hasofer, part one; Eshkol Hasofer; Toldoth Shem; Jehosophat; Yemin Zidki; Be-er Yizhak, $\gamma\eta\delta\iota$ $\gamma\times\alpha$; Pethuhe Hotham, $\rho\lambda\iota\rho$ $\iota\rho\iota\lambda\alpha\theta$; Heker Millim; Jezreel.

Not all of these were published. Some were lost. All we know of the book Jehosophat is that it contained reviews and opinions on certain books. Be-er Yizhak contained correspondence exchanged between him and the scholars of the times. Pethuhe Hotham contained a discussion as to the date of the composition of the Song of Songs and a dissertation on the name Metatron.

TE'UDAH BEYISROEL.

Te'udah Beyisroel was published in 1828 and appeared in a second edition in 1855. This review is based on the second edition of Te'udah Beyisroel.

In the very beginning Levinsohn shows the necessity of studying the Hebrew language. It is the sacred duty of every Jew to be thoroughly acquainted with Hebrew and its grammar. Many benefits are to be derived therefrom. It would lead to a better understanding of the Bible and of the great thoughts conceived by the prophets. The Jew would comprehend the visions, the secrets of God, the proverbs, and the morals contained in the Biblical writings. The Mishna compiled by Rabbi Jehudah, Maimonide's Mishna Torah and other great books have been written in Hebrew. The Jew should study Hebrew that he be able to read it.

A knowledge of Hebrew grammar is indispensable. Otherwise, the reader will encounter obstacles in making his way through all the works. Levinsohn informs us that the schools among the Jews, formerly, were conducted in a systematic, orderly way. After showing from Mishnaic sources that system prevailed in the teaching of children, he turns to the discussion of the necessity of knowing a language other than Hebrew. Is it permitted by Jewish law to study all languages? Is it prohibited? Should a book written in any other language be considered an heretical book and therefore be prohibited to be read by Jews? These questions Levinsohn answers pointing to sources in the Talmud.

The Rabbis of Mishnaic and Talmudic times, faithful followers of the Sacred Book, acquired so perfect a knowledge of Hebrew

through the study of the Bible that Hebrew to them could be expressed in as natural a style as the very language of the Bible. The Bible was the first thing taught in the course of studies.

In chapters four and five, reference is made to the method of teaching in those days. The Jews should, even at present, adopt some of their pedagogic ideas. The Bible should be taught and interpreted literally and not figuratively or homiletically. He who interprets the Bible homiletically loses the meaning of the purpose and aim of the Bible. We can infer from the Rabbis' ideas as to the Bible study that ^{they} studied the portions of the Torah consecutively and did not hurry over any part of the Bible merely to be abreast of the Sabbatical reading of the week. Mishna was not taught until after the child had completed a five years' study of the Bible. They did not approve of teaching the Talmud and Mishna at a too early age for the mind of the child was not fully developed to comprehend the subtlety of some of the arguments. In other words, there was a progressive course of study, in the opinion of the Rabbis, which would make things much easier for the students. The Bible, Mishna and Talmud were to be taught at ages when their value would be better appreciated. First and foremost should the Bible be studied. "Can a man build his house heavenward without a foundation on earth?"

A nation differs from another nation by the language it speaks. Therefore, "he who calls himself a Jew must surely feel ashamed if he lacks a knowledge of Hebrew. Especially the leaders of our people and the learned men, for were they to hold a conversation with some Christians who know Hebrew perfectly and if they were to be questioned on a certain Scriptural subject, and they would stand with mouth agape, unable to answer, would they not be put to shame? Through him the entire Jewish community would be put to shame and the

good name of Jacob would be dragged down to the dust."

In the eleventh and ensuing chapters we read of the great benefit to be derived from a knowledge of the Hebrew tongue. "If we were to search carefully into the many advantages which accrue from a knowledge of Hebrew, we would find that in the diaspora it is a great necessity and much can be derived therefrom. It makes for unity in religion and for national preservation. It serves as an inner band to embrace all Jews from one part of the world to the other into one fellowship and it alone binds their hearts together to worship their God in harmony. Were it not for Hebrew who knows whethere there would have remained a remnant in Israel".

In writing, says Levinsohn, we should take care to express ourselves clearly. Also in translating from one language into another, the translator should observe the rules of the language into which he is going to render the translation. He should avoid absolute literal translations. Some other method should be adopted. That is what the wise men of the Talmud intimated when they said in Kiddushin 49, "He who translates a verse in the same form, he tells an untruth".

Yiddish, which is borrowed mostly from the German language, is very corrupt as it is a jargon of words from Hebrew, French, German and Russian. Even the German words assimilated by Yiddish are distorted. Besides, it suffices merely to enable the Jews to carry on their regular daily work. If one would desire to talk of things higher than the mere daily conversation, he would be at a loss to find the proper words to express himself. This reason alone should stimulate us to acquire a knowledge of some other language thoroughly. Of all languages, it is important to study the language of the land inhabited. This is, without doubt, a great necessity.

The second main division of this book is also devoted to the importance for the Jew of studying other languages. But foremost should he acquire the language of the country in which he resides. There is no such thing as holiness or uncleanness in a particular language itself. All depends on the subjects treated. A book full of learning, morals and right conduct, be that book written in any language whatsoever is a good, clean book. It should be read with due respect. And contrariwise, books with heretical views or with knowledge that is of no value, should not be read at all, even if they be written in the Hebrew language. It is very important to study all branches of learning which will prove useful to Jews as a people. "Anyone who considers the sciences and languages as heretical is an ignorant fool of a Hasid."

In the third main division of the book, the author continues the discussion on the purpose and value of a knowledge of other languages. By means of other languages one can more fully understand the Holy Scriptures; especially the poetical portions found in the Bible, so full of power and beauty. It is almost impossible otherwise for anyone to appreciate the real worth of those portions, for the deep meanings in the beautiful expressions of the poetical portions cannot be fully comprehended when rendered in the Yiddish language. The beauties of nature are so forcefully written in Hebrew that it is difficult to render them in the jargon, Yiddish.

By means of these other languages the Jew would be able to make a study of those branches of learning necessary for his development. These studies would have a lasting value. They would have a permanent effect toward his development. He would be able to understand God's greatness, power and wonders. Nature and its phe-

nomena would have a deeper meaning.

The study of nature is of great importance. Moses, the lord of prophets, had a knowledge of nature and its mysteries. David pried into the wonders of nature as we see from the Psalms where he discusses the wonders of the creation of man. Not only of man but at the phenomena in the air, the clouds and the winds does he marvel. David knew all about plants and plant life; he studied the nature of man, his works and deeds. He observed and studied everything and translated those ideas and thoughts into language so that others might seek after. Solomon followed in his father's footsteps. He was not merely satisfied with what his father knew but he pursued his studies himself until he received the fame of being the wisest of men. The prophets, almost all, observed and studied nature. We see this from their utterances. The learned men of the Talmud followed in the same paths.

With all this as a setting, Levinsohn directs his conclusions, in chapter nine of this division, to his brethren. "Anyone who is negligent in searching and seeking to understand these matters will fail in his understanding of God and in his worship. Without this knowledge we can not completely observe the laws of God and the Torah. Every Jew should study astronomy and geometry and the like".

The author, then, cites a list of Jews, who from the earliest times, applied themselves to the study of various subjects. No matter what other occupations they followed they never failed to study other branches of learning. This same course should be adhered to by the Jews at the present time.

In chapter twenty-three, Levinsohn expatiates on the requirements in studies and languages which a man had to possess, in

order for him to be a leader of his nation. Levinsohn refers to the time when the Jews lived in their own land; without those qualifications in studies and languages one could not be a leader. He cites Maimonides, also, to show that besides the fear of God a man should have some knowledge in medicine, mathematics and some foreign language.

In chapter sixteen, he discusses Greek philosophy, showing that it had its origin among the Jews. Later on, also, in mediaeval times, the Jews contributed to the world some new systems of thought.

In the following chapters, we have, in chronological order, a long list of the noted people among the Jews, from the earliest time down to the present, who were authors of important books. Some of these authors received recognition for their learning in languages and philosophy from Non-Jewish theologians. Even at present there are, among the Jews, great Rabbis and renowned religious leaders who have perfected themselves in all kinds of learning of different languages. If these are few in number, the Jew himself is to blame. "For we have rebelled against God and we have been walking in untrodden paths."

With the proper kind of an education the Jews will be able to shine again among nations and remove the shame that has heretofore encircled Israel.

In chapter forty-eight our author offers another reason for the necessity of acquiring a knowledge of speaking in the vernacular. He explains the humiliation suffered by the Jews in the many small cities by being handicapped in expressing their wishes and thoughts. The Jews would, then, be able to dispel the ignorance of the Gentile in regard to Judaism. At present, when the Jews express their feel-

ings or thoughts, their language is so misleading as to cause misunderstandings. The history of the Jew abounds with instances of accomplishments for Israel's good by its leaders who knew foreign languages. Mordecai, Maimonides and Manasseh ben Israel saved Israel in this way.

A knowledge of the vernacular has the great advantage of making the laws of the country understandable. This is extremely necessary for the heads of communities. They should know Hebrew thoroughly, in speech and in writing, for they act in the capacity of modern substitutes for the Sanhedrin. The Jew would also gain business if he would be able to read and write in the language of the majority of citizens.

After giving the reasons why Jews should acquire a knowledge of other languages, Levinsohn discusses in chapter fifty-three, the necessity for Jews to acquire some manual trade or profession for a livelihood. Many examples are cited of the Rabbis of yore who were engaged in trade and work. Maimonides is quoted to the effect that a man should first choose a means for a livelihood, then buy a home and then marry. Fools do just the opposite and their lives end unhappily.

The Rabbis were not ashamed to work. They were not like some of the stupid people at present, who are ignorant of anything and who beg from others for something to eat. The result is that the home is neglected, the children grow up without any education nor manners. The Jew must do some work. It is an honor to be able to work. History bears witness of many nations whose kings tried to stimulate their subjects to manual labor. Peter the Great was one of those kings not ashamed to work.

Pinehas (פנחס בן יואל) who was high Priest during the Second

Temple was a stone chiseler until the time he was appointed to his high office. Some say, concerning him, that he was a farmer. Hillel, the Elder, was a wood chopper. Shammai was a builder. Abba Hilкия tilled the soil. R. Jochanan was a cobbler. R. Joshua by Hannaniah cleaned chimnies in spite of the position he had in Trajan's court. There were many Rabbis, learned and renowned, who made a livelihood by toiling with their hands and by the sweat of the brow. They refused alms. They refused to be dependent upon others. And although there have been some Rabbis who permitted learned people to live by means of assistance rendered them by others, it was at the discretion of the Ab Beth Din or some other high teacher. The learned men were to receive a fixed salary and were forbidden to receive gifts from individuals. He who is not learned should not receive help from the community. They should work and earn money.

In every city there should be schools with one definite, regular system where instruction should be given in the vernacular. Mathematics and other important subjects should be taught. Aside from this, technical schools should be founded where the young people might be able to acquire certain trades, as the Jews have done in Germany.

"May God be so gracious and bestir the hearts of the Rabbis and learned Jews, the leaders of the communities in our land, to gather money and establish such institutions among the Jews all over the country. Permission should, however, be obtained, first from the government. It is very important for communities to establish societies for the purpose of defraying the expenses of some of the poor youths who are anxious to receive some training. This method was pursued in Germany".

The fifty-ninth chapter is very important. It deals with

one of the means of bringing enlightenment into Jewish life. The Jews should seek different means for gaining a livelihood. The Jews should betake themselves to farming. In ancient times this occupation was pursued not only by the poor but also by the noble class. The high officials, princes and kings worked in the fields as did Gideon, Saul and Elisha. The Rabbis urged us to engage in agriculture. In general, we see that agricultural work was respected and considered important by many nations and empires. Rome regarded it highly. One of the causes of the Roman decline is traceable to their abandonment of agriculture. They lolled in luxuries and began to lose their virility and vigor. The same holds true in regard to Israel. "When they were farmers they were content and at peace. They found happiness in their allotted portion of land. They sat, each beneath his palm tree and fig tree. But from the time when Solomon became envious of the Egyptians-----and the people began to turn to commerce,-----then luxurious living commenced and there happened what we know from the Bible. They became a commercial nation in opposition to the Spirit of the Torah which meant us to be a kingdom of people whose livelihood was to be gained by tilling the soil".

"Our festivals all recall the blessings derived from the fields and vineyards. The able woman is judged by her management of the house, by her farming and caretaking of the vineyard and not by her ability to go to market. Palestine is described not as a commercial country but a country of wheat, rye, wine, dates and pomegranates."

Levinsohn comes to the following conclusions:-

- (1) Israel's main occupation in former times was agriculture.
- (2) Our religion, as expressed in the Torah, shows that not

only was the Torah not opposed to agriculture but even commanded it.

(3) The Jew, at present, is fit for similar work in spite of what others may say to the contrary.

(4) Business was foreign to the Jews in olden times. It was only through mingling with the Gentiles that they engaged in such work. The Jews have been engaged in it so long that it has now become natural.

(5) The Torah did not prohibit business entirely. Therefore, it did not define expressly the kind nor the amount of business he should engage in according to the changes in time and place. To forsake agriculture entirely and engage in business only, is not in conformity with reason nor the Torah. At the end of the book, we read, "Now, in these times when we are not hindered in Europe, from engaging in agriculture, especially in Russia that seeks our welfare, wherefore do we flee from this form of occupation in which our fathers and Rabbis, in Mishnaic and Talmudic times, engaged?"

This completes the account of the contents of this book. It was the first of its kind to come forth with such counsel and information. Every where it was welcomed and read with avidity. His ideas were not carried out by all who read it, but in Odessa and Zhitomir schools were erected with courses in technical trades. The seeds of enlightenment were being sown and the harvest was being reaped all over. Some of the harvests were fuller than others.

E F E S D A M I M .

Levinsohn was forty-five years of age when he wrote his apologetic book. Efes Damim in English means, "No Blood". Although finished in 1833, it did not appear in print until four years later. It was re-published in 1864 by his nephew Jacob Israel Levinsohn, in Vilna. As with some of the other publications in previous years, the same difficulties faced the publisher David Bar Nathansohn. He can be considered the sole financier of the publication, although there were some minor contributions by a few Jews. The Jews did not fulfill their promises to help defray the expenses. Yet they were the ones who persuaded Levinsohn by all kinds of flattering inducements to undertake the task. Levinsohn was failing in health and hardly had the strength to finish lighter works of his when the attention of the entire Jewry was directed toward him as the savior of his people. He was chosen by his correligionists to wash away the stains of the blood accusations and cleanse the character of the Jew. So ably did he perform this task that his work still serves as a model book and its arguments are still available to dispel the false notions of the Gentiles about the Jews. But when the money had to be collected to publish the work, the Jews were not there to respond. They had failed him when his work was ready.

Levinsohn was not angry at the Jews for having failed to do their share because he knew that the Jewish communities were poor but he saw no reason why the Jewish wealthy men should tighten their purse strings. These rich Jews could have Efes Damim translated into Russian and Polish and they could disseminate it among the Christians. The Christians would become their friends and they would all be able to live in security.

The direct occasion for the appearance of this book was the persecutions of the Jews at Soslow, Poland. The Jews were accused of using the blood of a Christian child for Passover. Many Jewish families of that city had been imprisoned and sentenced to death. The Rabbis and lay Jews all appealed to him to save them.

This book, written in the form of a dialogue, is an apology primarily against the Christian accusation of the Jew that the latter uses the blood of a Christ ^{son} child on Passover, and contains also other apologies for the Jews against different malignant accusations. Levinsohn made use of the information in the Apology of Menasseh Ben Israel, in Shevat Jehudah of Wirga and Za-akath Damim of Jacob Emden.

The dialogue is between the Patriarch of the Greek Church at Jerusalem and the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem.

This book can be said to be original. Indeed it was original for there were no books which could serve as sources. There were no foreign books in polemics which could be used or secured. Kremenitz lost her library when it was removed to Kiev. There were no people with whom to exchange opinions and ideas on a subject of that nature. The task was indeed arduous. Levinsohn was inspired

to write such a work. He, himself, felt the great need of such a work. The inspiration to write was rooted in the experiences of his relatives who, in their lives, did all they could for their brethren. In Beth Yehudah, chapter 134, we read as follows:-

"In 1834, at the time when the Jews were accused of ritual murder in the city Yampoli in Wolin, my granduncle, Rabbi Eliakum of Yampoli (at the authority of the Rabbis of the "four states" who had convened for that purpose in Brode) travelled to Rome and brought back from the Pope to the people of Poland a statement in Latin regarding the matter of blood accusations. The statement was signed by the Pope informing the people that the accusation was unfounded. My father had a translation of that statement in Latin and Polish which he received from Rabbi Eliakum when he was over at his home. I possessed that translation when I was a boy but lost it later. For six years Rabbi Eliakum sojourned in Rome and spent much time to straighten out that matter. And my granduncle on my mother's side, Rabbi Meir of Dubno, in 1859, also worked faithfully among the Polish nobles to dispel the charges of blood accusations. And Blessed be God, in that he conferred upon me the privilege of following in the footsteps of my dear parents, and to endeavor with all my might to refute that charge".

And, indeed, it was his lot to do much for his brethren. In 1832, Levinsohn sent a gift to the High Priest of Kiev, Evgenie, through the Priest Rafalski of Kremenitz, and in this way rendered help to the Jews. In 1843, when the Jews were charged with the blood ritual murder in Lutzk, Levinsohn sent to the same Rafalski, who had now become the highest official in the Greek Church, a letter asking for the freedom of some of the Jews. His request was granted.

In 1840, Lord Moses Montifiore had Efes Damim translated by Dr. Eliezer^w Lowe into English.

So much for the history of the book. Now for a description of the contents. We shall not enter into a minute account of the arguments as they follow in sequence but merely state the generalizations from the arguments. The work is in the form of a dialogue between a Christian sage and a Jewish Rabbi. The method employed is very simple but works well.

The Christian brings up those matters which substantiate the charge and the Jew shows him by the Torah, by history, and especially by the history of the Christian Church that there is no truth to this charge. All the accusations of this nature began about 1250 A. D., in the time of Alphonse X, King of Castile, when a certain priest arose claiming that the Jews cannot celebrate the Passover properly without using the blood of a Christian. The King did not believe the priest and even told his wise friend Thomas that the priest was a fool and ignorant, but he feared the people who had become mad with rage and he had to yield to their caprice. Before that time blood accusations were unknown. From that time, however, down to the present, the charges have spread all over the world and have carried destruction and calamity in their train.

The learned Jew proves by Scriptures and from later Jewish law that his people were never guilty of such crimes. The accusation is entirely and absolutely false. All the customs observed by Jews on Passover point to the rationality of his conduct. He considers himself a free man. He is happy. For this reason do Jews celebrate the feast by drinking wine and by reclining. This manner of enjoyment is still followed by the people who live in the Orient. This

was also the custom amongst the Romans. The Jews learned many ways from the Romans.

It was in Spain and Portugal that the seeds of this charge were sown and the harvest of persecution was reaped by the Jews for a fault and a crime not of their own volition. The Inquisition of 1480, in Ferdinand's reign in Spain added to the Jews' misery. Even among the Karaites who have been separated from the general Jewish people for such a long period there is not to be found such practices. How many learned Christians have affirmed and reaffirmed the existence of such a practice. Even the Anti-Semite, Eisenmenger, emphatically denies the imputation of such conduct to Jews.

Reason itself would point to innocence on the part of the Jew. To the Christian's question as to why many Jews answered "yes" to the charge of whether they were or were not guilty, Levinsohn says that those answers were forced from them during the inquisition.

We shall ^unot present a digest of the arguments as they follow in the book, according to the separate dialogues which make the book a composite whole.

Dialogue I.

The Israelites are prohibited by law against using blood whereas Christians are permitted to do so. This is borne out by Tertullian in apologio contra gentes; Justin Martyr and Eusebius. Jealousy, engendered by a difference of religious opinions, propagates evil reports.

Dialogue II.

The Torah contains the command, "Thou shalt not kill!" In general, our Torah bears testimony of the liberal policy of the Jews to all peoples whether Jews or non-Jews. The Jew is forbidden to

eat blood. Lev. 7²⁶, Dent. 12²³. After this argument there is a deviation from the argumentation when the Christian asks for an interpretation of a certain passage in Talmud Jerusalem.

← Pesachim which reads *פלאך* | " *פלאך* פסח קליל נאמר לו

The Christian believes *פלאך* to mean *pax* man. The Jew corrects this mistaken belief and shows that misinterpretations of this kind have led people into prejudice that were without foundation.

The learned Jew shows that Passover is modelled after a Roman feast and that many of the ceremonies and customs connected with the Passover observances are traceable to their Roman origin. A good example is that of the telling of riddles on Passover which is none else but a Roman custom. This, the Jew cites, to show that Had Godya has no secret meanings.

Dialogue III.

The best way to enjoy oneself on a holiday in ancient times was to feast and drink. There were no special secretive meanings attached to their forms of observance.

Dialogue IV.

Even at the time of the Jewish expulsion from Jerusalem, when the Jews were fighting their battles for existence, they did not shed blood. The Roman Nero, Julian and Queen Zenobia all favored the Jews. It was in Spain and Portugal that the charge of killing Christians for religious purposes was begun. The learned Jew points to the inconsistency of those who dispense justice. When a Christian murders a Jew, the judge does not say that the Christian thirsted for blood, but when a Jew kills a Christian, the Jew is accused of desiring his blood for religious purposes.

Levinsohn employs tact in discussing Christianity. He ex-

tols the good points of Christianity. It was wrong for Nero to put the saints to death. Christianity stands for noble conduct but the trouble is that Christians have drifted away from the teachings of Christ. The Christians are not living up to their religious ideas. They should be tolerant and not persecute those who deny Christianity for they themselves were at one time persecuted. They should remember to be tolerant and kindly.

Dialogue V.

If the Jews were to practice such an observance they would have been attacked on these points by the Karaites. But where do you hear of any such attack. Modern Biblical scholars as Lud and Gese-
nius could come forward and state whether such was the case. Not even the converts tell of such practices. Eisenmenger and Hoornbeeck, both arch anti-Semites emphatically say "No!" to such charges. There is no basis to these charges. They are founded on uncertain reports of the illiterate or secret accusations of monks belonging to the Inquisition.

Dialogue VI.

The learned Jew Maimon demonstrates by reason that the accusation originated in malice. Why did not Jews slay other than Christians? Why not slay a Christian in distant countries where life is cheaper? Could not a physician who lets blood distribute it to Jews? If any confession were extorted from the mouth of a Jew telling of his guilt, it was done under torture and compulsion. Such confessions might have originated with prostitute women who slay infants and criminate Jews. How wrong to accuse the Jews of this! And especially where they were learned and intellectual as they were in Spain. At that time in Spain when the accusation originated the Jews were progressing in all the sciences at the Universities of Toledo and Cor-

dova while other people were sleeping in ignorance. The religious animosities in Europe were all due to ignorance.

The Jew is not guilty of such crimes for many reasons. It is not in his nature to quarrel with people. Being a stranger in the land he always seeks the protection of the native. The Jew is of a peaceful disposition.

Dialogue VII.

Maimon points out the position in which other nations stand in relation to Judaism. The Talmud never condemned Christ's teachings. R. Joseph Jabez believes that by means of the Christian religion the Jewish faith was preserved to this day. In the Kuzari, we read of the good work of Christianity in rooting out idolatry. Jacob Emden extols the good intention of Jesus and the Apostles in spreading Christianity.

Levinsohn then quotes Professor King of Leipsic to show that the Jews were not to be blamed for the death of Jesus. "It was only the High Priest and some who adopted his opinion" that might have caused Jesus' death. The High Priest and his followers disliked Jesus' new doctrines. The governor, who wanted to win the good favor of Caesar, considered it advisable to crucify Jesus.

King is quoted by Levinsohn to show that Jews are not to be accused of crimes. "No Israelite was ever found guilty of pirating a copyright-----the Christians, on the contrary, commit plagiaries openly and without shame-----. Melancholy is rarely perceived among the Israelites; but it is common with the Christians."

Levinsohn also quotes Mendelssohn to support his theory that Jesus "observed not only the Mosaic Law, but the Rabbinical institutions." In other words, Jesus was a good Jew.

Dialogue VIII.

The reason the Jews did confess their guilt when brought up for justice on such a charge was because of the tortures they had to undergo. "He who is placed under the necessity of producing evidence to clear himself from suspicion of guilt, can never be entirely free from suspicion afterwards."

Dialogue IX.

The accusations can furthermore be shown to be groundless in consequence of the investigations of Popes and Monarchs who, in statements of their own, refuted these charges. Czacki in "A Disquisition concerning the Jews" cites facts to show that such was really the case.

At the conclusion of the arguments there is a letter from his Eminence, the Cardinal Corsini, to his Excellency, the Nuncio of the Holy See, written from Rome to Warsaw on February 9, 1769, showing the accusation to be groundless.

The Christian Simmias on hearing all the evidence presented by Maimon offers up a prayer for peace and good will among mankind.

There is also given a list of books showing the Jew to be innocent of the charge.

As a literary work it has been surpassed by Beth Yehudah and Zerubabel. There is continued repetition by the author but he had as his purpose, aside from the direct subject of ritual murder, the clearing up of many points that had been barriers to a better mutual understanding of Jews and Judaism. It seems strange, however, to one who has made a study of this work, to find that the author was handicapped in not having a library from which to draw. Yet he quotes many books which he must have had. For example, his biblio-

graphy contained books such as the following:-

Joseph Christoph - Wolfi Bibliotheca Hebraica, 1712.
Menasseh ben Israel - Vindiciae Judaeorum.
Stanilaus Lwowizyk - De Sanctio Interfectis a Judaeos, 1543.
Skaigo - Lives of the Saints, 1574.
Przedas Moiecki - treatise - 1598.
Pingblanch - History de l'Inquisition En Espagne, 1824.
Karamzin - Geschichte der Russichen Reichen.
De Guigner, Histoire des Huns.

The book made a wonderful impression. It was translated into English in 1840, at the request of Montifiore. Levinsohn wished Jost to translate the work into German but there were no funds forthcoming to enable the publication. The book received the most favorable criticism.

The Orient of 1843 wrote in this regard:-

"We must look at this book as on a sharp weapon prepared by an expert for our weal and benefit. It grieves us to see that from all the wealthy people upon whom enlightenment has descended, few have turned in the direction of the unfortunate worker, to render him some support."

The book received all the moral support of the Jews. They realized the influence such a book could wield in the country. Levinsohn received letters from many people, especially from Rabbis of different cities. But support for his famished body was not given him. He had to suffer the greatest privations. From a few people did he receive help but then not enough to keep himself in proper condition. But such was his lot and he resignedly accepted all his miseries in good cheer. Such was his life from early times and even so was it until the day of his death.

BETH YEHUDAH.

The subject matter of this book deals with the Jew and Judaism. As the author expresses himself in the preface, the book is intended to inform the Jew^{What} Israel's religion is, as to her books and her sects, her customs, her wise men and her writers. What the wisdom of the Talmud consists of; whether there is worth to it or not; how the Jews worship their God, etc.----"

In some other part of this thesis we have given the greater portion of the questions asked on April 12, 1827, by an official of the government, Emanuel Lieven, in regard to the Jews. These questions were partly answered in Te'udah Beyisroel. To other questions, references to noted authorities were given. But a great many of the questions were left to be answered in this work, Beth Yehudah.

Beth Yehudah is divided into ten divisions (פִּיטָה) according to the important epochs in the life of the Jews. These divisions are sub-divided into chapters (פִּקּוּחַ).

The book was written at a time when Levinsohn was extremely sick. He had to discontinue writing for months at a time. In many cases, he displayed brevity in writing on certain subjects when he should have been more lengthy.

The purpose of the book is to stir up the Jews to learn what they should have already known. They should correct the habits and bad customs by which their lives were guided in the past. They should remove the mist that blinds their eyes and behold the true, the real life.

The first volume of Beth Yehudah contains three divisions. Before proceeding with the subject under discussion, Levinsohn launch-

es out to state some of the qualities that should characterize a nation. He gives fifteen characteristics but they can all be reduced to a knowledge of the historical evolution of the race, their customs and religious practices. The historians of the nation should be truthful. They should write in a clear style. A nation should have academies of learning for her intellectual people and schools for the youths. The people should worship God in the right way. The nation should be physically strong. She must withstand all kinds of obstacles and must remain intact through all trials. The people must remain loyal to the country in which they live, be they citizens or mere sojourners.

The Jews, in primitive times, worshipped God, not as the Jews do today but in a more natural way. They lived a more natural life than the Jews today. What is natural is purer. The reason that the Jews at present are encumbered with so many laws and commandments is because of God's desire to purify man of the passions that blight his soul. "Just as the perfectly healthy body does not need any medicine, so also can the pure soul do without laws and injunctions". Levinsohn tells his brethren that they should rejoice at their ancestry for they lived a life in harmony with the ideals of God.

The Jews were the first to believe in the unity of God. The other nations were steeped in ignorance. God, in his Providence, guided them in all their ways. He had them go into Egypt and acquire all the learning which flourished there. There they multiplied greatly.

When the Jews left Egypt they were guided by a democratic form of government. God was their king and Moses the intermediary. The seventy elders corresponded to a Senate. The Levites and Priests

were the teachers of the nations. They served also in the capacity of doctors who supervised over the health of the people.

Levinsohn enters into a detailed narration of the functions of all the historical personages in the Bible. Beginning with the earliest time he describes their customs, ways and language. The Judges were the same as the dictators in Rome. Levinsohn leads the reader through the history of the kingdom to its destruction.

Levinsohn discusses the various phases of religion. In chapter thirty-one, he talks on revelation. Revelation in religion can not be attained by intellectual research; philosophy will not make man see God as He reveals Himself. One must reach the prophetic degree of inspiration to see God. "What human knowledge is in comparison with God's wisdom so is natural religion in comparison with revelation." The discussion of the different elements of religion leads Levinsohn to discuss the highest conception of God. When God revealed himself on Sinai, Moses brought down with him the inspiration for the Bible. Just as it is a good thing to study the Torah and the commandments, so also should man study all branches of learning and sciences. These are all necessary for a study of the Bible. The study of the Bible, in the proper manner, would lead them to good deeds. The people should study the Bible properly.

Levinsohn, in chapter thirty-eight, tells the people that they should study even that which is not "fit for the glory of God". It is not a sin to study secular subjects. Many of the Rabbis of yore studied secular subjects. Then again the Jews should also derive some material enjoyment from their study of the law. "Why should it be forbidden for us to materially benefit our lives from a study of the Torah and learning? We see ourselves that God added to all the

laws also physical enjoyment so that man might fulfill the laws with greater zeal. How well does a man enjoy himself and his heart gladden when God has graced him with the means to do charitable work or some other good! Then there is the law to rest and to enjoy yourself on Sabbath and the festivals.

Study is important, insists Levinsohn. Study, living in accord with what you have learned will make for the bestly life. Some of the Jews have rejected to a great degree the Torah and its teachings. They have embraced a few outward laws and practices of no importance so that they do not know the Torah, there is no real fear of God and they lack good manners and morals. Levinsohn undoubtedly refers to the Hasidim with whom he had so many quarrels.

The Jews are very lax in their manners. "Such laxity is not to be found among any people or race to such a degree as among our people, the Jews in this land. And just as it is considered a Mizvah to study the Torah and the laws therein, so is it necessary to study all studies and sciences. He should derive from it also some outward benefit, for his living, for his health, and for his conduct with man."

In the forty-eighth chapter, we are informed as to what constitutes those laws which are to be remembered by the Jews on their holidays. These holidays and festivals are not holy because of themselves but are made holy by the people resting on those days and by observing the duties which are to be remembered by the people. For example, if one were to forget which day was Sabbath, he could rest on any day, as long as that rest were to symbolize God's rest on the Sabbath.

Later on, Levinsohn describes Israel's life after she had

received the Torah from God. Moses began to explain the various laws written in the Bible. But the most lengthy explanations he told to the Levites and to the priests. He gave them the principles as to how to solve the problems in the Bible. Not all the observances as they were explained could be carried out, for there were times that the Jews had to go out and fight their battles. In their commingling with other people they would drift to strange gods and worship them. After they had been exiled, when the Jews returned to Palestine again and had ceased worshipping idols, some reforms were introduced by the members of the Great Assembly. They adapted the religion to existing conditions. They modified some of the explanations which were handed down to them. They began to implant in the Jews the real religion which consisted of the laws of God in nature plus ethics. Besides this, they added some new decrees and ordinances which were in vogue at the time of Rabbi Jehudah. There was no unanimity in the observance of these laws because there were disagreements. The nation was divided into two sections, ר' יוחנן. And later when Anan became head of the Karaites, he tried to annul those laws passed by the Rabbinites. The Karaites and the Rabbinites never agreed.

So far, Levinsohn has given us his interpretation of the Oral Law. Now Judaism is to him an ethical monotheism. Judaism is based on the following principles which a Jew must try to actualize. The Jew must do charity, shun evil, observe righteousness, must have a knowledge of creation. He should study religion and philosophy and he should observe the practical laws of religion. The two main elements of religion which embraced all the laws are:-- (1) Non-observance of idols; (2) Love of man. The first embraces all the laws between man and God. The second includes all the laws between man and man.

In ancient times, the Jewish sages who wrote books on different subjects, always based it on the foundation of faith and religion. No matter what they studied they never swerved from their religion. On the contrary, the more they studied philosophy or other subjects the stronger did they become in their fear of God, the more endeared did their people become to them. But now, observes Levinsohn, those who begin to speculate a little in other fields lose their hold on their faith. They drift away. Let them follow in the footsteps of their learned men of the past.

After citing a list of the books of the Jews from Moses' time, through the les Apocrypha down to the time of the writing of the Talmud, Levinsohn shows us that the tendency of the laws as explained in the Bible was to make them easier for observance by all the people. "All the *פ'נאלי פ'נאלי*, the restrictive measures are excellent means for the preservation of the religion.----- Some of the wise acres at present speak sneeringly of those 'fences and gates' but we know the result of those who have destroyed the vineyard of God, Zaboath and have made it look like a desert."

The Rabbis in olden times did all they could to enable the Jews to observe their laws and "it is also permissible at present for any authoritative body to devise similar ways and means". The idea of reform in our religion is advanced here.

In the second volume, Levinsohn discusses the origin of the Mishna, the Talmud, and the origin of the various sects. These subjects were also discussed in some of Levinsohn's other books but they are included here to give a history of the development of the various laws and their interpretations.

Levinsohn dispels the statements of Jew haters such as

Eisenmenger. He shows that the Rabbis in the Talmud did not look with evil eyes upon Non-Jews. He cites passages in which he shows that the Rabbis expressly affirm it as a sacred duty to visit the sick of the Gentiles, to permit their corpses to be buried with the Jews, to succor their poor. The Gentiles are considered by the Jews as brothers. There are many beliefs which they share in common and they are guided by the same principles of justice and truth.

The Rabbis all were liberal in their views. Did not Hillel say, "What is hateful to thee do not unto thy brother". Rabbi Akiba said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself". Even in our prayers we find tolerance and love toward all peoples. Those who try to inflame the minds of people to the contrary are committing a great crime. Everything that the Jew has said should be taken in the spirit in which they were written. Then no such misunderstanding would arise. This is what Levinsohn explains in the seventy-fourth chapter.

All the accounts of incidents, all the laws should be read literally. They would then be understandable to all. The Bible is unlike Greek historical books which narrate only those good facts which make their kings deserving of praise only. The Greeks omit the objectionable incidents. But the Bible is frank in everything. Nothing is hidden or kept secret. The kings are pictured as they really lived. They are not surrounded by halos of glory and virtue except when their deeds show them worthy of such honors. The writers of the Bible were truthful and fearless. Even the writers in the times succeeding the authorship of the Bible were honest and sincere. This is hardly true of any other people.

When the Jews were living in Babylon, they acquired some of the learning current there at that time. They studied about nature,

religion, astronomy and astrology. These ideas gained ground among the Jews and as a result sects arose who were inclined to accept some of the views in which they had an interest. This is quite natural among people and no matter how noble a religion may be it will always suffer from other religions of lesser value.

For this reason the Jews never practiced proselytizing although it is a duty to guide people in the right path. Experience has shown that the one proselytized may have a mistaken notion of the adopted religion and in this way it proves harmful to the people whom he joined.

The sages of Talmudic times were learned in things Jewish, as well as non-Jewish. They were anxious to know of everything. "It was considered a disgrace for a learned Jew and especially a Rabbi, if he were ignorant of exotic knowledge. In this country, however, such ignorance is considered as a mark of wisdom and piety.-----Groups of young men assemble in the synagogues, discuss nonsense and tell lies of all kinds; they drink and make merry while their stupid father-in-laws and their silly wives work to support them. The Yeshiboths of our Rabbis were used for the discussion of Biblical matters; they were, moreover, used for the discussion of other studies and sciences".

Lieven, in one of his questions, desired to know the origin of the prayers and Piyutim. Levinsohn, in chapter twenty-three, explains them. He says that **these** Piyutim are sung by the Jews on certain holidays as certain songs are sung by the choir in the Christian churches. These songs were handed down from one generation to the other. Cantors, however, wanted to embellish the singing and therefore they tinged them with some new melodies. The Cantor and his choir among the Jews, no doubt, was modelled after the custom of the Chris-

tian churches in the east where the use of an organ was forbidden. Yet in Germany at present, there are Jews who do use an organ. Levinsohn referred, of course, to the Reform Jews.

Levinsohn then describes all the hardships and persecutions which the Jew had to undergo for his religion. Thousands of Jews were killed in Germany during the Crusades. Many Jews from Germany migrated into Poland. As a result of these persecutions prayers were composed which later on were incorporated into the prayer books. Levinsohn quotes Czacki and Karamzin, Russian writers to show that some Russian Jews went to Spain to get instructions in Jewish learning. These came from the community of Jews who had remained in Kiev after the expulsion of the Jews in 1150 by Czar Vladimir.

The Jews in Spain, who were under Arabian rule were great students. They not only were learned in Hebrew lore but were proficient in all kinds of secular studies. They had a Jewish University in Kordova where they pursued studies in all subjects. Later the University was removed from Kordova to Toledo. During the Inquisition the Jews were greatly persecuted. The Spaniards burned many noted books written by Jews. Indeed, the Jews had waxed exceedingly wealthy and this, no doubt, aroused the jealousy of the natives.

Levinsohn, as we have already shown previously, believes in the adaptation of religious observances to existing conditions. He is not as radical a reformer as the Reform Jews at present but he understood the evolution of religion and the necessity of reforms to make the religion **liveable**. Levinsohn finds the actions of the Rabbis, at the present time, unworthy. "Every Rabbi in his own city does as he pleases, especially is this true of the little Rabbis in the small cities, for how else could they get honor? How else would he ingrat-

late himself with the people if not by adding some restriction or new custom, thus showing his piety and righteousness before all the people. Each Rabbi tries to show that he is far above his predecessor."

Great harm is resulting among the Jews because of the lack of proper leadership. The young people are being neglected. The Maskillim and the Hasidim are both guilty of not supervising over the education of the young generation. Levinsohn arraigns the Maskil for his indifference. When the "Maskil" is able to read a little French and German he considers himself wiser than anybody else in the world, the foundations of religion seem naught to him. He flaunts his meagre learning; he judges and decides, he becomes cynical and speaks blasphemously. "There is no God." Levinsohn feels bad at such conduct. The Hasid is just as bad. "If the Hasid has the opportunity of seeing one of his "holy ones" or if he is fortunate enough to touch the tail of his coat-----he believes the spirit to have rested upon him".

This could all be remedied and the young would be able to benefit if certain steps would be taken to meet the situation. Here is what Levinsohn proposes to have the Jews do. Schools should be established with the proper curriculum for the education of the youth so that they be good Jews to God and to man. Special textbooks should be used according to the age of the child.

The rest of the plans in regard to the reforms which Levinsohn considered necessary to uplift the conditions of the Jew we have already mentioned in the Biography. These suggestions were drawn up in 1886 by Levinsohn in answer to the many questions asked him by his friends on this subject.

Levinsohn shows how charitable Israel is. In all the cities where Jews live, large or small, you find that they have their own organizations for relief. It is difficult to trace them to their

origin but at the same time it shows how devoted Israel is to the principles of justice and charity.

The Jews must see to it that their religion be preserved. They must realize that in every generation wise men have arisen who have changed or added those things which make for the preservation of the religion. The Jews should not forget that of foremost importance is the observance of the fundamental principles of Judaism. They should not observe the laws added by the Rabbis of the various generations to the non-observance of those basic laws of Judaism.

The Jews should become more progressive than they are at present. This condition will be improved as it was improved in Germany. Sure enough, things are beginning to appear brighter to the Jews. Alexander I, in 1804, permitted the Jewish boys to study in all the higher schools in Russia and also for the Jews to build special schools of their own. Besides he has given them many more privileges, and Levinsohn in his ignorance of real Russia says, "Would that all the civilized nations were to follow in the footsteps of Russia, to give the Jews equal rights with the Christian citizens".

In conclusion, Levinsohn says, "My brethren, be not discouraged. Halt! and consider the basis of this subject. How difficult it is to establish something new which pertains to the entire nation! Especially when you have to shield yourself against ingrained habit and when it relates to the order of the study of the Torah and Wisdom. More so when you have to struggle against every influence, for among our brethren here, there are various sects with peculiar opinions".

ZERUBABEL.

The title page is sufficient to explain the purpose of this book. It reads "Zerubabel, by this book will the Temple of God, erected by the divine writers and their disciples, be firmly established; a Temple preaching love and peace to mankind in general, in contradistinction to the opinions of those mockers and defamers, old and young alike, and in contradistinction to our foremost accuser, who in his book, Old Paths, tries to destroy the principles of our religion and our Oral Law.

The publisher of most of his works, in his introduction to the third edition of this book which appeared in 1880, at Warsaw, says that Levinsohn completed this book in 1853, after twelve years of constant writing but because of many reasons, was unable to have it printed. Three years after his death, only two books of Zerubabel were printed but improper proof reading and redaction resulted in a poor edition. These copies were distributed among the intimate friends of the author, in Odessa. The publisher was urged, at the demands of many of the Hebrew readers "who thirsted to see the book in its entirety (six volumes) to publish the book and by defraying his own expenses, was able to carry out the publication of this work.

Levinsohn, in one of his prefaces to this book in 1855, says, that ~~that~~ Zerubabel is the third and last part of his book Beth Yehudah which he had published six years before in Wilna. "I directed this third part against the arguments of a certain anonymous author whose work "Old Paths" (London 1839) was sent to me. In his book he refutes all I stated in my first two volumes. And in his book, I saw the arguments and contentions which have been repeatedly

stated in Karaitic and Sabbatean works; in some modern opponents of Israel; from Eisenmenger and Chiarini. And with God's help and providence I undertook to refute his arguments and oftentimes I have expatiated on my statements in my first two volumes, in order to firmly establish the pillars of Beth Yehudah.

The purpose of the book in general is to explain the foundations of Judaism, which are built upon the Torah, together with the commentaries of the learned sages who followed the prophets; it will serve also as a systematic presentation of the learning of these sages, their interpretations and decisions.

From the above we see that the main object in writing this book was to shatter the arguments of a defamer. The author of Old Paths was a certain McCaul, who had been a servant to a learned man in Lita. McCaul^{was} firmly grounded in Jewish learning as is admitted by Levinsohn himself.

In 1853, we read concerning the events that brought about the writing of this book. About twenty years prior to this date, a Gentile published a two volume book against the Talmud. The arguments of the author were sent by a learned Polish friend to Levinsohn. And although engrossed in writing his book Beth Yehudah, he took time to give a cursory refutation to the accusations of McCaul. This cursory refutation afterwards was appended to Beth Yehudah. Later, when Sir Moses Montifiore asked Dr. Loewe to translate Levinsohn's book "Eres Damim" into English, and also to read the books Te'udah Beyisroel and Beth Yehudah, simultaneously a translation of McCaul's book into English appeared in London and caused a sensation. Some book was needed to cast away the aspersive statements against the Talmud and against the Rabbis but where was the man to undertake that work? Where was there a man fit for the task? And this was far

from an easy task. It required deep learning and tactful presentation. There was no man to be found in Germany, France or England. But the light of the Torah shone forth from the wretched humble dwelling place of the invalid Levinsohn. And although broken in body and bed-ridden the colossal task was given over to him. He worked assiduously for twelve years and finally completed the work.

In a letter to his friend Aaron Reich, we read, "On this book I worked day and night for more than twelve years; I lost all my strength, I lost all means of a livelihood, I lost nigh all my senses; and even when I sit up to write or to study I feel as if I were languishing away for even to sit is painful for me. Indeed, I work אלה ים לבן with my last strength".

In a letter, in 1853, to Reb David Luria, he says, "I am like a deserted person, my home is on the outskirts of the city, my relatives have all moved away to Odessa, and with the exception of an old lady and her son, whom I provide for, there is none who befriends me. And just last winter one of her sons became insane, and as yet there is no remedy for him. He was my best friend who knew and attended to all my needs. For the last twelve years he ministered to all my needs. Without him I shall not be able to get along. Briefly, I am all alone, sick. People come and steal, pretending to come and help me along. After Passover, I shall be compelled to leave my home and live in the city and take new medical treatment. Who knows? There may still be some hope. I still have many manuscripts and would that I could see them published. Some of them require correction----God knows my heart and my intentions; he knows that all my labors in these paths were to better the conditions of my people and to elevate the status of my religion. And if I am to die ere

they are published, I shall hand them over to my two friends here, Reb Jacob Israel Meisels and Reb Joseph Margolis, that they may dispose of it as they see fit. I have also stated regarding such an event in my will which is in their possession."

The book was dedicated to Aaron Hachohen Reich, no doubt, in appreciation for the many benefits and financial assistance rendered to him.

In a letter to the above Reb David Luria, regarding this book, he does not underestimate the extent of the influence McCaul exerted, for his book contains all the defamatory statements of his predecessors in such excellent systematic arrangement that on first glance one would agree with him. Not only does Levinsohn answer the accusations of McCaul, but also the charges of many of those from whose sources McCaul drew his information. Levinsohn was fearless in his refutations, yet he himself admits that at times he hesitated giving full expression to his ideas lest that cause added animosity on the part of Gentiles, and wherever possible, he used Christian authorities to support his pleas.

As in the other works of his it was his tactfulness in dealing with questions that might arouse resentment of the Gentiles, that he displayed. We shall now give an outline of the contents of this great book which could be used even at present as a textbook to understand fundamental Jewish ideas and institutions, and to refute some of the calumnious charges hurled against Jews.

Volume one has three sections.

Volume I - Foundation for the seven Noahitic commandments;
Section I - Foundation for the Written and Oral Laws and regarding Agadata;
Section II - Religion in general and Judaism in particular;
Section III - Origin of Oral Law;
Scribes:- Sanhedrin, Mishnaists, Priests.

Volume 2, includes the last part of Beth Yehudah, containing discussions on:-

Volume II - Concerning immortality;
The Am Ha'aretz;
Honor to teachers, to learned people, to parents;
Urim Vetumim; Learning; Noahitic; Concerning Gentiles who studied the Torah;
Concerning Gentiles who observed the Sabbath;
Liberalism and brotherhood in general;
Feast of Esther.

Volume 3, includes the last part of Beth Yehudah, containing discussions on

Volume III - Noahitic commandments;
Sojourning Proselytes;
Washing of hands;
Four Cups;
Searching for the leaven;
Two days observance of holidays;
Laws of mixture for cooking of victuals;
Prayers, Piyut;
Edomites; Legend of Leviathan; Piyut in general, and Agadata; Virtues of Israel; Oral Law.

Volume IV - Witchcraft; Learning and languages of members of the Sanhedim; Astrology; Talismans; Remedies and sayings of Rabba Bar Bar Hama; Commandment of Sabbath Observance and Sabbath Laws.
Opinions of sages concerning excommunication;
Reward, sin and repentance;
Blowing of Shofar.

Volume V - Merit of the Fathers; Custom of Repentance; Succoth; Day of Judgment; Custom of remembering the Dead; Charity; Priests.

Volume VI - Some Agadata in Talmud; Ordination; Chain of Tradition; Women and commandments concerning them; Concerning prayer of not being created a woman; Polygamy; Divorce; Forbidden Food, Shehita and Dietary Laws; Laws and customs in mourning; Annulment of vows; Circumcision; Additional remarks concerning Am Haaretz.

It would be too exhaustive an undertaking to give the detailed contents of this work but at the same time we can outline briefly those parts which would serve as an index to his ideas, as the work is not a unified whole but rather a collection of discussions

on those questions brought up by McCaul, it would be advisable to take up those passages that will serve as an index to the general character of his work.

In the second volume of this book, he discusses the respect and honor which should be paid to the teacher in Israel. Here we see the influence Levinsohn tried to exert on his correligionists, to enlighten them to appreciate any one who is trying to uplift their children for "the person who instructs people in learning and in manners, and teaches the ways of God and converts the unruly person into an orderly person, with wisdom and correct manners, no doubt but that his pupil must respect him and fear him because of his superiority".

Although endorsing the education of some women and citing many instances from the Mishna where the sages had girls of ability instructed, yet to lay down a hard and fast rule that all women should be educated is folly. "For many Jewish and Christian scholars admit at present that it would be better to keep them from studying for many wrongs result from this, and aside from their unadaptability to domestic management and all necessary matters, there result many other dangers as immorality, and we see that from the earliest times, Israel never instructed women in learning excepting in good traits and in womanly duties."

In speaking in general about rest from work on Sabbath and the Holidays, he finds a two-fold purpose in such observance. People desist from work because:--(1) we have to renew our physical strength for the rest gives us added strength to do our work more fittingly. Indeed this rest is work itself or functions as work. (2) He receives also spiritual strength which strength was dormant while engaged in work the entire week. That he might observe the world and all therein and see the greatness of his maker in the world is the

purpose of Sabbath.

As in his other books, we find him rationalizing. He wants his people to see that Sabbath Observance carry with it more than a mere command. He throws out to the people a meaning that is beneath the letter of the law. Indeed, he is quite modern in his interpretation of our Jewish institutions and one of his characteristics is to have reason explain, wherever possible, those institutions which seem to be divinely given to man. He wants his people to think about these matters and accept them because reason sanctions them. Why, for example, wash your hands before eating? "It is known that men work and unintentionally may touch something dirty or soiled, is it not right therefore to be careful? Reason dictates you to be careful. So do all civilized people wash their hands before eating. This was considered a necessity among the ancient Romans, never to eat before having washed your hands. And one should get accustomed to pray, when washing his hands, to God for his Providence in providing him with food."

He accuses McCaul of falsehoods when the author of Old Paths says that the stories of Rabba Bar Bar Hamma were to be understood literally. He shows, by examples, that the commentators considered them as allegories and metaphors, which were like the allegories among the Greeks and Romans.

He attacks McCaul, whose attitude toward the Talmud was unjust. McCaul finds the legislation in the Talmud rigorous. Levinsohn shows that there is confusion in the mind of McCaul. The sages in the Talmud were very careful concerning the lives of criminals and were always ready to lighten the guilt rather than make it severe. The Talmud was strict and exacting in regard to a murderer but never in

regard to sins between man and God. Indeed the tenor of Talmudic legislation is to mitigate penalties. For example, on first glance, the observance of the Sabbath would preclude walking on that day, heating in winter, drawing of water from well, feeding the animals, and to most of these we find ways of attending to necessary duties.

Levinsohn corrects the distorted views of McCaul about the custom of "Kapparoths". This custom, says our author, "never originated in Israel and no mention of it is found in the Mishna, Talmud, Sifra and Sifre and in the Mechiltas. Even in the time of Ramban we find no trace of this custom. This originated in the time of Rashba, a disciple of Ramban as is known to all, about 500 years ago in Barbaria. This custom has a very good end in view. Some of the poor received something to eat on Erev Yom Kippur. Otherwise serious consequences might have resulted from fasting without a good meal the night before. And what else could a poor man do who hasn't the means to buy food. No better means of repentance could be offered up than giving a poor person something to eat. Community leaders strengthened this custom for it contributed quite a large revenue and proved of benefit to the community.

In the fifth volume concerning McCaul's remarks about the Jewish custom of remembering the dead on their holidays, Levinsohn says that "this custom originated in Germany, after the Jews had suffered, time and again, gruesome deaths and massacre after massacre; fathers were killed with their children, and the main reason for remembering the dead is to humble the heart of man in reminding him of those who passed away into eternal sleep. All this tends to awaken in the heart of man a revulsion toward worldly vanity and an attraction to what is good and righteous. Accordingly the main reason for their

establishment was not for the good of the dead but rather for the benefit of the living, i.e. not for the benefit of those remembered but for the benefit of those who remember.

Levinsohn attacks McCaul for his misinterpretation of the passages in the Talmud which deal with Goyim. McCaul invariably translates these as Gentiles and shows that the Talmud referred directly to Christians. All the good qualities of the Jews are maligned. To McCaul the actions of the Jews are treacherous. The Jew has no love nor even friendship toward the Gentile. All these arguments Levinsohn refutes. He shows the wilful errors in McCaul's translations. To him, the many injunctions in the Talmud not to associate with idolators does not command them to do evil to those worshippers. Not only should they refrain from doing evil but as a matter of fact the Israelite is commanded to do good to him and to provide for him when he is hungry, to cover his nakedness, to visit him when he is ill, and even to bury him among the dead in the Jewish community in case there is no burial place for him.

And this tolerant attitude of the Jews has been taken in spite of the sufferings and persecutions which they underwent. Tolerance among nations who were intolerant! And here, Levinsohn, in discussing the treatment of the Jews by the various nations all over the world, says, that Russia was the only country that treated the Jews properly. "Never did she raise a hand against a Jew for aught! Yes these Russians are said to be retarded in civilization! If so, then the true civilization found a nest in Russia a long time before other kingdoms who shed human blood in vain for the foundation of civilization and whose aim is professedly the love of man.

Here we see Levinsohn throwing a bouquet at the Czar and

his government. It, no doubt, was a sincere avowal of his sentiments in regard to the Czar and his government for Levinsohn was considered highly by the various governmental officials. He was awarded a purse of 2000 Rubles for this book of his. He might have been swept away by the temporary reactionary policies of Alexander the First, who seemed to want to interest the Jews in agriculture, or again he may have been flattered by the heads of the educational department in Russia who had heard of him. As a matter of fact, in seeking someone to whom to dedicate his book he considered Graf Tolstoi, Graf Bibikov, although the book was later dedicated to Rabbi Aaron Reich. Again Levinsohn might have been tactful in his praise of Russia. But even his flatteries to the government authorities were tactful and brought no harm. Why were the Jews exiled from Spain? After stating the facts in their life in Spain, their wealth, their achievements and literary attainments, he gives us a philosophy of the history of their expulsion and although not as advanced as a historian, at the present time, yet he goes beneath the facts and searches for issues and causes. The common people were jealous of their wealth and fortunes; the priests and church leaders were jealous of their learning and honor which they derived, and together with their lust after Jewish daughters of refinement and beauty - all these precursors of the inquisition: jealousy, lust and seeking honor stirred up the hearts of the Spanish people against the Jews; the priests held counsel to perpetrate deeds of deceit and to cover the intentions of their heart with the cloak of religion, and they persuaded the poorer classes of Spaniards to rise against the Jews and compel them to accept their Christian faith or die.

McCaul arraigns the Jews for the low esteem in which the

woman is held by pointing to the prayer recited by the Jews thanking God "that he has not made me a woman".

"This prayer is not to deride woman but is said because of the hardships in her life and because of the advantages man does have over woman; for these advantages does man give praise to God, for man is commanded to bless God for every advantage or benefit he may have over others-----and then does not the woman suffer disadvantages even according to the Torah when she is not permitted to inherit the estate of her father or the males; even according to the laws of the ancient Romans a woman was forbidden to be appointed heiress; we also see that the male from five years of age to twenty is valued at twenty Shekel and the female but at ten, and from twenty to sixty the male is valued at fifty Shekel and the female at thirty, and many more examples are found in the Torah."

Levinsohn believes that the existence of the Jewish people depends upon the maintenance of their laws and commandments and were it not for these laws the Jews would have been assimilated. It is this adherence to the Jewish laws that has kept the Jews together. To Levinsohn's mind, there is no doubt but that each law has some secret which is not always within our comprehension, and it remains for the Jew to obey these laws unquestioningly, and we must not do as some have said that the eating of pork is permissible because when this law was decreed the Jews lived in a dry parched land. There are mysteries connected with these laws and it is not right to destroy a belief. However, if a modification is to take place, a synod of sages and proficient writers, who would study these questions could decide upon such modifications. This evidently was a thrust against the Reformers of his time in Germany who were beginning to

make changes in Judaism.

Near the end of this book he discusses circumcision. "How many wars were waged, how many righteous and pious fell in the wars and how many suffered so cruelly in Hasmonean wars when the Greeks tried to eradicate that custom from Israel. And it is apparent that the Greeks in those days saw what the author of Old Paths sees today that upon this commandment all of Judaism hinges and therefore they tried to destroy that practice.

This is but a brief sketch of the general contents of the entire work and now we shall merely generalize and show the reasons for McCaul's mistakes. Levinsohn, in his prefatory remarks to his work has enumerated these and classified them under the heads of general errors and wilful misrepresentations.

I. General Errors of McCaul are due to:-

- (1) Ignorance of the fact that only the Mishna (in part) is considered the oral law.
- (2) Failure to distinguish in the Talmud between final laws (*halakha*) and abrogable laws
- (3) Failure to distinguish between Halacha and Agadata.
- (4) Failure to distinguish between Agadata to be taken literally and those to be taken figuratively.
- (5) Ignorance of chronologies of Mishnaic and Talmudic authors.
- (6) Quibbling over one statement of a Tana without considering that Tana's system of reasoning over laws.
- (7) Lack of knowledge as to Piyut and the Mahzor and his considering these works also as Oral Law.
- (8) Failure to distinguish between a principle and dogma in Judaism.
- (9) Unthoroughness in Jewish History.
- (10) Lacks an historical knowledge of ancient nations.

II. His Wilful Misrepresentations fall under the following heads:-

- (1) McCaul attacks the Talmud and Rambam by citing passages from the Bible, intimating thereby that these passages

were unknown to the authors of the Talmud and to Rambam.

- (2) In translating passages from the Talmud, or from Rambam, he omits many preceding or succeeding passages that throw light upon the passage in question.
- (3) He changes the letters in the words to suit his purpose.
- (4) Fails to give the references to many passages which he cites from the Talmud or Rambam in order to deceive the reader.
- (5) Gives the contents of the passage but not as it is actually written.
- (6) Inserts Rashi or Tosefta into passages making passages complete to suit his purpose.
- (7) Those passages which he can use for his purpose in Rambam he calls Oral Law, but if other passages of the Rambam are not in consonance with his views, he calls them merely the individual opinion of the Rambam.

He considers McCaul guilty of dishonesty and wilful misrepresentation. The author of Old Paths insults the Tanaaim whenever possible. He described them as "fools - senseless, ignorant, robbers, murderers, liars, superstitious, wizards, immoral" and many more adjectives that are insulting. Levinsohn believes that even if there were no faults whatever in the work at all, this very attitude of his is condemnable.

The work consumed twelve years of his life. It had exhausted him. He was not in proper physical condition to have undertaken such a stupendous task and although the publication of this work appeared many years after McCaul's book had made a stir in the world, it nevertheless represented the tireless strivings of that noble soul, who, bed-ridden, tried with all the strength in his body, to cast off the vileness and bad name given to his brethren by an Anti-Semite. His arguments may not have been altogether sound but there was no one who would undertake the task. None seemed fit and it remained for the lonesome soul in Kremenitz to erase all the aspersive

remarks of McCaul.

SHORSHE LEBANON.

Levinsohn did not limit his activities as a writer to history alone, but as we have already seen, took up many problems which only a man of versatile abilities could justly execute. In Eres Damim he was a staunch supporter of the Jews and an apologetic writer. In his Beth Yehudah, Te'udah Beyisroel and in ~~Zerubabel~~ he was an historian. In his Shorshe Lebanon, which also had the added title of Beth Ozar, he was a philologist. In this work he does not grapple with the origin of words as philologists in the real sense of the word would do, but superficially compares his words with other words in different languages. He shows a knowledge of Arabic, Latin and Greek as is evident from the many quotations he cites from these sources.

Shorshe Lebanon appeared in Wilna in 1841. The words whose meaning and derivations Levinsohn seeks to explain are alphabetically arranged. He refers to the origins of these words in the sister Semitic languages and very often traces the meanings to some passages in the Bible, Talmud and Midrashim. This alone is sufficient to show us that it is not a strictly philological book. It is rather a compendium of words of doubtful origin. He digresses from the purpose intended. Nathanson, in his prefatory remarks, characterized it as a great work, but to us it spells just the opposite. Said the publisher, "This book can be read because of the learning and discourse which branch out from the discussion of these roots." Indeed his general discussions occupy more space than the discussion of the origins of the words. But unscientific as it is, it displays a knowledge of many languages. In a discussion later of his other grammatical works we shall give some evidences of his philological method.

The second part of Shorshe Lebanon is called Beth Ha'Ozar which includes (1) a Discussion of the origin of numbers; (2) Parsee idea of creation; (3) History of the Parsees; (4) History of idolatry for an understanding of the Bible; (5) Translation of Josephus' Contra Apion with remarks and a preface; (6) Rachabetes; (7) Hazohar and divers other subjects.

The third part of Shorshe Lebanon is devoted to certain omissions in Beth Yehudah where Levinsohn discusses questions of the same nature.

Of importance to us is what he says at the end of the book concerning the great losses incurred through the ignorance of Rabbis who would cross out many words and passages from books, which passages they could not understand. For this reason he advocated that the Rabbis study books outside of the Talmud and Poskim. Levinsohn wrote to the Minister Bludolf respecting this and the Minister informed all the Rabbis to act as censors and preserve those parts which are worthy of preservation, but the Rabbis instead of dealing lightly in such cases dealt severely which caused Levinsohn in 1833 to again call the attention of Bludolf to this wrong, suggesting the establishment of only three printing houses in Russia so that proper care would be taken in the supervision of the works to be published.

In a letter to one of his friends at this time, he begs him to see to it that some of the wealthy Jews of his town should contribute something to his livelihood. He was not merely suffering pain but was suffering as well the anguish of not being able to settle his debts as he writes, "Not only am I being overwhelmed by my illness, and lack of necessaries but I am being harrassed by my usurious creditors who gave me food during my illness for many days. Most of them are poor-----they need it themselves."

Dr. Furst in a review of the above book in the Orient, in 1846, calls the attention of the readers to Levinsohn's lexicographical discourses of the Bible and especially to Levinsohn's keen arguments with Gesenius.

ALIJAH HASHILONI HAHOZEH.

This book appeared in Leipsic in 1863. The money for its publication was furnished by Simhah Lipschitz of Odessa, and H. Trachtenberg.

The book was written by Levinsohn to refute the arguments of McCaul in his book "Old Paths". It did not touch on all the questions discussed by McCaul. That would have required a larger book and more lengthy refutations. Levinsohn, later, wrote "Zerubabel" which contained a refutation of all the statements made by McCaul concerning the Jews.

There is a history connected with the writing of this book. Levinsohn received a visit from a certain officer of the army. After a discussion on matters of religion, the officer took leave, not however, without showing his appreciation for the pleasant conversation he had. He presented Levinsohn with a copy of "Old Paths", telling him that he would return soon to find out how the book impressed him. Levinsohn declined to accept the present as he did not wish to enter into a discussion of the relative merits of Judaism and Christianity, but he was prevailed upon and reluctantly accepted. Thus was written, "Alijah Hashiloni Hahozah".

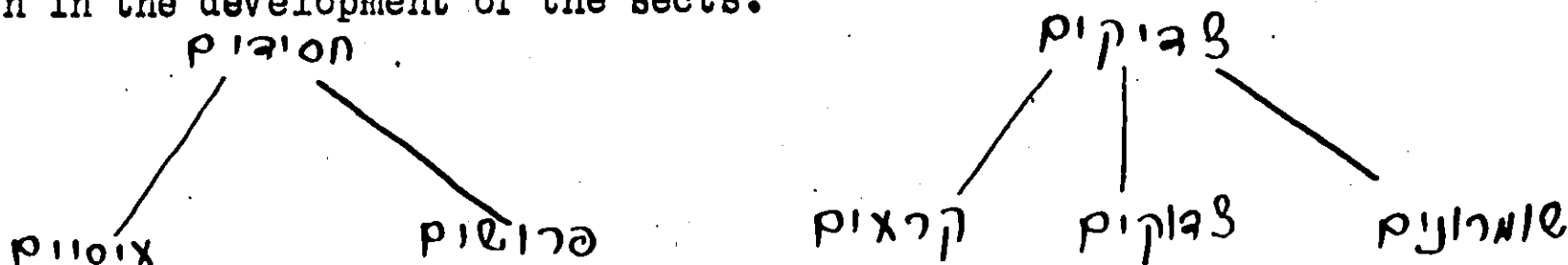
TA-AR HASOFER.

This anti-Karaitic treatise was written in 1851 and was published twelve years later, in 1863, in Odessa. Levinsohn was prompted to write this, according to the Russian translator of the book, P. Berezkin of Odessa, by the appearance of a book, Masah Ameriva אִמְרֵי אֱמֶרִיָּה written by the Karaite Abraham Firko- vich who derided all the Jewish laws and practices. At the outset Levinsohn gives a sketch of the rise of sects among the Jews from the time of the second Temple down to the modern times.

In the introduction to this treatise we find the cause for answering their charges. "For the last fifteen years, some of them have risen to break the peace covenant and are enraged over the old time quarrel----giving us and our Torah a bad name----. It is our duty now to protect ourselves against them and defend ourselves lest those not so thorough in these subjects who listen to them might think them correct. We, now, will present our words to those who know what our religion and Torah represent."

Levinsohn shows that the Karaite, R. Mordecai, in "Dod Mordecai" distorted the sentence in Me'or Enayim to show that the Karaites are derived from a sect of Zaddikim and not from Zaduk and Boithus.

The diagram will show what Levinsohn believed to be the chain in the development of the sects.



The following might explain Levinsohn's understanding of

these sects. The followers of Simeon Zaddick remained Sadducees and did not join the Samaritans in building the temple of Mt. Gerizzim. The followers of Simeon's successor Antigonus rejected the Oral Law and formed the sect known as Zadduk and Boithus. The Boithuseans disappeared and then the Sadducees remained.

The Hasidim were called after the Hasid

חסידין

Among the Hasidim there was also a schism. The Yoslim were also Essenes. Since the Yosi-im were also called Hasidim the latter were called Perushim. The Essenes later merged with the Perushim and the Zedukkim also disappeared into the Perushim.

The Karaites arose from a sect known as

קראים, i. e.

separated, torn from the Zaddickkim.

There is also scathing criticism against Firkovich. Levinsohn shows that the author has distorted passages from his sources to suit his purpose.

The publication of Ta-ar Hasofer was made possible through the financial assistance rendered by a certain Simha Lipshitz and his son. The Jews were asked to help publish all his works but they failed to respond. Even when Samuel Joseph Fin sent out an appeal through the Magazine Hakarmel, he met with no answers of encouragement. He said in part in the Hakarmel, "No greater good could be done than to give a holy Terumah so that his delightful books might be published. Great good would result from this and these works of his would immortalize his name for ages, more so than all monuments that might be reared to him of marble and granite."

LIGHT TO FOURTEEN.

In 1864, this book, known as *אור חן* was published in Odessa. It was written to clarify fourteen obscure myths propounded by our sages. The myths are

3. אגדת ארבעה עשר - אגדת ארבעה עשר
 2. אגדת ארבעה עשר - אגדת ארבעה עשר
 5. אגדת ארבעה עשר - אגדת ארבעה עשר
 13. אגדת ארבעה עשר - אגדת ארבעה עשר

These myths were written at the request of Levinsohn's friend R. David Luria, to answer a Christian theologian who wrote a pamphlet against the Talmud based upon deductions from these myths. This Christian showed that those myths put marriage in an immoral light, and they tended to poison the minds of the young folks and lead them into immorality.

Levinsohn proved conclusively that myths of this nature were abundantly scattered among the ancient Greeks and Romans. The Jews, like these nations, couched lofty subjects in myths and parables. "If among their myths and parables three or four seem strange to us among the thousands and tens of thousands of lofty myths that appear to all as being wise and refined, learned and moral, - then the fault is with us and not with the myths for it is impossible that such great, renowned wise men as they were should think thus ----they with their honesty and piety -- which we encounter in their books at each turn, -- in their laws, in their legal decisions and other branches-----and all at once in some of their myths these very same people should change their ideas and profess belief in everything that is strange and odd."

Levinsohn was not satisfied with bringing passages merely

from Jewish sources. He cites St. Augustine to bear out his point that there was no immoral motive in the polygamous practices of the ancient Jews.

ANFE HADASSAH.

In 1865, Levinsohn's heir published a short essay written by Levinsohn in 1846 with the above name. This essay contains a refutation of the arguments of Rigan, ז"ל, in his book "A Key to Megillath Esther", which he published in Vienna in 1841. Levinsohn shows, in his essay, that ז"ל is also of those modern writers who look, but in vain, to find faults with the sacred literature.

Levinsohn believes that the book Esther was written through divine inspiration. The purpose of the book Esther was to narrate the great miracle which God had performed for Israel and if certain stories in the book seem to appear irrelevant they serve the purpose of elucidating the book as a whole.

Levinsohn rationalizes those portions with which Rigan finds fault. The feasts, manner of mourning, and the facts are not distinctive Jewish practices but originated at a time when those practices were common among all the nations of the world.

This essay was written with the sole object of refuting the calumnious charges of Rigan, all of which charges Levinsohn shows to be groundless.

EMEK REFAIM.

This anti-Hasidic book was written in 1832, and was published together with Diqre Zaddikim in 1867 in Odessa. They were later re-published with Yalkut Rivl in 1879 in Warsaw. It contains a reverie concerning the future world, which was obtained from a somnambulist through the secrets of the science of Mesmerism. Emek Refaim is founded on a story of a magician and a wizard, a certain religious man, who knows and understands the secrets of mesmerism and can perform many miraculous things thereby. By means of those miracles he has been able to cure some very dangerous maladies and ills which have been given up as hopeless by physicians. These sick people, when put in a trance, answer all questions put to them. They also talk of the world beyond and tell you of the secrets in the heavens and those in the nether world, of the dead and of the living, and concerning all spiritual matters.

Some of the Maskillim asked permission from-----
to go to these sick people and ask them questions concerning the world to come and about the punishment of bad people in Gehenna. The answers of the sick people to the questions asked of them, were put down in writing. They were also asked as to those people, now dead, who were considered, when alive, as righteous. How were they being treated in the world beyond? The answers concerning the fate of the Zaddikim showed that instead of enjoying bliss they were being punished in Gehenna and that they were receiving the punishment due to them for their conduct in this world.

All the questions and answers are written in a lucid style and affords very entertaining reading. We shall quote part of the

answers of one of those entranced who explains how a certain ignorant Zadik gained the name he had among all his brethren. "Being ignorant, I decided to settle down in a very small town where no learned people dwelt, no writers, no rich, no merchants, and people who because of their abject poverty are occupied in work. They can not understand worldly affairs, not to speak of being able to understand deception and falseness. Here I became a "holy man" *liap* by acting that part and later returned to my home town famous for my piety. I would meddle in all the affairs of the city, in the expenses and receipts, etc. Then I tried to become a collector of money to help the people in the Holy Land-----and gradually the people were led to believe that no matter what I did there must be some secret(*alio*)connected therewith-----only part of the large sums which I collected for Palestine I donated to the support of the poor of the city, so that they might advertise my name and so that I might be considered a Zaddik among peoples. And I always preached that it was a greater Mizvah to tell stories and miraculous tales about Zaddikim than to study the Torah. And those Rabbis and Maggidim, who, in their sincerity would quarrel with me because they knew that I was an ignoramus and was misdirecting the people, I would calumniate them by putting up false witnesses to testify against them. I used to tell them constantly that they were foolish for believing in a doctor and telling them that they would do better if they would bring me "Pidionoth".

Regarding the advice given by this Zaddik at his death to his son as to how to deceive the people we find him saying, "Let your praying be in solitude in a small house near the synagogue, and accompany your prayers with the shaking of the body, with the clapping

of the hands and with songs.----You should talk in an eccentric way and in such manner that the people should not understand what you say. They will then think that you are talking of the secrets in the Torah. And while reading the Torah in Schul fall on your hand and remain stone-stiff as if your soul had just departed from your body. The people will then believe that your soul ascended to Heaven to hear some of God's secrets."

The second reverie is concerned with the vision of the same sick person. He hears what the Rabbi has to say about his practices on Sabbath afternoon when all the people come to hear his words of wisdom. At this occasion the Rebbe calls upon the "Badchan" to amuse him, for the Rebbe saw in Heaven that it was decreed, "that some Jews must be farmers just like the Gentiles, especially the poor Jews must do such work. There will also have to be mechanics. Jewish children will be compelled to study Russian and arithmetic. There is also a decree that there shall be Rabbis in every city as has been the case in many cities and moreover it is decreed that these Rabbis should be learned. God protect us."

Here are some of the prayers the Rabbi offered up at these occasions on Sabbath afternoon. He thanks God that he was not created a "learned man, a Philosopher, a mathematician; that he is ignorant of all languages; that he is ignorant of grammar, etc.

This book is of the same character as Sefer Zaddikim. Both aim to do away with the ignorance that reigns in the Hasidic camps. Whether satire was the best weapon is another question. Instead of correcting them, they declared war against his enlightenment and, indeed, he suffered much because of his satirical attitude towards them.

In 1832, he received a letter of congratulation from his friend R. Berish Blumenfeld, on the two books but his advice was not to waste so much time on "those Hasidim and their follies, as nothing will avail of such a battle."

DIVRE ZADIKKIM.

In 1832, Levinsohn wrote two short satirical essays known as Divre Zaddikim and Emek Refaim, both describing the spiritual powers and the greatness of the Hasidim at that time. Divre Zaddikim was published first in Vienna and in 1867 was published in Odessa together with Emek Refaim.

Divre Zaddikim is very cleverly written and the satire is excellent. As a matter of fact so realistically does Levinsohn describe the wondrous powers of those wily Hasidic Rabbis that when the book was first published, the Hasidim praised Levinsohn for his work, but later when they began to see that his other works were opposed to Hasidic manners and ideas of life, they became his antagonists. This book contains three letters and a dialogue between two Hasidim in the Hasidim "Stiebel or Kleisel" in the city Olik, concerning a certain book called Megale Temirim ascribed to the Hasid Reb. Obadiah ben Pethahia.

The letters are written by the imaginary רב'ל קל'סל to the imaginary רב'ל קל'סל . These two Hasidim have an exalted opinion of their Rabbi. The book Megale Temirim which was printed in Kardon, they say is not good because their Rabbi is of that opinion. The writer of this letter begins to display his Rabbi's wisdom by telling his friend what his Rabbi told him. "It is known that one can not write anything if his mind does not rest in that particular subject (concerning which he wants to write), instead, the writer's mind rests in the letters that he is writing and in this way his thoughts lie in those letters like frozen water which lies in ice in the winter; because of the coldness the water lies there. If the water were to be heated by the breath of man's mouth, then the water

would leave the ice. So is it with thoughts. When the thoughts are in man, they are warm for all that is in man is warm. When things leave man they are cold. So is it with thoughts. He who writes something must surely write with thoughts that are warm and when writing, his thoughts must go out into the letters thus becoming cold and so it lies in the letters."

Levinsohn puts in the mouth of the writer of the letter those words which ridicule the old methods of the Hasidim, "During prayer we warm ourselves and through the warmth we wish to ascend higher and higher where you find the highest degree of warmth."

R. Jacob Honipozer says that he has never read a book written in a foreign country because the Rabbi says that such a thing should not be done. It is a sacrilege.

Something else that has been puzzling him is the coincidence of seeing the name of the Besht in large German print in a book published in Vienna. Is it possible that a good book, for no doubt a book about the Besht must be a good one, should be printed in Vienna? Yet there may be a clue to this incident in the name of the publisher Strass, which means way or path and no doubt refers to the way to worship God.

The second letter is sent by R. Eli Hokilipker to R. Yekel Honipder. In this letter the writer tells his friend that he knows all about the wicked city Vienna. He had been there once on a visit and saw with his own eyes people dressed in garments of mixed kinds, an injunction against which use is found in the law of Moses. The people, who no doubt must be insane, do not wear belts, nor "Yarmal-kes", no beads or "Pe-oths". They are all good-for-nothings. They are *obryne pni*, and as long as he was in Vienna he saw to it that he should have nothing to do with such people and he refrained

even from holding a conversation with them.

The third letter is sent by R. L^ob Kremenitzer to R. Eli Hokilipker. R. L^ob narrates a dialogue concerning "Megale Temirin" between two Rabbis. Strange to say it seems that the learned people פלאנץ do not care to listen to the jokes of the Hasidim. At least, this is what the two Rabbis whom he overheard, were saying. Aside from this, he has also heard that there are books being printed now that have no Rashi letters; the books have margins and the printing is in good taste. All this he heard from Heinch Hasofer and after Heinch finished telling the other Rabbi about the wonderful secrets of the book "Megale Temirim" he fell over unconscious because of over-enthusiasm נלעגלע due to excessive drinking.

The book is indeed humorous and although one must understand the Jews concerning whom he talks, yet at the same time his imaginative powers help make the reading interesting and entertaining aside from picturing the benighted ways and ignorance of the blind followers of the Rebbes of those days.

Levinsohn has satirized them time and again in many of his works and in some of his poems. His idea in putting them up to ridicule was to rid them of their bad habits. They should refrain from drinking. They should trim their beards. They should cut their Pe-oths נלעגלע and pay attention to their outward forms of dress. They should broaden their minds and judge books by their contents and not by the place where they were published. He wanted light - Haskalah - to dispel the gloom and darkness in which they dwelt.

J E S R E E L .

This is a collection of varied subjects and discussions written by Levinsohn in 1839 at Kremenitz and published by David Bar Nathansohn in Yalkut Riv'e in 1876. Since the entire work is not a unified whole, we shall merely cite some of the discussions to show its general character.

The first subject is a "Dissertation on Insects". Man was given the power to dominate over the animals but not, in reality, to slay them, and even when man was permitted to kill animals those animals were to be used for food and not for mere sport of hunting.

Concerning the dietary laws in the Bible, Levinsohn says, that reason would sanction man's observance of those laws. They are not merely hygienic regulations, because if one eats the prohibited food he does not become sick. Man's and animal's instinct guides them to select the good foods and reject the poisonous. The Biblical injunction, therefore, regarding the dietary laws, are based upon man's reason and instinct.

We find in this book grammatical discussions on words, but these discussions are too complex and intricate for the readers of the present time, yet they must have appealed to the Maskillim at that time because although it was modern in its way, yet there was some Pilpul and hair-splitting explanations.

There is a criticism of Ezekiel Feivel, who wrote a book called "Toledoth Adam". The criticism deals with three main faults. First, the statements that the author ascribes to R. Zalmon are statements that were never made by R. Zalmon. In the second place, the author forgets many times to mention his authorities. In the third place, he, oftentimes, mentions certain authorities and they are nowhere

to be found in their places. He also shows how the author plagiarized. Not only does Levinsohn show that he took his facts from sources like the works of Herz Wesel, Rambam, Socrates and Plato, but Levinsohn also quotes those very passages.

Levinsohn says that Gesenius never went to the original Mishnaic or Talmudic sources but always drew his knowledge from secondary Latin sources. "All that Gesenius derived at times from the Mishna and Talmud-----he never saw in their original sources, for he did not understand very well Mishnaic and Talmudic Hebrew."

A certain Maharam Kunz, in 1808, wrote a book on Sefer Ben Jochai, in which he showed that Ben Jochai was the forerunner of the Copernican system. Levinsohn shatters this view by showing that Copernicus revived the ideas of Aristarchus, Philolaus, Anaximander, Plato and Nicetas. This shows us the rays of light shed by the Haskalah. Not only was Levinsohn possessed of a knowledge of Hebrew, but also a knowledge of secular things. Levinsohn truly exemplified the Maskil who combined Hebrew and general secular knowledge.

Levinsohn rationalizes not only parts in the Bible but customs in general. He explains, for example, some of the customs in vogue on Passover. What is meant by *וְהָיָה לְכָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יֹמֵי חֵן* Levinsohn explains this as being the rewards handed out to him who could or could not answer the riddles that were put to the people. If one was successful in answering the riddle he received *יֹמֵי חֵן*, if one lost he had to drink *כַּסְּאֵי חֵן*. The Jews, according to Levinsohn, borrowed the custom of eating eggs on Passover from the Romans as the latter used them as appetizers. This tendency to rationalize would have been stemmed fifty years before but enlightenment set in and it was not considered by the Maskillim wrong to explain

the origin of customs and ceremonies.

He attacks Lillienthal's sermons claiming that Lillienthal is ashamed to quote the name of the Talmud from which he got his quotations. Besides there are many faults in the translation of the verses from Hebrew in German. However, fair or unfair, Levinsohn might be in such criticism, we must remember that his criticism was not hurled at Lillienthal simply because some of Levinsohn's views were contrary to Lillienthal's, but because he really believed that Lillienthal was guilty of such faults.

Besides the above subjects there are to be found letters discussing Halacha, to men like Krochmal, Judel Epstein and Jacob Reifman.

ESHKOL HASOFER.

A collection of poems, parables, puzzles and sayings published in Warsaw in 1891 by Nathansohn. These poems which we find in this collection were written after Levinsohn had passed the middle period of his life although there are some of them that were written in his youth and in the prime of life. At the ~~ages~~^{of} nine and ten, says Levinsohn, he felt impelled to put his ideas into print. Yet how modest is our poet. He apologizes for his contributions. To be a poet "one must be endowed by God with natural propensity,-----indeed everybody sings and recites in his home and there are some fools **who even** sing in public, should they (the latter) therefore be termed as singers and poets?-----and I address myself to the wise saying: "Approach! Do not attack them (poems). What has the priest to do on a graveyard?"

The poems cannot be considered even worthy of mediocrity. They have no distinctive qualities. Levinsohn merely made the final words rhyme. Although understanding the requisites for good poetry, yet at the same time it was beyond his power to produce perfect poems. Yet there are many clever poems such as the one concerning a certain poet, T. Feder, who wrote best when under the influence of liquor. The six lines run as follows:-

רמל גו !רממ
 רמל גו רע
 רמל גו רע
 רמל גו רע
 רמל גו רע
 רמל גו רע

He assails the critics in those days

-127-
 קצר וז כתב חקארים
 והוא מקר ספרו אחרים
 בחיט אשר משהו טלאים
 ממשה אמן קופל חטאום.

And how clever is his satire on the Hasidim

לאל מפלגת קיהארים
 מטכאים זבים וחסידים
 המלכות אל דבר
 וחקר וקל העקר
 לזה דבר החסיד
 וקל ודבר פאטור
 והנה מה יארה?
 רק אג ההנה.

To Moses Montifiore for having done so much in clearing
 up the Damascus blood accusations he writes

משה איל הקינים	א אפנת חס
ברבא אל מזרים	משה קנא אמר
הפק דב אמוס.	הפק מוס אבס

He was an adept on punning. In his poem "The Woman", we
 read

דב הגלה אלה אפנת ראב - חווס
 ואם אק שלאל אל צאריק קחיוס.

One poem in this entire collection is worthy of quotation,
 for among all the others it stands out prominently. Here, for once,
 do we get into the spirit and swing of the Hasidim when they celebrate
 the "Sholosh Se'udoth". Levinsohn pointed out in his prose the

faults of the Hasidim, and in this poem he shows that they would become so drunk on these occasions that there were times when they would forego praying Shema the next morning.

ואם הלכת קין הערקים
חדר חסידים ארזם ונהל
הסך קאנען לכה כמים
אכסים יין לך ולכה
אחריו קאלה ולתו כפאים
ולאוי המלכה ארזם למים

ארזם ינע, אכסם עין
ינעו הערמ, וטרף טרף
ולנה ושלל, ומתרוקן מוין,
אכסם פניו, נאצוס כסוף
וקרז מלח: כעלה דרעלן
והע ענע: כוויא דתין!

הנך הרה! הרה! קרז
הנך הרה! לקלע טאק
הרה! קרז מלח טאק
נע עקרה טאק-טאק
נע עקרה טאק-טאק
נע עקרה מלח טאק!

Levinsohn, in explaining how difficult it is to write poetry, says that it requires a sound knowledge of the language in which you write and that the Hebrew writers would be able to write better if they would make use of Mishnaic and Talmudic words and expressions as well as Biblical. "All the ancient poets in Israel did thus; they all made use of Midrashic, Mishnaic and Talmudic words----- and so do we find among all nations, especially that their poets

used respectively the languages of the countries in which they lived. They used words even from the ancient languages although such words were altogether foreign and had no basis in their own language. This is not the same with the words in the Mishna, Talmud and Midrash; these are all based on some Biblical root, as we all know. In this way would Hebrew be complete.-----Would, also, that some learned Maskil would compose a dictionary-----and of course, this would require much time."

HEKER MILLIM.

Heker Millim was written in 1843. It was published in 1893. In this short essay in which he criticizes Leteris' work, we find the same honest attitude taken by Levinsohn in his entire life. Levinsohn has tried to live up to what he preached and therefore fearlessly calls Leteris to account for not having admitted that he took certain arguments from Gesenius. In correcting Leteris, he says, "Leteris! What have you to do with Gesenius? Desist from your ways! Remove the veil! Take down the crown! And give him the credit who deserves it! -- Rabbi David Kimhi".

Levinsohn shows that Leteris is ignorant in believing that because some modern person advances a certain view it is the best. What Leteris finds in Gesenius has already been expounded by our older Jewish authorities. Now Levinsohn does not mean that Gesenius is not original or that all that Gesenius says is taken from Jewish sources for we find Levinsohn agreeing with Gesenius many times, but what Levinsohn does object to strenuously, is the giving of credit to Gesenius of certain things which can be found in older Jewish sources. It is not so much at Gesenius that he is angry as at Leteris for his ignorance.

O H A L E S H E M .

This book published by Bernard Nathansohn at Warsaw, in 1893, is a grammatical treatise on Hebrew words. He had the same purpose in mind in writing this as when prompted by the publication of Toledoth Shem. Ohale Shem contains, also, a short criticism of the book Ozar Hashoroshim by Ben Ze-ev which was published by Reb Meir Halevi Leteris. This short criticism is known as Heker Millim.

This will give us an idea as to how Levinsohn discussed a word grammatically.

צנצנ:

קח צנצנת אחת (למאכל טעם), מארשין אסתר העתיק (קראע)
 ר"ל כבד, ומזה נראה כי נעשה בתלמוד קטני הערות קטן,
 ומזה גם באשון ראית קן כלי ודאע אלמן כמו הכבד-והחכם
 כי בנימין מוספיה (ערך קטן א') משתמש בזה לשון למאכל
 בתנן לקוח מאשון ראית קן, ע"ל, אולם זהבך כמו לכתבך.

רפא:

ומזה נראה תרומה (קראשית א', אולם אע"פ) והיא השנה העתיקה
 ונראה מלשון העצמות הזאת אל אשון ואטמוך זהבך האמתות

dormito, (sleep) dormitar, (to sleep) Dormio
 (strong sleep), ומה באשון היורשמו בארמוסא.

T O L E D O T H S H E M .

This "encyclopedic philologic dictionary" as Hermalin terms it, comprises new investigations into the Hebrew language. He discusses also the meanings of various subjects which are found in the Bible, Talmud and Midrashim. All discussions of the roots of Hebrew words are alphabetically arranged. This work was conjointly published by his nephew Jacob Israel Levinsohn and David Baer Nathanson in Warsaw in the year 1877. As with Zerubabel, which he dedicated to a charitable Maskil Aaron Reich, so also with Toledoth Shem do we find this work dedicated to David Malis of St. Petersburg who had been generous in his support of Levinsohn.

The purpose of this book is to demonstrate that the roots of the Arabic and Aramaic languages are grounded in the Hebrew language and "to Hebrew belongs the birthright". Arabic, Aramaic and all Oriental cognate languages are developments out of Hebrew and "he who desires to bring proof from these languages to compare them with Hebrew, must of necessity distinguish between basic and fundamental significations which are older, and those significations which have evolved and are borrowed - namely, those that are later meanings."

The method of Levinsohn is not scientific. He follows mainly in the footsteps of the Rabbis of the Talmud and men like Ben Saruk and Rashi who assumed the root of a word to consist of two letters. Levinsohn compares languages, brings proofs from the Bible, accepts the historical data of all writers on history and mentions even facts concerning idols of ancient peoples, all to bring out his ideas and make them understandable.

Levinsohn must have been attacked because of his method

of referring back to non-Jewish sources for he says as if in justification "even our Rabbis, the ancient commentators, followed this method; even the Rabbis of the Mishna and Talmud did research work in this manner"-----there are some among our people for whom all signs and proofs would not suffice and all the testimonies and answers would avail naught. Even if we were to bring down Elijah from Heaven they would not incline their ear to him. So is it with the majority of this people, the shallow-minded among them are as full of arguments and answers as the seeds of a pomegranate."

Levinsohn was fighting a fixed idea of the people. He was going to secularize the method of studying. Hebrew could better be understood by a reference to sources other than the Bible and Talmud and in consonance with his views regarding secular studies, he quoted in his work ever so many authorities which, to his mind, could elucidate those subjects which were ever so dear to his heart and to all his people.

We shall see how, for example, Levinsohn would discuss a word, how he would put all his faculties to work to explain a word.

Y I M I N Z I D K I .

This apologetic work, defending the Jewish religion and the Rabbis, was published by David Baer Levinsohn, in Warsaw, in the year 1881. A book called Derech Selulah, written by Asher Temkin, a convert, was given to Levinsohn by Director Christopher of the seminary in his town and Levinsohn was asked to express his opinion in the matter.

Levinsohn considers Temkin, the author of Derech Selulah, insolent and ignorant of general knowledge. "It is impossible to imagine his ignorance of Hebrew and his expressions as lean as the sheaves in the dream of Pharoah".

Temkin in his work purposes to show:- (1) That the Talmudists and all the sages of Israel did not understand Hebrew and therefore they could not understand the Bible and the meaning of the verses and "if they knew thoroughly all these things they would have renounced their religion as the author had done"; (2) The Talmudists were illiterate, ignorant and malicious, they wrote foolish things and evil things and accordingly all "who have some sense should flee from the Talmud and renounce their faith".

In his preface to this work in 1837, Levinsohn points out the various mistakes of the Anti-Semitic writer. In the first place, the author has no thorough knowledge of Hebrew, nor of any language aside from his meager Hebrew learning. His Talmudic learning is imperfect; his knowledge of history is very poor. Scientific study and archaeology are beyond him. In the second place, Temkin's quotations from the Bible are incomplete and full of mistakes. Thirdly, "he adorns himself with the feathers of others". He ascribes presumptuously to himself, thoughts, ideas, proverbs and explanations which

he found in ancient sources. Fourthly, he abridges certain passages in the Talmuds and then proceeds to explain their meanings as if the explanation were really the work of his own hands, whereas the explanation is that part which he omitted purposely in the citation. Fifthly, he brings up certain subjects and discussions as if these were new contributions, whereas in reality, these things are known to any young child who studies in school. Then again he quotes certain passages from books written by some ancient or modern author, whether that author be of importance or of no importance, wise or ignorant, and cites these as authoritative among the Jews. He also considers Kabalistic books of whatever author as traditional among Jews as the Mishna and Talmud "without his knowing that the Zohor is later and is ascribed by mistake to an earlier date". He fails also to distinguish between Halachoth and dogmas; between Hagada and stories; between real and metaphorical stories.

Levinsohn does not criticize the book minutely, "for the work and toil do not compensate for the waste of time". Yet Levinsohn must have spent much time and energy, despite the above statement, for surely the criticisms bear testimony to some research on Levinsohn's part to find out whether Temkin was honest or not in his work.

His answers are terse and to the point. Levinsohn says, for example, regarding some of Temkin's insolent questions concerning certain passages in the Bible, "Those four questions which the author has arranged in a certain way are taken from the book Akedoth Yitzhak". Again we read, "the author has plagiarized Ibn Ezra, Levinsohn displays his voluminous mind in this work and shows how familiar he was with all authors for we find him translating Leibnitz to show that his views were like that of Abahu. He also translates

certain parts of Schlötzer to bring out certain points in the discussion.

He attacks Temkin for saying that the Rabbis, such as Abahu and Akiba knew no Hebrew, says Levinsohn. "Is this not insolent and wicked on his part to say, concerning such a prominent man of our people as R. Akiba, that he knew no Hebrew? Would one of us Jews dare to say and lie in public saying that a certain prominent Pope was entirely ignorant and did not know his own language?"

Temkin cites the passage in Talmud, "And they have also said that the Sanhedrim should slay a Kuthi who rests on the Sabbath". To which Levinsohn answers and with an aching heart, "Not only does this author wish to put the Talmud in a bad light but wants to present us Jews as murderers of Gentiles for no reason at all, as if it were a principle among us, when we see a Gentile who studies the Torah and rests on Sabbath and does not work, to rise and kill him. Indeed! such an accusation is worse than a ritual blood accusation. For a blood accusation is temporary in its effect, whereas such an accusation seems to apply to everyday life."

Even Jesus, according to Levinsohn, held the Jews in esteem. Jesus, "is considered by us as one who feared God; who never intended to change the Torah; as a matter of fact he himself upheld the Torah."

After showing the author his various mistakes, he finishes his book with a plea to Temkin to change his way in life. "Your work to insult your Hebrew brethren was all in vain -- you who feasted in their good things! Present the case before my brethren and your brethren, the Christians, let them decide between us. You deserted us and accepted a new faith for you longed for that faith and in it did you find balsam for your heart.-----I shall not reproach you for

that but will praise you; **Success!** Be a straightforward, righteous man, but keep constantly in mind, as long as you live, the good and kindness which your brethren, the Jews, have done for you from the time you were born to the day of your conversion. Speak not unfavorably of them and let good words concerning them issue from your mouth. Deal justly with them. Tell our Christian brethren about our sages and learned people, concerning the respected men of erudition who are found in the Talmud and our numerous other books. Tell them about the many good decrees which our Rabbis passed in every generation; about the fine qualities and the morality and the charity which the Jews bestow upon their poor, sick and unfortunate, as you know. Speak about the institutions to help the needy and the poor, such as the societies to clothe the naked, the Talmud Torah, and the society to provide for the bride-----and is this the reward you show them? To insult them, to deride them, their wise people and their learned writers!"

The invective hurled at Temkin is tempered because Levinsohn, no doubt, was afraid to offend the Christian world, yet we can feel Levinsohn's heart pulsating for his people. He may have overestimated the value of Temkin's work for surely his was the kind of a book written by many others at that time. Nevertheless, Levinsohn is as painstaking as ever in answering the false charges of the convert. Conscientiousness is the dominant characteristic of all his works.

B O O K S .

Levinsohn wrote a book called Yesode Leshon Russiya, but it was not published. Nathansohn, his publisher, merely tells us that he found the manuscript among the writings of Levinsohn, but its publication was impossible, as it had to be rearranged.

Levinsohn also wrote in Yiddish a pamphlet entitled Die Hefker Welt. It describes the manners of the Jews and suggestions for their improvement. The pamphlet never appeared in print. It was sent from one person to another for reading and evidently never found its way back to Levinsohn.

The manuscript Pethuhe Hotham was sent to Mordecai Nathansohn but it was never published, and together with the Song of Songs, part of which was printed with Shorshe Lebanon, it remains yet to be published.

Some other short manuscripts remain unpublished. They are called Midrash Millim Malachuthiim and Hakdamoth Ha-Emunoth Ve-
doath. But they are of no great importance.

C O N C L U S I O N .

Isaac Baer Levinsohn has been called the father of Haskalah and truly may that be said of him. It was due to him that the enlightening of the Jew in Russia made great strides. We can, now, orientate ourselves and be the onlookers in the effect that he produced on the people of his time. Gottlober, one of the contributors to the magazine Hamaggid, tells of the influence Levinsohn's books produced on him and many of his correligionists. The following is an extract of a eulogy written at the time of Levinsohn's death.

"Concerning this great man we can justly and truthfully say that he was to our people in our land what Mendelssohn was in Prussia. Were it not for him who knows whether we would have advanced as far as we have. When at first his precious book Te'udah Beyisroel appeared they cursed him shamefully; his book was thrown down and trodden upon; later their eyes were opened, for his truthful words penetrated their very being. They then became warriors waging vigorously a war for knowledge. They succeeded."

Levinsohn was both learned and practical. By this I mean that he was interested in the execution into practice of what he preached. Who knows what he might not have accomplished had he been in good health. "Levinsohn", says his biographer, Bernhard Nathansohn, "clothed the spirit with flesh and skin." He suggested ways for the uplift of his people.

We have stated his plans for the enlightenment of the Jews in other parts of this thesis so we do not have to enter into the details. It seems rather unjust, and displays partiality for an historian like Graetz not to have mentioned Levinsohn. Graetz entered largely into the accounts of the accomplishments of the German

Jews who sought to educate the Jews, but he does not mention a man who did so much for his people as our author Riv'l. Rudermann, a follower of Levinsohn said in this regard, "The picture in living colors by which Graetz describes Mendelssohn in his life and actions, we can all see-----in that excellent man, our teacher and guide, Isaac Baer Levinsohn. Whereas Mendelssohn accomplished what he did through necessity-----as he himself says in his letters to his friends, and as Graetz himself shows. Levinsohn, however, goes forth like an intellectual giant to fight the battles of light against darkness-----he acted as an intermediary between his people and the government."

The writer continues, "In regard to the influence of the spiritual condition of his people, by means of books, Levinsohn surpassed Mendelssohn, for in his time Mendelssohn was occupied with explaining metaphysical subjects which originated with Leibnitz. But Levinsohn explains the systems of the founders of our religion-----he dispels by his clearness the clouds and darkness."

There were several other writers who could not understand why Graetz omitted writing about Levinsohn, but the main reason seems to be in Graetz's lack of sympathy with the Russian Jews.

Some writers believe that Levinsohn's worth is overestimated. Wiernick believes that the only work which made any real impression in the world at large was Efes Damim. It was translated into several languages and was made use of time and again whenever the occasion required it. But the other books, although they contained Jewish learning, yet did not do much for the Jews. Wiernick's reason is very plausible. Those who read his books were critics and as such were interested in the impression it would make on others and not on themselves. Those who were not Maskillim, that is to say, the

ordinary people whom Levinsohn wanted to reach, condemned him for taking the part of Haskalah.

There is a lot of truth in this, yet Levinsohn did influence many of those who were enlightened to some extent yet who knew not how to carry out their plan of enlightenment. It was due to his constant reminders that people began to take an interest in the welfare of the people. In this light, we can see why many of the most learned men of the large cities turned to him for advice on questions appertaining to the Jewish people. If anything at all could be said of him, it is that he was the beacon light for the wandering Jews who were seeking the ways and means of becoming enlightened.

Levinsohn in his works tried to show that the Jews would be better able to serve their country if they could best serve their religion. Those who believe that the Jew would be a better Russian if he were to be alienated from Judaism make the mistake of not understanding the genius of the Jew.

In his attacks on the Jews and Christians who calumniated the works of the Rabbis, Levinsohn was vehement in his denunciations. In Zerubabel where he attacks McCaul, we see his vast learning. In the second Hebrew edition of "Old Paths" many of the charges and accusations are missing.

He was the teacher and guide of the Maskillim. He was beloved by all who knew him or who understandingly read his works. The Hasidim Abraham of Turisk and Israel Rasiner considered him very highly. The Talmudists Strashun and Abele of Wilna spoke of him in the grandest attributes.

From his works and from his letters of the previous chapters we have been able to see how esteemed he was by his correligion-

ists. These works and letters show how much he meant to his brethren. He was their messenger to the government. He was like a father, willing to give up everything to make his children happier. As a guide to his brethren he was faithful and all his life was devoted to make his people self-respecting and enlightened. He can rightly be termed the father of the Haskalah movement of the nineteenth century.

Levinsohn's Conception of Oral Law.

An account of the activities of our author would be incomplete without a brief review of his conception of the Oral Law,

וְהָיָה הָאֵלֶּיךָ. A few explanatory remarks are necessary for an understanding of his method in dealing with this subject. Levinsohn did not possess an extensive library. What served as his sources were those branches of learning which had stamped themselves indelibly on his mind while a student, in his younger days. He writes from a fullness of his knowledge on the subject and in a confidence which is the outgrowth of a long standing intimacy with his Hebrew learning. And altho his work could not be placed on a par with scholarly works on similar subjects at present, it is to be admired, none the less, for its lucidity and clearness. So much for the explanatory introduction to this subject. Let us now deal with his interpretation of the Oral Law as we find it in his discussions in the books Beth Yehudah, Te'udah Beyisrael, Zemubabel, and Shorshe Lebanon.

The laws which were received by Moses on Mt. Sinai and transmitted to the Jews were written down in scrolls. It served a double purpose. It was the duty of the Jews to study these laws and it was their duty also to teach the younger generation. Now, the meanings and interpretations of the laws were taught orally which gave such instruction the name Oral Law. To write these oral explanations in order, to transmit them to posterity was forbidden-because in the transmission of these oral explanations mistakes might occur in the actual process of writing. Certain accepted ideas might thus be affected and religion would be undermined.

Another reason for not writing down the Oral Law was the misunderstanding that might arise if the common masses were to read those books. They, in their limited understanding, would consider themselves proficient to decide religious matters. There are certain religious ideas which require modification according to time and place. These modifications must be reserved to the discretion of the wise men in Israel and to the Beth Din. There are also other religious matters which should not be revealed to the masses. The masses should have no explanation of the *raison d'être* of certain laws. Although the writing down of the Oral Law was prohibited to the masses it was, however, not withheld from the wise men for private use - and then only they could write down the headings of the chapters which could serve as reminders of the subjects discussed in the event of any forgetfulness on their part.

Moses, was the first to explain the Torah, that is, the commandments as we find them, (in Deut. I., as it is said, "On the other side of the Jordan, Moses undertook to explain this Torah." This marked the beginning of Tradition. These traditional explanations were considered by Moses as Mishna, as we find in Deut. 17,

Not all, but part of these general explanations did Moses insert in the Torah. The residue of the involving explanations he transmitted orally to the priests and Levites. He gave them the general rules to be applied in seeking for explanations of laws in the Torah. Moses anticipated the changes that at some time would arise for the perpetuation of Judaism and therefore, he explained the methods to be followed by future Jewish authorities.

After Moses' death the adherence to the interpretations of the Priests and Levites was oftentimes interrupted by returns to idol worship and by other forms of apostasy. It was only near the time of the second Temple that the Jews began to return to their observance of Mosaic

3.

Law. It was at the time of the "Members of the Great Assembly" which included also some of the latter prophets that the Torah was restored to its former splendor. They modified the people's religion in harmony with the Torah. They studied the Torah searchingly and deduced, in amplification, interpretations according to the needs of certain times and places. Therefore, the Mishna is attributed to the "Members of the Great Assembly" and their disciples until the time of Rabbi Jehudah. *109*

The question is sometimes asked why the prophets never commented upon the laws of Moses, in the later traditional spirit. The reason for this is due to the task which absorbed the prophets in their attempts to eradicate the most prevailing evil of their time, idolatry. The prophets also had to fight against the people's belief in the false prophets. It was, therefore, impossible for them to devote their time to the explanation of the laws of Moses. It was not until after the Babylonian Exile that the Great Assembly undertook to expound the laws to the people.

Not everybody was permitted to explain the Torah. That right was reserved ^{to} for the Priests. The Oral Law, to serve as an explanation of the Torah, includes laws appertaining to man's social relations, - and also to man's conception of the universe, -

Now when, for example, are you permitted to draw from sources other than the laws in the Bible in order to explain the laws of the Torah? You are permitted to learn from other nations facts regarding our ethical conduct and even regarding our conceptions of God as long as these facts are not contrary to any law of the Torah. You may learn from everything in the world which may help you to understand the laws of the Bible.

improvement The right to change some of the laws of the Torah was vested in the Sanhedrin. This was withheld from the prophets because all laws point to the denial of such privileges to them. Many times there would be disagreements among the various Rabbis as to the interpretation of

certain laws of the Bible. This was very true in regard to the contentions of the houses of Hillel and Shammai. Yet when it came to questions involving the unity of the nation they would set aside all discords. We know this from their action in respect to certain disagreements upon the questions of marriage. Yet those adhering to either Hillel or Shammai would intermarry. There existed a high spirit of unity, as diversified as to the conceptions of oral law might have been to individuals.

Since the interpretations of the oral law resulted from following certain laws of reasoning, each conclusion would be considered correct by the reasoner. But where peace among men might be disturbed and enmity engendered, each opponent relaxes in his severity.

From Deut. 17, we find that the great Beith-Din in Jerusalem was the center of authority for the oral law. To them and to their judgment was entrusted the perpetuation of Judaism. To them was entrusted the re-
vising and the modifying of the laws of the Bible.

The main authority in Israel should, at all times, interpret the meaning of the laws. Never should the majority decide according to its own way unless their way be approved also by the authoritative body of Israel. The voice of the people may often err.

The oral law is divided into different classes. It consists of 1-explanations derived from God. These are suggested in the Torah and are deducible. There is no need to argue over these explanations. 2-Certain accepted laws, not implied in the Torah, called *halakot* 3-Restrictions and limitations. 4-Customs and ceremonies introduced by the prophets and certain ordinances established at special times.

The main source of the Oral Law is the Mishna. It is the source for the explanations of the laws called Halacha which formed the foundation of tradition. The Mishna is more thoroughly explained in the Gemara. However, the Hagada in the Babylonian and Jerusalemic Gemaras and the Midrashim are not termed "tradition". The individual is permitted to accept or reject them. The Halachoth were decided after due reflection. Logic

5.

prevailed in the discussion of the laws. What was, therefore, accepted as an explanation by all sides, had to be fulfilled by every Jew. As long as the Beth Din decided favorably all were duty bound to respect their decision.

How was the Oral Law transmitted? Joshua handed over the law to the elders or the Judges. They, in turn, to the various prophets from Eli to Samuel and so on down thru Jeremiah, Baruch ben Ner'ya and Ezra the first of the Great Assembly. *A. p. 3 Bottom* 2

This Great Assembly was the authoritative body of Jewry at the time of the second Temple. Their personnel consisted also of some of the later prophets, Haggai, Malachi, and Daniel. Simeon the Just was the last of them. He was High Priest and the first of the Mishnaic sages. This Great Assembly developed into the Sanhedrin where the keenest minds were collected to solve Israel's problems. There were two elders at the head of the large Sanhedrin, the Nasi, who occupied the position which corresponded to Moses' position in olden times, and the Ab Beth Din who sat at the right of the Nasi. After the destruction of the second Temple, it was part of the Nasi's duty to preach every Saturday on the law of Moses. The Ab Beth Din would attend to the rendering of decisions on special cases between individuals in the case. The Nasi, in other words, would attend to the presentation of the theory of the law and the Ab Beth Din to the practical aspect of the laws.

Later these names were changed. The Nasim were called Roshe Goluioth and the Ab Beth Din was called Roshe Yeshiboth. These Babylonian authorities even ranked higher than those of Palestine.

The Mishnaic Rabbis were active during a period of twelve generations, from Simeon the Just until the time of Rabbi Jehuda Ha-Nasi, i.e. from 3448 - 3949.

Just about this time different sects were beginning to arise. The Pharisees were those Jews who followed Ezra and who "explained",

as their name suggested, the laws of the Torah. They helped with their explanations to keep Judaism alive.

It has already been stated that Homilies upon verses of the Bible are not considered as important as Halacha. Man is free to accept or reject them. Only the Halachoth are included in the Oral Law.

Until the time of Hillel and Shammai there was more or less harmony in regard to opinions upon the law. Then began a sharp and keen contest between the intellects of both parties. The Torah was interpreted according to their own judgments and no attention, except at occasions, was paid to the judgments of the other side.

After the destruction of the second Temple, when Israel was suffering greatly and the Torah was in a precarious condition, it was left to Rabbi Jehudah (ג'מ'ר'י *²) to firmly establish Israel's Judaism. He established the Beth Din and with their sanction it was deemed wise to write down the explanations of the laws of the Torah. The Oral Law was written down in six sections which bear the general name of Mishna, from the root ^ל to learn. The scholars who participated in the discussions of the Halacha bore the name of Tanaim.

There are some other additions to the Mishna, arranged by the disciples of Rabbi, called Beraithoth. Other collections of comments upon the law were arranged by certain Rabbis, e.g. Simon Ben Jochai arranged Sifri^e. Sifra was arranged by Jehuda Ben Ilai. There are also Mechiltas ascribed to certain Tanaim.

The Mishnaioth, Berathioths and other books dealing with the Oral Law are written entirely in Hebrew. There are also Aramaisms, but as a whole it is written in a lucid Hebrew. The laws were discussed in the many academies of learning at that time. They analyzed all the Mishnaic writings and decided upon them. After the Mishnaists there arose Amoraim, who were commentators upon the Mishna. Their explanations were gathered under the name of Talmud or Gemara. These were at first oral

explanations, but later these oral explanations of the Mishna were written down and compiled by R. Jochanan of Jerusalem. The Gemara includes also the Mishnaic portions explained. After the compilation of the Jerusalemic Talmud (ס"ג פ' א'), Rabbi Ashi and Rabina, the last of the Amoraim, collected the explanations of the Mishna by the Amoraim down to their time. Their work assumed the name of Babylonian Talmud. This Talmud is fuller and more complete than the Palestinian Talmud. The Amoraim were engaged in their work from the time of Rabbi Jehuda until the time of Rabbi Ashe and Rabina, that is, from 3949 - 4236.

The Talmud comprises four distinct departments. 1-Explanations of verses in the Mishna and their literal meanings. 2-Decisions by individual Rabbis. 3-Decrees and ordinances. 4-Homilies.

This in general gives us an idea of the development of Oral Law down to the Saburaiim. Still there are other minor works that embody principles and ideas of oral law, for example the En-Jakob. This book gives us some very brilliant explanations of certain passages of our Bible and Law. There are the numerous Midrashim, late Megilloth, and translations that have added to a better understanding of our laws.

Our work here, in presenting Levinsohn's conception of the Oral Law, has really no close connection with the aim of the thesis, but Levinsohn devoted much time to this subject in several of his books. It will serve to show us his great knowledge of Israel's literature.