MOSES HAYYIM LUZZATTO

as an author of Hebrew Morality plays,
together with a critical examination of
the contents and structure of his morality
plays and a comparison with some English
productions of this type

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I

The Italian Renaissance was not without its effect on the Jews who lived in Italy. The freedom and liberality which existed there enabled the Jews to study Latin and Italian, and they thus came into contact with modern thought and culture, and absorbed this thought and culture into their own culture. It was in this enlightened era that Moses Hayyim Luzzatto was born in the city of Padua, in the year 1707. His father, Jacob Hai Luzzatto was a wealthy merchant of Padua, and through his wealth, he was enabled to educate his son in both Latin and Italian as well as in Hebrew. The boy was a most apt pupil, and his teacher, Isaiah Bassan held him in high esteem, so much so that the young Moses was permitted to use the books which he found in his teacher's library; and the Cabalistic books on Bassan's shelves were not proscribed to the lad. (1)

The young scholar made such rapid progress in his studies and especially in his mastery of Hebrew that his sixteenth year found him able to compose a drama, "Samson and the Philistines". Of the contents and structure of this play, we shall speak later, but the remark of Dr. Simon Ginzburg gives us some idea of the magnitude of the undertaking. He describes this play as a classical drama (2), by which he means to infer that the play is written under the influence of the pseudo-classicism then prevalent in Italy.

But Luzzatto found other outlets for his talents, for the Cabalistic books of Bassan's library had inspired the youth to become a mystic. And at the next period of his life, we find him much absorbed in his mystical inquiries,

so much so, that the rest of his life was impaired by his Cabalistic studies. His next literary production which we shall consider is the very long drama, Migdol Oz, which he began in his twentieth year. This play has been thought of as a plagiarism because it is so much like that of the Italian poet, Guarini. (3) But more recent scholars have found that while the play itself if taken from "Il Pastor Fido", the interpretation at the hand of Luzzatto is much more pleasing, and less gross in its treatment of love and passion.

Even after this attempt at poetry, Luzzatto could not give up his mystical yearnings; and it is not until almost the end of his life that his third production in the field of drama issues from his pen, La Yesharim Tehillah. This play, unlike the first two, is almost perfect in its dramatic elements, and as an allegory it possesses much charm for the reader. It is this latter drama that bore fruit in the field of Hebrew literature, for the Hebrew writers of the time of Luzzatto learned to what uses the language might be put, and although Luzzatto had had much opposition in his lifetime, yet the influence which he had on the development of later Hebrew literature has caused him to be remembered as the father of Modern Hebrew Literature. (4)

II

In the field of morality plays, it has been found that the drama is an outgrowth of early religious plays. (5) And this does in a large measure hold true of the morality plays of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto. This cannot be denied with regard to his earliest play, "Samson and the Philistines", for this drama strikes one as merely an improvisation of

the biblical story of Samson, with the elements of drama (acts and scenes) used for the sake of giving to the story a form for presentation. However, in the other two plays there is a marked advance over the structure of the first play; but in both of the latter two plays we find many phrases and thoughts that are taken from the Bible or else are paraphrases of biblical thoughts. Especially in Migdol Oz do we find a close connection between the scene in which Shalom meets his three friends who try to comfort him, and the scene in the Book of Job in which the friends offer consolation to the stricken Job. (6) In the third play, La Yesharim Tehillah, we have many allusions to biblical wisdom.

We shall consider the structure of the plays individually, for they represent a progress of structural development that could only come with maturity, and their order is therefore a chronological development.

III

In considering the first play by Luzzatto, we must realize that Luzzatto was approaching a new field in Hebrew literature, for not since the Book of Job had there been any Hebrew drama. (7) But at an earlier period, in English literature, there had appeared a play, "Samson Agonistes", by John Milton. This play we consider because there are points of similarity between it and the play by Luzzatto, "Samson and the Philistines". Structurally, the plays are different, for Milton wrote his drama after the form of the Greek drama, utilizing the unities of time and space; and more than this, Milton has reinterpreted the character of Samson and also introduced non-biblical characters.

But Luzzatto did not know Milton, either in the original or in translation. (8) Our interest in Milton's play is in a comparison with that of our author. Milton's drama is a tragedy after the manner of the Greek tragedy; it is a character study of the hero, Samson; while Luzzatto's drama is a drama of three separate incidents linked together by the character of the hero. In writing this play Luzzatto was influenced by the Italian literature and its pseudo-classicism. The allegorical element as well as the names and descriptions of the characters of Luzzatto's play all show signs of the Italian influence. It is true that the allegorical element of the play is not biblical, but the introduction of the pseudo-classical characters by Luzzatto does not detract from the biblical account, nor does it make the play less Hebraic. (9) The character, Delight, taken from the Greek mythology is Judaized by Luzzatto, and no longer is Delight a god in the sense of Greek mythology, but he becomes merely an abstraction in the hands of Luzzatto. (10) It is in this play that we find for the first time the introduction of secular love in Hebrew literature (11), the love of Samson for Timnith. And yet, Luzzatto under the influence of the Italian Renaissance adheres to the monotheism of Judaism; the allegorical allusions do not encroach upon the religious beliefs of our author.

A structural analysis of the play brings to us the fact that there are three acts (really episodes in the life of Samson) and each act is divided into scenes. In the first act of the play, Samson is presented to us as a youth; in the second act we find a more mature person, one who has ex-

perienced tragedy through the deception of his wife, and to add to this tragedy, his father-in-law has given Timnith to another. It is in the second act that doubt begins to assail Samson, while he is yet in his full vigor.

The third act is really the tragic part of the life of the hero. A man guided by his passion, Samson has married Delilah, a Philistine woman. Though physically a strong man, he is not able to overcome his passion, and now, to his own hurt, he succumbs to the wiles of Delilah. Dr. Ginzburg writes that the third act of the play is complete in itself, (12) for here we have the great tragedy of Samson's life. And the last scene of the play is a very tense scene, for in it we find the culmination, such as is rarely reached in modern drama. Samson, blinded and imprisoned, philosophizes on his own life; his errors loom up before his mind, and in his despair he concludes that his life (in blindness) is but death, while death will be life for him, freeing him from his prison chains and from his own thoughts. This treatment of the character of the hero, especially at this point, brings him within our own understanding; no longer is he the mythical hero of a legend, but he is human and heir to human frailties; we are made to feel that there was something noble in our hero in spite of the fact that he so easily succumbed to his passion.

In "Samson Agonistes" by Milton, we do not find the hero so human a character, nor do we feel the tragedy to be so poignant because the Samson of Milton's drama lacks the human touch. The play is somewhat forced because it adheres so closely to the form, and does not partake of reality; and we find that this may all be deduced from

the fact that Luzzatto followed the biblical narrative, while Milton harmonized the narrative with dramatic form.

With regard to the second play, Migdol Oz, Dr. Ginzburg remarks that it is somewhat paradoxical that Luzzatto, a son of the ghetto, could portray so beautifully and so wistfully his longings for nature; that the play is somewhat of an echo of The Song of Songs because of the fine use of the love element. Further, Dr. Ginzburg remarks that rather than a drama, this play is an idyll, a form of literature which was not produced in Hebrew since the Golden Age in Spain. (13) From the artistic point of view, this drama is the nearest approach to the Italian pseudo-classic development. We have noted above (page 2) that this play is an adaptation of Guarini's Il Pastor Fido. Rabbi Isaac Landman gives a splendid synopsis of the story of Migdol Oz together with other remarks. (14)

Rabbi Landman writes: "Luzzatto's earlier play, Migdol Oz, is a comedy in which passion, love and ambition struggle for mastery. It is of "The Merchant of Venice" type of comedy in that at certain points the author touches the tragic.

"Migdol Oz deals with the love of Shalom, a stranger in the land, Kedem, and Shelomith, the only daughter of Ram, its king. Ram had built a fortification on Har Oz and had offered the hand of the princess to the one who would gain entrance to the tower through a secreted door. A certain Zipha succeeded. Shelomith was thus betrothed to him and the nuptial day set.

"Now, Adah, the belle of Kedem and a dear friend of Shelomith, having set her eyes on the handsome Shalom, de-

termined to possess him. She had cast aside many lovers. The latest, named Eri, had discovered in her the archtype of wicked women and swore to rid the world of her; but he succumbed again to her charms and finally paid for his moral weakness with his life. In the suggestion that Adah arrange an interview between Shalom and Shelomith she finds the means for ridding herself of the princess, leaving Shalom to the magic power of her own unequaled charms and unrivaled beauty.

"In this fanciful land, so well named Kedem, there is a law punishing with death by fire every betrothed woman against whom there is proved suspicious relations with other men. So Adah arranges an accidental meeting between the lovers in order to impugn Shelomith's chastity. She also sends a poison package to Zipha alleging that it came from Shelomith, who aimed at Zipha's death, that she might marry Shalom. The princess is thus falsely accused on two counts and is sentenced to death by burning in the market place.

"The disconsolate Shalom, wandering in the outskirts of the city, soliloquizes upon his misfortunes to the mountains. An echo sends back the last words of his sentences, warning him that death awaits him and that there is no helper.

'Better far to die
But once than die a thousand deaths,'

is his reply and he rushes on to the fate that awaits him.

"Arrived in the market place, he finds Shelomith preparing to mount the pyre. Offering himself as his beloved's substitute he makes a public confession of his sins in which

he recounts how he had once broken into the Tower on Har Oz through a secret entrance. Zipha, in turn, confesses that he had found the door wide open, and is pardoned. Adah is prepared to pay the penalty for her intrigues, but Shelomith intercedes in her behalf and the curtain falls on a brilliant marital procession.

"Luzzatto has followed the Italian's story faithfully in this play, translating, paraphrasing, condensing, and borrowing red handed, as in the case of the echo. He approaches the story, however, from the Jewish and not the Italian point of view. He reduced the number of important characters, renamed them and endowed them with Jewish characteristics. He took a story of bold, brutal, bestial passion and infused within it the lofty, divine element which makes of passion love. For the hideous, gory tale of the unfaithful nymph which gives rise to the complications in Guarini's play, he substituted the Midrashic story of the Secret Tower, welding the Guarini-Tasso love tale into a complete, compact plot. Above all, he stripped he Italian's poem of all mythological content and of all the baser elements of the burning passion which Guarini's play idealizes when he permits those who succumb to it to go unpunished, but which Luzzatto condemns by making the transgressors pay the penalty either by death or by the more terrible punishment of conscience.

"Luzzatto created in Migdol Oz the first Hebrew drama, told in good biblical Hebrew, clothed in accurate, smooth-flowing verse, displaying dramatic elements of a high order, exhibiting a developed plot, adaptable for modern stage presentation."

The third drama which we shall consider is La Yesharim Tehillah. This drama was written in Amsterdam toward the end of Luzzatto's life, and it is full of the hard experiences of a none too easy life. The technical appointments of this play are almost perfect; there is no difficulty due to the metre as it prevails in Migdol Oz. (15) While in Migdol Oz there is a flaming zeal, an outburst of passion, in La Yesharim Tehillah, this flame has gone cold; the bitter experiences of a tragic life mark this play as a quiet, calm presentation built upon reflection and a philosophic attitude. We find in this play a more modern outlook than in the other two plays, for while the characters are those of a morality, their words are the thoughts of Luzzatto's own time. (16)

But the story of the drama is told by Rabbi Landman: (17) "In his second play (third from our point of view: Samson and the Philistines, Migdol Oz, and La Yesharim Tehillah) Luzzatto was even more successful from the point of view of Hebrew versification and techinical construction, but he fell below his Migdol Oz in dramatic force. La Yesharim Tehillah is a morality play, making no pretensions to dramatic qualities of a high order. All his characters, with the exception of Hamon (the People), represent allegorically the virtues and the vices and therefore admit of no development or growth in the course of action.

"Hamon (the People) has been duped by Tarmith (Falsehood) to marry his only daughter, Tehillah (Praise) to Rahab (Arrogance). Later, however, he turns to the unrecognized and neglected Josher (Rectitude), the son of Emeth (Truth) and his friend Sechel (Reason) and bestows his

daughter upon the former to whom she had been originally betrothed.

"There is a clear philosophical concept in this morality play. Rectitude and Reason are waging war against Arrogance, Falsehood and Folly. Rectitude is the child of Truth, nurtured by Patience, and Reason is his constant companion. Arrogance is the child of Passion or Desire, raised in the house of Fancy (Imagination), and Falsehood is his constant companion. The prize of the contention is Praise, the only gift of the People. Arrogance and Falsehood impress their presence upon the People through self-advertisement; unobtrusive Rectitude is usually unrecognized. Arrogance and Falsehood have so blinded the People that they do not listen to Reason's argument in behalf of Rectitude; but are ready to bestow their all on Arrogance and the False. Yet, says Luzzatto, optomistically, the heart of the People at bottom is true. In their hearts they believe in God and His workings among men, despite Falsehood's scoffing. However, they must have a concrete example of the truth before they will believe it. That given, the People will open wide their eyes, banish Arrogance and Falsehood and recognize Rectitude as the child of Truth. Then will the People give all Praise to the Righteous."

Rabbi Landman further remarks that from this play, one can pedantically read Luzzatto's life history, for this is the interpretation which Rabbi Landman would give to the characters: (18) "Emeth (Truth) is the Cabala; Josher (Rectitude) is her true son; Rahab (Arrogance) and Tarmith (Falsehood), the Venetian Rabbis and Hagiz; Hamon (the People),

public opinion. Could he, Luzzatto, once reach the Holy Land and there give expression to the dream which he, the son of the True Science, nursed by Patience, has to give to the blinded and deluded People, his persecutors would be banished and public opinion would turn to him; the song of joy would break through the storm of his woes and the People would find lasting happiness in the union of their only gift, Tehillah, to the true child of Truth, Josher."

IV

In the technical metrical structure of Hebrew poetry, Moses Hayyim Luzzatto was the first to set the tonic metre. According to the laws of Hebrew poetry, this is the Iambic pentameter. (19) But besides the Iambic pentameter, in the play, Migdol Oz, Luzzatto also introduces another metrical line; this line consists of two short pauses (beats) and a longer pause (accent), i.e. two 'tenuyous'and one 'yesod', repeated and then three 'tenuyous'. Dr. Ginzburg remarks that this poetical structure is a remnant of the Middle Ages. (20) And of the most nearly perfect of Luzzatto's plays, La Yesharim Tehillah, Dr. Ginzburg feels that this might be an additional book of the Bible, so splendid it is in its Hebrew and in its thought. (21)

In La Yesharim Tehillah, every long verse is based on the meter of two 'tenuyous' and one 'yesod' then seven 'tenuyous'; and every short verse is based on the meter of two 'tenuyous' and one 'yesod' then three 'tenuyous'. (22) The technique of Luzzatto in La Yesharim Tehillah is original and developed; the dramatic picturization of the storm in the last act of the play shows this development toward

a maturity in Hebrew poetry.

Of the first of Luzzatto's dramas, suffice it to say that this drama, "Samson and the Philistines", was written at a time when Luzzatto was working on a prose work, "Leshon Limmudim", and the purpose for writing the drama was to demonstrate the principles laid down in the prose work. (23)

A Comparison With Some English Productions of This Type

We have already stated the foundation of the English Moralities (page 2 above). They take their inspiration from the Church productions, and they are known in their earliest forms as Miracle plays. Their style has no appeal for us today because they are stilted, their phraseology is unique. But the remark of Miss Bates (24) that we must remember that these plays were appropriate to their time and that they were produced under the auspices of the guilds then extant did lend a reality to the productions that passes beyond our ken. In connection with the first drama of our author, we shall consider the English Miracle play, "God's Promises", by John Bale (25) and the play of John Milton, "Samson Agonistes". The English Miracle play is known as an Interlude based on the Old and New Testament, and having seven different acts or interludes, from Noah to the advent of Christianity, John the Baptist's appearance. This play merits consideration only from the point of structure noted above, that is, it is similar to Luzzatto's play only in that it divides the biblical material which it uses into acts, as does Luzzatto in "Samson and the Philistines".

We have discussed the play of Milton from the point of its structure after the Greek drama; and we have further shown that this play did not influence our author in the writing of his play. Our interest at the present time is in the analysis of the character of Samson, the hero. For the English author, Samson is merely a tragic hero, the

victim of a series of unfortunate incidents, almost the victim of fate. While in the hands of Luzzatto, Samson becomes a human being, subject to the foibles and the weaknesses of human nature. This latter view we find in Samson's soliloquy at the beginning of the Second Act, Scene 1:

"How long must I sit alone without a wife? Behold, when man was put upon the earth, his spirit was never quiet until one of his ribs was taken at the time when a deep sleep fell upon his eyes; because out of the bone of his bone, the flesh of his flesh, a woman was fashioned. Almighty God alone can build for them a house. Behold, in the first generation the earth had been devastated had there been no woman, for she gave life to the seed. And if the heart (of a man) deceived by love were persuaded so that his footsteps went even to the grave, it is not her sin nor her iniquity; nor does she deserve a judgment of death, because he it is who afflicts his kin. Such is the fruit of comfort to a full soul (because it is empty and vain, they are untimely). Let him eat, for thus does he deserve. What is sweeter than honey or the honeycomb for the palate to taste? As soon as its goodness tires, he will vomit it. Behold, life is made happy by the blood (juice) of sweet grapes; a wandering soul will be returned, (even) embittered souls. But when he will remove the boundary and widen the breach (scatter the sword), she will not prepare against him an avenging sword because his wounds are many, and woe to more (of them). Who has? Who has darkling eyes? Thus does a woman commit profanity for the sake of a man. Because

"when she is lacking (so is) all repentance and comfort, his body is half lacking; he will not be called a man until both man and woman are joined together. But when he is sated with her, then he thrusts her aside; instead of goodness she returns only evil unto us, even if we observe the statute and the law that was put (upon us) to take a woman (wife) unto us for a helpmate and not a stumbling block. Because our heart will not receive the beauty of her form, the purity of her pupils. In sexual pleasure, she gives rest; we shall be sated with her love; evil shall not befall her, affliction shall not draw near the tents of our good one. Thus ought I also to return to the wife of my youth; I shall not be angry, I shall not bear grudge. Selah. But I will keep a muzzle for my mouth; I shall guard my way lest part of her lips make my heart stumble again. I will take from me the balsam of a snake and the poison of its bitterness I shall cast away; then I shall be prosperous. I shall return unto her, the doe of my love; I shall lodge between her breasts and yet be on(my) guard. Behold, the choice fruit of the produce of the sun cannot grow if there is no furrow of fields and choice fruit of the earth. Without woman, man cannot make a breach; his increase is destruction and waste."

While in "Samson Agonistes", Milton presents the tragedy of Samson's life in a manner that causes us to feel that Samson is a superman filled with wisdom, and yet in his powerlessness to overcome passion. We quote from the play:

"Whom have I to complain of but myself?
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
O'ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body strong!" (26)

The presentation of Delila by Milton is far different from the presentation of her by Luzzatto, for Milton makes her the victim of circumstances and provides her with an excuse for her act in giving up Samson to the Philistines, the excuse of an impassioned love:

"Why then reveal'd? I was assured by those
Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd
Against thee but safe custody and hold:
That made for me; I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
Wailing thy absence in my widow's bed;
Here I should still enjoy thee day and night
Mine and Love's prisoner, not the Philistines,
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love.
.....
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe."
(27)

In "Samson and the Philistines" by Luzzatto, we have a dialogue between Samson and Delilah which gives insight into the cunning of Delilah (28):

The characters of the dialogue are Samson and Delilah, and Delilah tries to overcome Samson's resistance in not divulging the secret of his strength.

"Delilah: My love is red and hot, that is why I love thee. The fruit of thy friendship is sweeter than honey to my palate. Yes, I have always been amazed in seeing the greatness of thy power, and who can equal you. But, please tell me how you increased your power, and how is it that your might is so great? Is there any one in the land who could vex you or bind you?

Samson: There is such a one who can vex me; he can even bind me with seven ropes, then my power will leave me, I shall go his way; then I will be like all men of destitution.

Delilah: Let me see if I can vex you. (she binds him) Wake up, Samson, wake up! The Philistines are upon you.

Samson: If the Philistines are upon me, I shall not fear them. I shall tear it away just as the wick of refuse unbinds itself when it smells fire, all the ropes together. (he unbinds them)

Delilah: Truly you have mocked me. Now tell me words of truth; how can you be bound in order to vex you?"

The remainder of this dialogue is repetitional until we come to that part in which Delilah really reproves Samson and he is about to weaken. In the next speech we have the working of her wiles by Delilah:

"Delilah: Aren't you merciless when you see my heart burning with fire; you are merciless. (O merciless one) it burns together with yours; and yet in recompense you offer unto me the hardness (stiffness) of your neck. What can be sweeter unto my palate then reaping your love? And you despise the sweetness of my breasts! But I erred, saying that I love you. Because as long as love does not come near unto you, you do not know it and it does not reach. Verily, since you have not known how to satiate my desire, you will certainly sate my anger. The hardness of my neck will be fiercer than that of yours; the presumptuousness of my heart shall humble that of your heart. The trembling of a garment on a cold Winter day is like flattering words on an evil heart, because it is vain to speak softly unto a stiff-necked fellow; only obstinate answers will he give."

In "Samson Agonistes" the Chorus speaks the end of the play, giving a moral turn that is much less subtle than that which we find in "Samson andthe Philistines", for Luzzatto's play, even to the end, gives a religious characterization of Samson. Let us compare these two final scenes, first taking the Chorus of Milton's play, and then the final words of Samson: (29)

"All is best, though we oft doubt
What th' unsearchable dispose
Of Highest Wisdom brings about,

Chorus: "And ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns,
And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously; Whence Gaza mourns
And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent;
His servants he with new acquist
Of true experience from this great event,
With peace and consolation hath dismist,
And calm of mind all passion spent."

Samson: "Remember, O God, that I have judged Thy people, Israel for twenty years. Uphold my strength this once that I might take revenge on these Philistines. Just one revenge! (he turns toward the Philistines) Why do I need life? Wherefore? Are not my days like the ruins of a house; all my moments are occasioned by God. My sigs come before my bread; my groanings are melted like water. Thus shall I await death. I shall dig it from hidden treasures if I shall find them. When I hear that my enemies have surrounded me with their voices, and there is no helper unto me, verily my arm shall cause salvation to spring up because I shall kill my wife. Since my life is silence and quietude, I only want to give my heart its death; thus will I do. I might have lost my power, but I did not lose my reason. No, I did not lose it. My spirit is noble since it has supported me! I shall kill myself, then I shall

be quiet. My life is death because my soul has been terrified. My days are extinguished, my spirit is destroyed. I shall bend my broken heart, I shall wear strength, and I shall kill my soul. Like a mighty one shall I die, and then I shall be peaceful. I shall live in my death, and I shall make my pain cease. I shall die. I do not fear death; I laugh at fear. Let my soul die together with the Philistines."

We have stated above that Milton gives an interpretation of the character of Delila which makes of her an heroic character. Let us quote this passage in which Delila, after trying her wiles on the blinded Samson, turns on him in a boastful manner. (30)

Delila speaks: "But in my country, wher I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
I shall be nam'd among the foremost
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
.....
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
The public marks of honor and reward
Conferr'd upon me for the piety
Which to my country I was judg'd to have shown."

In the Chester Pageant of "Abraham, Melchisedec and Isaac", we are reminded of this first play of Luzzatto, for, like "Samson and the Philistines", this play is taken from the biblical narrative. However, in the Chester Pageant, we have the Christian theology, given thru

the Expositor (31):

"Lordlings all take good intent
What betokens this commandment: (circumcision)
This was some time a sacrament
In th' old law truly ta'en.
As followeth now verament,
So was this in the old Testament;
But when Christ, away it went,
And baptism then began.
Also God promises here
To Abraham, his servant dear,
So much seed that in no manere
Number'd it might be.
And one seed, mankind to forby,
That was Jesus Christ witterlye
For of his kind was our Lady,
And so also was he."

And thus throughout the play, do we find such alterations of the biblical narrative. The Epilogue of this Pageant is a moral warning based upon Christian theology: (32)

"Lordings, the signification
Of this deed of devotion,
An you will, it is shewn,
May turn you to much good.
This deed you see done in this place,
In example of Jesus done it was,
That for to win manking grace
Was sacrificed on the rood.
By Abraham you may understand

"The Father of heaven that can fand
With his son's blood to break that band
The devil had brought us to.
By Isaac understand I may
Jesus who was obedient aye,
His father's will to work alway,
His death to undergo."

The Chester Pageant of the Deluge we can dismiss without any quotations, for the only similarity that it bears to that of Luzzatto is that it also follows the biblical narrative. This play does possess humor, however, and Miss Bates remarks (33) that this play stands out above the others because it is less stilted, and because it presents in a measure the life and reflects the thought of the time in which it was produced.

With regard to the second play of Luzzatto, Migdol Oz, we have found nothing to which it might be compared. Perhaps this is because Migdol Oz is an idyll, and hence superior to the English Moralities. Only in a nearly contemporaneous prose drams, "George Barnwell", by George Lillo, do we find any points of similitude. This Morality by Lillo is a domestic play, and it is not subtle enough to possess any beauty. The critics do not hold this play in high esteem (34). There are two thoughts in this play which can be paralleled in Migdol Oz. The first thought is found in the scene in which Barnwell cannot divulge his misdemeanor to his friend, Trueman, and the friend replies

that he considers it the privilege of a friend to suffer with one he loves even though it is not given him to learn the cause of the suffering. This thought in Migdol Oz is expressed as follows (35):

'Shimi speaks: "How are you, beloved of my soul? I cannot understand your appearance; you seem to be sick or weary because your face is fallen (you are crestfallen). If it is sickness, then do you not know that all sickness and anger are messengers from the God of Kedem? They go to whomever they were directed. But if it is worry, then do you not know that pain is to the soul as a moth to clothes; slowly, if only a wick be in it, it will eat and destroy it. If I demand this from you, my friend, it is only because I desire your good; and you know that because it is a law of friendship that when one is smitten by a sickness, both feel it; if you become sick, I will also become sick like you. I only imagine this; it is better to be quiet."'

The second similarity which we find between the two plays is that each has a vampire who seeks to win for herself the hero. A synopsis of the story of "George Barnwell" will bring out this point. George Barnwell is a young man of eighteen years in the employ of the banker, Mr. Thorogood. Millwood, the vampire, has decided to ensnare our hero in order to get possession of some of the money of the banking house. In this she succeeds, much to the dismay of Mr. Thorogood (who trusted Barnwell) and of Trueman, the very dear friend of Barnwell. Millwood's

secret is revealed by her maid and butler, and both she and Barnwell must answer for the crime.

Millwood is deceitful after she has used Barnwell for her evil purposes, and in this she reminds us of Adah; however, Adah is a much more subtle character, and one who holds our interest because in her deceit, she deluded herself in thinking that she could put Shelomith out of the way and thus have Shalom for herself. Her trickery in sending Zipha the poisoned food through the maid of Shelomith has more dramatic force than the trickery which Millwood employs.

And the last point which recommends Luzzatto's play to us as superior to Lillo's play is the fine way in which the events untangle themselves, giving dramatic force to the entire drama. The forced issue of Lillo's play is to be found in the moral put into the words of George Barnwell (36):

> "Be warn'd, ye youths, who see my sad despair,
> Avoid lewd women, false as they are fair.
> By reason guided, honest joys pursue:
> The fair, to honor and to virtue true,
> Just to herself, will ne'er be false to you.
> By my example learn to shun my fate:
> (How wretched is the man who's wise too late!)
> Ere innocence and fame and life be lost,
> Here purchase wisdom, cheaply, at my cost."

With regard to the third and finest play of Luzzatto, we can find only one parallel worth out consideration. This is the Morality known as "The Marriage of Wit and

Science". This play offers only one striking similarity to La Yesharim Tehillah, and that is in the plot. In La Yesharim Tehillah, the main character, Rectitude, has been deceived into a false position, and he is not recognized as the rightful son of Truth. In the English Morality which we are considering, there is a similar occurrence when Wit falls asleep in the lap of Idleness, and Ignorance, the son of Idleness, dons the garment of Wit in order to present himself for the hand of Science. (37)

The story of this play commands our attention only so far because the play is built upon a stilted plot with no freshness to it, while Luzzatto's play offers more intriguing incidents. We quote several passages from La Yesharim Tehillah, and in the first we are reminded of the definition of friendship as we quoted it from Migdol Oz (38):

> "Reason speaks: 'My friend, as dear to me as my brother, you must surely understand that it grieves me over the distress of your soul; and that I understand (feel) your pain as though it were my own. Behold, this is the covenant of friends, the law of brotherhood, that they are united as one, united as twins in the womb, bared to the same happenings and occurrences. But what should I say, for since the time when these bitter waters crept over this poor native city of ours, my heart has had no rest.'"

The second passage which we quote is interesting for two reasons, the first being that it brings to mind Wisdom Literature, and the second, the sheer beauty of the thought.

"Reason speaks: '.....
because the righteous worker does not always fail, and the hope of those that strive after righteousness shall not be lost forever. Behold, Pride ascends and reaches the clouds. He rides upon the heights of the world, succeeds, and spreads himself as one who is mighty and dominant. He does not cease from his passion, nor does he see trouble, and he is ignorant of all the pangs of poverty. But he will be brought down to the netherworld. There all the pride of his heart will be humbled, and instead of haughtines he will be covered with shame as his apparel. He will always receive disgrace instead of honor. For all the trouble of your soul that you experience, you will find the fruit of your faith in its season, and be satisfied forever. When you will be redeemed, you will give thanks for your affliction. All the troubles which you have passed through are joys on a happy day, for they increase joy, whenever they are remembered.'" (39)

A third quotation which we shall give is the prayer of Praise. This is a beautiful piece of writing which we do well to translate (40):

"Behold, now I stand here alone. I lift up my heart; also I spread forth my hands. I pour out my soul and my spirit together (in anguish) before my God, for without Him there is no refuge and protection forever. Selah. Perhaps He will extricate this terror-stricken person from the snares put at her feet without cause. O Thou that rulest

"the world with might, Thou art the Master and King and there is none besides thee. O Omnipotent, whose mighty power has no limit forever; behold, there is none who can deny thy wish, nor, lo, is there a God like Thee in Heaven, how much less then on the earth. Who is he and where is he who speaks and it comes to pass, or whose plan is realized, unless Thou hadst so ordered. Who is he that can lift up or cause his hand and foot to rest unless Thou hadst known it. Who is quiet whom Thou hast not made quiet. Who is afflicted whom Thou hast not afflicted. I pray Thee favor and grant the entreaty of the soul that apart from Thee does not know of any refuge. I pray Thee be willing to do a favor to a bitterly afflicted heart, to a spirit Thou hast crushed. Calm, I beseech thee, the waves of thy hot anger, and like a father, be kind again to the soul thou hast chastised. Be willing, I pray thee, to deliver my foot from the net. ..... Grant me the portion of a righteous person, and not of the children of iniquity. Let me be a servant of Righteousness, and not the mistress of the house of Pride."

Throughout this study of the plays of Luzzatto and the comparison with English Moreilty plays, we have noted a certain freshness in the Hebrew plays, both in plot and in thought, that seemed to be lacking in the English plays, even that play of so late a date as to be almost contemporaneous with Luzzatto's works (George Barnwell). It may be due to a certain prejudice of our mind, that the Moralities did not have an appeal; but one is rather inclined to draw a different conclusion from the fact that the Moralities are not read today for their beauty, but where they are read, it is as a study of the drama, or else in private circles. They do not enjoy much popularity, and this we know from the fact that libraries cannot offer them from their shelves.

But of the plays of Luzzatto, we may honestly hope to see them in English translation so that they may be read and appreciated by a large circle, and we might even dare to hope, with Dr. Solomon Ginzburg, that they may some day find their way to the stage for presentation.

NOTES

1. J. E. article on Luzzatto, Moses Hayyim
2. Introd. to Sefer Hamachazos, p. IX
3. Isaacs, A.S., "A Modern Hebrew Poet", p. 45
4. Introd. To Sefer Hamachazos, p. XXIV
5. Bates, K.L., The English Religious Drama, p.1
6. note 270 to the play Migdol Oz, S.H. p. קכז
7. Introd. to S.H. p. VIII
8. Introd. to S. H. p. VIII
9. ibid. p. IX
10. note 8 to the play Samson and the Philistines, S.H. p 1
11. Introd. to S.H. p. X
12. ibid, p. XII
13. ibid. p. XVI-XVII
14. C.C.A.R. Yearbook, vol. xvii, pp 196-7
15. Introd. to S.H. p. XVII
16. ibid. p. XIX
17. C.C.A.R. Yearbook, vol. xvii, pp. 197-8
18. ibid.
19. Introd. to S.H. p. XXI
20. ibid. p. XXI XXIII
21. ibid. p. XXI-XXII
22. ibid. p. XXI
23. ibid. (preface)
24. Bates, K.L., English Religious Drama, chap. V.
25. Everyman with other Interludes, pp. 153 ff.

26. Milton, J., Samson Agonistes, pp 14-15
27. ibid. p. 40
28. Samson and the Philistines, Act III, Scene 5, p. ס
29. Milton, J., Samson Agonistes, p. 72
30. ibid. p. 46
31. Everyman and other Interludes, p. 44
32. ibid. p. 51
33. Bates, K.L., English Religious Drama, p 106f
34. note, in Introd. to George Barnwell
35. Migdol Oz, Act I, Scene 1, p. פ ה
36. Lillo, George, George Barnwell, Act IV, Scene 3
37. Hazlitt, W.C., Dodsley's Old English Plays, vol. II pp. 358-9
38. La Yesharim Tehillah, p. רפז
39. ibid. p. רכו
40. ibid. p. רלד

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