

U

M O S E S L O E B L I L I E N B L U M .

A THESIS FOR THE RABBINICAL DEGREE

OF THE

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE

BY

SAMUEL FELIX MENDELSON, B. A.

CINCINNATI, OHIO,

FEBRUARY 1, 1917.

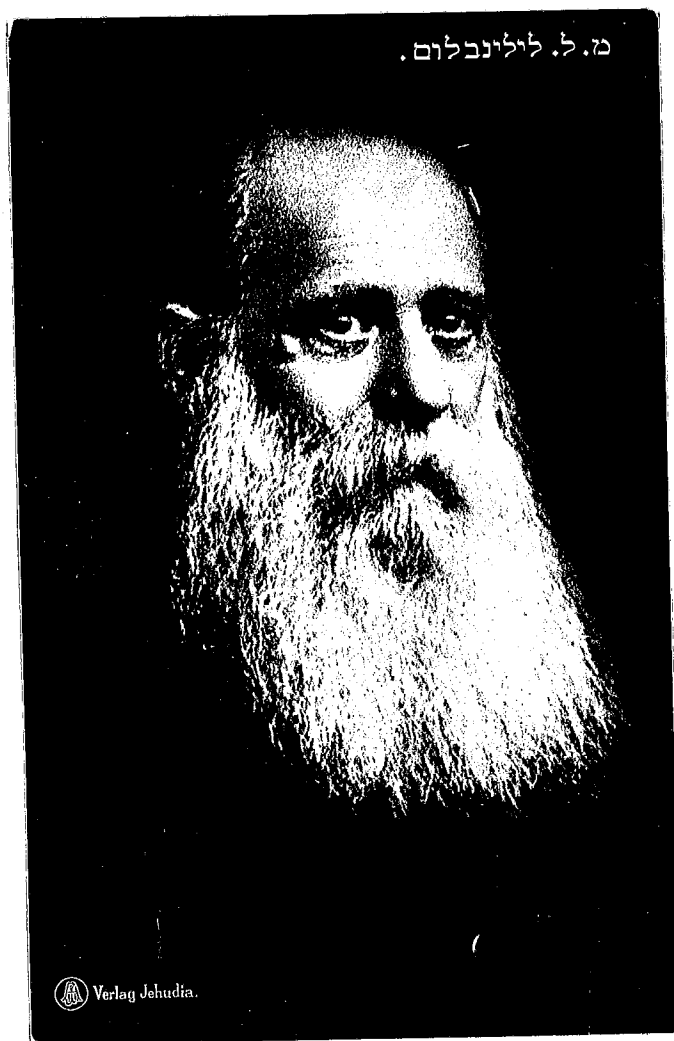
Recd. 5/79
Subscribed

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S .

LILLIENBLUM'S PORTRAIT

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER I STORM AND STRESS	PAGE 1.
CHAPTER II REFORMATION AND CHANGE	PAGE 14.
CHAPTER III ADAPTATION AND MATURATION	PAGE 34.
CHAPTER IV RESURRECTION AND REJUVENATION	PAGE 47.
CHAPTER V ESTIMATION AND APPRECIATION	PAGE 62.



Moses Loeb Lilienblum

B I B L I O G R A P H Y .

A. LILIENTBLUM'S WORKS:-

Kel Kieve Moshe Loeb Lilienblum,

Vol. I, Krakay, 1910,

Vol. II, Krakau, 1912,

Vol. III, Odessa, 1912,

Vol. IV, Odessa, 1913,

(Vol. II contains also Chatoth Neurim and Kehal Refaim.)

Derech Teshubah, Warsaw, 1899,

Derech La'abor Golim, Warsaw, 1899.

Pyat Momentovizh Zhizni Moiseya, Warsaw, 1900 (Yiddish Translation, New York, 1909.)

Der Judesher Wecker (which contains as supplement the drama Zerubbabel).

Zionistische Kopike Bibliothek: 1. Rishon Lezion. 8. Der Odesser Komitet. 15. Geulah Titnu La-arez, Odessa.

Various Articles in Newspapers and Magazines.

B. LILIENTBLUMIANA.

1. Ben Ami. Reshith Yeme Hithvaduthiel M.L. Lilienblum
(Haolom No. 9, 1910)

2. Berdichevsky, M. J., M. L. Lilienblum (in Baerev, Warsaw 1910)

3. Brainin, R., M. L. Lilienblum (Tageblatt N. Y., Feb. 15, 1910)

4. Carmeli, Yigal, M.L. Lilienblum (in Haneurim) Krakau, 1904.

5. Cohen, Mordecai, M. L. Lilienblum (in Luach Achiasaf) Warsaw,
1893.

6. Cutler Z. Gedanken wegen Lilienblum

(Tageblatt N. Y., Feb. 17, 1910)

7. Dubnow, S. Shete Pegishoth (Haolom No. 9, 1910)

8. Friedlaender, I. The Jews of Russia and Poland, N.Y., 1915.

9. Frischman, D. M.L. Lilienblum (in Parzufim, Warsaw, 1912.)
10. Ginzberg, Asher. Ha'achron (Al Parashath Derochim IV, Berlin, 1913.)
11. Glückson, M. J. Michtab Me-Odessa (Haolom No. 5, 1910).
12. Goldberg, Ab. Lilienblum (in Gesamelte Schriften, Vol. I, N. Y. 1913).
13. Gottheil, R. Zionism. Philadelphia, 1914.
14. Hurwitz, S. I., Lilienblum Vhashpo'oso (Haolom No. 9, 1910)
15. Klausner, J. Lilienblum Ha'adam Vehasofer (Introductory essay to Kol Kisve I).
16. Klausner, J. M. L. Lilienblum (Haschiloah V. 22, 1910).
17. Klausner, J. Hazeromim Hachadoshim shel Hasafuth Haibrith New York, 1907.
18. Kleinman, M. Rabbi M.L. Lilienblum (Kopike Bibliothek) Odessa, 1910.
19. Margulies, Isaac. Mo'oz Ha-Talmud, Warsaw, 1869.
20. Margulies, Isaac. Mo'oz Hayom, Vilna, 1870.
21. Niger, S. Hachasiduth She-beish Hama'ase (Haolom No. 9, 1910).
22. Pinsker, Leo. Auto-Emancipation (Eng. Tr.) 2nd edition, New York, 1916.
23. Rabensohn, M. Haderishyoth Hechomriyoth (in Safruthenu Hachadashag) Vilna, 1913.
24. Raisin, Jacob S. The Haskalah Movement in Russia. Philadelphia, 1913.
25. Reisen, Z. Lexicon der Judischer Literatur, Warsaw 1914.
26. Rhine, A. B. Leon Gordon. Philadelphia, 1910.
27. Sapir, J. Hazionuth, Vilna, 1903.
28. Simon, L. Moses Leib Lilienblum. Cambridge, 1912.

29. Simon L. The Hebrew Revival (in Zionism and the Jewish Future, New York, 1916.)
30. Slouschz, N. The Renaissance of Hebrew Literature, Philadelphia, 1909.
31. Sokolow, N. Sefer Zikoron, Warsaw, 1889.
32. Suwalsky, I. M. L. Lilienblum (in Hayehudi, Feb. 24, 1910).
33. Tavyov, J. H. Mivchar Hasaf Ruth, Warsaw, 1904.
34. Usischkin, M. Arbaah Regoim (Haolom No. 9, 1910.)
35. Waldstein, A. S. Appreciation of Lilienblum (Maccabean for March, 1910).
36. Wintchevsky, M. Zhurnalistiche Erinnerungen (in Die Zukunft for Nov. 1906).
37. Wintchevsky, M. Letheur Demutho shel Lilienblum (Haolom No. 16, 1910.)
-

CHAPTER I

STORM AND STRESS.

The nineteenth century, and notably the second half, has been a period of Sturm und Drang in the life of the Jews of Russia and Poland. Their political and social status, which were changed in accordance with the policies of the respective Czars and their "holy" counsellors, effected also numerous spiritual changes within, which influenced the Jewry of the world. The whole subject dealing with the struggle of the Russian Jew for light and liberty is of absorbing interest, since the Russian Jew is still one of the world's problems. For even in our own day the Russian Jew is, as Ahad Ha'am describes it, at the Parting of the Ways, and his fate is still in the balance. He is still an object of sport in the hands of the Czars, and his life, liberty, and property are at the mercy of the Romanoffs.

But while the Russian Jew has been politically and economically dependent upon outside factors, spiritually he constituted a world unto himself; many movements have arisen among the Russian Jew which shaped and changed his life. These movements resulted out of conscious efforts created by certain personalities who, while being influenced by their environment, have not at the same time failed to leave their imprints upon the sand of their own time. Russian Jewish history has such characters in abundance. In studying the cultural development of the Russian Jew in the second half of the nineteenth century, therefore, we shall be enabled to have a clear picture of our period by relating the biographies of some of these prominent figures.

It is to one of these heroes that we shall direct our attention in the present study, namely to the life of Moses Loeb Lilien-

blum. (1843-1910). As will be shown later he was one of those men whose life was typical of the times in which he lived, having been influenced by (but at the same time moulding) the period in which he lived. A study of the life of such a man will therefore constitute a chapter of his entire contemporaneous period.

In order, however, to understand his life more clearly, we shall devote the first part of our study to a brief account of the political, economic, and spiritual conditions of the Russian Jews in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Being that Russia is ^{an} absolute Monarchy, it is of course natural that its people should be at the mercy of the Czars. The conditions of the Jews therefore changed with the rise and fall of its monarchs; and, like all conservative and reactionary countries, the Russian Government has been guided by traditions. Reviewing the attitude of the Czars towards the Jews in the period preceding the second half of the nineteenth century, we find that the Czars have inherited the following traditions: The Jewish people is never to be at peace as long as it clings to the Jewish religion. Finding the conversion of the Jew towards the Greek Catholic faith a mighty difficult task, the Czars have therefore oppressed him both economically and spiritually. Hence the struggles of the Russian Jews have not been for wealth and power, but for a piece of bread. Unlike the Poles the Czars, in the first place, drove the Jews out of the villages into the towns, and, in the second place, attempted to disintegrate the inner structure of Russian Jewry so as to bring it nearer to Christianity. Russia never attempted the Russification of the Jew per se, as it may be seen to the present day from the restriction in the school norm where only a small percent-

Page 3.

age is admitted. Hence we may safely say that Russia's aim in its policy has been the total annihilation of Judaism.

It is with these traditions regarding the Jews clearly kept in mind that Nicholas I (1825-1855) began his regime. His general policy was the embodiment of Russian Autocracy, checking furiously the uprising of the revolutionary Dyekabrists and suppressing systematically freedom of speech and thought. The Jews more than any other unit of the Empire felt his iron hand, which is seen especially in the ritual murder trial of Velizh (1826) having been inspired by him, although he dismissed the case in 1835. He contracted besides the Pale of Settlement, excluding Jews from such provinces where they were permitted to live previously. He exiled many Jews from the villages of Grodno and Kief into the towns. Czar Nicholas I outdid his predecessors in his endeavor to christianize the Jews. Up to his day the Jews redeemed themselves from the army through an extra tax, but he, in order to bring the Jew nearer to the Christian, introduced military service among Jews. Finding, however, the mind of the eighteen year old Jewish lad too mature to be influenced by Christian teachings, he began to draft children of the age of 12, who were to spend their youth in Christian Cantons (hence called Cantonists). This ukase was signed August 26, 1827, and wrought havoc in Jewish ranks affecting seriously their moral and social status. Each community was responsible for a certain quota. Naturally the rich found it possible to evade this ukase. To complete the necessary quota the community appointed "catchers" who in many cases deprived poor mothers of their only sons. These boys were in many instances forced into baptism, but a review of results accomplished

convinced the Czar that he was doing poor business. This institution of Nicholas demoralized the Russian Jew to a degrading extent, and the whole story of the Cantonists constitutes one of the blackest chapters in Russian Jewish history. ¶ Czar Nicholas I employed besides other means for the purpose of converting the Jew. Knowing the value of the Jews for his country he would not permit their migration. He began instead to direct Jews towards Siberia for the purpose of colonization. Finding, however, that this did not increase the number of baptisms, he revoked this ukase in 1837. All the Jews who went to Siberia were deported on foot thus increasing Jewish want and misery. He also instructed Uvarov, the minister of education, to open schools for Jews where secular subjects be taught and also the Jewish Religion "according to Holy Writ", that is to say, not according to the Talmud, which, in the opinion of the Czar, stands for a perverted type of religion. Dr. Lillienthal, who had opened a school for Jewish children in Riga, was invited by the Government to be its propagandist in this new enterprise. The Maskilim encouraged this new step of the Government, but the conservatives opposed it, maintaining that the aim of the government was baptism. Lillienthal promised that he would give up his post, if this accusation should be found true. In 1844, the Czar issued a decree calling for the establishment of the schools and two rabbinical seminaries. The following year Lillienthal resigned his office, evidently finding out the designs of the Russian government. In 1843 Czar Nicholas issued the removal of Jews from places located within fifty vyerst from the boundary zone, which, together with the removal from the villages, deprived 50,000 Jews of their support. Sir Moses Montefiore visited Rus-

e

Page 5.

sia in 1846 on behalf of the Jews, but his intercession was of no avail. Uvarov told him that the Jews must be persecuted as long as they believe in the Talmud. In 1844 the old Kahal organizations were abolished leaving only the collection of Korobka (Government taxes on meat and candles) in the hands of the Jewish community. In order to free themselves from military service, many Jews resorted to self-mutilation which of course created a shortage in the quota of recruits, and it was the object of the community to make this good. The Government thereupon came to the help of the Jewish "Conscription elders" in 1853 by issuing a decree permitting them to get hold of any Jew who chanced to be found without a passport and make him a substitute. This fact furthered the demoralization of entire Jewry. All persecutions, however, did not decrease the number of Jews, but on the contrary increased them. All in all Czar Nicholas I deserved the title which was given to him by his contemporary Jews, namely, Haman II.

Alexander II (1856-1881) was the great liberator of Russia, having abolished serfdom in 1861, thereby freeing 22 millions of Muzhiks. He introduced many other reforms. His attitude towards the Jews was more favorable than that of his predecessors. He abolished Juvenile conscription, but did not permit Jews to live outside the Pale. Like his forefathers it was his desire to see the Jews amalgamated with the other inhabitants. He therefore permitted certain Jewish classes to reside outside of the Pale. These included soldiers that served under Nicholas I, merchants of the first guild, graduates of Russian universities, and artisans affiliated with trade unions. In other words, he selected out of the Jews those elements which are best adapted for assimilation, and best able to benefit the Russian people. Thus the

reforms of this Czar have been slight and have greatly been exaggerated by his Jewish contemporaries. Especially did Czar Alexander II become reactionary at the end of his reign, having come under the influence of the bigoted Pobyedinoszev, who taught his children. As a result we find anti Jewish riots in Odessa in 1871 and a ritual murder trial in Kuteis in 1878. Being that the Jews did not receive equal rights, and because of their spirit of liberalism, they joined secret organizations of nihilists and socialists through whose conspiracy the czar was killed in 1881. This fact gave even more impetus to the fury of anti semitism, and its reins were set loose especially under Alexander III (1881-1894). He began his reign with a clearly-defined policy, namely the total extermination of the Jews. His reign crushed even the faintest hope of liberalism, since his adviser was Pobyedinoszev, who by this time was the procurator of the Holy Synod and whom Turgenev called the "Russian Turquemada". Instigated by high officials, the Russian peasants literally drenched Russian soil with Jewish blood in the course of three months. In 1882 he framed the famous May Laws by which the rural Jew was finally destroyed, and the Pale was made even smaller. It is during his reign that Pobyedinoszev formulated his well-known prophesy as to what was destined for the Russian Jew: one-third was to be annihilated, one-third was to emigrate, and the other third was to be converted. True to this policy Alexander particularly showed favors to converts and increased his persecution upon the rest. As to his son, Nicholas II (1894) we may say that he is a worthy successor of his father. His bloody treatment of the Jew is too well known to need special account in this place.

Having surveyed the political and economic status of the Jew of our period, we shall now turn our attention to a brief account of his spiritual development and its accompanying changes.

In the nineteenth century it is the Lithuanian Jews who rise to the foreground. They are hardy and energetic, and display by nature predilection for philosophical and theological speculations. But in the South-West of the Pale we find a different development. Because of environment the Jews there were of a more emotional character, a fact which accounts for the large number of artistic geniuses who have emerged from these provinces. They found no interest in Talmudic logic, hence they accepted the teachings of Hasidism. This sect spread also to Poland, assuming there, however, a more intellectual form, since many Talmudic schools abounded there. Little by little, however, the Jew began to come in contact with foreign influences, and the great problem arose how to harmonize Judaism with the outside world. This was the task of the Haskalah movement which originated in Germany but came to Russia, mainly through Galician channels. Prior to Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) the spirit of separateness in Germany was as intense as in Russia, but Mendelssohn and his associates opened the Ghetto walls for the beauty of Japheth to enter therein. This was done mainly through his translation of the Pentateuch and the publication of the "Measefim". In Germany, however, this movement for Enlightenment led towards assimilation; it is only in Galicia that a true compromise between Judaism and culture was attained. Nachman Krochmal and S. J. Rapoport are representatives of this school of thought. But in Russia, the Haskalah movement penetrated later.

This aim of the Haskalah movement was (1) to convey modern ideas in Hebrew, and (2) to get the Jews out of the narrowness of his life into the European world. This Course of procedure was natural in Germany, a country with a high cultural status. Russia, however, did not have any culture worth adapting. Hence the beginnings of the Haskalah in Russia were an imitation of the same movement in Germany. Both Mendelssohn's Pentateuch and the Measefim were at first favorably received. But during the reign of Alexander I a member of Maskilim resorted to Christianity, and this caused the pious orthodox Jew to look upon Haskalah with suspicion and distrust. Even then they condemned the Maskil more than the movement he represented. The Orthodox were afraid that at bottom Haskalah was only a means for Christianizing the Jew, and their suspicion was corroborated by the fact that Mendelssohn's children embraced Christianity. Thereupon they condemned both the Mendelssohnian Pentateuch and the Measefim. Thus the opposition against the German school beginning with Moses Sofer (who said ⁽¹⁾ *ה'רמב"ם לא ידענו שיש להקל*) passed now over to Russia. Both Chasidim and Mithnagdim joined in the fight, calling the Maskil "Berlinchik" and "Deitchel". Many Maskilim blindly believed that the Russian Government was their natural ally in their crusade for Enlightenment, but in this respect they were greatly mistaken. Hence the orthodox Jew came to distrust both the Government and the Maskil.

As we have seen the opposition of the Government was against the Talmud. For this reason, during the reign of Nicholas I, many books against the Talmud were circulated. Some Jews (as was quite natural) in order to ingratiate themselves with the Government wrote books against the Talmud (2). This, however, did not decrease the

(1) Raisin Haskalah Movement, P. 316. (2) Ibid, P. 146.

study of the Talmud, and the numerous Yeshiboth, notably that of Volozhin, continued to be flourishing. The mighty Czar found himself helpless in the face of the weak Jew.

Yet in spite of opposition the Haskalah movement continued to progress, and in the larger cities schools were opened for the purpose of introducing secular knowledge to the Jew. Czar Nicholas, however, checked these efforts, believing as he did that the Jewish way of imparting Haskalah was not good for Russia. We have seen how the Czar's work in this direction, with Lillienthal as the head, has failed. The Jews maintained that education without emancipation leads to conversion. Hence they refused to participate in the Czar's pretended crusade in behalf of education. The two Rabbinical Seminaries in Vilna and Zhitomir thus proved a failure. The congregations refused to engage its graduates, because the Talmud was neglected by them. All these conditions brought about a situation that even the Maskilim themselves paid more attention to German culture than to Russian. The latter had very little to offer them. There was no one Russian language in the early decades of the nineteenth century, each locality speaking its own dialect (a fact which is true of Russia even today). Thus German poets and philosophers continued to be the inspiration of Russian Jews. They held such a lofty opinion of Kant that they interpreted his name to stand for the Hebrew words *נפש תערוג* כ'ל'ג (3). Then again, through the similarity of Yiddish to German, and through Mendelssohn's Pentateuch, it was easier for the Russian Jew to acquire German ~~than any other language~~ than any other language.

In the early forties there were Maskilim in every city of the

Pale. The Rabbinical Seminaries did some good in this respect, as some of the greatest Maskilim graduated from these institutions, including such scholars as A. A. Harkavy, J. L. Kantor and Joshua Steinberg. The Father of Russian Haskalah was Isaac Baer Levinsohn of Kremenetz, usually known under the name of Ribal (1788-1860). He devoted himself largely to the improvement of educational methods among the Jews. But he was also a great apologist on behalf of Jews and Judaism. In his *תעודת ישראל* he proves the compatibility of Judaism with modern civilization, and in his *בית יהודה* he shows the superiority of Judaism over the Greek Catholic Church. The absurdity of ritualmurder accusations is dealt with in his *דמים ופח*. His *זרובבל* is another apology in which the scholar addresses himself to the Gentile world.

Under Alexander II Haskalah spread even with greater rapidity than before. Schools and Universities were opened to the Jews and permission was granted to publish Jewish periodicals in all languages, including Yiddish. Many Maskilim hailed the Czar as the great redeemer of the Jews, as is seen, for example, in J. L. Gordon's poem *הקיצה עמי*. In 1860 the first Jewish weekly in Russian, *Rasvyet*, was published, and in 1863 was organized the *חברת מפעלי השכלה* which exercised a very great influence. Thus the craze of Russification embraced all classes, and the ambition of the wealthy was no more the study of the Torah, but the possession of a diploma and the wearing of a uniform. Attacks upon Orthodoxy began to come from an entirely new source, namely, the periodicals *המליץ* and *השחר*. Hebrew literature no more made compromises between religion and life, but it became the mouthpiece of the Opposition. In the large cities Russian was introduced as the language of the Sermon. Some even went as far as preaching cosmopolitanism.

In 1879 Jacob Gordin organized the Bible Brotherhood in Yelisavetgrad, which advocated the abolition of all ritual observances in religion. Although the equal rights, which the Jews expected from Alexander II, were not forthcoming, they continued in their zeal in behalf of Enlightenment. Conversions became frequent, especially in Poland. The breach between the Fathers and Sons became very wide, the younger generation growing up without religion and joining the ranks of the Nichilists, thus marching headlong towards Assimilation. Even the Conservative Maskilim preached that the highest object of attainment for the Jew was to become "civilized", by acquiring European culture. They could not deny that there was anti-semitism, but they maintained that the Jew, on account of his rigid separatism, is to a large extent responsible for this phenomenon. Hence the remedy for it, in the words of Gordin, was "ה'יה ארצנו ויהיה בזה". So Shallow was the philosophy of the Maskilim under Alexander II.

But it is to be said that not all Maskilim lost their head. Even Gordin in his later years, observing that the children of Maskilim did not know any Hebrew, exclaimed in despair "למי חייבים?". Lillienblum too complained in his "מגן אבות" that the Haskalah was leading to the dejudaization of our youth. However, foremost among those who realized the inadequacy and danger of the tendencies of Haskalah was Perez Smolens^ktein (1842-1845) editor of the monthly "השקפה" (founded in 1869). He opposed both Orthodoxy and Haskalah. The Jews are hated, he maintained, because they are weak, hence they need a land of their own. We possess all the attributes of a nation, (4) and if we cannot as yet obtain Palestine, let us at least revive the Hebrew language and be enlightened in the studies of Judaism, so that our people may be saved

(4) Klausner מ'שקפה ויהיה בזה

from destruction. He opposed the religious reforms of the German Jews, because he saw that they led to apostasy. Thus Smolenskin was an unmistakable forerunner of the Nationalistic movement, which culminated in modern Zionism. With his keen foresight he predicted the storm which broke out against the Jews of Russia in 1881, and from the pages of his journal a return to Zion was preached by Ben Jehudah even before the massacres. (תחשן 1878).

It was the pogroms of 1882 that caused the Maskilim to sober down and return to Judaism. They awoke to the realization how inadequate a remedy to Jewish ailments the Haskalah was. More than a million Jews left Russia, and the tide of conversion was checked by the rise of the new Nationalism. The cry was "Back to Judaism and to the Jewish land!" There was a religious revival in which Moses Isaac Darshon (Khelmer Maggid) and Zevi Masli^ansky figured as preachers, while in Kovno the "Musarnikes" (among the students of the Yeshibah) were formed. Hebrew was turned from a means of conveying foreign ideas into a medium of self-expression. Even Orthodoxy, which was attacked in modern Hebrew, found its exponent in Wolf Yabetz who endeavored to reconcile orthodoxy with life. Then there was a movement towards colonizing Palestine, which began after Leo Pinsker had published his brochure Autoemancipation (1882), ~~led~~ by Moses Loeb Lilienblum. It became clear that anti-semitism was ineradicable, and Russian Jewry felt that its salvation lay in its own hands. Students of the universities left their books and went to Palestine. A conference of Chever^rei Zionists was held at Kattowitz in 1884 where it was decided to make a concerted effort towards colonizing Palestine. But the difficulties ^r on the way of colonization have been too many, and Palestine has thus far done very little to

Page 13.

cure the ailments of the Russian Jew. In 1897 the new Zionist movement, promulgated by Herzl, found many followers in Russia. This movement has not helped the Russian Jew materially, but it has saved him from spiritual bankruptcy. It has aroused his self-respect and has bridged the gap between Fathers and Sons created by the Haskalah. To the present day the Zionist movement is the only hope of the Russian Jew. Will it prove a healing balm or merely a will-o'-the-wisp? Time alone will tell.

Having made our survey of the general conditions of the period, we are now prepared to go in detail into the life of that personality who forms the subject of our study.

-----0000000000-----

REFORMATION AND CHANGE.

Moses Loeb Lilienblum felt that the events of his life had a distinct historic importance. He therefore recorded carefully the various changes, which he went through, in three books, namely *מסכת נעוריו* and *לעבר גולל*. It is to these works, therefore, that we turn for the main facts of his life story.

Moses Loeb was born on the 22nd of October, 1843, in the small town of Kaidan, government of Kovno, Russia. His mother was his father's second wife, and he was her only son. She died in an epidemic while her son was a mere lad of nine. Thereupon his father married his mother's younger sister, who took great care of the boy. His father was a barrel maker; but in spite of his profession he was a learned man, possessing a thorough knowledge not only of Bible and Mishnah, but also of Ein Jacob and Midrashim. So renowned was he for his knowledge among his acquaintances that he was honored to read before them daily a portion of Agada in the Synagogue. Out of various Hebrew books he acquired also a knowledge of Natural Science, Geography and Arithmetic. It was the great desire of this simple man that his son should grow to be one of the worthies in Israel. Moses Loeb's grandfather (on the mother's side) was a teacher of small children, and naturally it was to him that the early education of the child was entrusted. This grandfather of his was a student of the Bible and also knew something of Hebrew grammar. It was his idea, therefore, that his grandson should acquire a general acquaintance with the Bible before he began his Talmudic studies. He thus taught him first the Pentateuch and the early prophets, and only at the

age of seven (a somewhat belated period, indeed) he began to teach him Talmud.

At the age of 12, having been found well prepared in the profundities of Talmud, Moses Loeb entered the Yeshibah of his native town, whence his fame as a deep student spread far and wide. Here he studied zealously until he was fourteen years old. But one year before he reached this "mature" age an important event happened in his life. His father had him engaged to a child of eleven years old (of the city of Vilkomir) whose mother came to pay her annual visit to the grave of her father in Kaidan. There was no need on the part of the father to consult the boy, as he being older knew exactly what was best for his son. It was indeed the interests of his son that the father had in mind. The bride's parents obliged themselves to do much for the boy in order to create for him a golden career. They promised to give their daughter a heavy dowry to the amount of 300 rubles in cash, two years support before the wedding, and six years after the wedding. The boy thereupon went to Vilkomir and in 1859 the marriage between the two children was solemnized, the husband being fifteen and his wife thirteen years old.

But unlike the Jewish prodigies of these days, Moses Loeb found interest also in the Agadic portions of the Talmud, in addition to his study of numerous complicated Talmudic commentaries. His interest in Agada developed his emotional, aesthetic and imaginative faculties. Finding many Agadic books in his father's house, he would spend his spare time devouring them ravenously. His qualifications for leadership appeared early in childhood, for as a small boy he organized in Kaidan a Chevrah (of boys, of course) for the study of E in Jacob, he being their head. He learned to write at the age of twelve, and finding in the

hands of his teacher Hebrew poems, he ^rtried to imitate them so that he became famed as a wonderful ^u"Melitz." His love for poetry stimulated his interest in the exegetical works upon the Torah, which in turn created in him an interest also in philosophic speculations. After his marriage in Vilka^mmir he became even more pious and studious. He tells us in his ^uתפילות ^uתפילות that he would come home from the Synagogue at ten, and then study Talmud with all commentaries until two and later. Thereupon he would take the encyclopedic Prayer Book Derech Hahayim and read the ^uהגדה ^uהגדה crying bitterly in confession of sins; or he would instead sit upon the floor, and read selections from the Zohar, which are called ^uתפילות ^uתפילות and go to bed only after three or four in the morning.

But while the youth was absorbed in his spiritual contemplations, his domestic condition was far from pleasant. The ruling power at his home was his mother-in-law, whom Moses Loeb describes in his memoirs in the blackest possible colors. She was a pious woman, and her great desire was that her son-in-law should be the object of envy of the whole city. It is ^uto satisfy this craving that she went even beyond her means to "buy" her son-in-law. We can imagine how keen and mortifying was her disappointment when he began to walk away from the righteous path. She noticed clear signs of heresy in his actions, for which she began to embitter his life. She found out that it is his ^utref-posul ^ubooks that taught him to deride Kapores and to disbelieve that evil is bound to happen to him whose Yom Kippur candles is suddenly extinguished. The domestic quarrels nevertheless did not stop the youth from continuing to read those books in which he found delight. Moses Loeb was from nature very conservative, especially in his early days. He gave up certain beliefs on-

ly after painful struggles with himself. From the book גליונות נפש of Moses Chofetz he learned of the imaginary existence of evil spirits. It took him a long time to reconcile himself with this idea, but having made this heresy his own, nothing in the world could induce him to repent. This applied to all his heterodoxies upon which he decided only after much careful deliberation.

It is his conservatism which made him so much the more dangerous to orthodoxy. The reforms he suggested were not meant to satisfy his recklessness; nor were they a matter of convenience (as was the case with so many other Maskilim of his day) but they resulted out of a deep conviction which was imbedded within him like an immovable rock.

The pious youth began to live through a period of doubt. Yet he continued to believe in the sacredness of the Bible and Talmud. He studied the latter with such diligence that he completed all the tractates of the Babylonian Talmud at the age of eighteen, and began to review it at the rate of fifty pages per day! He, however, came to the conclusion that the Agada was not to be taken literally, but only allegorically, and therefore it did not enjoy the same divine origin as the Scripture and Talmud. But in spite of his doubts, he continued to believe in the existence of migratory spirits, being that this doctrine was fundamental in the Zohar and other Cabbalistic books. Little by little, however, his heretical convictions increased, inasmuch as he began to come in contact with a new type of literature. By accident he discovered some old volumes of the Hebrew weekly Hammaggid which fascinated him, and this served as a stimulus for הגות books. He interested some of his acquaintances in these subjects, and this resulted in the "publi-

cation" of a weekly in Hebrew (written by hand, of course). To this work Moses Loeb supplied the poetry, in which he was imitating particularly the work of Malbim. His writing gave him an opportunity to perfect himself in Hebrew Grammar, (for which purpose he studied the *מורה נבוכים* and *חכמה*) a most unusual subject for the youth of his generation. His thirst for Haskalah books grew daily, and not being able to satisfy it at home, or among his friends, he would spend hours at the book-binder where he would discover those books. Nevertheless, he considered it a sin to read M. J. Lebensohn's *שירי דוד* in a sacred place, because one of its poems contains skeptical ideas. Nor did he dare place it among his other sacred books, in order not to insult their holiness. So conservative was this "terrible" Apikores.

In partnership with a number of his acquaintances Moses Loeb subscribed to the weekly *המורה*. Having had a stock of Hebrew poetry, and being desirous (as was the case with all Maskilim of those days) to see his name in print, he intended to send some of his poetry for publication in this magazine. But fearing that his father-in-law would deprive him of his support for committing such a "nasty" act, he refrained from doing it. It is true that he was tired of the daily "receptions" which his mother-in-law gave him ~~daily~~, yet he did not see a way out, inasmuch as he was unprepared to do anything for a livelihood. Now the six years of support were over; the promised 300 rubles, his mother-in-law refused to pay, because she became poor herself. What was he to do? There was no other way for him than to become a melamed. Being, however, famed as a genius, he did not become a plain melamed, but, organized a Yeshibah, consisting of two classes. One of the wealthy Jews of the City engaged him also to instruct his son. Thus by the end of 1866, he made

sixty-six rubles in half a year, and he was perfectly happy with his lot.

Another event of far greater importance in the life of Moses Loeb took place in the same year, for he lived to see his name appear in print under a poem which he wrote in honor of the Society *מקיצי נרדמים*. The name of this poem is *רנת הבקר* ("The Song of the Dawn, expressing Honor to the Sacred Union, the Society of Mekitze Nirdamim in General and to its Heads, the Princes of Israel, in Particular. The Lord be with Them and Grant them Life"). It appeared as an introduction to one of its publications (Lyck 1866). The poem has seven stanzas, each consisting of six lines, eleven syllables to a line, i.e. the metre commonly used by most Haskalah poets. It is written in the flowery Biblical style, announcing the Dawn of the New Era, and urging the people to realize its presence. The poet uses the name of the Society ("The Wakeners of the Slumbering") as the keynote for the idea he wishes to convey. He apostrophizes Hebrew books to come out from their hidden places and beautify our language and glorify our people. He continues to urge the Maskilim to point out to the reactionaries *(מורדי אור)* of our people that even the ancients believed in and followed Enlightenment. The poem is full of vigor as may be seen from the first stanzas:

עורו הקיצו נרדמים בלי!
 מרננות משאין קואו הקיצו!
 הביטו אור בקי כי אור חיל
 הנים צללי נשף אפל הפיצו;
 התעוררו הקיצו פקחי עינים!
 כי האיר שחר על רחבו שמים.

He signed after this poem the name "Moses Loeb, son of Zevi, Herrlichtssohn, Teacher at the Yeshibah in Vilkomir". The name Herrlichtsohn is the

German translation of the Hebrew *ליליין* (the name of his father, to which he gave a fanciful translation, probably based on the meaning of the word as used in 2 Sam. 1:19), because, as was common in those days, he did not as yet possess a second name, as he was not registered in the roster of inhabitants so that he might be exempt from military service. Moses Loeb used this name also in writing his *היסטוריה של ישראל*, for, as we shall see later, he had no family name until 1869 when he assumed the name Lilienblum.

Receiving such encouragement from without, the young man continued to perfect himself along the lines of Haskalah. He began to read historico-critical works, which increased his doubts and undermined the foundation of his religious faith. Among his collection of secular books was the Russian-Hebrew dictionary of Mandelstamm, by the aid of which he tried to read Russian books, but not possessing a knowledge of the rudiments of Russian grammar his task was an insuperable one. Nevertheless, he gained the fame as the foremost Maskil of his town. All the younger element of the city flocked to him, each bringing any of the Haskalah books he had in his possession. He thus had an opportunity of reading Krachmal's *פירוש נביאי חז"ל* and the works of Isaac Baer Levinsohn - books which uprooted his belief in the divine origin of tradition. Judaism then, he concluded, is a product of environment and causation, just like everything else, and has, therefore, been subject to the same laws of evolution and progress. The Rabbis of the Talmud were great men, true enough; they possessed a knowledge of contemporary conditions in accordance with which they formed decrees and founded institutions. But ^{that} they possessed a superior divine knowledge he denied.

At this period of his life Moses Loeb again showed his quali-

fication for leadership and initiative. He organized a Library Association, which collected books, both sacred and secular, for circulation. Thus the Maskilim of his city became somewhat organized with Moses Loeb as their spokesman. Naturally he expressed before his friends his doubts in the truth and value of some of the established religious beliefs and practices, and they circulated them all over town. He therefore became known as a horrible Apikores, a regular Jereboam who sins and causes others to sin with him. His sins became the subject of the ^{gossip} day in Vilkomir, and the pious people began to persecute him. The books of his library were confiscated and burned, they ceased adding him to minyan, and otherwise insulted him in every way possible. The Rabbi of Vilkomir invited Moses Loeb for an interview, in which he was urged to repent and give up his heresies. Moses Loeb, being honestly convinced of his own sincerity, tried to argue with the Rabbi. He ventured to show him that his heresies have no actual basis in true Judaism. Thereafter he began to be called in the city "Berlinchik" - a most damnable word among Lithuanian Jewry of those days. People said about him that he committed such sins as throwing the commentary of מהר"ם ש"ך degradingly to the ground; that he put his phylacteries upon the head of a dog (an accusation which was later made also against Smolenskin), and that he had smoked on Sabbath, although he did not smoke even on week-days. His friends, fearing their fathers, mothers-in-law, and their wives, deserted him one by one, so that he was left alone in the struggle. His life was especially embittered at home, where his wife wept over his head and quarrelled with him daily, insisting that he should go to the Rabbi and do penance. Conditions have reached such a crisis that there were zealots who threatened to

murder him stealthily.

Being inwardly conscious of his innocence, regarding the accusations which were made against him, Moses Loeb became even more embittered against his fanatical opponents. His disgust with their tactics he expressed in correspondences which he contributed to the *Y. L. P.* and *H. N. T. P.* In these letters he laid bare all the absurd fanaticisms of his townsmen, ridiculing sarcastically their superstitions and hypocrisies. This fact widened even more the gap between him and his townsmen. Meanwhile he continued to devote his entire time to the subjects in Jewry which baffled and perplexed him. He realized that life for a Jew has become unbearable, because of the numerous burdens which Orthodoxy placed upon his shoulders. Conditions of life have changed completely, but the religion of the Jew continues to remain stagnant. As a result of such a state of affairs, the intelligencia of Jewry is giving up its Judaism entirely. As the number of such people is on the increase, Moses Loeb argued that a time will come when the Jewish religion will not be practiced any more, and this will inevitably lead to the total annihilation of Jewry. This thought troubled him greatly, and believing that something ought to be done to save Judaism he concluded that the burden placed by Orthodoxy ought to be lightened so that the number of apostates may decrease. Judaism thus needs a reform, which can be brought about by subjecting the Talmudic injunctions to the test of modern criticism, and by abolishing those practices which have lost their value and meaning. It seemed to him that the laws of the Torah were ~~neither~~ too many nor too heavy to need reform. Then again, believing as he did in the divine origin of the Torah, he would not for a moment

entertain the thought that it could in any way be abrogated. It is the Talmud alone that contains laws, which, although their value at the time of institution cannot be minimized, are superfluous and undesirable in our day, and they therefore must be abolished.

This idea of reform Moses Loeb incorporated in an article *מאמר* *התורה* which appeared in the Hammelitz in 1868. The greater part of this article was devoted to a defense of the Talmud against Alexander Mecaul's "Old Pates" (of which a Hebrew Translation appeared), Reggio's *בחינת הקבלה*, and other attacks upon the Talmud which were published then in Russian periodicals. Thus the article is mainly an apology in behalf of the Halacha and Agada, and the author displays in it his vast knowledge of all Talmudic sources. He tells the critics of the Talmud that even the legendary portions of the Talmud have served a purpose, and the Rabbis cannot be criticized for them. The Talmud, like the Bible, purports to teach the people how to lead an ethical life, and the legends brought this lesson home more clearly, showing how good is remunerated and evil punished. These Agadas, although in many instances sounding ridiculous to a modern man, never did any harm, for no intelligent man ever took them to be literally true. The rabbis in writing these legends purposely exaggerated God's rewards to the righteous, in order to magnify the people's faith in God. He continues to attack Reggio who denied the validity of *אבות ופירות*, and straightens out all the difficulties which he brings up. Then he addresses himself in sharp words to the opponents of the Talmud: Do you mean to say that in modern Society there is no more room for religion? Go to the enlightened countries of Europe and try to

blaspheme their sacred doctrines, and see whether or not you will be imprisoned. A people is made up of three factors; Government, language and religion. We have neither of the first two factors, only the last and if you destroy religion, the Jewish people is doomed. Therefore you are traitors and enemies of the people of Israel. In concluding this article Moses Loeb Herrlichtsohn appeals to the Rabbis of his day. The Talmud in many places shows us how the sages in numerous instances did away with certain commandments for the purpose of preserving the faith, for they believed that *עַתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת לִי הַפְּרִי מִדִּוְרָךְ*. Our life has changed, and therefore our religion too must change. Mapu and Erter have already pointed out numerous flaws in our religion; the enemies of the Talmud are attacking it constantly - and yet you Rabbis are silent, busying yourselves daily with silly pilpul. You are the guardians of the faith and you have a right, just like the Rabbis of the Talmud, to remove those "fences to the Law" which have come to be a burden upon us. Why do you not urge the people to learn the language of the land? It is true, that we are waiting for the Messiah; but did not Jeremiah advise the Babylonian exiles "to build houses and seek the peace of the city?" (Jer. 29: 5-7). Why should there be dissension in our midsts? Is there any sense in opposing the Maskilim when they alone are able to defend us against our enemies? You cannot deaden the new spirit, and unless you change the religion, our educated youth will continue to look down with disgust upon that which they have been taught in childhood. The Bible tells us that our religion is to gain for us the respect of the world, and yet you tell us to continue to practice such laws (as *אין אדם*, for example) which disgrace us in the eyes of the Gentiles. The younger generation loses respect

for its religious leaders, and it is your duty to see what is to be done in order that you may strengthen the faith and increase your own power and influence.

Moses Loeb, writing this article, with sincerity of heart, thought that at least the rabbis would come out in the press to discuss his contentions with him. But to his disappointment this article made no impression anywhere, with the exception of Vilkomir. Here the zealots began to persecute him even more severely than heretofore. His pupils were taken away from his Yeshibah, and he remained without any support. A rich widow offered to engage him as teacher for her son on condition that he give up writing for newspapers, but he scornfully refused these terms. He and his wife opened up a small shop, but the new business proved a failure, and he even lost the money he had borrowed for it. He tried his fortune as instructor in Kovno, whither some of his friends encouraged him to come, but his trip was in vain. His heresies had reached even there, and none was willing to engage him. He returned to Vilkomir with empty hands. With great difficulty he managed to obtain a few private pupils from which he managed to support himself. His spiritual agonies at this period were very keen. On the one hand, his economic condition became worse and his persecutions increased, and, on the other hand, the world failed to pay heed to his ideas of reform.

But if the year 1868 was one of disappointment and discouragement to him, it gave him at least his family name by which he shall go down in Jewish history. For in this year he went to his birthplace Kaidan to register in the community roster under the name Herrlichtsohn, by which he had been known in the Hebrew press. A number of prominent Jews of Vilkomir, however, wrote to the Kahal of Kaidan to prevent Moses

Loeb from assuming this "heretical" name under which he signed dangerous articles. The Kahal therefore suggested that he assume the name Sneider, by which certain members of his family were known, but Moses Loeb, refused to adopt this name. The case was brought to the local rabbi who suggested that he assume any name he pleases, but not Herrlichtsohn. He therefore decided upon Lilienblum, which seemed well sounding to him.

In spite of his sufferings and torments Lilienblum did not give up his fights. He was too much of an idealist to lose courage. Seeing that his article failed to make an impression upon the religious leaders, he wrote in 1869 another essay הנהגת חכמי ישראל in which he did not any more appeal to Rabbis but in sharp terms denounced them for their indifference. The Talmud, he says, in this article, never decreed any new laws, but only modified and explained the older ordinances. Laws can emanate from God alone. It is the lack of understanding of this principle that is making Judaism a heavy burden upon our shoulders, for the present day rabbis believe that the laws of the Talmud have equal authority with those of the Bible. The Talmud is a man-made book; this is why one finds so many discrepancies in it.

No body can understand the Talmud unless he is acquainted with the historic conditions under which the various laws were decreed. The Schulchan Aruch, however, failing to understand this fundamental principle, is not written in the spirit of the Talmud. After answering some of those who criticized his earlier thesis, he gives the following admonitions to the Rabbis of his generation: It is in your power to give us a new Schulchan Aruch, free from silly laws, such as, for example, that one must not look above during prayer, because angels will laugh at

him; or, that a woman is to return to the Mikveh if she meets on her way home a dog, pig, gentile or an ignoramus. You can give us a new Schulchan Aruch written in accordance with the spirit of the times, just like the Talmud in its day. Look at Germany and see what happened. Religion is degraded there simply because the Rabbis cursed the Maskilim, instead of trying to save them for Judaism. The same thing is going to happen in Russia, if you Rabbis do not take measures to eradicate the existing religious evils. It is high time for you to begin to teach people to love work, rather than to waste time on silly casuistry and thus increase Jewish poverty; to respect our neighbors (the Gentiles) and not to cheat them. Organize yourselves, discuss these problems, found your own paper - but the evils need an instant remedy.

It is in such a strain that Lilienblum addressed himself to Rabbis of his day. But if his first article failed to call forth replies, his *שורש* raised a furor in the entire Russian Jewish press. As to Vilkomir, itself, it was seething like a boiling pot. For six weeks his article was the only topic of discussion. When Lilienblum walked on the streets he would be followed by women and children who threw stones at him and called him such names as "Apikores", "Kaporos", "Afikomen", "Red Thief" (on account of the color of his beard), and "Red Dog". On the doors of the Synagogues they posted placards announcing in vivid terms the degeneracy of his character. The townsmen refused to buy meat from his innocent father-in-law, and bread from his wife. The Rabbi of Kaidan, fearing the calamity which might befall Judaism through the dangerous preachments of Lilienblum, instituted that the *פ' ב' א' ב' ג'* be read aloud

daily by the congregation, as a demonstration that Judaism does not and will not change. The Rabbi of Vilmomir called a meeting at which it was suggested that the community send a petition to the Governor to the effect that Lillienblum ^{was} is a harmful member to society and that therefore he be removed from the city. Others suggested that he be offered fifty rubles and depart in peace. But when Lillienblum refused to accept this, a petition was sent to the Governor-General in Vilna stating that he was an atheist and therefore a corrupter of the character of the youth. Lillienblum's lot would have ended in a tragedy, had not salvation come from Kovno. This city contained a number of Maskilim who have been watching eagerly the career of the young champion. Finding out what was taking place, these gentlemen urged the heads of Kovno Kahal to write to the Orthodox Rabbi and to the Government Rabbi of Vilkomir to stop persecuting Lillienblum, or else they would bring the case to the attention of the authorities. Even Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Spector was influenced to telegraph to Vilkomir to stop the spectacle with Lillienblum "for the sake of peace and for the sake of the honor of Israel". In addition to this J. L. Gordon related the affair to the Governor of Kovno who informed the chief of police of Vilkomir and he in turn ordered the Jews to cease molesting Lillienblum. Thus his troubles in his native town ended gloriously.

In the meantime Lillienblum had to reply to his opponents who attacked him from the pages of the *המליץ הבינון* and even in special publications. A miscellany *מלחמה בשלום* was published against him and Gordon, to which they responded with a pamphlet *דברי מלחמה בשלום*, (Rhine Page 55). A bitter attack upon Lillienblum came also from the pen of Isaac Margulies in a pamphlet "The Strength of the Talmud, an apologetic essay against writers of pamphlets, and slanderers of the Talmud

and the Schulchan Aruch" (Warsaw 1869). This "essay" is written in a flowery philosophical style. There are in our midst, he maintains, people who are enemies of religion and wish to uproot everything, although ostensibly they tell you that they are only enemies of the Talmud and the Schulchan Aruch. Such were the German reformers of fifty years ago. Our inexperienced youth must be warned not to follow such people who pretend to champion the cause of Haskalah. The truth of the matter is that many Talmudic Rabbis possessed a thorough acquaintance with secular knowledge. A recent enemy of the Talmud is Herrlichtsohn; but all his arguments are groundless. Moreover, he is a truly wicked being, etc. etc. Lillienblum answered Isaac Margolies in a strong essay *מגלה נפץ* in which he shows that his opponent is a sophisticated hypocrite, who uses meaningless words. Then he takes up the arguments of the author of *מנחת חינוך* one by one showing their fallaciousness. The names which Mr. Margolies calls me, he says, are not new to me, for I have heard them applied to me in my home town. As a reply to this essay, Isaac Margolies published another pamphlet "The Strength of the Sea" (Warsaw 1870). In this paper the author prints Letters of Commendation from Raphael Nathan Rabinowitz, Dr. Levinsohn of Stockholm, and the editor of Hammaggid. He defends himself against the arguments set forth by Lillienblum and accuses him of having received money for preaching reform ideas (p. 12). The pamphlet is written in half Rabbinic and half Haskalah style, calling Lillienblum names and insulting him in every paragraph.

the
But the insults which Lillienblum suffered at home, in the press, and in books did not discourage him and he continued to deal blow after blow to the Rabbis and their policy. In his essay *קול ענות* he showed how indifferent Orthodoxy was to the real welfare of the

Jew, for in spite of the increasing poverty the number of Yeshiboth increased, thus raising up a generation of paupers. The Rabbis instead of urging the people to learn a trade and be useful to themselves and society are printing articles in the "Kirchenzeitung" קירכענצײטונג, charging the Maskilim with bringing about an age of irreligion.

But this, Lilienblum contends, is a false accusation. Go to Odessa and see many an ignoramus violate the Sabbath publicly. It is the non-sensical religious practices that make our faith a burden upon the people, and therefore they disregard it entirely. Now that the rabbis fail in their duties, it remains for us, Maskilim, to arouse the people to the actual beauties of our religion, so that the Jew may improve himself morally and intellectually. The pamphlets and libels of hypocrites will not discourage us. Surely, the bigoted and reactionary orthodoxy of the 60's was greatly mistaken in considering Lilienblum an enemy of Judaism. His earnestness, sincerity and devotion to the cause he preached are bubbling forth from every word he penned.

When one consults any Hebrew periodical of the latter 60's it is hard to find a number where Lilienblum's name is not mentioned.

Among those who answered his charges against Orthodoxy were many prominent rabbis, such as Joseph Zechariah Stern and Mordecai Gimpel Jaffe. Noteworthy among Lilienblum's replies to critics is his essay

התורה היא (Kol Kisve I p. 91). Our religion, he says, has no papal authority, and every Jew has a right to express his opinion, as long as he does it sincerely. He continues to say that the treatment he received at home and in the press is entirely unjustified. Then he reiterates his ideas of Reform even with greater vigor. Granting that Minhagim, such as שבת have a useful meaning, why should they

be included in the Schulchan Aruch which is a guide book for all Israelites? Let such customs be included in a separate book for the guidance of Hasidim or those who believe in super^{er}ogation, so that the people may be able to distinguish between the grain and the chaff, while those who do not observe them will not be branded as heretics. The Schulchan Aruch contains many injunctions which are not at all provided for in the Torah. Let us not desecrate the Torah by placing the worth and authoritativeness of the Schulchan Aruch on equal footing with it. The Torah alone is divine, and you can never prove that the Talmud was given on Sinai. By reducing the number of practices, you will also reduce the number of sinners, for now^a-days, when one disregards the minutiae of the law, he considers himself a heretic and denies everything. The modern man cannot accept the outworn asceticism of the Talmud. Will people hearken to you if you continue to insist that *קול גאון*? Or will the women obey you and wear sheitels? The Talmudic literature tells us in more than one hundred places that it is permissible to make a change in the law when conditions necessitate it. I do not stand for the type of reform introduced by Western Jews. Their aim was to please the world without, while I advocate a change in customs the cause of whose practice has disappeared, or in those which have been instituted not in accordance with the spirit of the Talmud.

The contemporary Maskilim naturally applauded every step he took against the reactionary Orthodoxy; yet, while his spiritual victories were many, his situation in Vilkomir became an impossible one. He could eke out a bare existence only with difficulty, and then he saw no future before him if he should remain in this town, not men-

tioning the insult, shame, and mockery which he had to endure. His friend, Dr. Shapiro of Kovno, (who is known as Dr. Sarof in the *אגדה* *אגדה*) advised him to go to Odessa where he could perfect himself in secular knowledge, enter a University, and thus attain some goal in life. Lilienblum consented unwillingly to this advice. It was hard for an unexperienced man like him to leave his wife, children and acquaintances and go to a strange city. But the most important reason which made the trip to Odessa unpleasant to him was a certain romance which began to function in his life. For in the midst of his struggle with the zealots of Vilkomir, he formed the acquaintance of a charming young woman F. N. who alone, of all people in Vilkomir, understood him and sympathized with him. He spent many a pleasant hour with her, reading romantic books (such as Mapu's novels) and discussing those problems which interested him. Lilienblum knew that his love to this woman would never lead to any results, yet both of them seemed to enjoy the passing pleasures which their frequent meetings afforded them. He dedicated to her a number of poems in Hebrew, of which the most notable is *ליליאן* (which appeared in "Hashachar" in 1872 and was also reprinted in his autobiography). In this poem, in which Lilienblum rises to the height of a true poet, he bemoans his bitter lot in not having enjoyed true love and in not having a wife who can understand and appreciate him. He kept a long correspondence up with F. N. and his letters to her (which he published in his autobiography) make very interesting reading. Morris Wintchevsky, who at one time was a bosom friend of Lilienblum said that it was his love affair which influenced him to take a great interest in economic and sociological problems (as is evident from his *השקפה כלכלית וסוציאלית*). His disappointed love for the

first time showed him the evils of the Jewish social order, and this in turn forced him to realize that the entire basis of our modern, social order was rotten. For a time he was therefore inclined towards socialism and cosmopolitanism.

Thus Lilienblum's love affair at first retarded his idea of leaving Vilkomir. After more reflection, however, he concluded that it was just his love for F. N. that demanded of him to leave the small town. He would go to Odessa, study hard, enter a university and then his wife will surely be unwilling to be with him, as she would not care to have a שׂוֹמֵר אֶת הַבַּיִת for a husband, and then....He could see a golden future of love, usefulness, and happiness before him. Thus on the 3rd of October, 1870, Lilienblum arrived in Odessa, where his career changed completely, but it was very far from the kind of future he ~~Lilienblum~~ had pictured in his mind.

-----00000-----

CHAPTER III.

ADAPTATION AND MATURATION.

Lilienblum's life in the "new city", as he calls Odessa in his autobiographic writings, did not flow like a song. To begin with, he was longing after his beloved, whose absence made life miserable for him. Then again he sustained himself with difficulty. He had a number of letters from people of prominence but these merely promised to do something for him in the future. What troubled him most, however, was his spiritual disappointment. He observed that his fights for alleviating the burden of the law made no impression in Odessa. Here the Jewish youth did not wait for permission from the Rabbis. They introduced reforms on their own accord, in which they went much farther than those which Lilienblum ever dared propose. Moreover, these reforms the Odessa Jews introduced not because of any struggle either with themselves or with the outside world. He, the hero of his native town, was not heeded at all in this cosmopolitan city. Odessa in the 60's and 70's was very prosperous and many Jews from all parts of Lithuania and Poland flocked thereto. The highest ideal of most of these people was pleasure. It was ridiculous to argue with them as to whether or not this or that was permissible according to the Talmud. Lilienblum having been of a serious trend of mind could not be reconciled to the idea that religion should be replaced by license, and his former heroic spirit became dejected.

During such days of agony of heart and mind Lilienblum began to long after those days when his faith in religion had still been unshaken. He realized that his townsmen, who had persecuted him in

were superior to those whom he met in Odessa, for they at least had some ideal dear to them. In Vilkomir he fought for freedom; but here he observes that freedom leads to irreligion, and irreligion endangers the very existence of the Jewish people. He was thus tormented inwardly because of his new experiences, which led him to conclude that life and religion were totally irreconcilable. Modern life is against all forms of religion, be they orthodox or liberal. For up to his arrival in Odessa he steadfastly clung to the belief in the divine origin of the Torah. But here he met Abraham Krochmal (Son of Nachman Krochmal) who convinced him that the Torah was compiled not earlier than during the days of Jeremiah. This idea seemed most destructive to Lilienblum, and for eight months he struggled with himself as to whether to accept or reject it. He felt that if this hypothesis be true, then all proposals of reform which he had advocated fell to the ground. The impression which the final acceptance of this theory had upon him he describes in his *מכתב יקר* as follows: "All the treasures, which I had gathered into my head during my life time, disappeared.....All my theology vanished. I found myself lonely and forsaken in this world.....I have taken the last step in speculation and my heart is astir, my mind is empty and my soul is stricken!" (Kol Kisve II, page 340).

During his first year in Odessa his friends helped him publish his satirical poem *מכתב יקר*, in order that his financial condition may be improved. In this poem, which is written in couplets, he describes a visit to the underworld where ^{the} author beholds all the leaders of Israel, from the bigoted hypocrite to the modern Maskil,

appearing before Adam in turn and denouncing him for committing the original sin, which brought Death into the world. Adam unmasks everyone of these people showing how death has brought a blessing upon them. This poem gives him also an opportunity to ridicule his enemies. All the incidents referred to in this satire are based upon actual facts, so that this work, in addition to its brilliant style and biting humor, has also a certain historical value, depicting contemporary conditions in various walks of Jewish life. The colony of Maskilim in Odessa at that time was very small so that the book did not sell readily. To go around peddling with books in the houses of the rich, (as was customary with many Hebrew authors of the day) Lilienblum considered humiliating, and thus the new effort did not improve his material condition, and he and his wife and children (in Vilkomir) continued to be in a state of penury.

The new environment wrought a complete change in his outlook upon life. Lilienblum the idealist, the religious reformer, began to tend towards materialism. He gave up all polemics about religion. If the structure of religion is without a basis, what sense is there in reforming its modes of expression? Instead of creating a compromise between religion and life, Lilienblum began to preach life per se. The Jew has to change his view upon life. Everything in life is useful only insofar as it brings material benefit to the individual and to society. The value of a spiritual idea is measured only by its necessity and utility. His writings of this period are characterized by a spirit of materialism, cynicism, and pessimism. His heart was depleted of all religious ideals, and his mind was open^{to} new ideas.

These he found in the Chernishevsky's "What is to be done"? and in the critical works of Pisarov, which formed the ideal of the youth of that period. Nihilism spread all over Russia, and Lilienblum was carried away by it. His interests emerged from the narrow and limited field of Jewish problems and centered around world problems. The provincial "melamed" began to discuss questions pertaining to capital and labor, equality of women, liberty of speech and thought, and the like; Naturally, this new spirit is reflected in the numerous Hebrew writings which he contributed to the press during these years. These essays were aimed particularly at the evils of the Jewish social order. The Jew is engaged in many activities, but none of them are useful. The Jew does not foresee the future, for all "Batlonim" get married and raise children whom they cannot support. He also ridicules the so-called Maskilim, who spend their time in writing silly, sentimental poetry and in reading novels instead of learning the positive sciences, which would help them to make a living. In a long article *על חתונה* (Kol Kise II, page 49) he criticizes Abraham Mapu severely for the non-utilitarian ideas which he preaches in his novel "The Painted Vulture". Characteristic of all the articles he wrote during this period is "What is Haskalah?" (Hazeferah, 1875, P. 7) Our youth thinks, he says, that by reading a few Hebrew books, by memorizing rules of Hebrew grammar, or by denying some religious beliefs, one becomes truly intelligent. I myself have for a time entertained this idea. But to be truly enlightened one must do things of value. Who is in need of explanations of difficult Bible texts? It is really a shame that some Maskilim are actually ignorant of those elementary subjects which are known to an ordinary thirteen-year old school boy. The reason for this

is the confused spiritual state existing in Russian Jewry. After abandoning the Talmud our youth devours anything they find without discrimination. They forsake the old but neither do they acquire the new. Our modern Hebrew literature is controlled by men of this stype. Its readers, the poverty-stricken Maskilim, finally discover the emptiness of such a literature and they soon forsake their beloved Hebrew. What our youth needs is training in the natural sciences whose value is permanent and materially beneficial. Only he who attains this type of culture has a right to be called Maskil.

Lilienblum felt that he had lost his former ideals and failed to find a new one. His wretched financial state added fuel to the fire of protest and pessimism which raged within him. His beloved in Vilkomir began to cut her correspondences short and his former plans of acquiring an education and becoming a useful, independent man, seemed to be farther than before. Under such a gloomy state of mind, he thought that it was an opportune time for him to bring his autobiographic notes into shape, and publish them as a protest against the existing social and religious evils in Jewry, and as a guide to the Jewish youth to guard against the mistakes he had committed. This resulted in Lilienblum's most famous work, "The Sins of Youth, or the Great Confession of One of the Hebrew Writers". This book he completed in 1873 but it was not published until 1876. It appeared under the pseudonym בר פתח (which is made up of the letters occurring in the author's Hebrew name חיים יהודה פתח חבצלת). There are hardly any Hebrew books which have had a greater influence upon their readers than Lilienblum's autobiography. Here he reveals in great detail everything that happened in his life, up to the year 1873. This book is full of

bitter protestations against the existing order of the Jewish society. Orthodoxy is so great a burden upon the individual that the Jew does not live at all. The book indirectly called the Jewish youth to get out of the rut and see what is before him. The greater part of the book is made up of documents such as letters, personal and public, extracts from his diary, poems, etc. The author does not refrain from referring to living personalities, but he does not mention their full names. It will help the reader to understand the book when he keeps in mind that the cities referred to are the following: Marshlov is used for Vilkomir, the Large City for Kovno, and the New City for Odessa. In concluding this book, Lillienblum says: And if you ask who I am, I shall say: אחלל בארץ which constitute the initials of his name: אני משה ליב ליליענבלום בן אבי נבי צבי The book had a wide circulation in all the towns of the Pale, and for a long time many speculated as to who the real author was.

The publication of the Chatoth Neurim marked the culmination of the fighting period of Lillienblum's career. In the following four years Lillienblum abstained from public life. He wrote very little, coming more and more to the conclusion that his former efforts had been a waste of time. The Odessa Maskilim did not help him financially, so that he was forced to do that which he despised- to be a Hebrew teacher. In 1871, he was engaged by Alexander Zederbaum as editor of the Yiddish weekly "Kol Mevasser", but as Zederbaum desired to control the editorial policy of the paper, Lillienblum resigned his office after editing the 29th number. In 1872, his wife and children came to Odessa against his will, and this hardened his burdens still more. At the end of the same year he was engaged as cashier in a

business office, for which he received twenty-five rubles per month at the start, and thirty-five rubles after the first year. This made him happy, since he did not have to be a "Melamed". However, in 1874

the office was closed and Lilienblum lost his position. Then days of dire poverty came upon him. His wife opened a hair dressing parlor, and he became proof reader of yiddish books; yet the two together could hardly eke out an existence. So poor was he that he was forced to sell the works of his beloved Pissarov to buy potatoes for the Winter. The sale of his *קהל רפאים* and *חשאת נעורים* brought him in some money, and he learned bookkeeping - a profession which helped him out later.

The most important events in his life from 1873 to 1882 he described later in his book *דרך תשובה* which constitutes the third part of his *חשאת נעורים*. Some of the documents printed here reveal the clear vision and the foresight of Lilienblum. As we intimated in our introductory chapter, he was one of the few who had concluded even before the massacres of 1881 that Haskalah did not offer a solution to the Jewish problem. In a letter to a friend printed in this book and dated 1874 he says that we must not "have too much faith in liberalism and justice". For if enlightenment will remove ignorance from the people, it will usher in the charlatanry of Europe and this will make it worse for the Jews. Then again the Jews are likely to be swept away by the tide of assimilation which is a necessary and unavoidable concomitant to the Enlightenment movement. How then is the Jewish people to be saved from annihilation? This question again troubled Lilienblum. In 1876 he was happy to find a solution to the per-

plexing problem, for the newspapers spoke of a certain H ayim Gedaliah, a millionaire, who was contemplating buying Palestine from the Sultan for the Jews. This news item flashed ^{the} idea upon Lilienblum that Palestine could both improve the economic conditions of the Jew and save him from spiritual annihilation. But these high hopes of Lilienblum were short-lived.

On April 13, 1877 Russia declared war against Turkey, and many people fearing the invasion of the Turks fled from the city. Lilienblum, too, feared for the safety of his four children; he therefore took them back to Vilkomir, and returned to Odessa. Now that his family was away he had an opportunity of carrying out his former high ambitions. He therefore began to study secular subjects in order to be admitted to a university. He gave private lessons in Hebrew, devoting the rest of the time to the study of Latin and Algebra. His teachers were students of the Gymnasium who taught him either gratis, or in return for Hebrew instruction. Day and night he worked on his studies, displaying remarkable patience for an older person. In a letter to F. N. he complains that it is difficult for him to get his subjects, especially geography because he has to remember a list of disconnected names.

But he believes that with an extreme effort he shall succeed in entering a higher institution of learning to acquire a profession.

His wife wished to return to Odessa, but he begged her not to do so.

Her presence and that of the children would disturb him from his studies. Then again his expenses with a family would be doubled in a large city. "You remember how miserable our condition was when you were here. It is to protect myself and my children that I must learn a profession. You well know my entire career. In spite of per-

secution I continued my Haskalah because I am stubborn! This stubbornness will help me reach my goal!" (Letter to his wife in ~~1877~~ 777)

The well-known Russian Jewish writer Ben Ami, who made Lillienblum's acquaintance at this period, described his state of mind in those days. Lillienblum despised the poetry of Goethe and Schiller which the Maskilim ~~and the Maskilim~~ were discussing constantly. He was interested only in positive sciences which "helped one improve his life". He was very modest in the company of the Gymnasium students, whom he respected greatly for their knowledge of Latin and Algebra. The fact that he was a great Hebrew scholar and author did not mean anything to him. His face was dejected, and his dress shabby; but he always refrained from speaking about his poverty. The signs of sadness and sorrow were perpetually engraved upon his face, even after he had entered a new field of activity. He never appeared self-satisfied. But in spite of his poor clothes his appearance was patriarchal. The lustre of his eyes impressed deeply all those who met him.

J. L. Gordon informed Lillienblum that a wealthy Jew was willing to pay him twenty-five rubles a month on condition that he take up semitic languages after completing his preliminary studies. In reply to Gordon, Lillienblum said that he declined this offer because he did not know what his inclinations were. At present he was interested in Natural Science, but he did not believe that he would ever learn any of the technical trades, because of the obstacles placed by the Government on the road of Jewish students. Hence the next most desirable profession would be Law, because it would give him an opportunity to defend his brethren against unfounded attacks. Then again Law is re-

lated to the subjects he was most familiar with, Talmud and Midrash, which are genuine products of Israel's genius. (Philosophy he considered a foreign product). "But on the other hand", Lilienblum continues in his reply to Gordon, "I am afraid I do not possess the ability for law, on account of my poverty in the Russian speech and lack a keenness of intellect. I know that I dislike Oriental languages, and then again I could not accomplish anything with them. At any rate I assure you that I shall not sacrifice my spiritual inclinations for the sake of a few rubles." Through the efforts of his friend he began to receive a ^{subsidy} amounting to twelve rubles monthly; yet his financial condition continued to be so wretched that in a letter to his wife he relates that he has been changing his undergarments only twice monthly.

Thus Lilienblum was very busy in building up a career for himself. Nevertheless in the later 70's he found time and interest in contributing to the Hebrew press. It is during these ~~years~~ years that he wrote his materialistic (and partly socialistic) treatises for the *הקול* and *מסכת חכמים*. In 1877 he published a series of articles in which he addresses himself to the Orthodox Rabbis who were to assemble in Petersburg and discuss matters pertaining to the Jews of Russia. Lilienblum again demanded reforms - but not of the type which he had desired in his early days. He does not demand any more reduction in the number of prohibitions in the observance of the Sabbath, for he learned by this time that these are done away with without the permission of the Rabbis. But he asked for changes in these institutions, (such as marriage and divorce) which even the extremest-free thinker cannot disregard since they are enforced by the Government. One more

9

44.
Page/new idea is found in these articles. Lilienblum begins to recognize that it is not so much the Talmud and Shulchan Aruch which make the life of the Jew miserable, but rather the restrictions and limitations placed upon him by the Government. In 1879 when there was a discussion going on as to the advisability of founding Jewish colonies in Russia, Lilienblum became enthusiastic over this new plan. Thus signs of the idea of self-emancipation and self-help appear in his writings. Lilienblum began also to write articles in Russian in which he opposed the assimilation policy propagated by the Maskilim. His reasons for opposing assimilation he gives also in a letter to a friend (written in 1880 and printed in *החיים 777*): "our disappearance as a people will not make for universal brotherhood". Assimilation is not desirable nor is it practical. Six million people cannot become assimilated in a short time. Thus Lilienblum did not need massacres (unlike most other Maskilim) to make him realize the futility of the Haskalah. But the massacre of 1881 pointed to Lilienblum a way out of the difficult perplexities. He found a solution to the Jewish problem, and to bring this into realization he devoted faithfully the rest of his life. The pogroms of Odessa in particular taught him the greatest lesson in his life.

In his memoirs of 1881 he says: "It is good that I have experienced the evil. At least once in my life I had an opportunity to feel that which my fathers felt throughout their lives. All their days were full of fear and tumult and why should I not live through something of that terrible experience which they felt all the time? Am I not their son? How great is now my satisfaction, for I had a chance to know and penetrate into the life of my people in the course of his

Goluth". (הבשר והרוח 777 P.38) Thus the massacres gave him a new philosophy; The Jews are strangers in all Europe, and this is why we are maltreated. There is no future for us anywhere. All that is left for the Jew is to return to the land of his fathers. What gives a man power is the historical citizenship upon his own soil. Let us therefore acquire that citizenship in Palestine. We must abandon accursed Russia, why then not go to Palestine immediately? No other solution to the Jewish problem ^{is} possible; the assimilation idea is played out, for a whole people cannot commit suicide. This was Lilienblum's trend of thought after the terrible pogroms; and while Russian Jewry was at a loss as to what was the next step, Lilienblum came out with an article which appeared in the Rasvyet (Nos. 41-42 for 1881) bearing the striking title "On Towards Palestine!" This was the first swallow announcing the coming of Spring for Russian Jewry. Everything has not as yet been completely lost, and "Our hope has not died". This ray of hope to Russian Jewry came first from Lilienblum, and not from Leo Pinsker, as is, commonly thought, for it preceded the Publication of "Autoemancipation".

Thus the hero of the Ghetto, who had lost his ideal, has found a much bigger and nobler one to replace it. All his ideas about his personal career have vanished, for no time was to be wasted, and work in behalf of the new colonization plan must be begun. His friends rebuked him for giving up his studies, for forgetting his own interests. But Lilienblum replied that all the days of his life he had been looking for an ideal and now he ^{has} found it. When my entire people is in danger, he said, how can I prepare myself for a university? We

Page 46.

are not hated because we are uneducated, but because we are strangers. All I can and must do now is to write articles, and arouse the people to their duty. I do not any longer fear the annihilation of the Jew, for I see a clear path leading to a rejuvenated Israel. Thus after my "Sins of Youth" comes the "Road of Repentance". My cosmopolitanism has been an absurdity. I am happy now that I have received a Talmidic training; without it I would not have been what I am now.

It was the massacres then that caused Lilienblum to discover himself, and to find in him one of the guiding spirits of the new Chovevei Zion Movement.

-----0000000000-----

52

C H A P T E R IV.

RESURRECTION AND REJUVENATION.

The transition from a materialist to an idealistic Lover of Zion was not as unnatural for Lilienblum as it was for most of the other Maskilim of his day. As we have seen he has always been an opponent of assimilation. Even before the mass/acres he preached that the Jew take up agriculture; he was filled with sorrow beholding the licentiousness which prevailed among certain classes of Jewry in the larger cities; he felt that restrictions of the Government did more harm to the Jew than the prohibitions of his religion; he feared the total annihilation of Jewry in the course of time; and he deplored the lack of idealism among the Jewish youth. Now in the new Palestinian colonization movement he found a complete solution to all these perplexing problems. Little wonder then that he plunged into the new work with his whole heart and soul. Yet it is a mistake to think that he gave up his previous ideals. Even after the massacres he printed a long article in Russian (Voschod 1882-1883), about the need of reforming the Jewish religion. The acquisition of Palestine by the Jews, however, was his predominating interest.

His literary talents have resurrected, and he began to write in the three languages which were at his command (Hebrew, Russian and Yiddish). In his first Zionist article in Hebrew (Hashachar, 1881, No.8) he proposed that Palestine be bought from the Turk, but immediately he gave up this idea and preached since the gradual acquisition of Palestine by the Jews. Noteworthy among his writings of that period is a series of essays in Russian (Rasvyet 1882-1883) on "The Revival of the

Hebrews on the Soil of their Fathers". These articles were published later in book form, and so great was the demand for them that three editions had to be published. Dr. Sapir, in his "History of Zionism", says, that of all the Zionist literature published in those days no book made as great an impression upon its readers as this work of Lillienblum. He himself translated these articles for the complete edition of his Hebrew works (Kol Kisve IV. P. 23). In plain but powerful and incisive words he analyzes here the Jewish problem and suggests a solution. Restrictions have made the Jewish life intolerable in Russia even without the massacres, but now the pogroms have actually endangered our existence. Civilization and progress will not improve our condition, for we are strangers, and there is nothing in human ethics which can compel an individual to love a stranger. The only way out is to begin building up a settlement in Palestine which is our historical land, and is also preferable because of ^{its} being closer to Russia than any other country. He concludes these articles with the following paragraph: "We have before us three roads: (1) To remain in our present condition, to be perpetually dejected, to be despised by all, gypsies, to be exposed to pogroms and unsafe even against a great massacre. (2) To be assimilated with the people in whose midst we are dwelling, not only externally but completely: to forsake Judaism, to accept the religions of the nations but at the same time be degraded and mocked at for a long time until the distant generations, in whom there will be no remnant of a sign of Israelitish descent, will be completely swallowed up among the Aryan nations. (3) To commence our work for the revival of Israel upon the soil of his fathers, where the immediate generations will acquire a national and normal life in the full sense of the word. Choose unto

yourselves!"

Another important work propagating the new nationalistic movement, written in the 80's, is his series of allegorical articles in Russian "Five Moments of the Life of Moses" which were published later in book form. This consists of five monologues in which Moses describes the great events of his life. Here the author finds an opportunity to compare the conditions of his day with those of the time of Moses. The great lawgiver finds it a difficult task to prepare a people of slaves for a life of freedom. The Jew of the diaspora, like his ancestors in Egypt, is so engrossed in his own petty and selfish affairs that it is hard for him to rise to the sublimity of the great national ideal, but Moses was never discouraged, and the workers for Zionism must follow the example of the greatest of the prophets. The author makes use of the numerous Midrashic legends centering around Moses, so that the monologues are very vivid and interesting. On the whole, this essay is a fine expression of love to and admiration for the Jewish people and its spiritual assets.

To popularize the national ideal among the masses, Lilienblum printed numerous articles in the Judishes Volksblatt (published in Petersburg). In 1887, he edited a Yiddish miscellany, "Der Judisher Wecker". Lilienblum wrote an introductory essay to this book, in which he says that the idea of colonizing Palestine is so simple that it needs explanations. The Jews are oppressed and are seeking a home, while Palestine needs faithful hands to restore and rebuild it. It is remarkable that both the Orthodox and the Radicals in Jewry oppose the colonization scheme, although each one from a different motive. The Orthodox are waiting for the Messiah but this ought not prevent them

No doubt Leon Pinsker was superior to Lilienblum in the sublimity of thought expressed in his "auto-emancipation." But it must be remembered that the period of activity in the life of Pinsker came about only through the stimulus received from Lilienblum. In his pamphlet Pinsker speaks only of the creation of a state not mentioning where and how, and it is only through the influence exercised upon him by Lilienblum that he came to look upon Palestine as the only possible and desirable place for establishing a Jewish Nationality (S. I. Hurwitz in Haolom 1910, No. 9). This is how we come to find Pinsker and Lilienblum (together with Professors, Herman Shapiro of Heidelberg and Mandelstamm of Kief) work out the first program of a colonization society. When the first "Lovers of Zion Society" in Odessa was organized in 1884, Lilienblum was a member of the Executive Committee and also its Secretary. In the Conference of all the Palestine Colonization Societies, held at Kattowitz at the end of 1884, Lilienblum, at the suggestion of Pinsker, was elected the paid secretary of the Central Committee in Odessa. Since that day Lilienblum has been the guiding spirit of the Russian Chovevei Zionists. Nothing was done by this organization in which he did not take an active part. He wrote all the circulars published by the organization, and answered thousands of letters and inquiries regarding the movement. In 1885 he defended the student organization Bilu (the initials of the verse Beth Ya'akov lechu V'Nelcho) which the Orthodox of the Chovevei Zionists refused to support because its members were liberal religiously and unmarried. In 1888 he was the chief promoter of the idea that the Colonists of Palestine should be permitted to till the soil in the Sabbatical years. Thus Lilienblum could not extricate himself from entering

into controversies with the Orthodox. But the tone of his arguments against the Rabbis has been calmer this time. His love for the new work has dictated a new policy. We do not find any more the bitterness and sarcasm of his youth, but rather a display of remarkable patience and diplomacy, although not giving up any of his contentions. The Orthodox among the Chovevei Zionists could not tolerate the idea that at the head of the Palestine movement should be the author of the "Sins of Youth". They therefore demanded his resignation. In 1887,

when the Russian Chovevei Zionists were assembled in conference at Drusgenik, Lilienblum gave the following, vigorous reply to his religious enemies: "Let my opponents know that I have not undertaken my work in behalf of Zion at their instance. I began my work for Zion even before they had dreamed of this new idea and before the societies had been organized, and since then people turn to me from all sides concerning the movement. So that even if the position of Secretary is taken away from me, nobody can take the work for Zion out of my hands altogether." (ח'סד וחסד 777 pp. 84-85).

In 1889, after the conference of the Chovevei Zionists in Vilna, he paid a visit to his native town Kaidan. What a change these twenty years have wrought! His aged father, who had thought that his son completely abandoned Judaism, rejoiced at seeing the honor which the townsmen did to the former Apikores. The sons of his former persecutors (and even some of the oldtime zealots, themselves) hailed him as a prophet of a rejuvenated Judaism.

Lilienblum was very active in the effort to legalize the Chovevei Zionist Society in Russia. He kept in constant touch with Alexander Zederbaum of Petersburg, who was influential in certain

Government circles. Finally when after many negotiations the Society was legalized in 1890, Lilienblum was reappointed as the Secretary of the Central Executive Committee in Odessa, a post which he kept to his last day. The Russian Zionists showed him their appreciation for his indefatigable efforts, and in 1893 Lilienblum's fiftieth birthday was celebrated throughout Russia. On this occasion he received many sets of resolutions, and the Odessa Committee elected him honorary member for life, and resolved upon having his portrait in its office. The Hebrew writers of Odessa gave him a banquet, and numerous appreciative studies of his life and character appeared in the Jewish press. Of these, the most noteworthy is the essay by Mordecai Cohen which was published in the Achiasaf for 1893. When the new Zionist movement, after the First Congress in 1897, began its activities in Russia, Lilienblum was one of its advocates, although he did not participate actively in it. He was too old to become enthusiastic over new ideals; then again his immediate duties in the office of the Odessa Committee kept him too busy to do any outside work. When the Great Assembly of Russian Zionists took place in Minsk in 1902, Lilienblum participated as representative of the Odessa Committee. He was enthusiastically applauded when he rose to utter his דברי "הקדמה" over the union of the older colonization scheme and the new political Zionist movement.

Up to the last day of his life Lilienblum guarded zealously the integrity of the practical aspect of the Zionist program. When Ahad Ha'am issued the call "Not this is the Road", in which he criticized the results of the Palestinian colonization and endeavored to influence the Chovevei Zionists to assume a Cultural program, Lilienblum

took up the weapon of defense. In a series of articles entitled "Wind Watchers and Cloud Gazers" (Hammelitz 1891), he attacked Ahad Ha'am and his organization "Sons of Moses". He failed to find a practical policy in the hazy cultural Zionism. Ten years later he attacked those who wished the International Zionist Congress to accept a cultural program. In his later years he opposed the new tendencies of decadence which some writers (borrowing it from secular literatures) began to introduce ~~it~~ to the readers of Hebrew. Out of the same motives he opposed also the superabundance of love poetry and treatises on Chasidic mysticism which found devotees in Hebrew literature. Towards all the recent movements of the Maskilim, Lilienblum took mostly a negative attitude. This was due not only to the conservatism (which is characteristic of old age) but also to his instinctive fear lest the new ideas will lead the Jew away from the practical Palestinian work which he saw nearer and nearer approaching reality. Yet in spite of his age Lilienblum was wide awake to every new tendency. He followed them up carefully, and always had his pen ready to express an opinion.

The productivity of his literary work never suffered atrophy. In 1897 he edited the Achiasaf Annual for 5658. In 1899 he published a book in Russian on Zionism. He contributed articles to almost every Hebrew and Yiddish newspaper and magazine of importance. In 1903 he wrote an introductory ^{essay to Sapir's History} of Zionism in which he deplores the fact that so little is known of Zionism and is therefore so greatly misunderstood. In 1906 when Dr. J. Sapir of Odessa began to publish the Zionist Penny Pamphlets ("Zionistische Kopike Bibliothek") Lilienblum contributed three booklets to the series. That his vigor and devotion to his ideal have not forsaken him in old age, can be seen from the last of the Yid-

dish pamphlets "Geulah Titnu Lo'aretz"(of which a Hebrew translation is found in his Kol Kisve IV P. 430). In powerful languages he appeals to the Jewish people to wake up and take an interest in the colonization movement, by buying land in Palestine. He concludes his appeal quoting Pinsker: "Now or never! Woe to our children. Woe to the memory of the Jews of our day if we do not utilize the present moment.

My people, arise!" Shortly before his death he wrote a congratulatory article to the "Yiddisches Tageblatt"entitled "The Duty of our Press" (appeared in the Jubilee Number of March 20, 1910). Here he calls attention to the fact that the immigrant is exposed to assimilatory influence and that the new environment is bound to make the Jew forgetful of his Jewish ideals. The press, therefore, has a great duty to perform, for it alone can serve as a connecting link between the old and the new. Then he deplores the fact that so many Jewish newspapers instead of building up Judaism are destroying it, but he is happy to note that there are exceptions to this phenomenon,since some Jewish journals are fully aware of their high duty.

In 1909 the aged idealist began to feel that his end was nigh. The want and suffering which he had endured during his lifetime weakened him,so that he felt that some disease was lurking at his life. He was troubled with cancer of the throat; nevertheless he did not complain and accepted his lot with stoic resignation. He only expressed to his friends the hope that he would be spared for a time sufficient to edit his Hebrew works for publication.He thereupon set immediately to work and divided his writings into four volumes according to subject matter. These appeared after his death, the expense of publication having been defrayed by Mr. Joseph Zeitlin of Mos-

cow. The first volume is appended ^{by} an excellent, critical and biographical essay on "Lilienblum, Man and Writer" by Dr. Joseph Klausner. It is to be regretted seriously that the publishers did not deem it necessary to state the date and place of the original publication of these essays. The second volume was published in 1912, and contains the critical and publicistic essays published originally between the years 1870 - 1880. This volume contains also a reprint of the "Sins of Youth" and of "The assembly of the Deceased". The third volume was also published in 1912 and contains literary and critical essays written during the years 1893- 1909. The fourth volume was published in 1913, and contains all the essays on Zionism written during 1881-1909. For this edition of his works, many of his articles in Russian and Yiddish Lilienblum (and others) translated into Hebrew. In the last three volumes fortunately the dates and original place of publication of the essays are indicated. Although these four volumes go under the name of "All the Works of Lilienblum", they are far from containing his complete writings. Besides several separate books there are numerous articles scattered in various newspapers and magazines which have not been included into this edition. Lilienblum made several slight changes in his essays before allowing their publication. In his later days, he realized that he had been too harsh with his opponents, and he therefore changed the phrasing, and also left portions out, to weaken the original impression.

An interesting question, which would naturally arise in the minds of those who followed Lilienblum's career, would be this: What attitude towards religion did Lilienblum take in his later days? Did he continue to be the same "transgressor" of the 70's or did he "repent?" Fortunately Lilienblum has answered this question for us in a

paper which he wrote for an Odessa Society and which remained in the hands of A. Druyanov and published after his death (Haolom 1910, No. 9). In this article, entitled "Religion Out of Love", Lilienblum says that a Nationalist, even though he happen to be free thinking, ought to observe religious practices out of love to the Jewish nation. The Jewish religion is above everything else a product of the national spirit, "hence if we wish to understand the fundamentals of the Mosaic law, we must not look for them in a universalistic philosophy, but in the national Hebrew spirit". Circumcision is not an ethical institution, but since the Jew considered it a covenant between him and his God, its observance is as important as any ethical law. For even the universalistic elements of Judaism are differently interpreted by the Jew than by any other people. "The belief in Unity has been accepted in all Europe, but it is not that same belief which we have." Moreover, many ethical laws, such as "Thou shalt not take the Widow's garb for a pledge", have not been accepted at all by humanity. All commandments then, which express the peculiar national spirit of the Jew, ought to be maintained. There are, however, certain laws which do not on the surface appear to be national, and these Lilienblum terms "priestly". The national laws are (1) All the Ten Commandments (which of course, include the Sabbath, although during the second Temple the Rabbis pushed the method of its observance to unnecessary extremes). (2) Circumcision. (3) The observance of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals (including the abstention from leaven, in the observance of which the Rabbis again went too far. "But logic cannot help us any in this respect, since the table of a nationalist must be fit for all Jews, and it is therefore impossible to hold

particular views on this subject, such that other Jews do not accept". Ethrog, however, is one of those commandments which ought to be observed only in Palestine.") (4) Rosh Hashanah, which has a national character because the agricultural year begins with Tishri. (5) Abstention from eating the hind part of an animal, unclean animals, and blood, because they stand for the national principle "Holy shall ye be for I am Holy". (6) Prohibition of intermarriage. (7) Prohibition of imitating all foreign customs including all superstitious beliefs and the practices prescribed by Cabbalah. (8) Obligation of teaching our children (which includes also Mezuzah since it serves as a reminder of the laws of the Torah). (9) Observance of all ethical laws and abstention from acts which may cause אורח חיים. The "priestly" laws, outside of sacrifices and their concomitant practices, include (1) Observance of the Jewish mode of slaughter and abstention from eating flesh of dead and torn animals. (2) Meat and milk must not be commingled (for reasons given under 3 above. (3) all prohibitions found in the Mosaic law bearing a hygienic character (4) Observance of the Day of Atonement. (5) Observance of Zizith which seem to be a reminder of the ancient national dress (and for the same reason also the prohibition of rounding the corners of the head is to be observed.)

We also wish to quote here from the characteristic concluding paragraphs of the same article: "Of institutions introduced in later period the nationalistic Jew ought to observe Chanukah and Purim. He also has to abstain from all forms of joy on the fasts of Gedalia, Tenth of Tebeth, Seventeenth of Tammuz, Ninth of Ab and days of Sefirah.....the nationalistic Jew ought to attend Public

Worship on certain occasions. Outside of the fact that Public Worship brings the Jews nearer to one another, many of our prayers are full of national sorrows and hopes. Divine Worship in a synagogue of a nationalistic Jew ought not to be modelled after the taste and form of Gentiles. Women ought not to be included in the choir.....Many of the things said here, of course, are only hypotheses. To our sorrow it must be admitted that it is very doubtful whether we shall be able even in the future to find the logical and historical reasons for all the laws and commandments of our Torah."

It is needless to say that any one prescribing such a mode of religious observance would be considered an ultra-orthodox in the United States. Evidently Lillienblum in his old age repented completely of his former sins and heresies. The nationalistic movement, in which he was engrossed, made a chauvinist out of him, so that he found "Nationalism" even in those institutions which he had formerly endeavored to abolish. Surely the Zionist movement is far from being anti-religious. On the contrary, judging from the change which came upon Lillienblum, it may be safely said that Zionism leads to religious fanaticism.

Economically Lillienblum's condition improved greatly in his later years. In 1885 he received a post in the Odessa "Jewish Free Burial Society". The salary he received here and in the Zionist Central Committee gave him a fairly good income, so that he was able to give his children a good education. In a letter to S. I. Hurwitz Lillienblum said: "My work during the day is to bury the dead and at night to revive the dead." As Dr. Klausner points out, Lillienblum's occupation in his later years was characteristic of his entire life.

"Up to middle age, he endeavored to bury the dead and rotten in hoary Israel, but only after thirty-eight years of his life had passed he toiled and labored to revive a rejuvenated Israel through contact with his fathers' soil, out of whose grave new life for us will sprout, eternal life"... (Kol Kisve I, p. XXVI).

In the last days of his life the condition of the cancer in his throat became worse, and this prevented him from going to Katowitz to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chovevei Zion Movement. He was taken to the hospital where he was operated upon but he did not improve. His mind was clear to the last moment of his life. Eight hours before his death, when Usischkin came to see him, he asked whether there were any hopes that the Russian Government would permit a change in the statutes of the Odessa Committee. So devoted was he to his ideal. He died on February 12, 1910 at midnight. Surviving him are his wife, four sons and two daughters. The funeral took place on Sunday afternoon, February 14th. According to the report in the London Jewish Chronicle (February 25, 1910) "a procession of unprecedented magnitude" paid its last respect to him. Deputations from Odessa institutions and from neighboring towns participated. Telegrams of condolence were received from all parts of Russia and Palestine. The funeral orations were delivered by Rabbi Polinkovsky, J. Kaufman, M. Usischkin, Dr. Himmelfarb, Dr. Chernowitz, Dr. Klausner and M. Scheinkin.

Lilienblum left his family without means. It applied to the Jewish Community of Odessa for a pension, but this was refused because the Mayor of the city was informed that Lilienblum had been a dangerous revolutionary! The Odessa Committee has instituted a "Lilienblum Memorial Fund" for the purpose of publishing natural science text books in Hebrew for the Palestinian Schools. Lilienblum Memo-

Page 61.

rial meetings were held in many cities of the world. In New York a large meeting was held in the Educational Alliance on the evening of Feb. 24, 1910 (Tageblatt for Feb. 25). It was arranged by the Federation of American Zionists. Dr. J. L. Magnes delivered the first address, and Dr. Israel Friedlaender spoke in Hebrew "We have very few men left like Lilienblum," he said, "and his death is a great loss to the Jewish people". Rev. Zevi Masliansky followed with a stirring address.

-----0000000000-----

CHAPTER VESTIMATION AND APPRECIATION

After Lilienblum's death all the important Jewish Journals throughout the world devoted articles to his memory. Some of these were by men who had known Lilienblum personally, or had otherwise followed his career carefully. They therefore help us get a better picture of Lilienblum's personality. We shall give here a digest of some of the more important articles (1).

Morris Wintchevsky, who is now a noted figure among the ^{NY} East Side radicals, says that in 1876 Lilienblum was inclined towards Socialism, but after he had entered the Chovevei Zion Movement he wrote (to Wintchevsky) that nothing outside of Palestine interested him. He was an honest and sincere man, and his "Chatoth Neurim is an autobiography which has no equal in our literature". (Zukunft) He was of medium size with round shoulders, reddish hair and looked like a country melamed. By nature he was timid, yet remarkably courageous, and ever ready to fight for his principles. Coming to Kovno (in 1877?) he stopped in a poor inn. Friday evening he did not go to Schul, After supper when all had retired, he took a candle and carried it through the house into his room - an unpardonable offense in pious Kovno. The innkeeper took exception to this, yet Lilienblum did not stop committing the sin. "I need the light", he said. The spirit of heresy was rampant within him. Another characteristic episode is the following: In Vilkomir (in 1877?) a relative begged him not to disgrace the family and go to Schul on Friday evening. The relative pleaded with him: - "Really, why do you not "daven"? - "Es is nito zu wemen", he replied.

(1) For references see the Bibliography.

Wintchevsky continues to relate that in Kovno he took a walk with Lillienblum, and the latter smoked on Sabbath. He said he did not fear anybody. "It is no exaggeration to say that he was then the clearest, most honest, and most conscientious Jewish writer" (Ibid) Wintchevsky showed his admiration for his friend by dedicating to him, "The Life of Boerne" (printed in ה'ב"ח נ"ב 1878 Nos. 5-6). In his later years Lillienblum became antagonistic to socialists, but not to socialism. Lillienblum believed that the Jew ought to be helped first.

Z. Cutler, relates that on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday Lillienblum said: Many thought that with my articles in Hammelitz I had intended to reform Judaism. But this is a mistake. I only wished to protect true Judaism. I demanded of the fanatics that they should not add to our religion such laws which are contrary to the spirit of Judaism, but I did not desire to omit anything. (This statement seems to be contrary to the intentions of Lillienblum expressed in his writings of the 60's). His sacrifices in behalf of the Jew, continues Mr. Cutler, have no peer in modern Jewish history. He hated the rich and the aristocrats. He was enthusiastic over the democracy of the new Zionist movement, because he believed that the masses would now be their own helpers. His love for truth prevented him from specializing in one branch of Jewish literature, for he expressed his opinions on all matters Jewish. He was the greatest nationalistic worker in Russia. He lived only for the Jewish people.

Reuben Brainin says that in the 70's and 80's Lillienblum was the leading publicist in Hebrew literature, but Asher Ginzberg overshadowed him, and political Zionism made him a back number. He was logi-

cal in his thoughts but too didactic. He possessed little of secular knowledge and was unfamiliar with the Jewish science of the West. But he was an honest, militant and always idealistic. His Hebrew style was simple but clear, and he was always to the point. His "Chatoth Neurim" is the only complete confession in Hebrew literature. Lilienblum was honest in his tactics, but tactless. He always knew what he wanted, but did not always understand his opponents. As a critic he lacked an aesthetic taste, which is seen in his criticism of Gordon's poems, (Kol Kisve III p. 26). He did not create any new ideas but was rather a product of his time. He had a wonderful memory for historic facts. As a man he was not very interesting, but was unusually clean in person, gentlemanly, friendly and above all an enemy to sham.

David Frischman says that the hero of the novel "Hadath V'hachayim" (by Reuben Asher Brandes, Lemberg 1880), the young Rabbi Samuel who is a militant in behalf of religious reforms, is a picture of Lilienblum. (cf. also Slouschz)". The Chatoth Neurim is the most remarkable confession I ever read". Its purpose was to relate the truth, while its keynote was despondency. Chovevei Zionism took him out of this state of mind, because he found in it a positive ideal. In this movement he participated fanatically. He stood and fought for the truth all his lifetime.

Berdichevsky writes that Lilienblum was the idol of the Yeshibah Bachurim who had become tired of the peaceful Haskalah which found no greater interest than to busy itself with Biblical exegesis. "The Chatoth Neurim is a bill of divorce which one generation gave to the other". We always listened attentively to whatever Lilienblum had to say. He was superior to all Maskilim because of his dauntless courage. He was not a writer, but a teacher. He was not satisfied with Haskalah per

se, but looked for benefits, for value. His great question was: What shall I do in order to become an independent and valuable social being? "Life and air"! was his great cry, which made him rebel against the shackles of religion. Lilienblum had no complete system of thought, but a great desire to do and be of help. Gordon and Yehalel (J. L. Levin, the poet) were only assistants in Lilienblum's warfare. "His Chatoth Nizerim is the greatest protest of the Sons against the Fathers". The pogroms changed his program; instead of individual he began to speak of social demands.

Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginzberg) calls attention to the fact that of the fathers of nationalism Lilienblum alone carried his banner for a whole generation. Pinsker and Smolenskin died in the early stages of the movement. He was always my opponent, hence whenever I would publish an article, he would follow me with a reply. There are very few essays written about Lilienblum, for he made his ideas so clear that all understood him. He always spoke of himself as being "practical", but in reality he was a dreamer, reading his own ideas into life. Unlike all his colleagues he was first a political Zionist and then became a practical Zionist. In the month of Elul 1881 he wrote in Hashachar (2) that we ought to buy Palestine from the Turk and gather all Jews therein. But a month later he changed his mind and said that it would be folly to spend so much money. The only way of acquiring Palestine is to colonize it slowly so that we may have an historic right upon its soil. He worked for Chovevei Zionism twenty eight years, during which his cry was: "We must cease to be strangers". He emphasized therefore only colonization work and opposed the cultural aspect of the movement. To this ideal he remained loyal to his day.

In concluding our study we shall quote here an estimate of

(2) See Chap. III above

Lilienblum given by Dr. Rabensohn in his History of our new Literature. (p. 141): "Lilienblum was neither an artist nor a poet, but a logical publicist, and at the same time a practical and enthusiastic public worker. His books are important not because of their literary worth, but because of their sociological and cultural value. They possess neither beauty nor poetry nor art; but they contain a clear reflection of our life in the course of a whole generation. All the Maskilim and writers of the nineteenth century passed through the three periods out of which Lilienblum's life was woven: The period of liberation from the yoke of tradition, the loss of ideals and the national revival. The general characteristic line which passes through the entire life of Lilienblum and his literary work is - the demand of a material life and the satisfying of its needs. Lilienblum wants religious reforms not because the people's education is hindered without it (as most writers of his day demanded) but because the religion prevented the proper enjoyment of life. In like manner this writer sacrifices himself for the colonization of Palestine, not because of any spiritual aim or the romantic magic it contains, but in order to settle many Jews upon the soil and give them an assured support.

"J. L. Gordon, and the publicists Kovner and Papirno also have sometimes expressed such realistic and materialistic tendencies; but Lilienblum gave them the most organized, the most succinct, and the most enthusiastic expression. He made us hear their living and deliberate voice as one of the heroes of his important period!"
