THE BOOK OF JONAH

ITS HISTORICAL, THEOLOGICAL, HOMILETICAL,

MYTHOLOGICAL AND LITURGICAL

VALUE

Submitted as a Thesis for the Rabbinical Degree

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chapter I

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Midrash Jonah

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(concluded)

Chapter VI (continued)

Rashi on Jonah

Midrash Rabba, Gen., Exod., Deut. (passages noted)

Talmud Babli: (passages noted)

Targum Jonathan on Jonah

Yalkut Jonah

Chapter VI

Blau, Ludwig: art. Liturgy in J. E.

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CHAPTER I

THE BOOK OF JONAH - WHAT IT IS.

"A book counted by itself." Bamidbar Rabba.

I Introduction

For the history of Jewish Theology and in the study of the doctrines of Repentance, Mercy, the all-inclusiveness of God's Grace and Truth, as indeed for the implicit duty of Israel to propagate that Truth among the heathen - the Book of Jonah is of supreme interest.

Scholars ancient and modern differ both as to the character of the book and the underlying purpose of the author.

As to its formal character, interpreters are divided both as regards the class of literature to which it belongs and with respect to the essential literalness of the story as conceived in the mind of the author.

On the one hand, Henry Preserved Smith holds, (1) "The book was admitted into the Canon not because of the lesson it contains but because it was read as a wonder book, one of the crowning evidences of the power of Jahweh." On the other, Edward König believes, (2) "Those who collected the Canon or those who arranged the Δωδεκαπρόφητον may still have rightly regarded the book as symbolic narrative." At best, either opinion is a conjecture but useful inasmuch as it shows the two prevalent ways in which the book is interpreted, i. e., (a) the externo-historical or literal interpretation, which believes the author of the Book of Jonah wishes to be taken literally, and (b) the symbolic interpretation which believes the author uses the events narrated as symbols. Those holding the

(1) Rel. of Israel, p. 264
(2) Hast. Bibl. Dict., p. 749a

latter view are of two classes - the one, regarding the work as a free creation of the imagination, purely symbolic, (Ed. König); the other, seeing in it the more or less "free use of an ancient prophetic legend," in the facts of which the author believed (so Kautzsch and others) - the legendary interpretation. (For this classification I am indebted, in part, to Hast. Bibl. Dict., article "Jonah.")

II The Formal Character of the Book

1 Its Classification as Literature

(a) A Volksage or Prophetic Legend.

(Eichhorn, deWette, Vatke, Budde, Kleinert, Kautzsch, Nowack)

(b) A Parable.

(Pareau, Eckermannn, Reuss, Astrac, Cornill, G. A. Smith)

(c) An Allegory.

(v. d. Hardt, Wright, J. S. Bloch, Cheyne, König)

(d) A Didactic Tale.

(Goldhorn, Ewald, Wellhausen, vonOrelli)

(e) A Didactic Phantasy.

narrating - a dream (R. Isaac, Abarbanel, Sonnenberg, H. A. Grimm)

a vision (Medieval Rabbis, Blasche)

symbolic of various mental states of the prophet (Palmer)

(f) An Apology.

explaining in the non-fulfillment of Obadiah's oracle against Edom (Hitzig), or of an oracle against Babylon (Knobel), or justifying prophets whose predictions remained unfulfilled (Vatke)

(g) A Polemic. (Kuenen, Einl. II, p. 423, Smend, Nowack)

(h) A Satire,

upon Jeremaiah, prophet of misfortune (Löwy, Wolkowitz,

Philipson)

upon the narrowness of "believers" ("filius creduli" = κατ'ἐξοχ-
ήν = ὁ πιστός - ὁ ἅγιος) representatives of the so-called Ortho dox.
party (König)

(i) A Myth.

with Grecian (Forbiger, Rosenmüller, Friedrichsen) or with Assyrio-Babylonian elements (Chr. Baur).

These classifications are by no means mutually exclusive. Nor can the book be designated as essentially a satire, a polemic, or an apology. Satirical elements are in it (cf. 4:4, 4:9, perhaps 1:6a); later ages may have regarded it as an apology; incidentally it might have been polemical. But I believe with G. A. Smith that, "The book is too simple and too grand for that. And therefore those appear more right who conceive that the writer had in view not a party but Israel as a whole in their national reluctance to fulfill their Divine mission to the world." (1)

2. Methods of Interpretation

(a) The Externo-Historical Method

(historically presented)

This method of interpretation was usual to Jews and Christians down to modern times and is still in vogue among Orthodox commentators like Clay Trumbull, C. F. Keil, J. Kennedy, Franz Kaulen (see also Cath. Encyc.).

Thus the author of the Book of Tobit makes Tobit an aged contemporary of Jonah, deserting Niniveh because of the prophet's warning. (2) Philo expatiates on the marvels of the fish. (3)

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(1) G. A. Smith, Bk. of the Twelve Proph., p. 502
(2) Tobit 14:4
(3) DeJona XVI, 21

Josephus is so very certain of the events of the story that he tells us the exact location of Tarshish in Cilicia and knows of a surety that the prophet was "vomited out on the Euxine sea." Moreover he tells us that the substance of Jonah's message was "that in a very little time they (the Assyrians) should lose the dominion of Asia." (1) It must be noted that Josephus departs considerably from the Biblical account and that he surpresses entirely the incident of the repentent Ninivites, a fact which evokes from one writer the remark that this is a mark of Saducean national pride and arrogance. (2)

In the New Testament, the much discussed "sign of Jonah, the prophet" claims our attention. Matt. 12:41 is now generally regarded as an interpolation due to later artificial methods of interpreting the book. (3) Hence we need consider only Matt. 12:40 and Luke 11:32. Of these passages Paul Haupt says (4) "Jesus does not necessarily regard Jonah as actual history in using an illustration from Jonah." Budde is still more certain that "he makes use of the book in its original sense, referring to the people of Niniveh as examples of faith and repentance." Kalisch also thinks the words imputed to Jesus are used in a symbolic sense. But the Catholic Encylopedia takes an opposite stand. Geo. A. Smith, in my opinion, more rightly concludes that from the passages noted we can neither confirm nor deny the historic character of the story of Jonah as used by the New Testament writer. (5)

Jewish tradition has always treated the story of Jonah as a fact. Later writers have indulged in much speculation as to the name of the king of Niniveh, the personality of the prophet, the miracle of the fish, etc. (6) It is difficult, however, here as elsewhere to say when the Rabbis are serious and when facetious.

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(1) Ant. IX, X, 211. 208-214
(2) See, however Paul Haupt, below
(3) Budde, "Jonah," J. E.
(4) Jonah's Whale
(5) G. A. Smith, p. 508
(6) Vide, Ch. V

If they are in earnest about the prodigies they relate, then their absurdities are equalled only by the efforts of later day literalists to rationalize the story. Thus Clericus (?) says Jonah was not really swallowed by a whale, but that the events enacted took place on a ship called "The Whalefish," or else in an inn, as reflected in the German student-song of Scheffle:-

"Im Schwarzen Walfisch zu Askalon
da trank ein Mann drei tag." Haupt (1)

or, as Canon Mutianus of Gotha, 16th Cent., would have it in a bathing establishment called "The Whale." (2)

Again to square with the facts of natural science it has been explained that the fish was really a man-eating shark - not a whale, that Jonah was not in the belly but remained in the gullet; and if really swallowed, instances like that of Tom Bradley have been cited proving how men have been rescued alive after having been swallowed. (3) With the advent of modern "higher criticism" such methods of explaining and explaining away have vanished and most modern scholars are inclined to the:

(b) Symbolic Interpretation.

As mentioned in the Introduction this is of two kinds:- 1: the purely symbolic, 2: the legendary symbolic.

1: The Legendary Interpretation.

The Leading supporters of this theory are Eichhorn, Rosenmüller, deWette, Goldhorn, N. Brüll, Berthold, Nowack, Kleinert, Kautzsch, Budde and Kalisch. These believe the story to be based on a "free use of a prophetic legend" containing some kernel of fact.

2: The Purely Symbolic Interpretation.

Those who hold this position believe the Book of Jonah to be a free product of the author's fancy - a parable or an allegory, containing (so J. S. Bloch, Cheyne, Baur, Goldziher) (4) mythologic

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(1) Jonah's Whale
(2) Kalisch, p. 188
(3) ibid, pp. 181-192

elements.

It is variously interpreted to symbolize:

(a) a type of "Christ." (Church Fathers, Marck, Keil, Hensten-berg)

(b) in cs. I and II to represent the reign of Mannaseh, in cs. 111 and IV the reign of Josiah, the author of the book being the High-Priest Hilkiah referred to in 2Ki. 23:4. (so Hermann V. d. Hardt)

(c) for homiletic purposes the human soul in its pilgrimage on earth (Zohar, see ch. III).

(d) Israel untrue to its divine calling. (Kleinert, Wright, J. S. Bloch, Cheyne, König)

Opposed to the purely symbolic interpretation is Kalisch, and to the writer of this thesis his views seem justified. "But it is, on the other hand, impossible to agree with those who regard the Book of Jonah as pure fiction - as an allegory, a parable, a fable, or moral apologue, as'a product of playful imagination,' and do not allow it to possess any historical foundation whatever, not even the feeble support of tradition. The truth lies probably between the two extreme views. Narratives like that of the Book of Jonah, as a thoughful critic observes, were by the ancients never wholly invented. The main incidents were derived from legends based on real occurences, though it would be idle to hazard a reconstruction of the precise facts." (1)

This view does not, however, excluse the view that the author of the Book of Jonah used the facts as he understood them in parabolic fashion. In fact indications point that way, as do also, that certain solar elements attached themselves to the legend of Jonah. (2) We must, therefore, next consider the most important

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(1) Kalisch, P. 189f, cf. Ewald Poet. Bücher III, p. 16
(2) Goldziher, see ch. IV

contribution of Dr. T. K. Cheyne to a better understanding of the Book of Jonah."(1)

(c) The Mythico-Symbolic View

Dr. Cheyne starts out on the assumption that Jonah's adventure in the sea is not a subordinate feature of the story as Kalisch, Kleinert, Budde and others had contended, but an integral element of the tale, consciously introduced because of certain connotations which the ideas "fish" and "sea" had in process of time attained - which ideas are directly traceable to ancient Babylonian mythology. Hence, says he, "We must therefore supplement the key of symbolism by the key of mythology." (2)

That the Book of Jonah employs mythical elements is an opinion that prevailed since the beginning of the nineteenth century. But before Semitic mythology was as well-known as it is now, these mythical elements were supposed to be of Greek origin. (Gesenius deWette, Knobel.) Kleinert first pointed out that these elements were but a part of the body of Hebrew mythology and F. C. Baur in connecting the Jonah story with the Oannes myth was on the right track, but wrong in that he made Jonah a Fish-god. Now Cheyne showed that "the widely spread Babylonian nature-myth of the dragon lies at the root of the apologue of Jonah." (3) Having come to this conclusion, he then in 1877 combined the theories of J. S. Bloch and Tylor and furnished "what may be considered as the intervening link between the original form of the myth and the application of it made in the story of Jonah." This link was the passage in Jer. 51:34, 44, 45 in which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is compared to a dragon swallowing up Israel and forced by God to "bring out of his

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(1) Encyc. Bibl. art. Jonah
(2) ibid.
(3) cf. c. IV for further details

mouth that which he had swallowed." This, then, together with Kleinert's opinion, 1868, (1) "The sea-monster is by no means an unusual phenomenon in prophetic typology. It is the secular power appointed by God for the scourge of Israel and the earth. (Isa. 27:1)." - furnished him the clue to the interpretation of the Book.

The "great fish" was an attenuated Tiamat now become Babylon, and Jonah, Israel. The experience in the fish symbolized the Exile from which Israel came out purified, but as yet unlearned in the lesson of its duty on earth. (Jonah IV) In Dr. Cheyne's own words "Israel called to preach to the nations (a touching antedating of II Isaiah's revelation?) evaded its duty, so that God punished Israel by exile but turned the punishment to Israel's good, and that afterwards Israel took up its neglected duty, but in an unloving spirit which grieved its patient teacher, the all-merciful God of the whole human race" (2) - this is the symbolic lesson of the book as supplemented by the mythological key. As to the name יוֹנָה, signifying Israel cf. Hos. 7:11, Ps. 68:14, Hos. 11:11 where the exiles of Ephraim are spoken of as coming "as a dove out of the land of Assyria," and in the later Jewish tradition, in reference to the word יוֹנַת (Ps. 56:1) G. T. Babli, Gittin 45a and Targum take it as referring to the nation.

While Cheyne's position in all of its details is untenable, (3) and while the objection has been made that Israel did not recognize her faithlessness, as did Jonah (1:12), still it seems to me that he has proven his main contention - the existence of mythical elements in the book - though it is also doubtless true as Budde says "the mythological stories are not constitutive elements introduced consciously" nor I may add even consistently (again Jonah 1:12), the

(1) Lange's Com., p. 10
(2) Encyc. Bib., p. 2567
(3) Budde, J. E.

author being interested in the truth he had to portray rather than logical or literary consistency.

III Purpose of the Book

Having determined the formal character of the book, it now becomes us to consider the author's purpose. Men have at various times and in different ways varied as to that.

Thus, the Arabic-Syrian History of Jonah believes the underlying purpose of the book to be a lesson of encouragement for penitents. Thus in the mouth of the penitent Ninivites is put a prayer with the words, "If this repentance be not accepted by God, transgressors will in future despair of the possibility of return." (1) Similar is Goldhorn's view that the book was designed especially for the edification and encouragement of heathen readers. Kalisch thinks, "the innermost kernel of the book is to demonstrate the power of repentance." (2) For numerous differing opinions as to the underlying purpose of the author see Kalisch pp. 265-269.

We must, however, mention a few opinions from those who hold that the Book of Jonah is a prophetic legend and addressed especially, in its original form, to the prophetic order. "It teaches that Jahweh rules in all places and over all elements. No prophet can avoid the Divine commission." (Eichhorn Einl. IX, 221-273) "A picture of a prophet as he should not be" and "that true fear and repentance bring salvation from Jahweh." (Ewald) "..that the honor of a prophet is not impugned if a threatening is not fulfilled nor is his inspiration called into question" (Vatke) "that the book is apologetic in tendency justifying God and His prophets on account of such predictions and menaces against Gentiles as remained unfulfilled and to silence the doubts and the displeasures thereby aroused in the minds of the Hebrews." (Köster, Hitzig)

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(1) Hast. Bib. Dict.
(2) p. 173, 265

"eine Schutzbrief für die Propheten." (Nöldeke)

With better insight Kimchi held that the book had a three-fold purpose: 1: as מוסר לישראל , 2: "to tell of the miracle of the whale," 3: "to show that God is merciful to penitents of whatever people, all the more when they are many (מאיזה טעם שיהיו וכל שכן כשהם רבים) (com. to Jonah 1:1)Ephraim Syrus holds the first opinion and Kleinert likewise is of the opinion that "there is no didactic unity in the book." (1)

But though the book is fruitful in many lessons,(2) the large purpose of the book is "to impress upon the prejudiced and thrice-reluctant mind" of recreant Israel the task of its "mission of prophesy to the Gentiles, God's care of them and their susceptibility to His word." (3) Even Kalisch despite another opinion as to the real kernel os the book (see above) is forced to admit "though not containing a single Messianic prediction in explicit words, it is thoroughly Messianic in its essence and totality." (4)

This view is strengthened inasmuch as Niniveh is made the seat of the prophet's mission, perhaps by the author's very choice of the Jonah legend as the framework of his message. For Niniveh is typical of heathendom - the embodiment of brute power, wordly splendor and vice. Against it was addressed the prophecy of Nahum, "Woe to thee city of blood! It is full of lies and robbery." (cf. also Is. 10:12-34, Zeph. 2:13-15) Throughout ancient history the Assyrians were known as a ruthless, pitiless people, crushing the life out of weaker peoples. It was the Assyrian who led the Ten Tribes captive. No invective was harsh enough for contemporary prophets to use against them. (5) Their own records confirm in all too true colors

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(1) Kleinert, p. 4
(2) Vide, ch. III
(3) G. A. Smith, p. 501
(4) Kalisch, p. 252
(5) ibid, p. 227-9

the terrible picture drawn by the prophets. Thus Sennacherib describes his victory at Khaluli:-

> "My faultless horses, yoked to my chariot, stepped slowly thru the deep pools of blood; the wheels of my chariot as it swept away the slain and the fallen were clogged with blood and flesh; the heads of their soldiers I salted and stuffed them into great wicker baskets.....By these things I satisfied the hearts of the great gods, my lords." (The Taylor Cylinder - quot. by Kalisch, I, 227 ff.)

Nineveh had ceased to exist a century or more, perhaps two centuries had passed, yet the cruel memory of her wickedness and inhumanity must have made the Hebrew of even the author of the Book of Jonah's day shudder. (1) Was it without design that the author makes even this implacable heathen people amenable to God's word? Yet he dares picture them in noble colors, awaiting only the light of God's word to bring these into relief. There is much significance in Jonah's refusal and anger at the repentance of the Ninivites (Jonah 4:2) in revealing the true motives of the author.

Kleinert (2) gives another reason:- "It (Niniveh) is selected here, because the contact with Niniveh marks the decisive turning-point between the old time, when Israel, joyful in his strength, subjected the neighboring nations, and the new time, in which prophecy, through contact with the Mesopotamian powers, became of a universal character."

Again, Geo. A. Smith wonders "Why of all prophets, Jonah was selected as a type of Israel." And he suggests a probable answer: "In history Jonah appears only as concerned with Israel's reconquest of her lands from the heathen. Did the author of the book say: 'I will take such a man, one to whom tradition attributes no

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(1) Cf. even Ezek. 33:22 ff.
(2) Kleinert, p. 5b

outlook beyond Israel's own territories, for none could be so typical of Israel, narrow, selfish and with no love for the world beyond herself?' " (1)

But while this belongs to the merely probable, certain it is that there were two views current in Israel soon after the Exile with regard to the heathen. The one view voiced by Obadiah and the Book of Esther felt that outraged justice and the coming of God's kingdom demanded the overthrow of the cruel kingdoms of the heathen. The other view was given expression to by Isaiah of Babylon, the Great Seer of the Exile. And the nation which read and cherished his visions "could not help producing among her sons men with hopes about the heathen of a different kind - men who felt that Israel's mission to the world was not one of war, but of service in those high truths of God and of His Grace which had been comitted to herself." (2) Hence, Bertholet (3) believes the author of the book to have been a disciple of Deutero-Isaiah, while Kleinert and others as we have seen above consider it " a touching antedating of II Isaiah's revelation" - which brings us to a consideration of:-

IV The Date of the Book.

As to this there is wide divergence. Estimates range all the way from the era of Assyrian decadence (770-745 B. C. E.) James F. Driscoll (4) to the time of Alexander Janeus, c. 100 B. C. E. (so Paul Haupt), (5) who calls it " a Saducean protest against the Pharisaic exclusiveness based on a conviction that Divine Grace was reserved for the Chosen People, not for the Gentiles." (6) See, however, Kohler (7) as to this.

Other dates given are:- 1: time of the Assyrian exile

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(1) G. A. Smith, p. 504
(2) ibid, p. 501 ff.
(3) Berth., p. 201
(4) Cath. Encyc.
(5) Jonah's Whale, p. 159
(6) ibid, p. 159
(7) p. 95

(Goldhorn), time of Josiah (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Berthold), time of the Exile, Jäger, Kleinert; while the great majority of critics are inclined to place the fourth or fifth century as the date -(Marti and Bertholet, c. 300 B. C., and Hitzig and Haupt (Maccabean age) excepted),Cheyne's date, a half century after Ezra, seems reasonable, and if true, the Book of Jonah could be accounted for as a natural reaction against the narrow policy and harsh measures of Ezra and Nehemiah. (1)

V The Problem of Authorship.

Practically all scholars are now agreed that the prose portions of the book (cs. 1:1,2:1,10;3,4:) with the exceptions of a few glosses are the work of one author. Opposed to this are the views of Dr. Kohler, (2) who regards these portions as the work of two hands; while Böhme believes no fewer than four writers are represented. (3)

As to the Psalm of Jonah 2:2-9, there are three views:- "1: that it is by the same writer. (G. A. Smith), 2: that it was used not written by him (Baudissin), 3: that it was inserted by a later editor who missed the prayer referred to in 2:1. (Nowack, Marti, Cheyne,, Kautzsch, etc.) 'The last view is on the whole most probable.'" (4)

The writer of this thesis sees no reason to believe otherwise than with G. A. Smith but that the entire Book of Jonah, including perhaps the song, is the work of the same author. "The few real discrepancies of narrative with which they (the critics) start are due .....rather to the license of parable than to any difference of authorship."(5)

In contention for this view the prsent writer would also urge the marked difference between the Oriental and Occidental mind and the danger, too often overlooked by the critic,, of subjecting the

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(1) Ezra 9-10, Neh. 13
(2) For a summary, G. A. Smith, p. 510, also Encyc. Bibl.
(3) For a refutation, V. Kuenen, Einl. 426f.
(4) W. T. Smith, H. B. D. I vol.
(5) G. A. Smith, p. 510

former to the Procrustian bed of prosy, Western logic. The Oriental mind has the seeming tendency to "think by leaps and bounds" and the tendency of Biblical writers is "to disregard rigid sequence and formal transitions." (1) Also the poetic Oriental mind takes illustration for proof and often sees striking analogies where we find none. Hence, though it is impossible to state whether the Psalm of Jonah is a composition of the author or only an insertion made by him, there is no reason for believing that he found the analogies at variance with the experience of Jonah as do modern critics. At any rate "it is introduced with true art as a musical interlude, which here divides the narrative into two equal parts." And we must never forget in applying our own canons of criticism that "the consistent exuberance of the writer's fancy is sufficient evidence that he is no mere matter of fact historian." (2)

VI Sources of the Book.

Various theories have also been suggested as to the sources of the author by those believing the story to be no mere fancy:-

Cheyne, Budde and Thoma believe the source to have been a non-extant Midrash to "Kings," perhaps the very one mentioned in II Chr. 24:27. In IIKi. 14:26 where the story of Jonah ben-Amittai is told "God addresses warm words of mercy to the Northern Kingdom and it is easy to show how a Midrash could be added showing how this mercy was extended to an alien, heathen empire." (3) Winckler, on the other hand, believes it was rather a Midrash to an old prophetic codax contra Nahum, rising from the necessity of explaining why Manasseh was forced to be a vassal.

Furthermore, Budde believes the story of Elijah, IKi. 19 furnished the model; Kleinert sees a literary dependency on Joel 1:20, Ezek. 18:23, "and in general a realization of Ezek. 3:6;" (4)

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(1) Buttenwieser, p. 37, 91-95
(2) Rev. James M. Whitton, Jonah, ed. Moulton, p. 229ff.
(3) Budde, J. E.
(4) Kleinert, p. 8

while Kalisch says of Jer. 18:1-10, "These words of Jeremiah may be regarded as the theme or text of the Book of Jonah, if they did not actually prompt the author to compose it." (1) Literary dependency is at all times difficult to determine accurately and the theories cited must at best remain conjectures.

VII The Conclusion of the Writer.

We must conclude then that the Book of Jonah is a parable founded on what the author believed to be fact, symbolizing Israel, and written to correct the prevailing narrow nationalistic conception of religion. Furthermore the work is a unity, post-exilic, dating probably from the half-century after Ezra and rising, if such be the case, as a reaction to the harsh policy of Ezra and Nehemiah towards the foreigner.

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(1) Kalisch, p. 262

CHAPTER II

ITS THEOLOGICAL VALUE

I The Hebrew and the Stranger

The Book of Jonah views the heathen more favorably than any other book of the Bible. True, the prophets had already given expression to the universalistic outlook of Judaism in rhapsodies lofty as they were beautiful ~~period~~. "But even by the side of these soaring sentiments, the simple Book of Jonah maintains its own high value; for more important than theoretic doctrines is its embodiment in a distinct example. The book proves that the Hebrews had not merely conceived the idea of a union of all races as an abstract speculation, but that they were ready to adopt it as the practical guide of their lives." (1)

But we have seen that not all the Hebrews were so minded. Indeed the conduct of the Hebrews towards the stranger has a history - a history "which forms an organic part of the Hebrew people's general history, of which it reproduces nearly every shade and phase." (2) We shall attempt to sketch that history in an effort to determine the relation which the Book of Jonah bears to it.

This history is exceedingly complicated. Many factors - political, social, religous, enter into to it and it is not always easy to disentangle them. This is due in part to the more homogeneous character of the Hebrew state as compared to those of a more modern day. So that the authorities consulted are unclear at times, often contrdictory, and the writer is far from satisfied with the conclusions reached.

It appears, then, that in the very earliest times the foreigner in Israel was treated in a manner no way different from that

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(1) Kalisch I, p. 247
(2) ibid, p. 2.

which he experienced among other peoples. The political unit was the clan or tribe. While there were marked differences between the stranger and the clansman a condition of tolerance existed, except of course in case of war. Strangers were frequently adopted into the tribe, intermarriage was permitted and the religious toleration and confusion of cult characteristic of paganism prevailed. Moses' reception and intermarriage into the Kenite tribe is the most conspicuous example. (1)

Yet soon, probably, about the time of the Judges, a feeling of aversion to intermarriage with the uncircumcised arose. (2) The story of Dinah and the Schechemites hints as to this; (3) and, too, though Hebrew men from the earliest to the latest age freely married heathen women - from Joseph and Moses to Solomon and down to the days of Nehemiah, yet Hebrew wives were at all times preferred, e. g. Samson (Ju. 14:1-4), the objection on the part of Rebekah to Esau's Hittite wives. (Gen. 24:2) But this objection was an objection not on account of religion; for, even circumcision, was a custom and not a religious law till later.- Only in the post-exilic period did it become the sign of the covenant - (cf. IChr. 2:34-35). The objection was rather an outgrowth of the superiority felt by a triumphant race, and engendered by a long period of warfare with the Canaanites as well as by the natural ties and preferences of blood relationship.

Along about the time of Samuel however the tribal unit gave way to the territorial unit as a principle in religious division. All the people of a given locality were conceived of as subject to the god of that territory. In a word the "Geschlechtsgenossenschaft" becomes the Territorial - genossenschaft. (4) This principle is illustrated in ISa. 9:12 and in Ju. 9:26 (5) and is equivalent to the

(1) Cf. also Gen. 38:2, 41:45 ff.
(2) Kalisch, p. 5
(3) Gen. 34
(4) Cf. Bertholet, p. 70
(5) LXX reads more correctly "Jobaal"

later maxim "cuius regio eius religio est."

The coming of Elijah, however, marked an era of a new and more intense religious consciousness. "A rigorous distinction was proclaimed between the national god of the Hebrews and the national gods of the Gentiles." (1) The call was now sharp and clear "How long do you halt between two opinions? if Jahweh be God, follow him; but if Baal then follow him." (2) In the political realm this new spirit manifested itself in the overthrow of the house of Ahab and the rise of Jehu. From this time begins the record of civic lists (3) culminating in the geneological emphasis and separatism of Ezra and Nehemiah. (4) This movement is reflected in the Jahwist's disfavor of heathen marriage and in the Elohist's injunction, "Thou shalt not make a covenant with them nor with their gods." (5) To the generation immediately following belongs also the first historical case of proselytism to the Jahweh religion, i. e. Naaman (2Ki. 5) - a concrete evidence of the idea that there might be a difference between the poltico-social and the religious allegiance of a man. (6)

The distinction between the Jahweh religion and the Baal cults was made with greater emphasis and more clearly by the literary prophets. Whereas Elijah was opposed to the foreign Phoenician Baal Cults, the literary prophets recognized that likewise the native Canaanitish Baal elements were vicious accretions to the originally pure and simple Jahweh worship. (Hos. 9:10) For the first time in the Bible we find in Hos. 9:1, the equation עַמִּים equals heathen and also for the first time is the term גּוֹי applied to the people Israel. (Hos. 4:6) Thus in Hosea is laid the foundation for that particularism ↗

(1) Kalisch, p. 17
(2) IKi. 18:21
(3) Cf. Jer. 22:30, Ps. 69:29
(4) See Bertholet
(5) Exod. 23:32
(6) Bertholet, p. 93

which, according to Betholet, dominates and contends with even the most universalistic prophets, (1) which differentiates Israel even physically, vaguely, it is true, as early as the Elohist (2) and clearly and definitely in Ezra's conception of "the holy seed."

This hatred of foreign cults extends to foreign culture because in the minds of the prophets these are inseparably connected. Thus Isaiah, whose opposition to foreign cults is not so marked as in Hosea still is averse to their acquisition of burial places. (Is. 22: 15) Zephaniah threatens those who wear נכרי שלמה (Zeph. 1:8) and is xxxxxx opposed to commerce (1:11), Jeremaiah extolls the nomad as against the agricultural life and commerce (Jer. 35), and even as late as Zach. 14:21 occurs the statement "no trader shall be any more in the house of the Lord" - the term for "trader" being the significant one of כנעני.

With the Deuteronomic reformation enters a hatred of all things foreign on the basis of religous differences. The "seven nations" are to be utterly extirpated, (c. 7) where the older records had been content with the expulsion which God had resrved for Himself, through hornets (Ex. 23:20), through the fear of Him, 23:27 etc. Intermarriage is not now vaguely disapproved of, but strictly forbidden on the expressed ground of its being injurious to religion. (Deut. 7:3)

Accompanying this feeling of aversion to the stranger without the land was the beginning of a plan for absorbing the stranger within the gates. A distinction must here be made between the "ger" and the "nochri." The "nochri" was an alien, totally outside the pale of Hebrew interest, while the "ger" was what might be termed a naturalized foreigner, reckoned with the congregation of Israel. (Deut. 31:10ff.) He was given full civil and legal equality along with the Hebrew (1:16, 24:17) he was allowed to participate in religious festivals and pil-

(1) Berholet, p. 84
(2) Bertholet on Ex. 1:19, p. 84

grimages. (Deut. 26) At the great Passover celebration ordained by Hezekaiah strangers from all parts of the land repaired to the common Sanctuary and rejoiced like the rest of the congregation of Israel. (2Chr. 30:25) Charitable provisions were made for the stranger and all this on the basis of the prophetic principle of love for the stranger. (Deut. 5:14) Nor can objection be made that the law of release and usury did not apply to the "ger." Since he was not forced to observe these laws himself, as was demanded of him in the case of the Sabbath, he would unfairly profit from his Hebrew neighbor's observance of them, if the Hebrew was obliged to observe them also in reference to his dealings with the Gentile.

But in this bright picture of the Deuteronomic laws in regard to the "ger" there is one dark spot, an indication, according to Kalisch, of the real status of the foreigner in the Hebrew state. This was the law regarding the נְבֵלָה (Deut. 14:21). "Thou shalt give it to the 'ger' who is in thy gates; or thou mayest sell it to an alien; for thou art an holy people to Jahweh thy God." Commenting on this law Kalisch says, "The Hebrews were the holy people required to regulate their lives by special laws of purity not binding upon the profane strangers. To a degrading servitude was added a more degrading unholiness and uncleaness. The strangers were not merely serfs, but also sudras; both physically and morally a baser class of men than the Israelites."(1) Kalisch asks "how those most generous precepts of the Pentateuch, to which we have adverted, can be harmonized with so invidious a doctrine." He finds the answer in the fact that Deuteronomy is a combination of priestly and prophetic elements. "The prophets aimed at exclusiveness; the former found the Divine in the most perfect humanity, the latter searched for it in subtle and arti-

(1) Kalisch, p. 38

ficial speculations." (p. 39)

Though this is perhaps too harsh a judgment on the priest, who at his best tries to harmonize theory and life, Bertholet's more detailed investigation into prophetic teaching regarding the stranger shows that the prophets likewise, along with their universalism, combined peculiarly particularistic elements.

Amos' (9:2-4) God conception had already become spiritualized. He was the God of the world, omnipresent, a just God, punishing the heathen for transgressions against the moral order (chs. 1-2) as well as appointing a "Day of Jahweh" for the Jews (5:18). Yet only Israel has been singled out from amidst all the families of the earth. (3:2)

We have pointed out the particularism in Hosea.

Ezekiel's standpoint is that of Deuteronomy, but the heathen are drawn in darker colors - "noch ins Dunklere nuancirt." (1) The rebellious Jews are definitely described as "goyim." (Ezek. 2:3) The uncircumcised are to be excluded from even the menial service of the Temple (44:6ff.) and the co-ordination הגר אשר בתוכם is made. But the "gerim," which word by this time had already become equivalent to "circumcised proselyte," are elevated for the first time to the rank of אזרח (natives) 47:22, 14:7.

Even the most universalistic of the prophets, the Great Isaiah of Babylon, insists on circumcision as necessary. Jerusalem is the holy city. "The uncircumcised and the unclean shall not enter thee." (Jer. 52:1 cf., 52:11) Israel is an holy people, "my people, my inheritance" in opposition to Babylon. (Jer. 47:6, 43:28) This it would seem is quite opposite to those who believe the prophets were anti-nomists and opposed to organized religion.

In regard to Deutero-Isaiah, Bertholet expresses himself

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(1) Bertholet, p. 107

"Ein merwürdiges Beispiel wie Eine und dieselbe Person die Gegensatze umspannt..neben seinem hochstrebenden Idealismus ist Deuterojesaija im letzten Grunde Deuteronomiker gewsesen." In part he ascribes it to "the well known fact that in all history there is no one religious personailty (religiöse Persönlichkeit) who is entirely consistant (ganz consequant gewesen ist)." (1)

With the coming of Ezra and Nehemiah the older tolerant Israelitish religion gives way to Judaism. Deuteronomy becomes the law book of the new theocracy. "The limited prohibition with respect to Moab and Ammon" is in Nehemiah's day (Neh. 13:1f.) "generalized, and peculiar stress is laid on Hebrew decent." Intermarriage is strictly forbidden, and the elders including the Nethinim set aside their wives, thus, "separating themselves from the uncleaness of the heathen of the land." (Ezra 6:21)

This policy found expression in the Levitical law and although the " 'ger' was included in the religious covenant in accordancewith his attitude toward the Jewish Law" (2) still he was not fully recognized with the Hebrew of pure descent as a member of the community. "Stress was exclusively laid on the fact that the Jews were 'the seed of Israel' while the Gentile were 'alien' or 'the nations of the land:' the circumstances that these were 'uncircumcised' was never alluded to. The sole point of importance was descent." Such is the inference of Kalisch. (3)

The Levitical law made a distinction between the "ger" who was received into the religious communion of the Jewish congregation and the "toshav," who might enter only into social communion with Jews. (4) It greatly extended the religious prerogatives of the "ger" and was exceedingly liberal to the "toshav," even also to the

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(1) Bertholet, p. 121
(2) Kohler, p. 304
(3) p. 66
(4) ibid, p. 59

alien (נֵכָר-גֵּר) (1). With respect to the תּוֹשָׁב the Levitical law was also an advance in humanity and justice. Yet traces of the old Deuteronomic legislation remained in the fact that "Gentiles could "de jure" own no landed property in Canaan and Hebrews (though, not Gentiles) could never be kept in permament servitude." (2) Nor could they even though sharing all religious prerogatives intermarry with "the holy seed." (p. 66)

Hence, Kalisch concludes that the liberality of the Levitical law was doubtful. "it is impossible in any sense to discover true toleration; and however reluctant we may be, we are forced to admit that, down to the latest Biblical times, as far as social life and legislation were concerned, the feeling of fellowship was among the Hebrews narrowed by the limits of their own nationality." (3)

With this point of view, it is not strange, then, that Kalisch interprets Lev. 19:18 "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" as limited to those who, by adopting the rites and usages of the Hebrews, were virtually no longer strangers. For a strong refutation of this view see Hermann Cohen, who sees in this word a reference to not a proselyte but an alien. (cf. Deut. 10:19) One of his arguments is taken from v.19b - the Hebrews were never "gerim", in the sense of proselytes, in Egypt. And so he concludes "Und so wird auch die entdeckung des Menschen als eines Gliedes der Menscheit ein Wunder bleiben." (5)

The writer is not competent to enter into the merits of so widely differing verdicts regarding so vital a question, but he is content with pointing out the breadth of view reached in the so-called Prayer of Solomon, (IKi. 8:41) "And also unto the alien, (נָכְרִי)

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(1) See Lev. 17:8-9, 22
(2) Kalisch, p. 68
(3) ibid, p. 69
(4) p. 89
(5) ibid, p. 90

who is not of thy people Israel, when he cometh from a distant land for thy name's sake;" the pious wish of Zeph., 3:9, for the time when all peoples shall be of one mind; and the magnanimity of spirit of a man devoted to the forms of worship yet dreaming of ~~xxxx~~ time when "Also of them ("the nations, your brothers") will I take priests and Levites, saith the Lord." (Is. 66:20ff., cf. Is. 56:1f.)

Suffice it to say, the legal is always behind the moral; ideals are ever in advance of the practical necessities and circumstance of life. Can we say that we have measured up to our ideals or realized the ideals of the prophets of the long ago? And considering it all in all, the priests and lawgivers realized the prophetic ideals as best they could for their day - as well, indeed, as mortals could, given the same historical circumstances. (1) Ezra's strenuous measures were necessary for the preservation of Judaism. Let us admit once for all that there were two interpretations of Judaism, the one narrowly nationalistic, the other as universal as the world - often enough combined in the thought of one and the same individual. But let us also recognize that both interpretations were actuated by and permeated with an intense religiosity, that it was no mere blind national chauvinism.

Bertholet holds that this broad liberalism was the result of external stimuli. Hellenism, he thinks, inspired the later Pharisaic zeal for proselytism - and he dates the Book of Jonah at the beginnings of the Greek period. But does he not overlook the fact that the latent Jewish genius was only awaiting a favorable time for blossoming forth? What of the prophets and Job?

Be that as it may, the Book of Jonah is one of the choicest flowers of the Hebrew genius. The author assumes that the heathen are human, even as the Hebrews - only ignorant of God's law. (4:11) In piety and nobility they are at least equal to the prophet (1:10,

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(1) J. E. art. Gentile

5, 6, 13). On learning God's truth they readily repent (1:16; 3:5). Nor does the author dwell on the external rites of repentance. He simply says "The men of Niniveh believed in God" and fails to tell us the creed they believed in. It is assumed, in fact, he tells us, 1:16, that they became converted to the religion of the Hebrew God - there the author was particularistic - yet nowhere does he say that they were circumcised. He leaves that inference for medieval rabbis, who missed the point of the simple story. How far the great medieval commentators lost the spirit of the author is evident from their notes. (1) But as for him, he tells a simple tale, in which all men are children of One loving Father and Israel - the "first-born" the elder brother of them all.

II The Belief in God's Mercy.

The Book of Jonah emphasises one side of the Jewish God- conception, on its retributive side. This is the idea of God's Mercy. To God are applied the terms חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב-חֶסֶד וְנִחָם עַל-הָרָעָה (Jonah 4:2).

It would be well to examine these words closer. The word חֶסֶד is from √חסד, primarily; "to be inclined to," "to desire," then "kindness," "love." (2) The word is used to describe relations between men as well as the relation of God to man. "Finally it is the most common designation of the kinship between God and man, his condescension, including in its conotation both the idea of goodness as well as Grace, Mercy and Love. This conotation occurs as early as in Ex. 20:6, 34:6,7. A narrower connotation is carried by the word חַנּוּן. It is the application of God's חֶסֶד upon the unworthy, the sinner. (cf. רַחוּם, womb) used of God only, equals compassion, pity - God's חֶסֶד applied to the suffering, needy, helpless. אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם signifies patience; literally, abiding his wrath. By this expression, the Bible

(1) See ch. V The Book in Later Jewish Lit.
(2) See Gesenius

wishes to indicate that "when God's holiness is outraged, His anger is aroused; but He does not give vent to His wrath at once; but He restrains Himself (Ps. 78:38, Prov. 24:18) in order to give men time to repent (Zeph. 3:7)as well as for His name's sake - impatience not being in God's nature (Micah 2:7), God's Mercy and God's anger are everywhere represented in the Bible as contending with each other. The change from one aspect of His justice to another is termed מדת or מדת. Generally this change is from anger to mercy. (Jer. 18: 8, Jo. 2:14; 3:10 etc.) (1)

We are now ready to consider the retributive phase of God's nature as revealed in the book. In the first place the writer recognizes that God may be wrathful. This wrath is disciplinary in its workings and as elsewhere in the Bible manifests itself in the phenomena of nature - in the storm at sea, c. 1, and in the burning east-wind, c. 4. In a word physical catastrophies and misfortunes have a moral connotation and are the direct result of man's doings. Hence, too, Niniveh is to be physically destroyed for moral sins. This is a quite common Biblical conception. (2)

The author, however, is interested in God's mercy rather than in God's anger. Nor is this mercy anthing but an outflow of God's justice. The indications are pretty clear that the lesson so satirically conveyed is that it would have been unjust to destroy Nineveh"where there are more than twelve myriad men who know not to distinguish between the right hand and the left, and also much cattle." Jonah is sorry for the"gourd, the child of a night" over which he did not labor; Should not God be sorry for His children, the work of His hand, particularly after they have repented? (3)

This conception of God's mercy as supplementing His just anger and, in the synthesis, producing an absolute justice is a pe-

(1) Dillmann, pp. 263-267
(2) Kohler, pp. 80-81
(3) See Kimchi, ch. V

culiarly Jewish, nay Biblical, notion. It is here that Judaism differs from Christianity with its doctrine of Love, independent of man's merits. For in Biblical theology, God's justice is an outgrowth of His holiness, conceived of first as a consuming fire, in a physical sense, and gradually becoming an ethical force. (1) This image of the consuming fire finds expression in the words חֲרוֹן אַף "heat", "the burning of his nostrils" - manifestations of his displeasure with evil doers. God's holiness makes Him transcendently moral. "Thou art of eyes too pure to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." (2) Hence His holiness manifests itself in wrath against evil - "Seine Heiligkeit ist also nicht blosse Unantastbarkeit oder Selbstbewahrung in seiner vollkommnen Reinheit, sondern zugleich Selbsterschliessung zur Hemmung und Bekämpfung des Bösen und Ausbreitung seiner eignen vollkommnen Reinheit und Güte." (3) Hence God manifests Himself in His holiness, as the God wrathful against evil and then, when the evil principle is overcome, as the God of Love and of the Fathers.

But mercy or love likewise is a manifestation of God's holiness; "die positive Seite der göttlichen Heiligkeit, (wenn man Zorn die negative nennt) also das Prinzip der ganzen Offenbarung, auch der allegemeinen Offenbarung der Schöpfung und Erhaltung der Welt; alles was lebt und ist, verdankt ihr sein Dasein." (4)

Dillmann's Christology is evident here. But though we Jews cannot be certain as to which is the positive or negative side of God's holiness, as is Dillmann, , we can and must agree with him in the following conception, which he hints at, of an absolute justice, where both mercy and rigid justice exist together in a complex. "Nur wo begriffen wird, dass in Gott weder nur Zorn noch nur Gnade ist,

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(1) Dillmann, p. 259ff.
(2) Habakuk 1:13
(3) Dillmann, p. 257
(4) ibid, p. 264

sondern beide zusammengehen in einen höhern Begriff, kann auch der Schein der Veränderlichkeit in Gott schwinden." (1) Thus can we explain God's "repentance of the evil" and the necessity for God's mercy.

Scripture recognizes that man is prone to sin. The many passages in the Bible afforded points of contact with Plato's conception of matter as a positive principle of evil, and thus was influential on medieval religious conceptions in both Church and Synagog.

The contrast between God as spirit and men as flesh had already been made by Isaiah (31:3) "The Egyptians are men, and not God: and their horses are flesh, and not spirit." This, to be understood, must be taken in connection with the beginning of the passage "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; that trust in horses, and look not unto the Holy One of Israel." Here, as can be readily seen, when God is called Spirit, it is not a question of His essence but of His power. (2) "And when men are spoken of as all flesh, the emphasis does not fall on that which they are made of, but it rather expresses a secondary idea, no doubt suggested by this, the idea of their weakness." In this sense, "All flesh is grass..the grass withereth..but the word of our God shall stand forever," (Isa. 40:6, cf. Deut. 5:26) "He being full of compassion turned His anger away.. for He remembered that they were but flesh." (Ps. 78:38f., cf. Job 14:1-4; 14:7-9) Hence, God remembering man's frail nature is merciful and forgives. But it is given man to repent and earn forgiveness. In any case it were injustice to punish heathen, ignorant of God's law, how much the more poor, dumb beasts. (4:11)

Such is one important lesson of the book. It exemplifies in a concrete manner, though by indirection and unconsciously, what the reasoned consciousness declares to be the theology of Judaism in the

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(1) Dillmann, p. 268
(2) Davidson, p. 190

matter of God's justice and mercy. (1)

III The Doctrine of Repentance

The doctrine of Repentance is the most hopeful teaching in Judaism. Here it is superior to all other religions. "Repentance is an emphatically Hebraic conception, and its full development is a genuine and specific excellence of Rabbinical and Post-rabbinincal Judaism," says Claude Montefiore. (2) And the highest point in the Biblical development of the doctrine is reached in the story of the repentant Ninivites.

In the Bible we find no equivalent for the term repentance. The noun תְּשׁוּבָה (Hos. 13:14) is doubtful. There remain only the verbs נָחַם - to be sorry, feel pain, regret; but better and more distinctly religious is the term שׁוּב "to return." Just as sin is a חַטָּאת "turning from the way" (Deut. 11:26-28, Is. 1:4) "a failing to miss the mark" חָטָא, a perversion or deviation from the right (cf. עִקֵּשׁ "crooked" vs. יָשָׁר "upright"), so the penitent sinner turns again to the straight path of rectitude. (3) The word תְּשׁוּבָה which in Talmudic literature becomes a technical theological term is in the Old Testament used in a non-religious sense only.

The word שׁוּב however takes its place. "It is constantly followed by the idea of pardon and restoration, or the annulment of intended punishment. It is a prophetic word and rather religious than ethical. Apostacy from God can be healed by "shub."

The word, however, does not occur in the legal portions of the Pentateuch in this sense. Only in the prophetical book of Deuteronomy does it so occur. (Deut. 4:30; 30:2-3) Amos (4:6ff.) first uses the term as a means of staying God's wrath but rather indefinitely. But it is in Hosea, the prophet of God's love, that we find the first

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(1) See Kohler, on Ex. 33:19, p. 86
(2) J. Q. R., p. 212 (Jan. 1904)
(3) Davidson, p. 207

intense call to repentance. (Hos. 6:14) More insistent is Jeremaiah, (cs. 3, 4, 18) and finally, and most insistent Ezekiel, the Preacher of Repentance. "Return and repent from your sins. Create unto yourself a new heart and a new spirit; wherefore shall ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 18:30ff.) After the Exile, the prophets still insist on repentance and, as against the atonement wrought by external means and priestly mediation, they insist on "rend your hearts and not your garments" (Joel 2:10f.) that "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;" (ps. 51) while Is. 58 makes it plain that God has not chosen a fast of sackcloth and ashes - but "to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free," etc. The culmination of the doctrine of repentance was reached in the parable of Jonah when God's grace was extended to the penitent heathen as well as the Jew. (1)

An impartial survey of the development of the doctrine of repentance must convince one that it was no mere conformation to external ritual that brought the penitent back to God. True there was a method in externally attesting and perhaps inducing the penitence which was from within, "Create within me a pure heart, O God; and a right spirit renew within me." (Ps. 51:12) These included:- 1: a confession of sin (Lev. 5:5; Nu. 5:7), and 2: a guilt offering (Lev. 5: 1-20) for sins against God; and in case of sins against men, in addition, restitution to the one sinned against, his heir, or the priest. (Lev. 5:20-26; Nu. 5:7-9) Other means were:- 1: Prayer (2Sa. 12:16), 2: Fasting, sackcloth and ashes (1Ki. 21:27, Jonah 3:5). But though it is undoubtedly true that these external rites and the sacredotal conceptions tended to usurp the place of the pure prophetic principles of repentance, the latter were ever present. Christian theologians must not overlook that fact. "Even before the destruction of the Temple, it is clear that the ethical substitutes for the sin-

(1) Kohler, p. 188

offering, which afterwards became all-prevailing, had begun their beneficial influence. Moreover, even in the Pentateuch itself, the sin-offering and the guilt-offering are usually associated with involuntary offences. (1) So that even before the Destruction of the Second Temple the people were prepared to substitute the offering of contrite hearts and prayer for bullocks and rams. There remained only the conviction in "The persistence of the Day of Atonement's atoning efficacy (a belief) operative both for good and evil." (2)

The real issue, therefore, between the Christian and Jewish view of repentance was not in the fact that the latter was formal while the former was not. The Paulinism which began with Jewish antinomism resulted in even more legalistic Catholicism and erected an entire hierarchy of mediators as a barrier between the penitent and God. And the Reformed Church re-emphasized, even as the Catholic, the doctrine "No one can come to the Father except through me." (Jno. 14:6)

As Claude Montefiore so well points out the doctrine of Repentance is one of the causes of the optimism of the Jews. "The theory of repentance helped them to keep clear of the gloomy doctrines of election and reprobation. Hence the Book of Jonah is a product of the truest religious genius. How much the Jews of medieval times had fallen out of touch with the common humanity around them is revealed in the grotesque measures which they have the Ninivites take to secure God's pardon and in their amazement at their conversion. (3) Evidently they had not our author's simple faith in the goodness of humanity. The oppression and persecution and the narrow ghetto had narrowed their souls.

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(1) Montefiore, J. Q. R., p. 215 (Jan. 1904)
(2) ibid, p. 216
(3) See Rashi and Ibn Ezra's comments, Ch. V

CHAPTER III

THE BOOK IN HOMILETICS

I Jewish

We have already noted that the Book of Jonah is rich in motives. Hence, it furnishes excellent homiletic material. Some of the Midrashic homilies have been noted in chapter five "The Book in Later Jewish Tradition." It remains to be considered how the book was applied in later sermonic literature. The writer was able to secure only a few of the numerous sermons based on the Book of Jonah. Hence this chapter is necessarily fragmentary. For a valuable index see Maybaum's "Jüdische Homiletik."

Most of the sermons carry out the thought suggested by the Zohar Va-Yakhel. Here Jonah symbolizes the human soul in its pilgrimage on earth. After a three days' stay in the grave the soul mounts aloft, remaining suspended however between heaven and earth for thirty days. During this time it undergoes judgment and if meritorious is received above while the body moulders in the earth until the time arrives when the Angel of Death departs from the earth forever (Is. 25:8). Then will the righteous of Israel arise, the earth casting out her dead (Is. 26:19), but the wicked will remain buried forever (Is. 26:14). (1)

This symbolization of the Book of Jonah as suggested by the Zohar is elaborated in a number of sermons before me. A typical treatment is that of Ludwig Phillipson's "Das Leben des Sünders" and "Das Leben das Frommen." (2) These are beautifully worked out in all details. The two sermons considered are not based on a text; rather are they an exposition of the two parts into which the Book of Jonah may

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(1) Cf. Midr. for Yom Kippur, also Pirke Eleaz. chs. 10, 43
(2) I. P. u. S. Mag., 2d ed., pp. 201, 211ff.

be divided. The first part (Chs. 1 and 2) is symbolic of the life of the sinner; the second part (Chs. 3 and 4) symbolizes the life of the pious.

I

"Das Leben des Sünders"

(a) The origin of man and the beginning of his life course:

1: יוֹנָה בֶּן-אֲמִתַּי - the "dove", symbol of purity and innocence as it comes from the Creator. God's speaks to this soul saying, "Arise, go to - נִינְוֵה

2: נִינְוֵה עִיר, the earth, habitation of man

3: נַפְשָׁהּ יָרְדָה the soul descends in its beauty and finds a body (אֲנִיָּה) in which the soul wanders in its journeyings.

אֲנִיָּה also reads אֳנִיָּה "trouble." The body is the cause of much sorrow and trouble to the soul. It hems in the soul's aspirations. It always urges to יַמָּה (towards שְׁתֵּי יַמִּים "two errors"). Material convenience and pleasure strive always with the soul's aspirations.

"We have here an account of how man comes to earth and how his life course begins."

(b) How man continues his course:

1: Jonah 1:3 וַיִּתֵּן שְׂכָרָהּ - But the soul pays her wage. She gives up her pure nature, forgetting her purpose and destiny. Then comes the storm typifying the storm in the soul. v. 5 The "seamen" are father, mother, friends. "They take part in the fate of the dear one. They too share his lot, are concerned for him." But the sinner sleeps on.

(c) Finally: how man ends his career:

v. 6 The רַב הַחֹבֵל, conscience which aught to direct the deeds calls, "Up, free youself of your bonds." The first result is the thought of the neglected and outraged God.

Consience whispers, "Call upon thy God." (v. 6b) But Jonah answers nothing! Man can answer nothing. He feels unworthy of the Grace of God, whom he has despised. He feels he must atone for his guilt, empty the Cup of Expiation. Then be begins to find excuses for his conduct. The voices of Lust, Sense, Reason, the World quarrel with each other as to who is the cause of this evil. (v. 7) Finally the lot falls on the guilty soul, whose business it is to rule, to subdue sense, to temper lust, etc. (v. 7b) They question the soul and it responds: עִבְרִי אָנֹכִי "I am a Wanderer (עִבְרִי), a Pilgrim on earth and death only can bring complete expiation." Finally Death brings rest from the conflict. וְעָלְתָה נִשְׁמָה נִזְדַּכְּכָה - "the soul rises aloft, tested, strengthened, purified, healed, atoned. Our career is ended and a second begins in the Heavenly Heights."

II

"Das Leben des Frommen"

(a) The pious soul in her innocence: (Jonah 3:1-4a)

This time God speaks to a soul which guards her piety. "Einen Beruf werde ich dir geben auf dieser Erde" (קְרָא-אֵלֶיהָ 3: 2b). This calling is the pursuit of virtue. The sinner complains God has given him tendencies to evil - but he has also given him free-will. כְּהֵבֶל יְמֵי חַיָּיו the three stages of life: youth, manhood, old-age.

(b) The pious one amidst the perplexities of life:

עוֹד אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם (3:4) - Life is brief. Make the most of it. Become a strong, virtuous man. Verse six symbolizes the Vale of Life and the changes of fortune. "The king rises from his throne, puts off the royal mantle and dons sack-cloth and ashes." Now the sinner questions Providence, "Why does the way of thw wicked prosper?" - and seeing that he prospers, while the good often do not, he goes arrogantly on in his course of life. But though it seems evil to the pious soul, he follows not the sinner's evil example but seeks God. "And it appeared a very great evil unto Jonah; nevertheless he prayed to God." (4:1,2a)

He is weary of life, retires to solitude but still questions (4:5) - "What is the purpose of Life in the World?"

(c) The pious in his realization of God's purpose:

The "gourd", the plant of the night, emlematic of the ephemeralness of life. Because life is so fragmentary, there must be a "Vollendung" in the world of eternity. The next world is the solution of the problem of the sufferings of the pious. Meantime this world is for the perfection of the pious and the repentance of the sinner.

The second part of Phillipson's sermon is not as happily drawn as the first. The analogies are forced. Also there is an "other-worldly" tone about it which is typically Christian rather than Jewish. The Zohar which furnishes the model for this interpretation of the Book of Jonah is "other-worldly" but not gloomy. But this sermon given in detail is typical of an endless variety of others like it. Sometimes the application is made more directly to the lesson of Atonement Day. Then the יום הכפורים is not Conscience, as with Phillipson, but the Day of Atonement. (1)

Sometimes Jonah symbolizes, in keeping with the original, the people Israel. (2) Often the lesson is the meaning of true repentance. (3) The favorite texts seem to be:- 1: Jonah 1:6, e. g., "Was ist dir Schläfer?" - sermon preached by Dr. Edward Kley, Sept. 1825, (4) in which a likeness is drawn between physical and spiritual sleep, and a strikingly similar sermon preached in 1848 by Dr. Mendel Hess called, "Der Sündenschlaf." (5) 2: Jonah 1:8 (Dr. Michael Sachs, "Die Vier Fragen, and M. Präger, N. Brüll, "Selbstachtung und Glaubenstreue.") (6)

II Christian

If Jews have found the Book of Jonah rich in homiletical ma-

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(1) See Hess, "Der Sünderschlaf," Kley, sermon noted, etc. (15ff.
(2) Leon Harrison, "I am a Hebrew;" M. Präger, Isr. Volks-leher II, p.
(3) Benedict Levi, Kays. Bib., p. 38
(4) K. & S. Sammlung, I Jahrg. I, p. 65
(5) In his volume of sermons, pp. 75-87
(6) See bibliography

terial, Christians have found it, perhaps, of even greater interest. This, of course, is due to the fact that Jonah is regarded as a type of "Christ" and the Ressurection. Also "The Book of Jonah is the missionary book of the Old Testament." (1) Hence it is especially important in the eyes of Christians, and in it have been found texts for almost every doctrine of the faith.

As early as 1773, Lavater, Mendëlssohn's famous controversalist published an entire book of sermons based entirely on the Book of Jonah. (2) Höselen, 1816, preached fifty-four sermons on the general subject,"Jonas Bekehrtes Ninive." Neander also wrote a book of sermons on, "Der Prophet Jona." (Mittau, 1842) The writer, however, was unable to secure these books and knows of them only through Lange's Commentary - a storehouse of Christian homiletics and doctrine.

Calvin and Luther each read the book through the glasses of their special doctrines of Faith or Predestination. Calvin sees in Jonah, an unwilling instrument constrained to do God's will, additional support for his Doctrine of Election. Luther, with characteristic irony, on 3:10, "God saw their works, that they turn from their evil way." - - -"Here the legalists have the advantage, yes, a fine advantage!" Scathingly he concludes, "But what kind of works were they?" - "Faith in God from the heart." (i. e., not works)

A word as to the lessons drawn by Christian theologians;- chapter one - 1: teaches the Omnipresence of God. 2: "Every individual has his proper work." 3: The preacher must be "called of God." 4: "The call to repentance is a call to Grace." 5: Distress teaches prayer. 6: The requisites for a true minister. 7: The value of confession of sin. Chapter two - 1: The great lesson here is the power of prayer, especially Luther. (3) Calvin regards Jonah's prayer as a model for

(1) Lange's Comm., p. 22 (Quandt)
(2) Predigten über das Buch Jonas, Zurich, 1773
(3) Lange's Comm., p. 28

all prayer. "It mus be noted here that the worship of God especially consists of Praise, as it is said, "Sacrifice to me the sacrifice of praise." (1) 2: This chapter typifies "Christ." But evidently Saint Augustine must have had misgivings as to this, for he hastens to explain:- "Jonah prophesied of Christ, not so much by words as by suffering; and evidently more clearly than if he had announced his sufferings and resuurection by words." Chapter three - 1: The great teaching here is "The repentance of the Ninivites, a model of a genuine national repentance." 2: In repentance especially before God all are on a level; purple is of no avail, but a broken heart. (on v. 6) 3: Belief in God's words springs from faith. (v. 5) Chapter four - 1: Jonah a type of the misery and vanity of the human heart. ('Original Sin.') 2: On the gourd - (v. 7ff.) "Such is the vanity of our heart that it can be made glad and be troubled about trifling things. If we are too much delighted with a gourd, God knows that nothing more than a worm-hole is required to sober us again." (2) (Christian aceticism)

Thus by implication every Christian doctrine is found in this book. So that the Catholic scholar, Kaulen, who explains the book not only "literally" and "morally" but also "allegorically" and "mystically" comes to the conclusion that "in the small Book of Jonah the profoundest mysteries of the Christian faith are wonderfully prefigured, nay that the whole history of the New Testament is delineated in these few chapters." (3)

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(1) Lange's Comm., p. 29
(2) ibid, p. 40
(3) Kalisch, p. 270

CHAPTER IV

THE MYTHOLOGIC ELEMENTS

Practically all modern scholars are agreed that the Book of Jonah has in it elements ultimately traceable to ancient mythologic concepts. The analogy of Jonah's adventure with the sea-monster and certain Greek myths for a long time led them to suspect that these elements were of Grecian origin. But latterly, as we have already seen, they have been traced to the Assyrio-Babylonian Tiamat Myth. It would be useful to review a few analogous myths:-

1: Cepheus, King of Ethiopia, marries Cassiope. Her boasted beauty arouses the jealousy of the sea-nmphs who send a ravaging monster to terrorize the coast-lands. To appease them, Cepheus exposes his daughter, Andromeda, as prey for the monster. Perseus liberates her. In itself, the myth presents no similarities with the Jonah story, were it not connected with Joppa. (Jonah 1:3) Both Josephus and Strabo (1) assert that the events narrated took place there. In fact, for centuries, the staples to which Andromeda was bound to the rock were shown. This and the circumstance that the bones of a huge sea-monster found at Joppa was exhibited at Rome led scholars (2) to believe there was a possible connection between the Andromeda myth and Jonah. Others contend that the myth is of Semitic origin, the name Cepheus being related to the Hebrew (כּוּף , Jer. 4:29; Job 36) Chaldee (כֵּיפָא , rock). (3)

2: Another story cited as a parallel, and offering more points of contact with the Jonah story, is Hercules' rescue of Hesione from the sea-monster. In is similar in character to that of Andromeda. Kalisch's words (4) are worth quoting,"A comparison between

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(1) Bell. Jud. III 9:3; XVI 2:28
(2) p. 181, Kalisch
(3) Gensenius Dict.
(4) p. 177

the Hebrew and the Greek legend is highly instructive. A marine monster forms the centre of either; but in every other point there are as different as earnestness differs from arbitrary playfulness. The animal beneficent in the case of Jonah, destroys, in the Greek fable, indiscriminately all that come within its grasp. The God of the Hebrews is wroth on account of the loving care He bestows upon a people that does not know or adore Him; the god of the Greeks on account of gifts he considers his due from worshippers; the one requires no other explanation than the prophet's repentance, the other must be appeased by countless human victims; and lastly, in the one story the lot falls upon the guilty Jonah, in the other not upon the guilty king but upon his innocent daughter, who yet is finally withdrawn by a mortal from the fate destined for her by the deity. It is surprising that the two tales should ever have been adduced as parallels."

A later version of the Hesione myth, found for the first time in the pagan literature of Lycophron of Chalcis (2nd Cent. B.C.E.) makes Hercules remain alive in the belly of the sea-monster, tearing himself after a while through the intestine of the "jagged-toothed dog of Triton." (1) Christian authors definitely extend this stay to three days. (Justin Martyr, Cyril of Alexandria, and especially the Scholia to Cassandra by Isaac Tzetzes.) So that not the author of the Book of Jonah borrowed from this pagan story, but the poet of Cassandra, or his immediate authorities, either borrowed from the Book of Jonah or adopted some similar tradition of the Tyrian Hercules.

An interesting parallel exists between Lycophron's description of Hercules after leaving the belly of the fish and the scorched and fevered state which the medieval rabbinic commentators thought made Jonah so desirous of the shade of the booth and the gourd. (2)

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(1) Cassandra, pp. 31-37
(2) Comm. on Jonah 4:5, 7, etc.

Cf. - - - "but who, remaining alive and tearing the intestines, though scorched as at the seething bottom of a cauldron, a hearth without fire, merely forfeited the strong hair of his head." (1)

A most striking similarity is offered by the story of Mittavindaka of Benares. Against the wishes of his mother he sets out to sea. A mysterious force prevents the ship from going further. Three times the sailors cast lots and each time it falls on the guilt Mittavindaka. At last he is cast overboard. Even the language addressed by the seamen to him is parallel to the words addressed to Jonah. (2)

Yet the basis of the mythology must be sought in the myth of Marduk and Tiamat. (3) Originating in the observable phenomena of eclipses of the moon and sun (4), it was extended to embrace the entire nature-drama - the conflict of light and darkness, day and night, finally embracing the ethical sphere of good and evil. The influenece of this myth is most clearly seen in Isa. 51:9, "Awake, awake, put on strength, O Arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generation of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the sea-monster?" In the apocryphal Book of Esther (1:4) the differences between Haman and Mordecai is conceived of under the guise of a battle between two dragons. (cf. also Bell and the Dragon) (5)

Thus the Dragon becomes the mythical personification of Chaos and Evil, and finally of Hades, as the realm of darkness and evil. Hence "the expression Jonah 2:2, 'out of the belly of Sheol I cried' seems to be a relic of the original myth." (So Edward B. Tylor) (6) The notion of Hades, a monster swallowing men in death, seems to have been actually familiar to early Christian thought. Thus, the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemes' descent into Hades"makes Hades speak in his proper personality, complaining his belly is in pain," and a

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(1) Cf. Yalk. Jonah, 55
(2) Z. D. M. G., Band 50, p. 153
(3) Gunkel, Schöpfung und Chaos, p. 410ff.
(4) Paul Ehrenreich, p. 215ff.
(5) Dähnhardt, Natursagen III, see index
(6) Prim. Culture, p. 339 note

medieval picture, "Harrowing of Hell" depicts "Christ" standing before a huge fish-like monster's open jaws, whence Adam and Eve come forth, the first of mankind. (1) (Cf. Isa. 5:14, Habak. 2:5, Prov. 1:12, 27: 20, 30:16 where Sheol is compared to an insatiable monster.) Hence Goldziher (2), Tylor and Cheyne find in Jonah traces of a solar myth.

Regarding the abode of Jonah in the whale, Godziher says, "This trait is eminently solar and - - - "as on occasion of the storm, the storm-dragon or the storm-serpent swallows the sun, so when he sets he is swalloed by a mighty fish waiting for him at the bottom of the sea. Then when he appears again on the horizon, he is spit out on the shore by the sea-monster. (Cf. Jonah 2) Hence, as Dr. Cheyne points out, F. C. Baur was on the right track, when as early as 1837, (3) he tried to connect Jonah with the Oannes myth, which likewise has a solar character.

Again, "It is by the simplest poetic adaptation of the sun's daily life typifying man's life in its dawning beauty, mid-day glory, in evening death, that this same mythic fancy even fixed the belief in the religions of the world, that the Land of Departed Souls lies in the Far West or the World Below. How deeply the myth of the Sunset has entered into the doctrine of men concerning the future state, how the West and Underworld have become by mere analogy regions of the dead is a matter of profound interest." (4)

Is it not, then, a remarkable coincidence that the Zohar and Christianity should have hit upon Jonah as atype of the Resurrection, continuing in so strange a fashion and after so many centuries the old pagan solar myth of the Dragon, which had become bound up with speculations on eschatology when the world was very young? (5)

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(1) Prim. Culture, p. 340
(2) Goldziher, p. 102
(3) In Ilgen's Zeits. für die hist. Theolg., new ed., v. I, pp. 90ff.
(4) Prim. Culture II, p. 48
(5) See ch. III

CHAPTER V

THE BOOK IN LATER JEWISH TRADITION

I The Prophet

The personality of the prophet Jonah has occupied the imagination of Jews and Mohammedans alike. Many legends have sprung up about him, particularly among the Moslems. We shall, however, confine ourselves to Jewish tradition.

He is generally regarded as a native of Asher. But certain textual indications (Cf. Jos. 19:13 and IIKi. 14:25) make Rabbi Jochanan assign him to Zebulon. In their usual way, the rabbis harmonize the discrepancy - assuming that Jonah's mother was of Asher and his father of Zebulon.

The Yalkut Jonah, quoting Talmud Jer. Succah makes Jonah's father a prophet. "Every prophet whose father's name is mentioned is the son of a prophet." (On Jonah 1:1) Curious is the belief that Jonah's mother was the widow of Zarephath whose son was raised by Elijah from the dead. The ground for this belief is the resemblance between the word צָרְפָתִי (IKi. 17:24)and יוֹנָה (Jonah 1:1). This would accordingly make Jonah a half-Jew. Tradition also ascribes the Book of Jonah to him. Was there any connection between these circumstances and the liberal doctrines he taught, in the minds of the ancient rabbis? Or vice-versa, did these doctrines induce them to posit a half heathen origin for the prophet?

Tradition teaches that Jonah received his education and prophetic appointment from Elisha, under whose orders he annointed Jehu (Kinchi to IIK 9, also Zemach David).

Jonah's wife was an exemplary Jewish woman, assuming religious duties not incumbent on her, e. g., עֲלִיָּה רְגָלִים (1). Unlike Amos he was rich.So anxious was he to flee away from his hateful mission that he paid for the hire of the entire ship - 4000 gold denari. (2)

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(1) T. J. Erub. 10:1
(2) Ned. 35, Mid. Jonah

Interesting are the various motives assigned for the flight. First, why the flight at all; could the prophet then be foolish enough to think he can flee from before God? The critical Ibn Ezra asks this question, but unlike his contemporaries and predecessors leaves it unanswered. The answer of Kimchi is typical. שאינה מקום נבואה חוץ לארץ "There is no prophecy outside of Palestine." Hence, Jonah thought that once away he would be free from this unwelcome prophetic impulse. Why did he not want to preach before the Ninvites? The rabbinical commentators assigned mingled motives of selfishness and nobility. It is however reducable to one principle: שחשב כבוד הבן ולא האב - "He was anxious for human glory not for the Father's." He was in the first place afraid that the repentance of the Ninivites would bring injury to Israel. Israel would be all the more punished beacuse she remained unpenitent. The Ninvites would become לשמש לישראל. (1) One commentator (2) has it that Niniveh was allowed to repent not for its own sake, but for Israel's. To be אפר שבשה לישראל, רצוצה מרדות על ישראל. Another reason was wounded vanity. He was afraid the heathen would call him a false prophet, as did the Hebrews because his threat against them, too, was not fulfilled. (Cf. IIKi. 14:26) (3) Kimchi makes him selfish and self-righteous, though also chauvinistic to the point of sacrifice of life. (4)

II His Adventure at Sea

The rabbis see in this a sign of God's omnipotence in using an unwilling instrument to serve His ends. All the sea is at rest and all the other ships sail quietly on, but their own. (5) Ibn Ezra rather sceptically remarks that the junction of two bodies of water is always a dangerous point for ships. From 2:4 he concludes the storm

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(1) Rashi, Tal. Bab.
(2) מצודת דוד
(3) Rashi, Midr. Jonah, etc.
(4) Kimchi on 2:9, 4:3
(5) Rashi, Pirke R. El. Yalkut

took place at the junction of the Red Sea and the "Sea of Joppa." The storm is quoted as one of the most noteworthy that ever happened. (1) The sailors are good men and try various devices to save Jonah but in vain. (2)

On the ship seventy nationalities were represented (i. e., the world) each with a god in his hand. The captain is represented as saying, "We have heard that the God of the Hebrews is the greatest god." The sailors become converted. But the author of the Book of Jonah says nothing as to the rites of conversion. In 1:16, they apparently sacrifice on the ship, ignorant evidently, that sacrifices must only be offered up in the Temple. Later generations could not understand this; nor that the author was evidently not primarily interested in ecclesiastical means of salvation. Hence, the Targum adds, "They promise to sacrifice"- implying of course when they came to Jerusalem. In this sense the medieval rabbis took it. So Kimchi and Rashi interpret, "They vowed vows," and "They sacrificed sacrifices," to mean "They gave charity to the poor and vowed to convert their wives and children;" the sacrifice being the blood of the covenant rite. (Quoting Pirke R. Eleaz.)

The"great fish" affords the rabbis a splendid opportunity for the exercise of their delight in the marvelous. Rabbi Tarfon regards it as one of the things prepared for "From the six days of creation" with reference to the word וַיְמַן (Jonah 2:1). (2) Its eyes were like two windows through which he saw the Red Sea and the path of the Exodus. Two pearls furnished the light in the interior of the fish. (R. Meir) (3) Upon Jonah's promise to save the fish from the jaws of Leviathan, he is shown all the sights of the sea: the source of the ocean (2:4a), the path through the Red Sea (2:6b), Gehenna (2:7b), the foundation-stone of the world (אֶבֶן שְׁתִיָּה) sunk in the "Urmeer" - upon which stone the sons of Korah stand and pray till the Judgment Day, finally, the Temple at Jersusalem. But Jonah is having too inter-

(1) Berak. IX, Ecc. R. 1:6
(2) Yalk. Jonah, P. R. Eleaz. X, Gen. R. 5:5, Midr. Jonah
(3) Midr. Jonah

esting a time to think of his sin and his apostacy from God. He refuses to pray. Hence, God causes the fish to vomit him out and he is swallowed by a female fish with 365,000 embryo fishes. Cramped for room, and in a sad plight, he now calls to God - his prayer, being recorded in Jonah, chapter two. Thus the rabbis interpret the use of the word הַדָּגָה in 2:3 instead of the usual דָּג. Kimchi, with greater grammatical knowledge, describes the apparently discrepant הַדָּגָה as the collective of דָּג, evidently refusing to believe in the story of the female fish. Ibn Ezra, perhaps ironically, insists on its truth. (1) These tales of the Rabbis were suggested to them, doubtlessly, by their desire to conceive of the greatness of God, absurd as they seem to us. Nor must we overlook the noble religious thoughts which the story of Jonah's adventure furnished them. For Jonah becomes the classic example of the power of prayer and repentance and God's forgiving goodness. (2)

Of interest for the study of the Messianic ideal, is the idea that Jonah is Messiah, the son of Joseph, and that it is he who is to bring up Leviathan for the Banquet of the Just. (3) Like Jesus, Jonah, in Cabbalistic literature, becomes a type of the resurrection and there is a suggestion that like the former he too was taken up into heaven while he was participating in the festivities of the last day of Succoth. (4) The influence of Christianity is discernable here. (Matt. 12:39-41) (5)

III The Repentance of the Ninivites

The medieval commentators look in amazement on the sudden repentance of the Ninivites. It is so different from their own experience with the Gentiles of their day. And while they believe it is

(1) Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Midr. Jonah, Kimchi, etc.
(2) Midr. to Psalm 95:1-2, Gen. R. 5:5
(3) Midr. Jonah, Tal. B. IV, Tal. J. Succoth I:55a
(5) J. E. art. Jonah

possible for God to work any wonder; still, they conjecture because Niniveh is several times spoken of as "A city great before God" that its inhabitants were formerly "Fearers of God" and only later had fallen away. (Ibn Ezra, etc.) Kimchi with better insight says the words "great before God" have no ethical significance. Rather does it denote extraordinary great size (דֶּרֶךְ הַגְּדֻלָּה) like "The cedars of God," "The darkness of God."

The sins of the Ninivites were comparable to those of Sodom. Hence the punichment decreed is the same. (נֶהְפָּכֶת) (1) (Cf. however the opinion of Abayah, that the term used is ambiguous, advisedly so, because Jonah knew not whether the Ninvites would repent.) (2) Their chief sin was חָמָס, interpreted by the rabbis to mean sins against the very foundations of the social order. (3) The Midrâh Jonah gives us a most vivid picture of the repentance of the Ninvites and incidentaly tells us that the king's name was Osnappar. (Cf. Ezra 4:10) The rabbis give extraordinary interpretations to the manner in which the Ninivites showed their repentance - due to the word וַיַּאֲמֵן (Jonah 3:8) and to the strange fact that the beasts were also included in the king's decree of repentance. מעשה ניניה more rightly takes בחזקה in the sense of בכל לב . There is however no question about the sincerity of the repentant Ninivites; as there is about the conversion of the heathen sailors. Resh Lakish says the men of Niniveh did תְּשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה . (4) They were careful to make due and proper restitution of lost and robbed articles. With a view to Proverbs 1:19, they regarded the theft of a "peruta" with as much horror as the theft of a soul. (5) So that the Ninivites became for all times models of true repentance.(6)

(1) מעשה רוד and others
(2) Yalk. Jonah,
(3) See Kimchim below
(4) Yalk. Jonah
(5) Midr. Jonah
(6) Mish. Taanith II, I, T. B. Taanith XVa, XVIa

Interesting is the explanation of "much cattle" (Jonah 4:11). אדם equals Israel and the "souls of the righteous." The בהמה are the wicked, also the ignorant whose "souls are like the cattle." Hence, one explanation is that the Ninvites made their cattle fast to symbolize that like these they were ignorant of God's word and hence sinned. (1)

IV Theological Reaction to the Book of Jonah

That the medievals missed the lesson of the book, in its widest implications, has more than once been noted. Of course, it is unfair to make general conclusions upon the theological outlook of any one period or any one man from the few notes appended to the Book of Jonah. But knowing as we do the historical conditions of the Middle Ages and the character of their scholarship, we can come to a definite conclusion, in particular to their lack of a universalistic outlook and the narrowing of the conception of God's Mercy.

Kalisch has well stated the real standpoint of the writer of the Book of Jonah when he says, "The author is so free from religious exclusiveness that the distinction between Hebrew and heathen is to him hardly more than a distinction between people and people." (2)

This lesson, the medievals failed to grasp. So intelligent and learned a man as Kimchi clings to the belief that although God's Providence rules over all peoples (כי הא למשגיח אף באומות העולם), yet he is interested in the Gentiles only when their sin grows too great - in order to punish them. (3) His is a typical attitude. In commenting on Jonah 4:10, he makes God sorry not for the Ninivites, His handiwork, but sorry because their destruction would lessen His glory -, with reference to "For my glory I created him" even as Jonah is sorry not for the gourd but because of his selfish comfort. So that, though Kimchi admits mankind in general is "His glory," Israel

(1) Midr. Gen. R. VIII-1
(2) Kalisch, p. 267
(3) Also ויקרא כ"ו

is especially so. For it is Israel which honors Him most with the exception of the few wise among the Gentiles. (1)

The lesson of the repentant Ninivites did, however, make a profound impression upon later generations. The Midrash Jonah tells us how keenly Jonah felt the force of God's arguments. Overcome with a sense of shame at his conduct, he fell on his face before God and cried, "Lead the world with Thy attribute of Mercy." (Cf. Dan. 9:9) (For Jonah in the Zohar, see chapter three.)

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(1) Also in מעלות דוד

CHAPTER VI

IN THE LITURGY

In Talmud Taanith, 15a, we have a description of the procedure on a fast-day. The Ark with the Holy Scrolls is brought into the street; ashes are strewed on the head of the Nasi, on the chiefs of the Beth-Din, while other persons strew it on themselves. The eldest scholar or other honorable man then addresses them: "My brethern, it is not said about the Ninivites that God saw their sack-cloth and their fasting, but that God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; also in tradition it says, 'Rend your hearts and not your garments that you may return unto the Lord, your God.' " (Joel 2:13)

Likewise an elder who is experienced, who has children, and whose "larder" is empty recites twenty-four benedictions, eighteen of the Tefillah and six more. זקן ורגיל ויש לו בנים וביתו ריקם כדי שיהא לבו שלם בתפלה

(R. Chisdai interprets ריקם to mean הגבינה שבית ריקם מן הגבינה) As to the exact benedictions said, R. Jehuda differs. (Taanith, 16b) But the sixth closes with, "May He who answered Jonah in the bowels of the fish answer you, andlisten favorably to your cry on this day. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who answerest in time of distress." The seventh benediction refers to David and Solomon, and the rabbis wonder why the chronological order has been disturbed. They answer, because the latter benediction closes, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who has mercy over the earth;" - which is a more inclusive benediction. (1) (משום רבוני למיחתם מרחם על הא

At any rate, we find the repentance of the Ninivites pointed to as a model of sincere penitance. It is not strange therefore that it should have been selected as the haftarah for Yom Kippur afternoon, emphasizing as it does true inward repentance, as does its companion piece of the morning haftarah, Isa. 57:14-58:14. The Ashkenazim read

(1) Taanith, 17a

the entire Book of Jonah. The Shephardim add Micah 7:18-20.

As to when it became customary to read the Book of Jonah as the haftarah for Yom Kippur afternoon, as indeed, the whole question of the time when the order of prophetic readings became fixed, it is exceedingly difficult to determine. (1) But the fact remains that this is the only haftarah for Mincha mentioned in the Talmud - the haftarah at Mincha being a very late innovation (בשעת ובמנחה קורא ומפטיר ביום) (2). Evidently, then it was a long cherished custom.

(1) Elbogen, p. 175ff.
(2) T. B. Meg., 31b; Elbogen, p. 183