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JUDAH LOFB GORDON,
SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS REFORMER.

THESIS

Submitted in partial
fulfillment of the Rabbinical
Degree.

by

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Dedicated
to
My Father and Mother.

INTRODUCTION.

Judah Loeb Gordon occupies a significant niche in Hebrew letters. During the past few years interest in him has been revived, partly due to the centennial celebration in his memory and honor in 1930. His works have been viewed from various angles, as a lyricist, satirist, fabulist, nationalist, Maskil, reformer, etc. This thesis does not attempt to develop every phase of Gordon's writings, but is limited to a consideration of his ideas on reform. Reform for Gordon was twofold in character, social and religious, due to the conditions of Jewry in Russia. In Germany, for example, the reformers had to be concerned with only one phase of reform - the religious, for the social and political conditions of the Jews were rather favorable. On the other hand, the religious reformer in Russia had to work for the improvement of the social and political status of the Jew to make his reforms effective.

In viewing Gordon as a social and religious reformer, we shall, first of all, present a picture of the conditions of the time which called for reform, then discuss the influences and forces which shaped his thought and determined his action; afterwards give a summary of his life, based mainly on his autobiography, and, finally, select from his writings the most significant examples dealing with social and religious reform.

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Chapter I.

THE CONDITIONS OF JEWRY IN GORDON'S TIME.

When Judah Loeb Gordon was born, Nicholas I. was the Czar of Russia. Russian Jewry was suffering at the hands of this autocratic and reactionary ruler who was determined to solve the Jewish problem by having the Jews de-Judaized. He followed a ruthless policy to Russify the Jews. "Absorb this group of leeches!" became his cry.(1)

Determined to annihilate the Jewish people by making the Jew a Russian, the Czar devised techniques to carry out this political policy. The first steps taken was the institution of a rigid military service for the Jewish youth. A decree was made in August, 1827, that the Jews must render military service between the ages of twelve to twenty-five for a period of twenty-five years.(2) Away from home the youth would come under the influence of Christianity and thus be weaned from his own religion.

To enlist these recruits became the responsibility of the Jewish communities. Each community was required to have a certain number of recruits from its own group. Military exemption was granted to merchants, artisans, mechanics, agricultural colonists, rabbis and the graduates from Russian educational institutions. Whenever the community fell short of its quota then the communal agents would catch anyone, even children eight years of age. Often children would be kidnapped, torn from their mothers' arms, and sent to far off regions, away from Jewish contacts. Often Jewish children would die of fatigue on the way. (3) Once in the canton every method was used to make Christians out of them.

These children were taught by Greek orthodox priests, were

starved, flogged, and every imaginable method and torture was used to make them adopt Christianity. For example, they would be made to eat salted fish, then were denied water until they embraced Christianity. Those who refused to accept Christianity were forcibly kept awake the whole night until they dropped from exhaustion. Most of these children could not endure these tortures and became Christians. Those who were maturer endured this suffering and remained steadfast. Many were martyrs and accepted death instead. (4)

The older recruits were often taken from cheder or yeshibah, from wives and children. What tragedy these young Jews suffered when they would give their wives a divorce upon entering military service, so she would not have to remain a widow forever. (7) The years of military service spent by the older Jewish soldiers were amidst extraordinary hardships. They were ridiculed for not being able to speak Russian, and their life became depressing because of their inability to adapt themselves to a new environment. (8)

Those exempted from military service were required to pay "recruiting money." It is easy to see what the consequences would be for the poor. The poor could not pay to escape conscription. Furthermore, the general military law stated that there could be substitute recruits. The whole town was now at the mercy of the Jewish officials and leaders of the Kahal who had a list of those required to do military service. This gave the hypocrites and opportunists of the Ghetto an opportunity to exercise power and become wealthy.(5) Often orphans and poor children became substitutes for the sons of the wealthy class. (6)

The Jews suffered not only from military conscription, but from unprecedented legal discriminations and liabilities. "The

Jews were lashed with a double Knout, a military and civil."(9) The same year which saw the promulgation of the conscription statute, two new "ukases" were issued, one decreeing the transfer of the Jews from all villages and village inns in Grodno into towns and townlets; the other ordering the banishment of all Jews from the city of Kiev. This marked the beginning of a new system, that of narrowing down the urban area allotted to the Jews within the Pale of Settlement. There the Jews had developed an important community of commerce and industry. The government maintained "their presence is detrimental to the industry of this city and to the exchequer in general, and is, moreover, at variance with the rights and privileges conferred at different periods upon the city of Kiev." (10) Likewise, the Jews on the shores of the Baltic and Black Seas felt the "whip of expulsion crack over their backs." (11) In Courland and Livonia measures were taken to reduce the number of Jews. In the same year an imperial "ukase" decreed the expulsion of the Jews in Sevastopol and Nicholayev. Thus the Pale was narrowed down by this "Charter of Disabilities." (12)

These liabilities in addition forbade the Jews to employ Christian domestics, to have marriages before the groom was eighteen and the bridegroom sixteen. The use of the Russian language was made obligatory in public documents. The "Kahal" was held responsible for the carrying out of the government instructions and for the correct payment of taxes. Synagogues were not to be built in the vicinity of churches. Coercive baptism of Jewish children still remained in force in the conscription statute. To control the spiritual and cultural life of the Jew, a strict censorship was introduced for books in Hebrew. (13)

These methods of assimilating the Jew did not meet with success, and the government therefore began a program of "enlightened absolutism." It thought that the Western European attitude toward the Jew might be applied in Russia to assimilate the Jew. The basic cause for the Jewish problem was the separatism of the Jews, and if they should be brought into closer contact with the Western world, this segregated existence would be broken down and the way prepared for assimilation. (14)

The first measures made for the assimilation of the Jews was the establishment in the cities of the Pale elementary schools to teach the Jewish children the Russian language, secular science, Hebrew, and "religion according to the Holy Writ." (15) The growing generation would be uprooted from its Talmudic and religious moorings and gradually merge with the Christian world. Fearing that the Jews might not be favorably disposed towards such reforms, it was decided to appoint Lilienthal, a young German Jew, to acquaint the Jewish people with "the benevolent intentions of the government." (16) He became preacher and director of the modern school in Riga. (17)

Lilienthal was the desired man for this post. He represents a new type of Jew, the product of the emancipation period. He expressed the point of view of the German Jewish intellectuals of that period - assimilation and moderate religious reform. The intellectuals, the Maskilim, were very sympathetic towards his proposed school reform, but the plain Jewish people did not have such confidence in the government. They saw in the school the medium of baptizing their children. Subsequent events proved to them that this educational reform program was for the purpose of drawing the Jewish youth nearer to Christianity. (18)

After the purpose of this school reform became known and the Jewish people practiced passive resistance to all government measures, then steps were taken to destroy what was left of the Jewish communal organization. (19) Repressive laws were passed which put the "Kahals" in the hands of the police and municipal governments. In addition to the regular tax, the Jews were now required to pay a special tax on "kosher" meat and on Sabbath candles. (20) These additional funds were for the purpose of maintaining the new schools. Then a law was passed driving the Jews out of the Prussian and Russian frontier, which applied not only to villages as previously decreed, but also to cities and towns. (21)

The next effort to assimilate the Jewish population was the "assortment" or classification of the Jews. Russian Jewry now belonged to one of two categories: useful or useless. The useful category consisted of "merchants affiliated with guilds, artisans belonging to trade-unions, agriculturists..... All others who could not claim such a financial status and had no definite income, the large mass of petty tradesmen and paupers, were to be labeled as 'useless' or 'detrimental.'" (22) Such disabilities meant the economic ruin of the large masses of Jews. (23)

The conditions of the Russian Jewry stirred the hearts of the influential Jews of Western Europe. Originally the eyes of European Jewry was sympathetically turned towards Russia. They thought that these school reforms meant the ushering in of a new Jewish life in that country. (24) But with the frontier expulsions of 1843 they became aware that such actions were not at all motivated by what Lilienthal and others assumed to be "benevolent intentions." It became the duty of the important and influential

Jews to intercede in their behalf. (25) Moses Montifiore, the famous Jewish philanthropist of London, was singled out for this task. He visited Russia in 1846 to make a survey of the Jewish situation there. He was given a hearing by the Czar, granted every opportunity to travel in the Pale, familiarized himself with conditions there, and was commissioned to submit a report based on the information he gathered from his travels. His coming was met with great enthusiasm and solemnity on the part of the Jewish masses. Their hope that this visit would result in a change of the government's attitude was not realized. (26)

The government's attempt to reconstruct the economic life of the Jew resulted in his ruin. The method that it used for a quarter of a century--"hurling of masses of living beings from villages to towns and from the border zone into the interior"--instead of solving the Jewish problem created a new problem. (27) The government then turned to an agricultural colonization experiment. Many of the Jewish refugees were turning to the soil as their livelihood when the government set aside certain lands in Siberia for this purpose. A few months later the Czar changed his mind; this colonial project was crushed, and with it the hopes and aspirations of many Jews. However, about 10,000 Jews settled on farms in Yekaterinoslav and Bessarabia, in Lithuania and White Russia. (28)

But this did not change the economic conditions of the millions of Jews. The life of the Jew remained basically the same. As before the liquor traffic held the central place in the economic structure of Russian Jewry. Next in importance to the liquor traffic was that of retail and wholesale commerce. Crafts and

professions came last. Poverty and misery were the inevitable companions of this economic system, if we remember that there were hundreds of thousands of Jews without definite occupations. (29)

In addition to this economic suffering there was the persecution and misery caused by the blood libels. Under Nicholas I. the ritual murder accusation became a source of danger for the Jewish people. (30) The blood myth was revived again when the Jewish community of Velizh became implicated for the murder of Theodore Yemelyanov, the three year old son of a Russian soldier, at the Easter season. (31) Forty-two people were put in chains, thrown in jail, even though the witnesses testifying against them were perjurers and of questionable character. The whole community was placed under suspicion, the Synagogues were shut, shops were closed, and terror haunted the Jewish community. (32) After the passing of about nine years, the government, after making a careful investigation, was convinced of the innocence of the Jews. Those in prison were released; Synagogues, and Jews were granted a respite from this suffering for several years. (33) The phantom of the ritual murder reappeared later in Saratov. (34)

The last years of Nicholas I were even darker for the Jews of Russia. (35) The government authorities again attempted to introduce forceful assimilation measures, and new conscription laws which made the existence of the Jew even more severe and difficult than before. (36)

What was the effect of this despotism on the inner life of Russia? The attempt of the Russian government to graft the European culture upon the Jews achieved the reverse of its aims and intentions. The autocracy of the government made the Jews withdraw more to themselves and farther away from the outside world.

During such persecutions, they clung all the more tenaciously to their old mode of living. The tyranny of the Czar was counterbalanced by a conservatism and rigid discipline within the Jewish group. (37)

With the government disrupting the Jewish communal organization, robbing the Kahal of its authority, reducing it to the degrading role of conscripting recruits, the masses turned from the elders of the Kahal as their spiritual guides to the Rabbis and Zaddiks. They followed these leaders with confidence and submitted to their rigid discipline without a murmur. The result was that the cultural influences from without were stubbornly resisted and the old scheme of living was tenaciously adhered to. The life of the Jew was now controlled by conservative religious laws. No one dared deviate from the accepted group customs and practices. (38) The minutiae of the rabbinical laws became the essence of Judaism. "A short jacket or a trimmed beard was looked upon as a token of free-thinking." (39)

The Talmud became the all-important subject of study for the Jewish youth. Secular education was regarded as subversive and was suspected as an assimilating influence. The reading of secular books in foreign languages or in Hebrew was prohibited. Talmudic dialectics, "pilpul," was valued and developed to the highest degree in the Yeshiboth. This scholastic education resulted in producing men who were not fit for the problems of life. Those who turned against the existing order of things were crushed by the power of the rabbi and checked by the threats of excommunication. The fate of Rabbi Manashe Ilyer in the hands of the Lithuanian fanatics is a typical example of what happened to anyone who tried to widen the range of thought and introduce religious

reforms. (40)

The civil and political disenfranchisements of the Jews at the time of Nicholas I. made the masses turn to Hasidism. It became for the suffering masses a haven of refuge and an escape from their worldly problems. The mystical lullabies and fascinating stories of the exploits of the Zaddiks offered surcease for their aching hearts and restless minds. Under these conditions it was inevitable that the religious life of most of the people should have been essentially superstitious. The people believed in demons and ghosts; they accepted the tales of the Talmud literally; they made charms and amulets a part of religion. In addition to this limited and narrow religious view on the part of the people, there were the Rabbis with their rigorous interpretation of the law which tended to isolate Jewish life from outside influences. The cultural life of the people, as a result, reached a low level. (41)

The forward-looking and progressive Jews of that generation were faced with the serious problem of introducing religions and social reforms in Judaism in order to raise the cultural status of the Jews and purge religion of all its superstitious content. This became the goal of Haskalah, the life-work of Judah Loeb Gordon.

In short, these were the existing social and religious conditions of the Jews of Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century which required a man with the inclinations and powers of Gordon to help solve: (42)

1. An oppressive government which kept the masses of Jews in poverty, not allowing them to lease or own land, nor engage in commerce or manufacturing.

2. The lack of a practical school system, based upon instruction in the language of the land, the ordinary branches of knowledge, and a handicraft.
3. The religious superstition of the people, the ignorance of the rabbis on subjects outside of religion due to their suspicion of and hostility towards European culture.
4. The need for the rabbis to be less rigorous in their interpretation of the rabbinic law and adjust Judaism to the conditions of the time.

N O T E S .

Chapter I.

1. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, II. p. 14.
2. Ibid., p. 17; Margolis and Marx, History of the Jews, p.668. Raisin, p. 137.
3. Dubnow, II, p. 25, Raisin, p. 138-139.
4. Dubnow II, pp. 27-28.
5. Cf. Gordon's "The Two Joseph ben Simons" as a tirade against these conditions.
6. Dubnow, II, p. 29.
7. Ibid., p. 28.
8. Ibid., pp. 28-29.
9. Ibid., p. 30.
10. Ibid., p. 31.
11. Ibid., p. 32.
12. Ibid., pp. 39-40; Raisin, p. 154.
13. Ibid., p. 41. (Gordon tells in his autobiography how his writings had to be passed by the censor before they could be published. Autobiography, pp. 106-108).
14. Ibid., pp. 45-47.
15. Ibid., p. 51.
16. Ibid., p. 52.
17. There were two other modern Jewish schools, in Odessa and Kishinev.
18. Ibid., pp. 52-58; Raisin, pp. 164-165.
19. Ibid., p. 59.
20. Ibid, pp. 60-62.
21. Ibid., p. 63.
22. Ibid., p. 64.
23. Ibid., p. 65.

- 24. Ibid., pp. 66-67.
- 25. Ibid., p. 68; Raisin, pp. 155 f.
- 26. Dubnow, II, pp. 69.

(Gordon tells in his autobiography that he remembers distinctly the tall, well-dressed Montifiore when he visited Vilna in 1846 (Autobiography, pp. 36-37). When he visited St. Petersburg in 1872, Gordon dedicated a poem in his honor. The poem hails Montifiore as a defender of his people, coming to them in their distress.

"Verily there is still under heaven
A land where the sun of righteousness does not shine,
All its inhabitants, young and old, are uncultivated.
There the law of man is trampled under foot.
No cause is taken up; there is no justice in the gate.
Alas, worm Jacob, you are trampled under foot
By the Danube river and wallow in your blood."
(Collected Poems, I., pp. 96-97.

On his second visit to Russia Montifiore commented that he noticed an intellectual revival and greater cultural interests on the part of the Jewish people.
(Autobiography, p. 37).

- 27. Dubnow, II, p. 70.
- 28. Ibid., pp. 71-72; Raisin, pp. 140-142.
- 29. Ibid. (Gordon's father, for example, was an innkeeper - Autobiography, pp. 18-19).
- 30. Ibid., p. 73.
- 31. Ibid., pp. 75-76.
- 32. Ibid., p. 79.
- 33. Ibid., pp. 83-84.
- 34. Ibid., pp. 150-153; Margolis and Marx, p. 674.
- 35. Ibid., pp. 141-143.
- 36. Ibid., pp. 143-150; Margolis and Marx, ibid.
- 37. Dubnow, II, pp. 111-112; Slouschz, p. 100.
- 38. Ibid., p. 113 f.; Ibid., pp. 93-94, 194-196.
- 39. Ibid., p. 113.
- 40. Ibid., p. 144 f.
- 41. Ibid., pp. 116-125; Slouschz, Ch. IV; Raisin, Ch. III.

42. Slouschz, p. 113; Dubnow, II., p. 116;
Raisin, pp. 95-96.

Chapter II.

THE INFLUENCES ON GORDON

Out of these conditions, two movements, bent on bringing about definite changes in Russian life, were born. One was a Jewish expression - Haskalah; the other, non-Jewish - Nihilism. Both of these intellectual forces influenced Gordon's thinking and action. With Haskalah Gordon had direct contact, as a follower in his youth and in his maturity as the last of the Maskilim. (1) In regards to Nihilism, ^{it can be said,} he was not directly influenced by it. Whatever ideas he expressed which are recognized today as nihilistic, he wrote not as a conscious follower of this school, but as one close to the "spirit of Russia." (2)

1. The Haskalah Movement

The Haskalah movement had its origin in Germany under the influence of Mendelssohn and Wessely. Their aims were reaffirmed by a group of Jewish young men, eager to acquaint and introduce the people to European culture. They founded a Hebrew periodical (1785) Ha-Meassef as an organ to express their ideas. The contributors consisted of men who had both a thorough Hebrew background and some academic training. Their purpose was to introduce reforms in Jewish life. These reforms, they realized, would be possible only if the people had a secular background. Through the medium of the Hebrew language and the development of Hebrew literature they sought to raise the cultural level of the Jew. The writings of this group did much to revive an interest in the language, literature, and general life of the Jewish people. (3)

The Haskalah movement was destined to have a far-reaching influence in its day. Slowly, it was becoming a vital force in reforming Jewish life in Eastern Europe. This new spirit manifested

itself in Galicia through personalities as Erter, writing satires on Hasidic life, Krochmal, busying himself with his philosophic work "Moreh Nebruche ha-Zeman," and Rapaport engaging in critical studies of the Bible and Jewish history. (4)

At the time of Nicholas I, Haskalah expressed itself vigorously in Russia, and of the many Maskilim to further this Renaissance in Jewish life these personalities stand out: Isaac Baer Levinsohn, "The Russian Mendelssohn," (5) Mordecai Aaron Ginzburg, "The Father of Hebrew Prose," (6) and Abraham Baer Lebensohn, "The Father of Hebrew Poetry." (7)

The first seeds of Haskalah began to blossom in the Hasidic center of Volhynia. Here Issac^{Baer} Levinsohn was giving expression to the enlightenment influences he had associated with in his youth in adjacent Galicia. (8) Levinsohn's contribution was as an emancipator of the Russian Jews from their spiritual and cultural bondage rather than in the field of literature. (9) In 1828 he wrote his Te'uddah be-Yisroel to prove from Jewish sources that Judaism recognized the value of secular education. He also stressed the importance of the Jew to engage in productive labor, as handicraft and agriculture, with less emphasis on business and trade. This writing did much to remove the prejudice against Haskalah and influenced the Minister of Education in Russia and Czar Nicholas to found Jewish schools throughout Europe. (10)

The Volhynian soil was unfavorable for the seeds of enlightenment. The pioneers of Haskalah were thwarted in their efforts by the Hasidim. In Odessa, the youthful capital of New Russia, and Vilna, the old capital of Lithuania, was it possible for the seeds of Haskalah to take root. Both became centers of the Haskalah movement. (11) While Odessa excelled in its "external civilization,"

Vilna surpassed by her "store of mental energy." (12) About 1830 a literary circle known as the "Berliners" was formed in Vilna and from this group the two founders of Neo-Hebraic style, Mordecai Aaron Ginzburg and Abraham Baer Lebensohn, emerged. (13) Of these Vilna Maskilim Abraham Baer Lebensohn and his son Micah ^{Joseph} had a great influence on Gordon in his earlier writings. (14)

Haskalah in this period was a romantic movement. However, the romanticism of Haskalah was not analagous to the romanticism in Europe in that it had no reactionary tendencies.

Rather, it continued to develop "the humanitarian ideals of Haskalah." (15) The masses of people, however, could not be swayed from their hasidic mystical tendencies by logic or rationalism. Their suffering and despair found surcease and calm in Hasidism.. The romanticism of Neo-Hebraic literature was to be an answer to their needs, as well as a powerful enemy of Hasidism.(16)

Soon this romanticism of these literary writers began to respond to the romanticism of the masses, for it was satisfying a national yearning. (17) But the romanticism in no way had any relation to the needs of the time. The writings of the romanticists became a passtime literature; its fiction was much more appealing to the people than the serious writings of Haskalah, as Lebensohn's poetry. (18) Thus it became the light literature of the time, and as for its style, it was the Melizah, using Biblical language and Biblical stories for themes. (19)

Micah Joseph Lebensohn, whose name was previously mentioned as an influence on Gordon's earlier writings, belonged to this romantic school. Like the romanticists of his time. Micah's poetry expressed a twofold influence which we shall later have occasion to notice in the writings of Gordon: (1) the style of the

classics and (2) the Biblical, historical theme (20)

Another of the romantic writers to exert an influence on Gordon was the novelist, Abraham Mapu. His glorification of natural life in his "Love of Zion" inspired that phase of Gordon's poetry which urged the Jews to return to the farm. (21)

At this point it might be well to clarify an often misconceived idea as to the aim of Haskalah in Russia. The Maskilim did not desire assimilation or the destruction of the Jewish group. The Haskalah of Russia must not be confused with the Haskalah in Germany, even though they outwardly seem to have much in common. There was, however, this essential difference. The beginning of the German enlightenment was accompanied by a strong drift toward assimilation. (22) In Russia, on the other hand, they desired the Jews to leave their secluded cultural life and obtain a broader view through contact with the outside world, heretofore unknown to the masses of Jews. Their purpose was to synthesize the culture of Judaism and the Western culture. If anything at all, Haskalah of Russia was nationalistic in that it desired to revive the Jewish group, develop its language and literature.

The era of reform under Alexander II after the Crimean War marked a decisive change in the cultural life of the Jew in Russia. The liberal program of the Czar included the Jewish problem among the needed reforms. The result was a substantial improvement in the political status of the Jew; the abolition of juvenile conscription; (23) the extension of right of residence in the empire; (24) easier access to the liberal professions; (25) and a greater participation in self-government. (26) These social changes and the hope for liberty aroused the Jewish

intelligentsia with the desire for emancipation and Russification. Many had been stirred from their age-old dreams and were brought face to face with new ideas and problems. The youth of the Pale was now lured by the promise of freedom and ^{the} enjoyment of the rights of human beings. (27) They rushed to the gymnazia and the universities, came in contact with Russian literature and the nihilist thinkers. The student, who a generation ago was poring over the Talmud in the heder and yeshiboths, was now thinking of the ideas of positivism, evolution, and socialism. This transition from rabbinism and hasidic mysticism to the world of science was sudden and sharp. They became imbued with the ideal of that age - freedom of thought and the annihilation of all religions and national barriers to prepare for a brotherhood of all mankind. The result was a conflict between the old and the new generation. The younger generation negated entirely its Jewish historic past. The elders still adhered to the faith of their fathers. (28)

The Haskalah was the golden mean between these two extremes. On the one hand, the Maskilim were in full accord and sympathy with the new ideas expressed in Russia. They attacked the superstition in hasidism, the obscurantism of the rabbis, the ignorance and credulity of the people, and suggested the need for moderate religious reforms to relieve the burdens of ceremonial discipline. On the other hand, they did not carry the policy of emancipation to the extreme of assimilation, as it has been shown on page seventeen. They wanted the Russification of the Jew, not that he should be completely Russified, the removal of obsolete forms of Judaism, not the total disappearance of Jewish life. (29)

The Maskilim now began to prepare themselves for the golden future the government offered. They ranged themselves on the

side of the government with utmost confidence in its intentions and took advantage of every educational opportunity offered them. All that the Jews needed, so they thought, was to make themselves worthy of the Czar's kindness. (30) In their eagerness to reform, the Maskilim often used the government to impose their program on the masses of Jews. As a result, these Jewish masses distrusted the Jewish intellectuals and looked upon the cause of enlightenment as an enemy of the Jewish religion. (31)

Various methods and means were used to realize the new order Haskalah espoused. In Odessa, Zhitomir, and Minsk technical institutes were established for the purpose of teaching useful trades. (32) The attempt of the Russians to enlighten the masses through the society of Narodniki (Common People) gave the Jews the impetus to organize a similar society for the Jews of Russia. In 1863 the society for the Promotion of Haskalah was founded by a group of financiers and intellectuals of St. Petersburg - Baron Günzberg, Leon Rosenthal, and Rabbi Neuman. (33) Its object was to spread the knowledge of the Russian language among the Jews, to publish and assist others in publishing, in Russian as well as in Hebrew.....and assist the youth in devoting themselves to the pursuit of science and knowledge. (34)

The strivings of the Maskilim for enlightenment and religious reform were made further possible by the publication of periodicals. In 1856 the Ha-Maggid, a political and literary journal in Hebrew, appeared with Silberman as editor. (35) Samuel Joseph Fuen in 1860 published Ha-Karmel, a Science of Judaism weekly. The most important Hebrew publication was the journal Ha-Meliz, established in 1860 by Zedarbaum. It became the principal organ of the movement for emancipation and Jewish

reforms. The Yiddish weekly Kol-Mebasser was published in 1862 as a supplement to Ha-Meliz. Ha-Shahar was published by Smolenskin in 1862 to fight against the fanaticism of the masses and combat the intellectuals' indifference towards Judaism. Ha-Zefira was founded by Slonimsky in 1872. (36) In St. Petersburg three Russian weeklies were published, The Russian Yewrey ("The Russian Jew"), The Razswyet ("The Dawn"), and later on Voskhod ("The Sunrise") (37). Outstanding among the contributors to these periodicals was J. L. Gordon. He wrote prolifically for these publications - almost a literature in itself - to convey to his people the message of Haskalah, and make them aware of the pressing educational, social and religious problems, which unless solved, the position of the Jew would remain unchanged. (38)

2. Nihilism.

The second influence on Gordon's thinking was the movement of Realism or Nihilism. (39) Haskalah now in contact with the liberal thought-currents in Russia abandoned Romanticism with its "citadel of dreams" and with the bluntest realism aggressively attacked all the evils which were corroding the foundation of society. They followed the example of the Russian realistic literature of the day, which exposed and attacked the antiquated notions of the past conflicting with the modern world-view. (40)

Now to consider in a broad, general outline the Nihilist movement and its effect on Haskalah, which later was to make Gordon a champion of enlightenment and a trenchant critic of old-fashioned Jewish life.

With the liberal tendencies of Alexander II, the liberation of the peasants, etc., Nihilism became a revolutionary social and political movement in Russia. (41) It gave rise to thinkers

and writers as Bielinsky, Cernysevski, Pisarev and Dobroljubov. Coming under the ^{influence of the} historical, evolutionary thinking of Hegel, the materialism and positivism of Feuerbach ^{and Comte,} the utilitarianism of Mills, the economic theories of Bentham, Ricardo, and Marx, they began to express ideas which challenged the established order.

1. Nihilism, in contradistinction to romanticism and sentimentalism in the literature up to that time, was rooted in realism. It embraced the objective world, the totality of human experience; the ugly as well as the beautiful belonged to the realm of art. (42) The function of literature, then, as in ethics, is to interpret life. Every author must therefore keep in close touch with reality. (43)

2. Nihilism was hostile to the abstract and the general, and it stressed instead the concrete and the specific. Facts were regarded by the Nihilists as more important than the speculations of metaphysics, the theories of philosophy, and the illusions of religion. (44) The artist, in addition, had to be a thinker and acquainted with science, "the handbook for the beginner in practical life." With such a criterion for art, literature became concerned with social and political problems. (45)

3. History is a process of naturalistic development and growth. All institutions are a product of this evolutionary change. The primary motive force in history for the Nihilists was reason or understanding. (46)

4. Nihilism accepts no authority; it criticises and negates the authorities of the older generation. Bazarov in Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons" became the classic example of a Nihilist who breaks with tradition and the institutions of the past. As for their religious views, the Nihilists were atheists and material-

ists, enemies of mysticism, falsehood and the orthodox church.

In his political and social outlook, he aimed to destroy the old Russia, the Russia of Nicholas. (47)

5. Science and culture were to be the means of solving the social problem. Thus it became the task of the Russian revolutionary to expound the socialist aim to the peasant. (48) Physical toil was recommended to members of the cultured class (49), and they adopted the plebian manners and customs. (50) In "Virgin Soil" Turgenief portrays Nezhdanov, a young Nihilist who renounced the bourgeois society in order to live among the masses and devote his life towards their education and ultimate emancipation. Nihilism was a foe to liberalism and the bourgeoisie. (51)

6. The status of the woman was a problem of deep concern to the Nihilists. Under Nicholas I. the woman suffered from political oppression. They condemned Russian patriarchalism which enslaved the family, and above all the woman. (52) They were interested in making her "a thinking being," in "securing her admission to the sources of education and to the means of independent livelihood." (53)

Naturally, a portion of the Jewish youth was drawn into the revolutionary movement. Jewish students imbued with these new ideas identified themselves with the down-trodden masses. They were not so concerned with the suffering of the Jews, for they took it for granted that the realization of the ideals of Russian democracy would also mean the solution of the Jewish problem as well. The Jewish problem, they felt, might be set aside for the time being. (54)

In the beginning of the seventies there existed in Vilna a Jewish revolutionary circle consisting primarily of the students of the rabbinical and of the teacher's institute of that city. They were detected by the police and arrested, in 1875. Several of the group managed to escape, among them A.Lieberman, who succeeded in reaching London where he associated with Lavrov, a follower of Marx, and with the editors of the revolutionary journal Vperyod ("Forward"). The following year Lieberman founded in London "the League of Jewish Socialists". This society was soon dissolved, and he emigrated to Vienna, where, under the name of Freeman, he started in 1877 a socialistic magazine in Hebrew, Ha-Emet ("The Truth"), to convey to the Hebrew reading public the doctrines of Marx. (55) Socialist literature had a short history; in 1879 Lieberman and his comrades were arrested and expelled from Prussia and Austria. (56)

The Jewish revolutionaries who were heart and soul devoted to the cause of social advance did not seem concerned with the problem of freeing their own people who were in great distress. It was in the later development of Haskalah that these revolutionary and radical ideas were expressed in behalf of Jewish emancipation. (57) The Hebrew writers of Russia, now increasing in number, developed a new style in writing by introducing the diction of the Talmud and Hebrew. This form is much more in accord with the spirit and environment of the Jew. (58) The poet or novelist under the influence of Realism and Nihilism, became a fighter, who attacked the old order of things and developed the new. (59) Their characters now represent real individuals, living and acting. The themes are related to actual experiences and problems in Jewish life (Slouschz, p. 168). Thus Micah

Joseph Lebensohn describes the anguish of a Jewish youth who is torn between faith and science, and is sensitive to the oppression and the great suffering of his "homeless" people; (60) Mapu in his "Hypocrite" describes the fanatical rabbis who persecute the champions of enlightenment, and in contrast the dreamy Jewish youth who goes to the Russian school to serve his people and strives to reconcile religion and science; (61) Abraham Baer Lebensohn publishes the drama "Truth and Faith," which portrays the unscrupulous rabbi taking advantage of the ignorance of the people; (62) Solomon Jacob Abramowitsch in his novel "Fathers and Sons" realistically represents the antagonism between religious fathers and emancipated sons in a Hasidic environment. (63)

Soon Jewish life, with its constantly growing problems, was to have as its champion, J. L. Gordon, the outstanding realist poet of the age. (64)

Chapter II.

N O T E S.

1. Kleinman, Dimuyoth vi-Kummoth, p. 66.
2. After his arrest in 1879 by the government, Gordon made this statement: "There is no proof to testify against me that I really was in contact with the Socialists. Their teachings are strange to me, and the representative men in it I do not recognize or know." (Al-Nehar K'bor, p. 83).
3. Slouschz. pp. 29-50.
4. Ibid., pp. 51-92.
5. Raisin, p. 204; Dubnow, Vol. II, p. 125; Slouschz, p. 121.
6. Raisin, p. 213; Dubnow, II, p. 132; Slouschz, p. 117.
7. Dubnow, II, p. 134; Slouschz, p. 104.
8. Raisin, p. 204; Dubnow, II, pp. 125-126.
9. Slouschz, p. 121.
10. Dubnow, II, 126-132; Slouschz, pp. 122-123; Raisin, 206 ff.
11. Slouschz, p. 103; Dubnow, II, p. 132.
12. Dubnow, II, p. 133.
13. Slouschz, p. 104; Dubnow, II, ibid.
14. Gordon, Al-Nehar K'bor, pp. 38-42.
15. Slouschz, p. 156.
16. Ibid., p. 126.
17. Ibid., p. 128.
18. Ibid., pp. 128-129.
19. Ibid., p. 126.
20. Ibid., p. 176.
21. Slouschz, pp. 148, 157.
22. Dubnow, II, pp. 137-138.
23. Dubnow, II, pp. 151-161; Slouschz, p. 159; Raisin, pp. 225-226.
24. Dubnow, II, p. 161; Slouschz, ibid.
25. Dubnow, II, p. 157 ff.

26. Ibid., II, pp. 172-173.
27. Ibid., II, pp. 206-207.
28. Ibid., II, p. 210.
29. Ibid., II, p. 211.
30. Slouschz, p. 160; Dubnow, II, p. 211.
31. Slouschz, ibid.; Dubnow, II, pp. 212-213.
32. Raisin, p. 235.
33. Raisin, p. 237; Dubnow, II, pp. 214-216.
34. Raisin, pp. 238-239.
35. Slouschz, p. 160; Dubnow, II, pp. 216-217.
36. Slouschz, pp. 162-163; Raisin, p. 242; Dubnow, II, pp. 218-219.
37. Dubnow, II, p. 221.
38. Kiryath Sefer, Eight Year, Number 2, Bibliography by J. Pograbinski, July 1931, pp. 248-262.
39. The term Nihilism was applied by Turgenief to Realism. (Masaryk, Spirit of Russia, II, p. 6).
40. Slouschz, p. 165.
41. Masaryk, II, p. 31.
42. Ibid., p. 70.
43. Ibid., p. 18.
44. Ibid., pp. 12, 71.
45. Ibid., p. 18.
46. Ibid., pp. 25, 28.
47. Ibid., p. 73.
48. Ibid., p. 64, 92.
49. Ibid., p. 65.
50. Ibid., p. 76.
51. Ibid., p. 79.
52. Ibid., p. 15.

53. Ibid., p. 14.
54. Ibid., p. 222; Raisin, p. 256.
55. Raisin, p. 257; Dubnow, II, p. 223.
56. Dubnow, ibid.
57. Dubnow, II, pp. 224-225; Slouschz, p. 165.
58. Slouschz, p. 170.
59. Dubnow, II, p. 225.
60. Ibid., p. 226.
61. Ibid., pp. 227-228; Slouschz, p. 166.
62. Slouschz, p. 169.
63. Ibid., pp. 169-170.
64. Lachober, II, p. 285.

Chapter III.

THE LIFE OF GORDON.

DAWN.

"It is known by the first rays of morn
What the day has in store;
If it is to be a cloudy day or bright,
With a gentle breeze or burning heat.

"But is it seen in the eyelids of the youth
What the future will bring,
Whether at noon-day his existence is secure,
Or an event of ill-fortune has been set aside?" (1)

Judah Loeb Gordon was born in Vilna, December 7, 1830. (2)

He was born into a well-to-do family; his father, a prosperous inn-keeper, was able to keep his family comfortable and give his son every educational opportunity. (3) His mother was of a rabbinical descent, "an upright, god-fearing woman," and in contrast to his father was "stern and decisive in all her actions, while he was docile and submissive." (4) Her education was rather meager, like the average Jewish woman of that time. "She knew the order of the prayers, could read, but not write Hebrew, and had a speaking knowledge of Russian and Polish." (5) His father was a "truthful and honest man to everyone, even to his own hurt and harm." (6) Like the Maskilim of his time, he spoke and wrote Russian and Polish with ease; in addition to having a good Hebrew background. In the evenings he would play on the harp or else listen to Judah Loeb retell what he learned from his teacher that day. (7) Before Gordon's parents were married to each other, they had experienced the tragedies of love and married life so common among the Jewish youth of Russia. Against his own consent, his father was married at the youthful age of 13. But shortly after-

wards he divorced his wife and married a woman he loved. In those days such an action was very daring, for it meant clashing with the established law. Gordon's father therefrom received the name of "Maskil and Berliner." (8) The second marriage was not of long endurance. Shortly after childbirth, his much beloved wife passed away. Later he married again; this wife became Judah Loeb's mother. Gordon's mother had been married once before, but had no children. (9)

In his autobiography Gordon tells that it is difficult for him to recall his youth prior to the time he went to cheder. At the age of four years and four months he was sent to the school of Rabbi Lippo, a relative of his father. (10) As was the custom, his father was eager that his son should have a thorough training in rabbinics and prepare himself for the rabbinate. "From my youth my father raised me, as was the practice with all the other Jewish boys, on the knees of the Talmud." (11) It was deemed by Gordon as a stroke of good fortune that Rabbi Lippo was his first teacher, as he was "a good teacher and a true pedagogue." (12) He was unlike the average teacher of that time. He came to Vilna with an unusual background, having studied in his younger days under the Vilna Gaon, and later under Rabbi Hayyim of Volozin. From these teachers he acquired a critical approach and a modern method of pedagogy. He sought to make the studies less cumbersome for his students, and, therefore, purposely did not begin with the study of the Gemara, but with the Torah, using the "p'shat" interpretation. He pursued the following curriculum with his students: first, he taught the Pentateuch, then the Pentateuch with Rashi; then the prophets in their

order and the Psalms; at the same time they studied grammar and the Hagiographa. After they had covered the Pentateuch a second time, he introduced them to the Talmud. (13) At the age of nine Gordon had studied completely Masechoth Betzoh, Kesuboth, and selections from Pesochim. (14) He was in Rabbi Lipp's cheder for five years, (15) and in that time he showed himself to be a very apt and industrious pupil, endowed with a retentive memory. (16) His teacher described him as "a sponge which absorbs everything." (17)

At the age of nine Gordon left this cheder. He was by now well grounded in T'nach and developed a very beautiful handwriting in Hebrew. (18) After that he studied in other schools, but never derived the same pleasure and satisfaction that he did from his first teacher. (19) The teacher after Rabbi Lipp was a hot-tempered hosid. He taught Gordon for one season, and then he went to another heder. (20) Gordon recalls the following experience in this school: It is a realistic picture of the Jewish educational system in Russia the last half of the nineteenth century. Among the students was a certain Jacob, eighteen years of age, engaged to be married. As they were reading in the Talmud a suggestive sex passage, the rabbi was anxious to skip it. Jacob whispered to Gordon that he ask the rabbi to explain this passage. In his innocence, he asked the question, the rabbi became furious, slapped Gordon on the cheek, and shouted: "Shegetz, keep on reading, when you grow up you will find out." (21) It seems that Gordon cherished his associations with his fellow students in his school days much more than the instruction of his teachers. Yet he was grateful to them for what he learned. "Much have I learned from my teachers, but from my comrades much more than from them." (22)

His next teacher was Aziel the Magid, who impressed Gordon

more with his power to punish students with his strap than his ability to impart information. (23) Then the Maskil Aaron Jonothonson taught Gordon for a year and a half. He became acquainted with his teacher's work, "Klai Shir," and through this writing he acquired an appreciation for a "pure language" and good Hebrew style. This teacher aroused within him the desire to learn how to express himself clearly. (24)

Until 1838 his father was prosperous in business. The Polish noblemen were regular patrons of his inn because of his reputation for honesty. (25) With the introduction of the oppressive economic measures by Nicholas I, his father's economic status was impaired. (26) Despite these financial reverses, his father wanted him to continue with his studies.

During this time Gordon's sister married Michael Gordon, a Maskil and poet. (27) After this marriage Gordon's brother-in-law lived in the same home with him and his parents for six years, and his association with Michael brought him in contact with Haskalah. Gordon writes: "His residence with us caused me to join later the Maskilim of this city (Vilna) who knew and visited him." (28)

When Gordon was eleven he became a student-companion to the two sons of the "Maggid of Antekoliah," and the "Maggid of Karalitsch" (Rabbi Issac) became their teacher for three seasons. (29) These studies proved invaluable to Gordon because of the excellent foundation it gave him in Talmud. He became so well versed in the three Baboths, he tells us, that with the passing of years he never forgot them. (30) He called this period of study "golden years" - "the foundation upon which the edifice of his Talmudic knowledge was built." (31) This training, however, was one-sided and when

Gordon's father suggested to Rabbi Karalitzscher that his son should also read Scriptures and the Shulchan^{Aruch}, he ridiculed such a study as being too simple, and set aside only for women. (32)

Gordon was now beginning to show signs of revolt against this educational system, which placed undue emphasis on the study of the Talmud to the neglect of modern literature and modern languages. "And behold all of my mischievous works increased in the third year.....the fear of my teachers was less and less upon my head, my soul began to stir.....They saw in this signs that I am tending towards evil ways, but these perfect men did not consider which was the right course for me." (33) There then followed an incident which was to be a turning point in his youth. One day Rabbi Issac found him reading "Song of Summer," a poem written by his brother-in-law, Michael Gordon. (34) The rabbi became furious, the wayward Gordon was whipped, cursed, singled out as "an abomination in the house," and the poem was torn and scattered to the winds of heaven. Rabbi Issac informed him that the Maggid of Antekoliah was thinking of him as his future son-in-law, but now, Gordon narrates, "I destroyed my life with my hand, brought blood upon my own head. If what my rabbi said is true, then it was a special act of kindness which Michael had bestowed upon my entire life." (35)

The following winter Gordon was Bar Mitzvah. For the occasion he gave a sermon on Masechoth Baba Metzia, which created such a great sensation that one of the guests sought him out as a prospective son-in-law. (36) By now he had an enviable reputation as a student. When only eleven he showed signs of becoming an astute Talmudist, for in addition to his knowledge of T^anach, he

was thoroughly versed in one hundred pages of the Talmud. (37)

The day came for Gordon to put on phylacteries. In his own words we have an account of a growing discontent in this period of his youth. "I set my heart to be god-fearing and an upright Jew, and I became repentant, even though I did not know of any sin and transgression prior to this. When I had put on my "t'fillin" for the first time, I had prayed with great devotion and in a weeping voice. Michael, my brother-in-law was standing behind me, like Mephistopholes, laughing at my innocence.....Michael said to me, 'The time will come when you will be negligent in prayer'... I was angry at him then, but this prophecy about me later came true." (38)

It was on the very day of his Bar Mitzvah that Gordon's hopes to remain "sin-fearing" were shattered. The guests seemed to be more anxious to eat than hear his entire sermon. When he was told, "Enough, stop; come eat and rejoice on the day of your happiness," Gordon remarks, "I saw a sign that God did not desire my repentance and my vow which I made in my heart. The prophecy of Michael came true; the fearing of sin was not to be realized by me." (39)

After his Bar Mitzvah Gordon continued his studies, for a time under Rabbi Todroth, then he had a private teacher in the Russian language, and later Rabbi Leipsiger. (40) At fourteen his heder days ended. His father now released him from the "guardianship of the teachers," permitted him to use his time for himself, and study alone in the Beth ha-Midrash. (41) Under these circumstances Gordon drifted farther away from his rabbinic studies, and followed instead the trend of Haskalah. Until now he claims to have been "up to his neck in the sea of the Talmud.... in the

Beth ha-Midrash I would steal several hours to study the reading and writing of foreign tongues. My eyes were opened to see that this (i.e. the study of the Talmud) is not the way to lead us to our desired end....I turned hither and thither and looked all about me, and realized that I was an Asiatic in the center of an enlightened Europe....When I saw all of this, I set my heart..... and guided my strength to the study of the basis of the Hebrew grammar, Russian, Polish, German, French, and all other necessary knowledge. I was alone....there was no teacher, no guide, no one to show me anything, and I was going like a fluttering bird from story to story." (42)

While in the Beth ha-Midrash he became acquainted with some of the personalities of the Haskalah, especially with the younger generation, as Micah Lebensohn and Z. Kaplan. Gordon became acquainted with the elder Lebensohn through association with his son, Micah., and Lebensohn, who ordinarily was a strong individualist and slow in making friends, became very kindly disposed to and interested in his son's companion. He treasured this friendship and considered himself fortunate that Abraham Baer Lebensohn condescended to be his teacher. (43) Thus Gordon reminisces:
"I/^{consider}myself a son of fortune, for he always treated me with kindness and great love. Often I would come to his home to visit his son before he went to Berlin in 1848 for medical attention..... He never challenged anything I said, nor did I act arrogant in his presence, for he was always my teacher, and I respected him." (44)

This relationship between teacher and student became even more binding when Lebensohn decided to publish his son's poetic works after he went to Germany. His handwriting was not very legible due to the deformity of his hand, and Gordon was, therefore,

asked to transcribe Micah's writings for publication. Lebensohn assigned this work to Gordon because of his clear Hebrew handwriting and his acquaintance with his son's writings. He also thought highly of Gordon's knowledge of the Hebrew language. (45) A few years later Micah passed away. Gordon, who was then teaching in Ponoviez, wrote an elegy, "Alas, Brother," in memory of his poet-friend. (46) When the father read the poem he made this comment: "His friend dedicated this poem to him. There is not to be found among our people one who can approximate the grace, clarity of style, and the great powers as a Hebrew poet, as Jehuda Loeb Gordon." (47)

In 1850 Gordon traveled to Pinsk to collect a sum of money a man in that city owed his father. There he remained for several months and supported himself by teaching. (48) Such an existence proved despairing for Gordon and he returned to Vilna where he resumed his studies. In 1852 he graduated from the Rabbinical Seminary, an institution which the Orthodox Jews frowned upon, and therefore to attend it required daring on the part of Gordon. Only individuals like Lebensohn had a friendly attitude towards the institution and the students who attended it. Soon after receiving his diploma he left Vilna to teach in Ponoviez in a government school. (49)

Revolt.

"Let our writing to based on absolute truth, and we shall succeed. Truth is the most dangerous weapon against falsehood." Gordon, Letters I, p. 167.

Gordon now entered a new period in his life. He made a transition that is inevitable when one leaves his immediate environment and comes in contact with a world more complex and challenging than that of his youth. A life of traveling, wandering, questing commenced. He is faced by new problems and new conditions - a people suffering and struggling. (50)

He lived in Ponoviez from 1853-1861 (51). Here he married and became the father of two daughters and a son. Two years after he settled in Ponoviez his father died, and he assumed the responsibility of supporting and providing for his three younger brothers. (52) In addition to his own personal suffering, he encountered difficulties as teacher. The Orthodox Jews did not favor the Russian schools established by Nicholas I. They were, therefore, hostile to Gordon, whom they regarded as a conspirator for the government.

Despite this suffering, Gordon lived a vigorous intellectual life. He wrote for Hebrew, Russian and German periodicals. Here he completed his first significant poetic works, "Ahabat David u'Michal," "David and Barzilai," and in 1860 published a volume of fables, "Mishle Yehuda." (53) He now occupied a position of importance in Hebrew letters and was recognized by his contemporaries as the outstanding poet in his day. (54)

From 1861-1865 he taught in Shavly. (55) Here he also opened a school for girls, and continued to work with great in-

tensity and earnestness. During the time he was not teaching, he devoted himself to writing and finished his first story, "Shne Yomim v'-Lailah Ehad." (56)

Gordon also took an active part in the communal life of the Jewish people. He came to the defense of the Jews of Shavly when they were accused of a ritual murder the winter of 1861. (57) The charges were made that a child was kidnapped by two Jews, seen in the vicinity of her home the day she disappeared, and that her blood was used for ritual purposes. It so happened that these two men, who were merchants, were traveling through Shavly to buy flax. The accused were arrested and put in jail. Gordon lost no time. He had the rabbis of Shavly use their influence to have them released. He wrote a letter to the editor of the Ha-Shahar, and showed that the evidence for this blood libel was not thoroughly investigated, nor was there any proof that the child's blood was used. (58) This letter aroused the entire community, and the government officials challenged Gordon's statements. Shortly afterwards the body of the child was found. She was lost in a snow-storm. Through further efforts on Gordon's part the innocence of the two men was finally acknowledged by the government officials. (59)

In 1865 Gordon went to Tels where he taught until 1872. (60) Now he became all the more conscious of the problems of the Jewish people, of the realities of life which were to be expressed in his poetry. He gives a very graphic picture of the living conditions of the Jews in communities such as Tels. "In the rainy season the entire city is like a pile of filth.....The homes of these communities are in ruins.....They are not inhabited by

maskilim, wise men or writers...but by men engaged in business... All of them are asleep, nor can they be stirred by the spirit of the time, or any other spirit. And if a person with open eyes should happen to be among them.....all of his days will be spent in pain, he will have no rest." (61)

The realistic awareness of his environment impelled Gordon with the desire to elevate the life of the Jew. He resorts to satire to attack and ridicule the rabbis, whom he regards as responsible for the prevailing ignorance and superstition, and ridicules all traditional beliefs which the modern mind can not accept. His outstanding literary creations in Tels for these needed reforms and the enlightenment of his people were, "Hakizzah Ammi," printed in the Ha-Karmel in 1865; a series of caustic fables published in Ha-Karmel; "Shire Jehudah," his first collection of lyric and epic poems published in 1866; "Ashakka de Rispek," written in 1869, "V'somachto b'Hagecho," (1870), satirical fables for religious reform - in the collection, Gam Eleh Mishleh J_udah; and he was giving thought to "Kozo shel Yod," which he finished six years later (1876). (62)

With such ideas Gordon could expect no peace in Tels. The fanatics rose up against him with fury. "These obscurantists found no satisfaction in the work that I was performing for the school in particular and for Haskalah in general. They did not favor that I urged them to study and speak Russian, that I also opened a school for girls. My writings in Tels and my satirical poems, which were published in Ha-Karmel, incensed their wrath against me...They arose and wrote an accusation against me to the director, curator, governor, and governor general; and they accused me, as was their habit at all times, that I was a non-

believer in their midst teaching heresy in the school." (63)

The more he reflected over the cultural status of the Jew, the less confident he seemed to be in the creative powers of the people to improve their lot. Not even in the intellectuals of the community did he have much faith. "The Jews living here, like the mass of people, fall into four parts: (1) learned idiots, oxen, which lick the grass of the field of this side of the mountain, and are unaware that on the other side there is abundant fruit suitable for enlightenment; they study in their own tent (i.e., limit themselves only to the literature of their group), and are separated as fools when they come in contact with other people; (2) reverent idiots who place a precedence on observance rather than on understanding; for them the practice of the law is uppermost; to study it is of no significance; (3) intelligent idiots who permit themselves leeway in their religious observance merely on the grounds of heresay--that this is permitted and that is forbidden; (4) complete idiots....the ox is just like the stall....all of them are idiots and niggardly, pursuing with all their soul after money and engaged always in business affairs. Some provocation would do them good." (64)

The suspicion on the part of the orthodox Jews that he was a friend of the government trying to undermine Judaism was not warranted. His relations with the government officials were always honest and he at no times permitted the authorities to use him as a tool. When the government official who was giving Gordon his salary for teaching in Tels asked for a bribe, he flatly refused. He would not in any way become allied with the corruption of the state. (65) When in Shavly during the Polish

Rebellion of 1863, he maintained a consistent attitude of disinterestedness towards the government. The Jewish community was anxious to express its loyalty towards the government. A celebration was held, and Gordon was called upon to say a few words. Several government officials were present, and were favorably impressed by these remarks. The government wanted to give Gordon a medal for his loyalty, but he refused it on the grounds that it is the same medal given to officers and spies. (66)

In 1872 Gordon was called to St. Petersburg. (67) Here new activities were opened to him. He became secretary of the Jewish community and secretary of the Society for the Promotion of Haskalah. (68) This gave Gordon material comfort and security, an opportunity to express his literary interests and associate with individuals like-minded as himself. (69) The ten years preceding marked certain changes in Jewish life, and these changes determined to a great extent the activity of Gordon in St. Petersburg. More and more the Talmudic students were coming under the influence of Haskalah. Secretly they would be reading its literature, and thus transported into a new world which "the fence of the law" heretofore prevented them from entering.' (71) Of this awakening Gordon writes: "In the majority of Jewish cities our brethren are still walking in darkness, but nevertheless the rays of the sun are beginning to penetrate them. I remember a certain Jewish student, (this was in 1850) who did not dare walk through the streets in his uniform. He would always leave it with a janitor of the gymnasium, which he used to attend in his "kosher" garments and long earlocks; and only when he was safe inside the gymnasium building would he comb his hair, put his locks behind his ears, don the

uniform, and become another man...Today you will find many a Jewish youth writing good Russian, or German, or French--all the product of the last ten years." (71)

The tendency to Europeanize the Jew created a new problem, of which Gordon became conscious in this new environment. (72) The Jewish youth was drifting away from his people, as a result of the foreign influence. Gordon sought to reunite the youth to his Jewish ties, to have individuals with "Jewish hearts and human heads." (73) This was his picture of a complete Jew; he was not to be a ghetto mind, nor was he to go to the extreme of those individuals who "have no regard for their people and do not consider their Torah or language." (74)

As Secretary for the Society for the Promotion of Haskalah, Gordon had tremendous opportunities to work for social and religious reforms in the Jewish community. He did not use his power to further his own ends. Uppermost in his mind was always the question of aiding his people. He assisted Hebrew writers, Jewish students, and despite his office duties was always active in communal work. During his time, the Jews of St. Petersburg obtained permission to build a synagogue and acquire a piece of ground for a new cemetery. On the occasion of the dedication of the cemetery, Gordon mentioned the departed souls of the Gentiles. Brafman, a convert, appointed by the government to be censor of Hebrew books, objected to this prayer. "Is it in accordance with the spirit of the Jewish people to pray for Gentiles?" Whereupon Gordon replied: "Did not King Solomon, when he dedicated the Temple, pray for the welfare of the Gentiles?" Therefore, he concluded the prayer should not be censored. Brafman acquiesced. (75) Gordon was also

instrumental in the publication of a translation of the Penta-teuch into Russian (1874).

Despite his twenty years of struggling and fighting with the fanatics and living in the most backward provinces in Lithuanian, his literary interests did not wane. The years 1872-1879 were rich and full for Gordon from the standpoint of achievement and literary accomplishments. During this period he finished his social and religious poems. "Kotzo Shel Yod," wrote "Shnai Joseph ben Simon," "Shomeres Yovom," and wrote prolifically for the Ha-Shahar and Ha-Meliz. (77)

But Gordon's happiness and well-being were not to endure very long. A controversy broke out in the Jewish community over the election of a rabbi; the Hasidim supported one candidate, Gordon another, a more modern man. He was thereupon accused by the Hasidim as the cause for the conflict and they denounced him to the government as a Nihilist. (78)

In the morning, on the Sabbath before Passover (March 18, 1879), the police raided his home, arrested him and his wife, and took them to the Lithuanian fortress, where they were kept in close confinement. Gordon was hopeful on the very first day of his confinement that his innocence of the charge would soon be known and he would be released. (79) But week followed week, and there were no signs of becoming free. Those were trying days for Gordon. "The spirit of affliction has been poured on me. Tears begin to flow from my eyes and I weep like a boy. Our companion in prison tries to comfort my bitter heart....To forget somewhat the pain of my soul and my broken spirit I write on the wall with matchsticks." (80) After six weeks in prison came the news that they were to go into exile. (81) On the third of May,

he and his wife, led by gendarmes, were banished to Petrozavodsk, where they remained eight days. (82) Then they were ordered to live in the suburb of Pudosh. (83)

The agony and suspense of waiting for their release was beginning to show their signs on the heart-broken Gordon and his ailing wife. (84) Not only did they suffer from the loneliness in exile, from the physical hardships they had to endure, (85) but the great disappointment of knowing that their friends had abandoned them and were too timorous "to lift a finger in their behalf." (86) Thus Gordon philosophises on this experience: "Do not trust in the princes of Israel and the prominent Jews. All the influential people of our congregation saw what was done to me, and they knew that it was their fault that this evil befell me, yet not one of them made an effort to help me." (87) In all likelihood the Jews of St. Petersburg who had influence and might have helped Gordon were afraid of being singled out by the government as revolutionaries, especially after 1870, which was a period of political reaction.

Through the ceaseless efforts of his brother, Abraham Gordon, his son-in-law, Max Kaplan, both prominent lawyers, (88) the charges were shown to be false and on the sixteenth of August, ^{and five} one hundred/days after the exile, they were permitted to return to St. Petersburg. (89)

After receiving his release Gordon reflects in a letter to Kaplan: "Who knows if not for some good God tested me with this great trial. All the days of my life success was with me. Evil never befell me nor sickness....From a lowly station I arose to a position of eminence and was stationed among the honored men of our people. I had a portion of the crown of the Torah, of the

crown of greatness, and when your son married my daughter then I had the portion of priesthood, but I was lacking another crown which God bestowed upon me - suffering." (90)

Even in exile the muse of Gordon did not remain silent. He wrote the last of his historic poems, "Zidekiah in Prison." (91)

Despair.

"The spirit of the time changes, and as it changes
so does the spirit of man."

The life of Gordon after his exile is filled with gloom and despair. Whatever hope and enthusiasm the poet once had now seems to be fading away. He speaks of his "broken spirit" and "his soul like a flickering wick." (92) His personal disappointments plus the suffering of his people during the reactionary period following Alexander's reforms, dampened whatever optimism he once had. "My experience is one of the conclusive proofs that we are going backwards not forwards. Formerly Haskalah was spreading among our people....truth was sprouting from the earth and false belief was stilled. Blind crawl out of holes and stand at the head of the congregation to lead them and restore former days. The rabbinical seminaries are closed because Rabbi Samuel Mohilev wished the minister to close them; the rabbis are still busying themselves with trivialities....It is clear that the wind is now blowing backwards and not forwards, and therefore Haskalah is silent at present, for it is an evil time." (93)

During Gordon's exile his position was assigned to another individual and he was left without any means of support. (94) This was another source of disappointment in his later life. He made his living by teaching the sons of Baron Gunzburg (95) and writing for the Russian publication, Voskhod. (96)

The ideal, the dream he once envisaged, is now shattered before his very eyes. He feels that his people have abandoned him, that his literary endeavors were futile. So he writes to Kaplan, the father of his son-in-law. "You tell me, 'Be strong and courageous in behalf of your love, our holy tongue and in behalf of its history, in which your name will shine like a star.' You are perfectly naïve! Do you really hope that the names of our writers will be like the stars shining, and not like the stars in darkness, or like the falling stars, whose light wanders about? Do you not see a thick, pressing darkness over our feeble language? Where are those who in the future will write history and plant new heavens and stars in their midst....? Do you not see whether we are destined and what will befall our people ultimately? Sadducees busying themselves with Hellenistic science; the pious and the Pharisees busy themselves studying the laws unrelated to life. Are these the camps of Israel for the future and which one of them will reveal to our children the new stars you speak of? And wherefore do you beguile yourself and me into believing: 'Your name will cast light forever.'" (97)

Like the true artist, the creative powers of Gordon did not become lax when conditions became unfavorable. He wrote lyric poems, contributed newspaper articles, short stories, feuilletons. In 1872 his second story Olom k'Minhago ("The World as It is"), dealing with Hasidic life, appeared. Brafman wanted to censor this because it slandered Christianity. It was finally accepted by Professor Kasovitch and translated into Russian. (98) He became the unofficial editor of Ha-Meliz in 1880, the official co-editor with Zederbaum in 1885, and held this position until 1888, when he resigned. He was also editor for a while of

Voshod. (99) In 1884 the collected poems of Gordon appears in four volumes. (100) After Gordon resigned as editor of Ha-Meliz he wrote articles in Russian for the Brockhaus and Ephron edition of a Russian encyclopedia. He took charge of the section dealing with Jews and Judaism. (101)

One experience at this time gave Gordon great encouragement to continue his efforts to bring enlightenment to his people, and it made him realize that his efforts were not entirely futile. On October 31, 1882, twenty-five years since he published his first poem, Ahabat David u-Michal, a celebration was given in his honor. (102) There were some sixty people present, and among the guests, Gordon narrates, "there were many who could not read or translate Hebrew, and had never read a line of the poetry written by the guest of honor. However, this occasion was necessary to sustain the despondent spirit and quicken the hearts of our depressed people. When they saw that our honor was insignificant among the Gentiles and that evil times would soon be felt, that we had as our remnant the Hebrew tongue and our books, they therefore began to think of the glory of their people:.....'that we also have writers and poets whose glory is our glory.'" (103) He was presented with a golden pen, a loving cup, and many Jewish communities sent telegrams to congratulate him. (104)

In 1891 Gordon was sent by the physicians to Marienbad, Germany, on account of his health. (105) On the way he stopped in Berlin for several days as he was anxious to see how the religious reforms in Germany were put into practice and how they might serve as a guide for his own country. (106) He made these observations of the reforms in the religious worship.

1. Such reforms are possible for the Jews in Germany because they are guaranteed their political rights by the government. Germany Jewry could teach the Russian Jewry much about the steps to take towards enlightenment, but they could not be imitated. The political status of the Jew made this impossible. Furthermore, the Jews in Germany are financially more secure than their brethren in Russia.

2. Then Gordon observed the reformed Prayer Books by Aub, Geiger, and Joel. (107) These reforms in the ritual did not prove very satisfactory to him. Their omission of the prayers on sacrifice, restoration of Palestine, and Kol Nidre did not solve for Gordon the problem of reforming the ritual. He came to the conclusion that this was inadequate and that there was a need for further reforms. (108) He also detected grammatical errors in one of the Prayer Books of Joel and considered the Hebrew style very faulty.

3. On visiting the synagogue, it was surprising to Gordon that Gentiles should be in the choir. He comments that Solomon Alkabetz would never have predicted that his "Lecho Dodi" would be sung in this manner.

4. People were not very reverent or attentive at services.

He remarks about men praying without hats and reading the Torah bareheaded. (109)

Gordon is a good example of the Jew reared in an orthodox environment who intellectually feels a need for a reform in the ritual. However, when he sees the change in effect, he can not emotionally respond.

When in Berlin he also visited Zunz and tells of the following experience with the distinguished scholar. "When I introduced myself to him, he passed his hand over his brow as if to recall something that slipped his mind. 'I heard of you as a writer,' said Zunz. 'Wait a little and I shall tell you what you wrote.' 'I am neither a philosopher, nor a critic,' I replied, 'I am a poet.' Had I lived in the time of Kalir, Zunz would have known all my verses, even how to combine their letters.....Since I am a contemporary, he is not responsible, and it is not necessary to my poems and their names." Nevertheless, Gordon's visit with Zunz was the happiest experience he had while he was in Germany. (111)

At Zunz's home he met Prof. Lazarus, who was Chairman of the Relief for the Jewry of Russia, and his wife. When Lazarus was introduced to Gordon and saw that he was no "schnorer," he was surprised, for nearly every Jew he met from Russia usually wore tattered clothes and asked for alms. (112)

The last year of Gordon's life was of intense suffering. Afflicted with cancer, he was confined to bed a great part of the time. But when pain relieved him, he would pursue his usual activities and with his remaining strength kept himself absorbed in the affairs of Jewish life. Gordon has left a

complete diary of his last days. It gives one an insight into his personality, his interests and his concern for Jewish life. Gordon gave much thought in his last days to the problems of Jewish adjustment, (113) Zionism, (114) religious reform, (115) immigration, (116) assimilation, (117) educational reform (118), the attitude of the government toward the Jew (119), the social and political status of the Jew (120), and the effect of rabbinic tradition on Jewish life. (121) He continued to write poetry and articles for the "Voshod" (122), and during his spare time studied rabbinic literature and Biblical criticism. (123) Seldom a day passes that he does not have a visitor, (124) a correspondence to write (125), a communal problem or activity to be engaged in (126), or a book submitted for his criticism. (127) Every minute of the day is occupied; yet he is never too busy to encourage a young writer or answer a letter he receives from a young person who shows an interest in the Hebrew language. (128)

The little strength that Gordon has left is slowly leaving him. He is growing weaker and is most of the time in bed. His thoughts turn to death and the purpose of life. Each time he broods, he is comforted by the thought that he lived to see his children blossom into noble manhood and womanhood. (129) There is also the inner calm and peace in knowing that while all his energies are now spent, in his youth he had the creative power to compose a poem like "Milchamath David b-Plishtim ("The War of David against the Philistines"). (130) It was out of such a life of "dreams and sorrows, tragedies

and achievements" that he could write with such serenity his
"L'Envoi" -- (131).

"My task is completed; I have written
of the aspiration of the spirit,

And poured my soul unto my brethren in
writing.

What does it matter if my day is done,

Or if my frame should turn to ashes?

Within these leaves I bound my soul

And from destruction and oblivion have
preserved it."

When he was eight, his father bought him a Bible printed in London. He would read from it during his spare moments and thus began to create the desire to read books which were never read or suggested by the Rabbi. Ibid., p. 14).

18. Ibid., p. 15.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 16.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., p. 17.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p. 18.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., p. 19.
27. Ibid., p. 20.
28. Letters, II, p. 340.
29. Autobiography, p. 20.
30. Ibid., p. 29.
31. Ibid., p. 21.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., pp. 26-27.
34. Ibid., p. 27.
35. Ibid., pp. 27-28.
36. Ibid., p. 28; Letters I, p. 28.
37. Letters I, ibid.
38. Autobiography, p. 28.
39. Ibid., p. 29.
40. Ibid., pp. 31, 37.
41. Letters, I, p. 82.

42. Ibid.
43. Autobiography, pp. 38-40.
44. Ibid., p. 40. The importance of Lebensohn in shaping his career and influencing his thought is stressed by Gordon in one of his letters: "Those were the days before the young grapes had ripened; the days when the fledgling had just come out of his shell. A ray of light broke forth, and I saw that the day had come for me to go out in the barn and seek grain for myself; but my feathers had not yet sprouted and my beak was not yet sharp enough. The walls of the Beth ha-Midrash tottered, and I was standing with one foot on the four cubits of the Halakah and with the other in the regions of life. When I began to walk with trembling knees, to shift for myself, and there was nobddy to help or support my tottering steps, I met Lebensohn,.....a fledgling like myself, but with full-grown feathers and a stormy spirit, and he showed me the path to light. Some steps we plodded together, he leading and I following. Alas! he disappeared too soon."
45. Ibid., p. 41.
46. Gordon's collected poems, I, p. 114.
47. Autobiography, pp. 41-42.
48. Letters, I, p. 83.
49. Ibid.; Autobiography, p. 37.
50. Cf. Introduction to his Autobiography; Autobiography, p. 32.
51. Ibid., p. 3.
52. One of Gordon's brother's, Abraham, became a famous lawyer. Letters, I, pp. 83-84.
53. Lachober, Toldot ha-Sifruth ho-Ivrit ha-Hodosha, p. 250.
54. Slouschz, p. 176.
55. Autobiography, p. 3.
56. Lachober, pp. 250-251.

57. Autobiography, p. 101.
58. Ibid., p. 102.
59. Ibid., pp. 103-104.
60. Ibid., p. 3.
61. Letters, I, p. 102.
62. Lachober, p. 251.
63. Letters, I, p. 108.
64. Ibid., p. 105.
65. Moznayim, No. 4 (104), June 4, 1931, p. 9.
66. Ibid., No. 1 (101), April 14, 1931, p. 9.
67. Autobiography, p. 107.
68. Ibid., p. 109, 82.
69. Letters, I, p. 190.
70. Lachober, p. 251, Slouschz, p. 174.
71. Letters, I, p. 190.
72. Ibid., I, p. 149. Cf: Lachober, p. 252.
73. Ibid., p. 183.
74. Ibid.
75. Autobiography, p. 108.
76. Ibid., p. 116.
77. Lachober, p. 252.
78. Autobiography, pp. 3,4,42,82.
79. Ibid., p. 79.
80. Ibid., p. 65.
81. Ibid., p. 72.
82. Letters, I, p. 261; Autobiography, pp. 73-79.
83. Letters, ibid; Autobiography, pp. 85-86.

84. Autobiography, pp. 80-82.
85. Ibid., pp. 80, 88, 89; Letters, I, p. 261.
86. Ibid., p. 84.
87. Letters, I, p. 262 (No. 158).
88. Autobiography, pp. 65, 66, 95, 99.
89. Ibid., p. 100; Letters, I, p. 262 (No. 158).
90. Letters, I., p. 263.
91. Lachober, p. 251.
92. Ibid., p. 252.
93. Letters, I., p. 265. (No. 159).
94. Autobiography, p. 126.
95. Ibid., p. 111.
96. Ibid., p. 126.
97. Letters, I, p. 269. (No. 163).
98. Autobiography, pp. 106-107.
99. Lachober, p. 252.
100. Ibid.
101. Autobiography, p. 116.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid., p. 117.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid., p. 43.
106. Ibid., p. 44.
107. Ibid., p. 45.
108. Ibid., p. 46.
109. Ibid., p. 47.
110. Ibid., pp. 50-51.
111. Ibid., p. 49.

112. Ibid., p. 55.
113. Ibid., p. 122.
114. Ibid., pp. 123, 124, 154.
115. Ibid., pp. 123, 134, 136, 148.
116. Ibid., p. 132.
117. Ibid., pp. 122, 124, 138, 141.
118. Ibid., pp. 133-134.
119. Ibid., pp. 127, 130, 139, 151.
120. Ibid., p. 124.
121. Ibid., pp. 135, 150-151.
122. Ibid., pp. 124, 126-127, 130, 150.
123. Ibid., pp. 131. 149.
124. Ibid., pp. 140, 180.
125. Ibid., pp. 152, 163, 189.
126. Ibid., pp. 146, 150.
127. Ibid., p. 155.
128. Ibid., pp. 125-132.
129. Ibid., p. 128.
130. Ibid., p. 182.
131. Collected Poems, IV, p. 171.

Chapter IV.

Gordon's Ideas on Social and Religious Reform as Reflected in his Writings.

Unlike the reformers of Germany Gordon had to be concerned with effecting political and social changes for the Jews in Russia. He not only had to remove the mass of superstition clustered about the Jewish religion, but he also had to improve the material conditions and standards of living of his people as well. He was aware that religious reforms would be futile unless the Jewish people would be released from poverty, misery, social and political oppression. He therefore could not deal with social and religious reform as separate entities, for enlightenment could not flourish where the social life of the people was demoralizing and degrading. He writes: "Our material advance is part and parcel of our religious advance.. Remember that all Israel lives on air..... Remember that in every city there are still to be found schools where the new generation is brought up under idiotic and ignorant teachers..... Are we to permit these conditions to remain as they are, (to act) as though no changes are necessary?" (1)

Social and religious reform would be possible only through the efforts and ~~striv~~ings of the people. Unlike the Orthodox Jews of his time he did not believe in waiting for the Messiah to usher in a better life. As long as they remain passive and inert, these conditions will continue to exist. In contrast to the average person who accepted life with resignation, he grappled in his own way with these problems and

and attempted a solution. "Miracles do not happen every day. The recital of the prayer (for the Messiah) is merely mechanical..... No, my friends, you must prepare the younger generation for the coming of the Messiah, which, however, can occur only in a natural way. You must change your system of education....teach trades and occupations to those who are not capable of study; teach our merchants to be scrupulously honest in their dealings with Jews and non-Jews; institute order in the conduct of your communal affairs; remove from the hearts of the young the hatred towards other religions and their adherents. Then the hope of Israel may be realized; then the world will see that we are not opposed to knowledge, and freedom will be given to us to develop along the lines of our own genius, and we shall be able to enrich all mankind by bringing the gifts of the intellect with which God has endowed us. Only by good deeds can we win the friendship of mankind."(2)

Gordon in his social and religious reforms is consciously working through the Jewish group and is always trying to preserve it. He was no assimilationist. He says repeatedly that his religious reform does not imply breaking with the past, or destroying the Jewish group. To him the Jewish group was in the final analysis the arbiter of the religious life, not the subjective desire of any one individual. He felt that without any group control and group sanction Jewish life could not continue. "There are some," he says, "who want to give themselves free reign.....and throw off completely the yoke of the Torah and the commandments....Only when the congregation (the community of Israel) introduces a change can it become the

regular practice; for the custom of Israel becomes the law. Then the rabbis are able to give their own sanction to it." (3) On another occasion he wrote: "I do not believe in destroying all the memories of the past with which the life of the people is bound up..... Only in this way is it possible that the position of our people will be bettered slowly and will come to a state of affairs in which we can hope for a complete and decisive amelioration. Only by a perfected and well-ordered education, which will combine in the hearts of the young men human culture with a knowledge of their religion and a love for their people, will we be prepared for better days than these." (4) If one is a Maskil, he believes, one need not be destructive. Like Saadiah, Maimonides, and Mendelssohn, he always retains "the kernel of Judaism." (5) An ideal Jew is, therefore, one who is concerned for the welfare of his people and their problems. (6)

These introductory remarks may enable us to approach Gordon's writings with a better understanding and appreciate more fully the reforms he proposed for the religious and social life of his people.

His writings can be divided into three periods; each period reflects a different mood, spirit, and point of view.

1. ROMANTICISM

In the first period of his writings Gordon expresses the tendencies of romanticism. (7) We have previously discussed the nature of romanticism, its tendency to select Biblical themes, use the Melizah style, etc. (See page 16-17).

In his early poems, Ahabat David u-Michal, Milhamot David ba-Pelishtim, Athnoth bath Potiphera, Gordon is under the in-

fluence of the Lebensohn's, especially Micah's Shire bath Zion. "The Love of David and Michal" is introduced by a dedicatory poem to Abraham Baer Lebensohn. The young poet expresses his indebtedness to his elder:

"I am thy pupil - though I did not come
To your school to receive instruction from
your mouth.

I am thy son - though thou didst not
beget me,

But to your son who passed away
I was a brother.

I am thy servant ---

As a servant to his master, a son to his
father,

And in my youth when the muse
first seized me

I tried to approach (imitate) you." (8)

He also dedicates himself to the Hebrew ^{tongue} /and kept this promise during his entire life.

"I am the eternal slave to Hebrew,

To her all my feeling I will always deliver." (9)

These poems follow the classic form, and the dominant classic influence was Schiller. The German Haskalah introduced the Russian Jews to German poetry, which in turn helped shape the poetic style of the Russian Haskalah writers. (10)

Of his early poems the most significant for its suggestion of reform in Jewish life is "David and Barzilai." (11) Gordon contrasts in this poem the tranquility and happiness of an agricultural life with the distracting, restless life in the city. Here he evinces the desire for rustic life which was already expressing itself in the Ghetto under the impetus

of Mapu's writings on rural life and the Jewish agricultural settlements in Southern Russia around 1850 (See pp. 6 and 17). Gordon wants to stir his people with a love for agricultural life, for he envisages in the return to the soil an amelioration of the existing Jewish conditions. The poem describes Barzilai, a shepherd in Gilead, living close to nature, "away from the noises of the world."

"There he does not have all the wealth, nor
all the sorrow,

His bed is the green, and his covering, the
heaven;

The stars of heaven are his lights.

There he sees the coming of evening and dawn,

The rising sun returning with its brightness,

And the host of stars and the moons
without end -

Each one without speech utters praise
to God.

And in his heart he knows that knowledge
is there.....

That there is a house of refuge for the
soul and spirit,

And with trusting heart and a comforted
soul

He sees his shadow fleeing, the days of
his life passing." (12)

It so happened that when David was fleeing during the rebellion of Absalom, he took refuge in Barzilai's house. Here he was sheltered and fed; and after the rebellion had subsided, David invited Barzilai to spend the rest of his days with him in the palace, where he could live in comfort and ease. But Barzilai declined the offer; the field is more precious to him than the palace with all its splendor and

loveliness, and the "stall of the flock is to him like the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem." (13) He answers the king that the life in the city with all its excitement and joy can not give the happiness and contentment of the farm.

"False is glory, vain is beauty,

But a heart at ease is our portion
on the land." (14)

"And I do not desire glory, nor violence nor
mishap,

I can not yet bear noise or destruction,

Is not one moment of poverty and rest

To be desired more than treasures with the
worries on all sides.

I am a poor shepherd herding sheep --

And in the court of the King I will really prosper?

Pleasure is not pleasant to me, nor glory
and splendor,

Already my senses have weakened and I have no
power." (15)

Then David sank into thought. The words of the old shepherd stirred him. He recalled his own youth and begins to feel that a life of serenity and peace in the field is more possible than in his palatial city.

This poem presents an economic problem that the Jew had to face then and even in our present time. He was forced by political and social circumstances to be a middle-class individual, usually engaged in petty business or trade. As a result, the Jew could serve as a scapegoat for the economic ills and social oppression in Russia. This created prejudice and hatred toward the Jew. It was felt by the Haskalah leaders that the Jew might better his lot if he would engage

in "productive work" (see page 15), and it was, therefore, suggested that he adopt the agricultural mode of living.

In the subsequent poems of this period Bi-Mezulot Yam and Ben Shinne Arayot, Klausner remarks "the holy pathos of Gordon broke forth which made a breach in the skies. He was not able to restrain himself further and from the lofty heights he passes over to an impassioned state. He begins to become 'the prosecutor of his people.'" (16)

Bi-Mezulot Yam ("In the Depths of the Sea"), an historical poem, recaptures the sorrow and pathos experienced by the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492. "My ear hearkens to the cry coming from the historical records of them who fell under the sword and were put to death," and recognizes it to be "the voice of Jacob who is sorrowfully plodding his way through the generations." (17) The Jewish refugees of Spain escape on a ship for the shore of Africa where they hope to find rest for their wearied souls. Among the passengers are two women "donned in mourner's garb," the wife of the Rabbi of Tortonah, and her daughter Peninnah, who less than a month ago saw her husband burned at the stake. The young woman is so beautiful that she captivates the heart of the captain. Should she refuse him, he threatens to take the Jewish passengers to some desert island and abandon them. She promises/^{to}surrender herself to him after he lands her companions safely on shore. After this, the ship returned with Peninnah and her mother. At a distance from the coast the two women, with prayers to God on their lips, threw themselves into the sea, to save the girl's honor.

"The Lord is one, the Lord is our God,
Behold we come to Thee, accept us, we pray Thee,
If our blood is pleasing to Thee, as a
sacrifice.
Behold we are about to die as a free will offering
on your altar." (18)

In this poem we hear the bitter groans of a person rebelling against God for the destruction of innocent lives. The poet despairs for these unfortunate victims who will never be revenged.

"Never, O Israel, wilt thou be avenged!
In the hands of thine enemy is power,
All that they do is accomplished, what they
do prospers." (19)

"The sea beheld and fled, its waters trembled,
The waves round about roared.....
While these two pure souls.....
Sank like lead into the depths of the sea.
The sea's rocks became their tombstone and
its belly (depths) their grave,
The heaven their vault and the stars
their stories.

No one sees, no one knows to weep over their
destruction,
Only the eyelids of the dawn were opened
to them,
Only the eye of the earth silently looking
through the clouds--
The eye which sees the end of all flesh,
The end of these thousands of beings
And it never sheds a tear drop." (20)

Another historical poem of this period which dwells upon the problem of reform is "Ben Shinne Arayot ("Between the Teeth of the Lions"). It relates an incident dealing with the Judeo-Roman wars. Simon the Zealot, one of the staunch defenders of Jerusalem, was taken captive by Titus and brought to Rome. There he is made to fight a lion in the arena. Among the spectators he recognizes his beloved, Martha, who was sold as a slave to a

Roman matron. In the combat Simon met with a horrible death. Martha, unable to bear this grief, expires with her lover.

More significant than the strong national feeling expressed over the destruction of his people, is Gordon's explanation for this catastrophe. He holds the rabbis responsible for the plight of the Jew. Even in an historical poem such as this Gordon does not surrender the opportunities to attack rabbinism. He claims that their instruction has made the people believe in superstition and the schools they established did not avail the people with a better understanding of life. They were not taught the practical affairs of life--handicrafts, useful arts, and self-defense against the Romans. Thus the poet pictures the results of the conservatism of the rabbis:

"It has meant your destruction, O Israel,
That they did not teach you how to carry on
 war with understanding and foresight,
Of what avail are strength and rebellion
If you have no plans or discipline.

For many centuries the teachers led you,
They built houses of learning--but what
 did they teach you?
They taught you to guard the wind, plough the stone
To draw water in a sieve, and thresh straw.
They taught you to go counter to life,
To isolate yourself between fences and walls
To be dead on earth, alive in heaven
And walk about in a daze and speak from dreams;
So your vigor has gone, your spirit grew faint,
..... Your strength dried up,
With the dust of the scribes and the leaves of the
 trees they have filled you
And they have set you up as a living mummy for
 the generations." (22)

"Zedekiah in Prison" is classified in this period, even though it was written when Gordon was in exile, because it is an historical Biblical poem. It is a monologue to convey the thoughts and feelings of the unfortunate King Zedekiah who was

made a captive by Nebuchadnezzar and remained in prison the remainder of his life. He attempts to account for his own plight and the destruction of the nation, and concludes:

"Because I did not submit to

Jeremiah! And what did

The priest of Anoth require?" (23)

Jeremiah demanded that the people should not carry burdens on the Sabbath. But, asks the captive king,

"Was this the time for the observances
of festivals and Sabbaths?

When the enemy was surrounding the land." (24)

Zedekiah does not believe that the "city would still be standing if he had not borne burdens on the Sabbath." Then he rails against the prophets who only condemn and denounce the people, command them to keep the law, but never ^{help} them in a practical way to cope with their needs. A people who are dreamers and visionaries, in accordance with the prophet's ideal, can not exist a single day.

"Should all the people - from the husbandmen
to the princes be sages and prophets,
Then the ploughman would abandon the soil,
The craftsmen would leave their shops,
And everyone would assemble in the prophet's
abode in Ramah,
They would don cloaks of skin and would
prophecy.
Then the axe and the wine-press would
disappear from earth,
The spade and the threshing sledge.
Can a nation like this exist?
Who will do the tilling, who will produce
the bread,
And on the day of distress and oppression
who will fight?" (25)

In the strife between Jeremiah and himself Zedekiah recognizes the usual struggle that always existed between ecclesiastical and temporal powers. "The seers and prophets have always sought to crush the kings in Israel." He cites the story of Saul and Samuel as an example. Saul met with his death because the prophet Samuel thought that his command, "Seven days you shall wait until I come to you," (26) was not observed. In view of this he despairs over the future:

"Alas, I see that in the future

The words of the son of Hilkiah will be
fulfilled;

The law will remain, the kingdom
will be destroyed,

And the bow will assume the place of the
scepters of the rulers,

And the people are learned and scholars

Yet thin and emaciated like dust and ashes." (27)

In this poem Gordon presents the catastrophe the Jewish people have suffered and will continue to suffer because of the emphasis placed on the Law. The Jewish people can not advance so long as they over-emphasize the moral problem in preference to the political and social problem. The time has come to free the masses from minute religious regulations and ritual legislation, if they are to make any progress.

2. REALISM

The second period in Gordon's literary activity is characterized as realistic. (28) With the production of his, Mishle Yehuda, in 1860, there is a turning-point in his career. He finds himself face to face with the realities of Jewish life, the fanaticism of the rabbis, the backward school system, and

the superstitious belief of the masses of the people. For him Haskalah is no longer limited to the cultivation of the Hebrew language, but it must now come to grips with obscurantism, ignorance, and outworn religious practices. (29) He no longer turns to the past for his subject-matter but is concerned with the present. Thus he describes his transition: "When I was young.....I would discuss in my poetry matters which were of no practical significance. But when I came in contact with men, then my eyes were opened to see that the House of Israel had deficiencies...Then I had another spirit, a troubled spirit..... and I produced the poetry of the second period... As I changed the form of my poetry, so I also changed the style of my writing. In my poetry of the second period I turned from my pure style which was in my first poems....to express myself very simply in order that the people within the wall would understand me...."(30) He employs Talmudic terms and phrases so that the language he uses will be akin to the rabbinical life he describes. (31)

The poet no longer can sing of "happiness, love and friendship." He has descended into the innermost depths of the soul of his people. He knows all the evils of the Ghetto. There are crafty leaders and reactionary teachers ruling the masses. There is hypocrisy, poverty, and frustrated lives. He is now concerned in exposing these wrongs. He is no longer concerned with "art for art's sake." His writings have a purpose, an objective.

"In my youth I used to rise from my sleep
In the morning----at dawn.
Then I sang of pleasant things, love
and friendship
.....Pleasure, freedom....comforts and hope." (32)

Now a change has come over Gordon. He is a different person.

in the poem above, Gordon does not express satire or bitterness as yet. Rather in gentle language he calls upon his people to abandon their Ghetto ways of life. He does not reproach the people for the prevailing conditions. Instead, he attributes this to historical forces. (40) He exposes these evils in Jewish life with sympathy and understanding, with the hope of effecting corrective measures and changes.

"Behold, it is true, O Jacob, until now you
 have been foolish,
You have clung to stupidities, rejected
 science,
And you have poisoned at youth the minds
 of your children,
You resisted light, dwelt in darkness,
You justified the blasphemies, the same
 of your enemies,
But not with contempt did you do all this.
You did not harden your heart, nor act
 stiff-necked.
It was the hand of the oppressor, it
 silenced you." (41)

Gordon again voices the aspirations of Haskalah. In the attainment of the goal of enlightenment with the Jewish people usher in a new age for themselves. If only they will take advantage of the educational opportunities the Czar offered and strive to adjust themselves to the needs of contemporary life, then the Gentile world, which at present is "raging against the Jew," will change this attitude and acknowledge the Jew as a citizen in their country.

"Be steadfast, O people of Jacob, let your
 hands be strong,
Then fruit will ripen and flowers blossom
Sanctify your entire life for the pursuit
 of knowledge.
Be diligent by day and night, toil and
 remain awake,
Serve your king with enduring faith,
Your fathers handed this down to you as a
 legacy.

Ha-Peh she-Osar hu ha-Peh she-Hittir ("The Mouth which Forbids and Permits") is an attack on the rabbis for being "professionals" and for interpreting the law in their own interest. (48) Gordon never spared the occasion to show how selfish and greedy the rabbis were performing their religious duties. A rabbi was told a scandalous act committed by a young man; he carried a watch on the Sabbath. The rabbi ordered the boy to be summoned to him; for according to the law "a watch is a vessel; it is forbidden to carry it on the Sabbath.....Let him be severely reprimanded, that he may be a warning (lesson) for the younger generation not to transgress the words of the wise." The sinner was brought before him, but to his amazement it was his son. "Then his heart changed and his wrath departed; he stroked his beard and changed his decision.....Some say the reverse: "A watch is an ornament, and is therefore permitted to be carried on the Sabbath." Thus the rabbi's son was declared innocent, for his father "was sharp and well-versed, and knew how to change the words of God as one changes the shoes on his feet." In conclusion the poet says: "That which is forbidden to us and our children becomes permissable to them and their children." (49)

His religious reforms did not negate a theistic religious view. In the poem Ha-Holeh^C L'bakesh es Adonoi ("He Goes in Quest of God") he adapts the story of the prophet Elijah to his own time to have his fellow Jews realize that the godly life is more than ritual observance. (50) The restless prophet goes in search of God. He inquires of "fools, wise men, lowly and proud," but not one of them "knows God." In the end he discovers a difference of opinion among men/^{as} to the way to find God.

"One dresses in long garments and looks wild,
Another washes his flesh daily in the ritual bath,
Someone else separates himself from worldly cares
and lives on herbs,
This one prays three times a day--
Others remain silent to do the will of their
Maker."

He concludes that "not among any of them will there appear true devotion and fear of heaven." Then he goes to the cave and there hears a voice speaking to him.

" 'Behold, God is passing!'
There is a tumultuous voice
like the voice of the multitude in prayer--
'But God is not in prayer!'
Afterwards there is the cry of
stinking garments--
'Not in garments is God!'
Then a voice of long earlocks--
'But God is not in hair.'
And after the earlock every pure soul--
He beheld this, then fell on his face, declaring:
"The Holy One is in the earth, in heaven,
The Holy One is forevermore the God of Justice." (51)

Let us now consider another group of satirical poems by Gordon which call for social and religious reforms. The series of poems to concern us consists of Kozo shel Yod, (52) Shomeret Yobom, (53) Amakka de-Rispak, (54) v'Somahta b'Hageho, (55) and Shene Yosef ben Simeon. (56)

Kozo shel Yod has a two-fold significance: (1) it is clamoring for the emancipation of the Jewish woman; (2) it exposes the wrongs and consequences resulting from the rigorous interpretation of the divorce law by the rabbis. The poem opens with a portrayal of the status of the Jewish woman. Gordon's views on the woman-question no doubt was influenced by Nihilism (See page 22).

"Jewish woman who knows your life?
In darkness you enter the world,
In darkness you leave it.

"Before you have learned that you are the daughter
of your mother
You become married and are a mother to children.
You become married -- Do you know the man you
marry? Do you love him?
Have you seen him eye to eye?
Did you love? O Wretched One, it is not true
that before
You have a chance to know that there is love in
your heart you are betrothed.
One thing is certain. You are not the chooser.
Your parents are the chooser, they rule you.
You pass on like merchandise from one hand to
another.
In your girlhood your father rules you,
When you leave your home, your husband dominates
you." (59)

In the character of Bath-Shua Gordon summarizes the history of all Jewish women. That is, she is a slave to her parents; they select for her a husband without an education, profession or understanding. For several years he eats at the table of his wife's parents. After that if he has no way of making a living he leaves her and the children. She has no knowledge as to where he goes, remains an "agunah," a forsaken wife. (60)

In brief this is the tragic story of Bath-Shua. Beautiful and talented, she is married at the age of seventeen to Hillel, an unattractive student.

"His eyes were calf-like and his locks like tails,
His face all shrivelled--
But he is a person of rare gifts, versed in
rabbinic lore,
And with his sharpness he can trample and
crush mountains." (61)

He is selected by her father because of his Talmudic knowledge, and "she did not protest the choice even though she had reached the age to do so." In his ironical and satirical way Gordon comforts her by thrusting gibes at the frame of the social order which imposes restrictions on woman:

"Wherefore do you weep? Until now you were
shapeless mass,
But now man will elevate you over myriads.
If your husband does not know enough to engage
in worldly affairs
He can uproot mountains with Abbaya and Rabba.
If he knows no trade or language,
He knows that a woman is acquired in three
ways.
If he never saw a coin
He has stored up a thousand pages of Gemara.
Enhanced with the commentaries of Maharsha and
Pnai Joshua." (62)

Here Gordon alludes to the impractical educational system of his time. There seems to be no correlation between the studies in the school and the needs and demands of everyday life. He also expresses a sense of loyalty and devotion to his people. His heart is full of grief and sympathy for his people who seem unaware of their spiritual destruction.

"What is this breaking sigh.....
Piercing our ears.....?
It is not the sound of a sigh, but the
sound of glass,
Broken in memory of the destruction of
Jerusalem.
The city's destruction we remember for
a thousand years
But the destruction of the people we
forget,
And in the sound of the broken glass
on the day of marriage
Is not heard the wailing of our children
after us." (63)

The story of Bath-Shua continues. For three years they ate at the table of her father, and in the meantime she gave birth to several children. On the fourth year they had to shift for themselves. But there was nothing Hillel could do to make a living. Again Gordon shows how ineffective the Talmudic training is in preparing youth to meet the problems of life:

"What shall a Talmudic student do who has no
understanding?
To be a tax collector, he does not know the
language of the nation.

To be a "shohet" - he is too tender-hearted,
A teacher - he has weak eyes.
To be a business man - he has no money,
A cantor - he has no voice." (64)

Hillel then left to seek his fortune "where silver is as abundant as stones and where he might meet Elijah who will show him a source of livelihood." Meanwhile, Bath-Shua opened a store to support herself and her children. The first year she heard from her husband, but after that her waiting for an answer was in vain. Then there came to the city where Bath-Shua lived a successful young widower, Fabi by name, to supervise construction work. He seems to represent to Gordon the ideal man. He has a profession, knows the language of his country, and has cultural and intellectual interests. Fabi falls in love with Bath-Shua, but he cannot marry her without a divorce. He learns from a friend that Hillel is living in Liverpool, and that he is willing to grant Bath-Shua a divorce for five hundred rubels. The money is sent to Hillel and he has a divorce granted him by the rabbi. At last Bath-Shua would be free. She and Fabi were making plans to be married after the divorce was granted. They were to live in St. Petersburg. She was to be elevated to a new position. Her children, who thus far were neglected, were to receive an education. The divorce document at last came, But her hopes were frustrated by the rigid legalist, Rabbi Vofsi, who declared the divorce illegal because the word Hillel was misspelled: a yod was missing after the "Heh." The subsequent life of Bath-Shua was one of misfortune. As she says, "A dot of a yod caused my whole ruin." (65)

Gordon emphasizes once more what human misery can be caused if the rabbis remain so set and fixed in their interpretation of the law. The fate of Bath-Shua, he maintains, should

be ascribed to Rabbi Vofsi. She is only one of many such cases in Jewish life. Rabbi Vofsi is to him another example of the haughty, arrogant rabbis of his day.

"He had none of the virtues which
distinguished Israel,
He had no regard for the money of
Israel,
He knew not the path of peace, nor
scattered mercy.
He knew only destruction, excommunication,
unclean, forbidden."

Religion is becoming a destructive institution in the hands of the crafty rabbis. This is another instance from Jewish life cited by Gordon where "the letter of the law" crushes the hopes and ambitions of human beings:

"And in Thy name, Merciful God, the
interpreters
By means of the missing yod kill so
many souls!" (67)

Shomeres Yobom ("Waiting for a Brother-in-Law) deals with another religious institution in need of reform. (68) The purpose of the poem is to scorn and ridicule the practice of Levirate marriage. Although it was a mere formality, it was observed, and often to the hurt of the widow. It also expresses disdain for the "greedy enlightened rabbis," graduates of the Russian Rabbinical Seminaries. In brief, this is the story of the poem. Jonah ben Hosea is on his deathbed; his ~~faithful~~ wife of ^{-two} twenty_^ is faithfully attending him during his illness.

"She was watching her husband for seven weeks,
Knowing neither rest by day or night,
Tasting neither delicacies, having no sleep,
For a Jewish daughter is she who knows her
duty." (69)

She happened to be childless, and recently a son was born to her mother-in-law. She was now faced with the despairing possibility of "remaining a distressed widow waiting for her brother-in-law."
(70)

Gordon is fully aware of the young woman's predicament; he understands her problem with sympathy and concern. He reveals the characteristic of fellow-feeling as he depicts her sorrow, of being able to identify himself with those who are in distress.

"I am grieved for you, my sister Toby,
.....They destroy your youth,
Your most precious years." (71)

That his wife would not have to wait until her brother-in-law grows up in order to receive Halizah, the husband is approached by his mother to divorce his wife before he dies. He consents, and arrangements are hastily made for the divorce, but alas

"Satan arose against them from another place
In the image of an 'enlightened rabbi'
Who is only seeking private gain.
This 'enlightened rabbi' was at the head of
the Jewish community
To preserve the Holy Scriptures
And to deliver in stammering speech sermons
of reproach,
Calling grace false and beauty vain." (72)

The rabbi required two hundred zuzim for the divorce. The family urged him to accept half of that amount - their entire fortune - as all their money had been spent for medical treatment.

"Have pity on us, rabbi, take only half." (73)

Gordon then launches his attack on the "enlightened rabbis."

"However, this rabbi of truth practiced
no partiality,
Not in vain did he eat in the Rabbinical
Seminaries
The bounty of the king for twelve years
He knows that two hundred are more than
one hundred." (74)

In vain did they urge the rabbi to take one hundred zuzim, but he still insisted on having two hundred. While they were bargaining with the rabbi

"The sick man did not wait, he expired.
'Kind Death' set Jonah free
From bickering and strife,
From rabbis and from laws." (75)

Now the bereaved widow had to wait for her infant brother-in-law's Halizah.

Ashakke D'rispak ("The Shaft of the Wagon") is a tragi-comedy which presents the rabbis in an unfavorable light. (76) Gordon again attacks them for their narrow interpretation of the law. The title means "For a Trifle," and in this poem Gordon shows how the well-being and happiness of a family was destroyed on account of a barley grain discovered by accident in the soup of the Passover meal. It is a graphic picture of the suffering and pathos of the Jews in the Ghetto during the reign of Alexander II.

"We have been slaves.....And what are we now?
Do we not sink lower from year to year?
Are we not bound with fetters,
Ropes of absurdities, bonds of quibbles.
Strangers no longer oppress us -
Our despots are our own.
Our hands are not shackled -
But our souls are in chains." (77)

The poem opens with a description of Eliphelet, a coachman, his wife and children on the first night of Passover. After much preparation, hardship, and work the Passover meal was served. Gordon pictures the scene of the meal:

"Thank God! All is well prepared,
The wine is red, the matzoths are well-baked,
All comers of the house are clean and bright,
The candles shed light from the candle-sticks,
His children sit around the table.....
His good-hearted wife is busy in the house,
And he, garbed in a linen tunic of white,
Of heart rejoicing, of countenance bright
He reads to his children the miracles of
the Exodus from Egypt,
Assuring them that soon Elijah in his glory
Will drink wine with them from his cup." (78)

The festivity is interrupted by a cry of terror uttered by his wife. She exclaims, "I have found a grain in the soup." Everyone became dejected. The mirth vanishes. Eliphelet cannot continue with the service:

"O God of my father,
A wagon's axle settled Bethar's doom
And two barley grains destroyed
my home." (83)

This poem has further significance in that it shows Gordon's concern for the welfare of the common man.

The poem V'Somahto b'Hageha is another example by Gordon to show the dire results of strictly adhering to rabbinical laws.(84) This is the incident. A certain Rabbi Kalman, living in the Pale, carried on his business in Moscow, a good distance from his home. His wife informed him while he was away that a very suitable match had been proposed for their daughter. It was decided that the agreement for the marriage should be made on the last days of Succoth. She was therefore eager for him to come home for this occasion. He started for home. Unfortunately, the means of transportation was poor. He tried to reach home for the holidays, but did not succeed. When he had arrived three miles from his home, the sun had set and the evening of the holiday had commenced. Being an observant Jew, he did not travel on the holiday, not even a distance as short as this. He tarried in a neighboring village and reached home on the morning after the holiday. He found his wife and daughter filled with disappointment and grief. The groom and his parents left; they became weary and disgusted waiting for the bride's father to return home. Gordon stresses, with possibly some exaggeration, the consequences of having adhered so strictly to the rabbinic law of "limit:"

"Alas, 'limit' for the Sabbath! How much
grief and sorrow
You suddenly brought unto this family." (85)

"Had not your teachers led you with a pillar of
cloud
You would not have refrained from returning
home after it became dark;
For the rejoicing on a festival is a Biblical law
And the law of "limits" is only rabbinic." (86)

The last of Gordon's satires, "The Two Joseph ben Simons,"
'87) is a vivid description of the arbitrary control exercised by
the K_ahal during the reign of Nicholas I and the conflict between
the new and the old world - the Maskil and the Orthodox.

Joseph ben Simon, a young Talmudist of promise, comes under
the influence of the sciences and modern literature. The fanatics
persecute him and his father attempts to dissuade him from pur-
suing his secular studies.

"And Joseph began to reflect in books
Written in foreign language and strange
signs,
He had a fixed time (for study) each day
at twilight;
His mind was not inclined towards his
companions, they slandered him,
And with sweet words he outraged the heart
of his father
When he reproached him and spoke harshly to
him." (88)

But all this opposition did not crush his spirit. He leaves his
native town and goes to Padua to study medicine.

"How strong, how powerful is the desire
for knowledge
In the heart of the youth of Israel the
oppressed people!
It is like the fire always burning on the
alter.
Stop upon the highways to Mir, Eisheshok,
Volozhin
And see the poor youths walking in haste.
Whither are they ascending? To sleep on
the ground,
To lead lives of privation....." (89)

Gordon is ever aware of the status of the Jew, and at this point
reveals again his staunch loyalty to his people.

The ceiling of your roof is the skin of the poor
The air is of sighs, the plaster of tears." (92)

There Rabbi Shamgar is seated by a table, "covered with a purple cloth on which is engraved, 'Judge ye the truth and the judgment of peace in your gates.'" (93) He keeps the list for military service and makes out passports. The wealthy are able to buy exemption from military service for their sons. The conscriptions are taken mostly from the ranks of the poor. (See page 2).

A woman complains to Rabbi Shamgar that her only son was "snatched" for military service. He tells her that her son was taken as a substitute for Rabbi Perez's sons who are scholars.

"In vain do you speak!
Your son has been enrolled as a member
of Rabbi Perez's family,
I have ordered that he be taken
instead of his sons,
For - they are students of the law and
your son is a common person." (94)

Finally, Uri makes his appearance. He tells Rabbi Shamgar that he has to go abroad on business and wants a passport. "But," Rabbi Shamgar says, "you are a hidden one." (95) Thereupon he drew a hundred rubel note from his pocket. This convinced Rabbi Shamgar, and finds a way out of this difficulty: "I remember that three years ago a young man disappeared and no one knows what happened to him. You will be called Joseph ben Simon and no longer Uri ben Johanan."

"And Joseph the second left contently,
And the son of Anath hid the hundred rubels
in the pocket
And he went to join in the afternoon prayer." (96)

In the meantime, the real Joseph ben Simon was studying diligently, not only medicine, but Jewish studies as well. His ideal was to teach a more enlightened Judaism to his people, a

Judaism which would be in harmony with modern thought.

"Why are we different from all people,
Who know the distinction
Between man and God,
And we have strayed from the path of
reason.
We are wise, we are of letters,
But the spark of the Torah is obscured
under the ashes
Of endless disputes and investigations.
Your children grow like a root in the
desert,
When the youth is grown his soul does
not live,
For you have built a house for him before
planting a vineyard;
And the teachers who lead an elephant through
the eye of a needle
Have fenced in the paths of life
With fear, strictness, prohibitions, excom-
munications." (97)

"What is the Torah.....
If it is not based entirely upon knowledge
Knowledge of life, knowledge of the nature of
everything?
Our ancestors taught according to the
knowledge of their time
And it is incumbent upon you to arise,
Change your teachings
According to the science (knowledge) dominant
in our day." (98)

After five years of privation and hardship, he completes his studies and starts for home. On the way he dreams he is a rabbi instituting various reforms to lighten the life of his people. He would be lenient in ritual matters, permit more foods to be eaten on the Passover, allow the use of the "lulab" from America, make the "mikveh" more sanitary, instruct the "Mohel" in pharmaceuticals, abolish the old Beth ha-Midrash for a modern vocational and professional school, teach music to cantors, revise the prayers and substitute some of the lofty Sephardic verse, and fight against the greed and corruption of the officials of the Synagogue. When he arrived in Russia, officers examined his passport and had him arrested. In prison he learned that some months

who are stringent in pronouncing things because they are not proficient in matters of ritual investigation; perhaps "Kozo shel Yod," which I wrote with blood and tears, will save some Jewish woman in the future from lifelong ruin through ignorance of the rabbinical writers of grammar and the Bible; perhaps "The Two Joseph ben Simon" will reach the ears of some tax-collector in a town where some of our fellow Jews are languishing and his hand might wither in the midst of his desire to issue a forged passport to his clients." (100)

3. DESPAIR

The last period in Gordon's writings is characterized by a spirit of despair. (101) A strain of hopelessness and disappointment recurs in all his later writings. The question naturally arises: What crushed the struggling spirit of Gordon? Why does the man of dreams and aspirations become despondent? There were two causes for this: the reactionary measures of the government and the tendencies towards assimilation on the part of the younger generation of Jews.

We have already seen how the liberalism of Alexander II in the early part of his reign inspired Gordon with the confidence that the Jews will finally become emancipated. (See pages 69 and 70) The various attempts made by the revolutionaries to take his life, made the Czar supplant his liberalism with a reactionary policy. (102) The Jews naturally suffered. When this happened, the hopes and aspirations of Gordon were shattered. He realized that the emancipation he once regarded for the Jew as a reality was merely an illusion. (103) This experience meant the disillusioning of Gordon and ^{acquiring} a different outlook on life, which expressed itself in the writings of the last ten years of his life. With the accession

of Alexander III, after the assassination of Alexander II on March 1, 1881, the lot of the Jew did not become easier. He was a despot, a narrow-minded fanatic, and shared the anti-Jewish prejudices of his environment. (104) Insinuation was being made that the Jews participated in the murder of Alexander II and that an "important role" was being played by them in the revolution. Shortly thereafter organized attacks were made on the Jew. There is evidence to show that the masses were stirred by the anti-Semitic appeal of the officials. And when riots occurred in the large cities of South Russia, such as Elizabethgrad, Kiev, and Odessa, the government made no attempt to intervene on the grounds that it is "undesirable to obstruct the will of the Russian populace." (105) The Jewish problem now became all the more acute, and Gordon realized more and more that he had been deceived by his earlier expectations, that Haskalah would usher in a new age for the Jew.

Towards the end of his life Gordon came face to face with another situation which changed his outlook from hopefulness to one of despair: Assimilation. Since he came to St. Petersburg, the problem of assimilation always confronted him. Will emancipation lead to assimilation? Will enlightenment mean the disintegration of the Jewish people, due to the abandonment of the Hebrew language and culture by the younger generation? (See pages 41 and 46). The more the young Jew became Europeanized the greater was the danger of him leaving his group. Thus enlightenment created a new problem.

Here are a few examples from Gordon's own experience which made him conscious of the danger of the Jewish group dissolving. One of Michael Gordon's sons embraced Christianity in order to

be eligible to the office of district physician at Cheiginow. In St. Petersburg the younger generation of Jews who were lawyers and had political offices would ask Gordon why they should remain as Jews and suffer discrimination because of their religion. Many were tempted to become Christians in order to have the opportunities to attain the political positions which were denied them as Jews. (106) The Jews are drifting away from their group, especially when they endure hardships and privations, he relates in the last part of his autobiography. (107) As long as they can benefit materially they remain Jews. He tells of the case of Antikolski. In his youth he studied Torah, and at present carves images of Ivan Groznoy and Jesus of Nazareth for the private collection of the Czar of Russia, who paid exorbitantly for this work. (108) Carving images, he feels is contrary to the Jewish heritage. "In previous generations, the Jews were true believers; they believed in God's creative work, and diligently served him, always worried lest they serve idols. But now that the generation has broken away and have diminished their beliefs completely, they do not fear God....Even those who pretend to be pious have set up statues in their homes, even though they have "mezzuzoths" on their doors; they imitate the gentiles entirely." (109)

On Yom Kippur, in 1873, while praying in the Synagogue he noticed a man in back of him. "His voice was not heard and his lips did not move." Gordon thought that he did not know how to pray by heart, so he offered him a Mahzar. But he refused to accept it: "I do not know how to read Hebrew.....You might be interested in knowing that I remained a Jew sheerly by accident, because in the small city in which I was born there was no priest to baptize me." In later years Gordon had contact with this

same person, Trachtenberg by name. His children showed no Jewish influences; they did not know how to read Hebrew, had no knowledge of the Jewish history or the development of the Jewish religion. This same Trachtenberg became one of the chief supporters of the community and secretary of the Synagogue. (110) Gordon cites as another example his brother Abraham. "In his youth he was pious, a diligent student of Hebrew, the science of Judaism, and devoted to the cause of his people.....But the shhool in St. Petersburg, in the midst of other people, turned him away from his group. When I came to St. Petersburg, I found him a changed person. He did not concern himself with the affairs of the congregation and was not interested in the welfare of his people. " (111)

Now to consider the writings of Gordon which express this spirit of despair and reflect his point of view during the declining years of his life.

In his "L'mi Ani Omel," (112) Gordon "looks back over the road he traveled," and a feeling of futility seizes him. There is no one to understand, appreciate him. In anguish he asks:

"For whom have I toiled the best years
of my life
Depriving myself of happiness and comfort?"

The older generation looks with suspicion upon poetry:

"My parents - they cling to their God and
their people,
They busy themselves in business and
religious observance all day
long,
They despise knowledge, and do not care
for good reason."
There is death in song, heresy in "composition".

"It is forbidden to dwell together with a
poet in the confines of his
(spirit).

The intellectuals have become so assimilated that they see no need for the Hebrew language:

"The intellectuals acquire knowledge,
They have an undesirable union with the
 language of their land,
They scorn the old mother ("i.e. the
 national language")....
'Abandon the language, it has outlived
 its usefulness,
Abandon its literature, it is function-
 less.....
Abandon it; let each man accept the
 language of his land.'"

He can not expect a hearing from the daughters of Israel, for

"A woman to study Torah - it is folly."

As for the younger generation,

"The become strangers to us from their youth
They go on and on each year,
Who knows how far and wither?
Perhaps to a place from which they will
 never return."

So he addresses himself to the "few who do not despise the songs of Zion." He will sing to them - "one in a city, two in a province," for they will understand him and appreciate his work. But there is no assurance as to the future of the Hebrew language. It seems that his life of struggle and battle were in vain. It was a "tragic sense of life" for Gordon when he saw there was no guarantee that the future generations would continue its labor from where he left off.

"Alas, who can sense the future,
 who knows
If I am not the last of the poets
 of Zion,
If you are not the last readers." (113)

The poem Siluk Shehinah (114) is filled with Gordon's spirit of despair and sadness. The Shehinah is forsaking the world, for it no longer can endure the injustices of life. The poet hears a "voice like a turtle dove making love to its beloved dove."

"What do I have here? Who is here in my
behalf in this mire of destruction?
All holiness has become violence, in the
dust is everything beautiful!
Verily the people are like grass, encircling
the mud,
The grass covers all the sadness of the
soul." (115)

It whispers to the poet:

"I am distressed for you, unhappy poet!
Also you, I know, are grieved like me,
Your bloom dries up here from stench and mire
And your soul lacks space to expand.
A ladder is seen, set on the ground
Men are descending but are not ascending
on it." (116)

There is no hope or promise for the poet in the future. This
is his fate:

"Alas, you dreamer of dreams.....
Bitterness will fill your life of
futility;
You will sleep, see dreams, rest a
moment,
You will awaken, see them shattered-- (117)
broken in spirit."

Therefore, "let him bind his dreams to the garment of light"
and prepare himself to ascend upwards, for on this earth there is
"terror all around, stream and storm, they shattered all hope,
scattered all desire." This feeling of pessimism arises after
Gordon discovers that after all his years of struggle and strife,
his teachings are denied.

When the riots of 1881 occurred, Gordon responded with two
poems, Bi-N'urenu Neleh^C (118) and Ahosi Ruhamo. (119) They do
not attack the rabbi as in his previous poems, but the tyrants
and those in power. (120)

In the poem, "We Will Go Forth Both Young and Old," we
recognize a spirit of defiance against the unjust oppression
of the people. It is a word of comfort of his people in their

sorrow.

"We were one people, one we shall remain,
From one will.....we were hewn;
Both grief and joy we shared together
These two thousand years we were dispersed." (121)

The daring of the people in the face of darkest oppression, and its courage to persist during bitterest suffering and persecution, Gordon explains:

"The storm rages, the wind howls,
The boiling waters have reached our throats-
Do not fear Jacob, let not your soul be
cast down.
We will cleave unto God, not forsake
His religion,
And His holy tongue will not be forgotten
....." (122)

"Beloved Sister" is a passionate plea for his people who are persecuted and harassed. (123) The poem is dedicated to the honor of the daughter of Jacob, (the Jewish people) violated by the son of Hamor, (the Russian government).

"Why do you weep, beloved sister,
Why is your heart cast down, your spirit
troubled,
Why are your rosy cheeks fading?
If thieves came and defiled your honor,
If the fust prevails, the hand of the
wanton is exalted,
Is it your fault, beloved sister?" (123)

Gordon then shows her that she has not been made impure by bestial attack. The blood they spilled will mark them as Cain was marked by the blood of Abel. A feeling of melancholy follows:

"All the violence and spoilation, I bore,
I did not leave my land, I hoped for
better.
But to bear your disgrace, my spirit does
not rise within me.
Arise, let us go(home), my beloved sister."

The poet ends by saying that inasmuch as we have "neither a house nor a mother," let us go to another inn, "to a place where the light of freedom shines on all creatures, where no man is

suggests in his poem Ahosi Ruhama. It would be a new center for the Jew in the Diaspora. Here he would have his freedom - privileges of self-government, and the opportunities to be economically secure. In a speech before the committee of Argentine colonists, he presented in detail his colonization program: "In addition to the duty of improving their material conditions, there is incumbent upon you the holy duty to preserve the spirit of Israel, the spirit of God, which enabled Israel to withstand all suffering and hardship in the course of two thousand years... Israel must show to all nations this wonderful thing, the like of which has never been known: farmers who are not drunkards, workers who never shed blood. And all of this will be possible if at the time you take care of the material needs of the people, you will also take care of their spiritual needs by erecting schools for the youth and synagogues for the adults, so that the youth may not grow wild, and the old, after their hard labor, will not have to find rest and pleasure in the saloon. In addition to the scientific men (physicians, chemists, and agriculturists) which are necessary for every colony, there must also be in every colony genuine pedagogues and intellectuals to establish and conduct schools which will teach secular Jewish knowledge... It is necessary that at the head of the party should be men who know the Jewish religion in all its aspects, and also have a thorough knowledge in secular science - men who are able to walk in the middle path with fire on one side and snow on the other." (128)

The program of the "Hobebe Zion" for the Jews to establish a Jewish national center in Palestine, Gordon did not endorse. This was not due to an anti-Zionistic attitude on his part, but

because he felt that before a Jewish homeland could be established in Palestine the people must be spiritually emancipated. The building of a Jewish state is, therefore, premature. Moreover, he did not want to entrust a government to the rabbis. He dreaded the idea of combining temporal with ecclesiastical authority. So he writes: "I do not expect the redemption of Israel at this time. As long as the rabbis have power, the children of Israel will not be able to have their own government. Who will be at its head? Shall it be Rabbi Joshua Diskin and his wife and others like them? Woe unto us if the rule of the land should ever come into the control of men like these. The Shulchan Oruch will be as it is now with us.....and the four methods of execution by the Sanhedrin will return, as well as corporal punishment and excommunication.We will not make ourselves so false as to agree with the rabbis that Judaism is opposed to all culture? I dreamed such a dream in my younger days....but I know now....that the persecution of the Jew is worse than Gentile persecution. And those who strive to answer this problem look at it from the national side, and shut their eyes to the religious question, for they know it is impossible to persuade the rabbis to make the necessary religious reforms." (129)

In another letter he further elaborates his views on Zionism, and explains why he has little faith in it. "The perpetuation of the nation and the redemption of Israel are sacred words to me, and perhaps more so than for them who make a great deal of noise. I will not destroy the inheritance of the Lord, nor will I keep back redemption. But I will not retrograde; I will not be a fanatic. I will not call upon my brethren to give

up the Haskalah, return again to the Ghetto, or teach their children jargon, as Lilienblum does." (130)

Furthermore, "before we go to Palestine we must prepare ourselves in a way to redeem our minds before we redeem our bodies." (131)

"It is false that I am opposed to the ideal of a national resurrection. Like all faithful and loyal Jews, I also desire the salvation of my people; but I wish the redemption to be complete.not a deliverance from the "Goluth" of nations and to have a more "goluth," ignorance and stupidity. How is it possible for any nation to exist in our time, even for an hour, without culture, be it China, Japan, or Greece?....Our fathers went out from Egypt, and took along their silver and gold, but not the darkness and plagues of Egypt.....If we are to have Europe without taking along with us its civilization, why should we go? Is it not better to die in slavery than to live a free life like savages in the desert?" (132)

Nine years after writing "The Flock of the Lord," Gordon died. To the very end he was a Maskil and with his death the Haskalah movement ended, in despair. The words which Turgenev put into the mouth of Samuel Abraham, the Lithuanian Jew, might apply to the passing of Gordon: "Our children have no longer our beliefs; they do not say our prayers, nor have they your beliefs; they believe in nothing." (133)

N O T E S.

Chapter IV.

1. Letters, I, p. 147.
2. Ibid, I, pp. 172-173.
3. Autobiography, pp. 135-136.
4. Letters I, p. 148.
5. Letters II, p. 438.
6. Autobiography, p. 131.
7. Lachober, pp. 249-250; Orenovsky, p. 274.
8. Collected Poems, III, p. 4.
9. Ibid, p. 3.
10. Klausner, Yotzrim u-Bonim, p. 149.
11. Collected Poems, III, p. 114.
12. Ibid, P. 117.
13. Ibid, p. 120.
14. Ibid, p. 119.
15. Ibid, p. 121.
16. Klausner, p. 150.
17. Collected Poems, III, p. 150.
18. Ibid, pp. 158-159.
19. Ibid., p. 150.
20. Ibid., p. 158.
21. Ibid., p. 137.
22. Ibid., pp. 137-138.
23. Ibid., III, p. 125.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., pp. 126-127.

26. Ibid., pp. 128-129.
27. Ibid., p. 130.
28. Klausner, p. 148; Orenovsky, p.
29. Klausner, p. 153; Orenovsky, pp. 81-82; Slouschz, pp. 178-179.
30. Cf., Introduction to his "Collected Poems."
31. Slouschz, p. 189.
32. Collected Poems, IV, 1. (Ba-Alot ha-Shahar)
33. Ibid., p. 2.
34. Ibid., p. 3.
35. Ibid., I, p. 33.
36. Ibid., p. 35.
37. Ibid., p. 34.
38. Kleinman, p. 70.
39. Collected Poems, I, p. 35.
40. Klausner, p. 153.
41. Collected Poems, I, p. 36.
42. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
43. Ibid., p. 38.
44. Ibid., p. 49.
45. Klausner, p. 154; Orenovsky, p. 82.
46. Collected Poems, IV, p. 130.
47. Ibid., p. 132.
48. Ibid., p. 133.
49. Ibid., p. 134.
50. Ibid., p. 128.
51. Ibid., p. 128-129.
52. Ibid., p. 4.
53. Ibid., p. 35.

54. Ibid., p. 41.
55. Ibid., p. 48.
56. Ibid., p. 57.
57. Ibid., p. 4. (According to Prof. Maximon, the opening verses to this poem were probably influenced by Nekro~~s~~ev.)
58. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
59. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
60. Ibid., p. 7.
61. Ibid., p. 12.
62. Ibid., p. 13.
63. Ibid., p. 14.
64. Ibid., p. 16.
65. Ibid., p. 34.
66. Ibid., p. 28.
67. Ibid., p. 33.
68. Ibid., p. 35.
69. Ibid., p. 37.
70. Ibid., p. 38.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., p. 39.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., p. 40.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., p. 41.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., p. 42.
79. Ibid., p. 43.
80. Ibid., pp 44.

81. Ibid., p. 43.

82. Ibid., p. 46.

83. Ibid., p. 47.

(Gittin 57a has this narrative. It was the custom that when a boy was born a cedar was planted, a girl, an acacia tree. When there was a marriage a canopy would be made of both trees. One time the daughter of the Roman emperor was riding by and she broke a spoke of a wheel. Her servants cut down a cedar tree and fastened it on to the chariot. The Jews slew them for doing this. The Romans brought news to the emperor of this occurrence: "The Jews have rebelled against you. Let us kill them.")

84. Ibid., p. 48.

85. Ibid., p. 55.

86. Ibid., p. 56.

87. Ibid., p. 57.

88. Ibid., p. 64.

89. Ibid., p. 83.

90. Ibid., p. 84.

91. Ibid., pp. 70. 71.

92. Ibid., p. 72.

93. Ibid., p. 73.

94. Ibid., p. 75.

95. Parents who wanted to save their sons from military conscription under Nicholas failed to enroll their male children in the official register at their birth. These were called "hidden ones."

96. Ibid., p. 78.

97. Ibid., p. 80.

98. Ibid., p. 81.

99. Ibid., p. 110 ("Blame not Judah")

100. Letters I, pp. 210-211.

101. Orenovsky, p. 84.
102. Dubnow, II, p. 243.
103. Orenovsky, p. 85.
104. Dubnow, II, p. 244.
105. Ibid., p. 248.
106. Moznayim, No. 4 (104), page 9, June 4, 1931.
107. Autobiography, p. 146.
108. Ibid., p. 147.
109. Ibid., p. 148.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid., p. 149.
112. Ibid., I, p. 76.
113. Ibid., p. 77.
114. Ibid., p. 84.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid., pp. 84-85.
117. Ibid., p. 85.
118. Ibid., p. 85.
119. Ibid., p. 87.
120. Orenovsky, p. 86.
121. Collected Poems, I, pp. 86-87.
122. Ibid., p. 87.
123. Ibid., p. 87.
124. Ibid., p. 88.
125. Dubnow, II, p. 328.
126. Collected Poems, I, pp. 89-90.
127. Dubnow, II, p. 327.
128. Letters, II, pp. 404-405.

- 129. Ibid., II, pp. 9-10.
- 130. Ibid., p. 162.
- 131. Ibid., No. 392.
- 132. Ibid., pp. 113-114.
- 133. Raisin, pp. 259-260.

CONCLUSION

How far-reaching and significant was Gordon as a social and religious reformer? To sum up, we can say as a religious reformer he wanted a more enlightened religion in harmony with the spirit of the age, free of superstition, etc.; the rabbis to be less rigid and absolutistic in the interpretation of law, especially ritual matters; a scientific and critical study made of Judaism. As a social reformer, he sought to abolish the heder system of education and introduce a modern vocational school; to change the economic status of the Jew by engaging less in business and trade and more in handicraft and agriculture; to give the Jewish woman more freedom and opportunities for development; to encourage migration from Russia to America where the Jews could have more political and religious liberty.

It seems to me that as a religious reformer Gordon was more direct and far-reaching than as a social reformer. He seems to analyze more thoroughly the causes for the religious situation, and was less timorous to offer remedies and cures for religious ills. Furthermore, religious reform in his time could be effected more easily than social reform. The religious reform depended solely upon the Jewish people for its achievement. Social reform required more than a Jewish solution, it required a general economic and social change in Russia. To have carried his social reform as far as he did his religious reform, Gordon would have come in conflict with a tyrannical state. He cautiously avoided this, as his letters in Moznayim and his autobiography indicate. If Gordon desired to have these social reforms

actualized, it would have been necessary for him to fight to change the system in Russia. It would have meant joining with the revolutionary movement in his country. But he had the interests of his people at heart, and were he to become a radical, then he would have been powerless to help them in any way. He purposely tried to maintain the friendship of the government by pretending to be a good citizen and a patriot. He thought that if more Jews would be loyal to the state, they would in the end have more freedom and rights.

As a result, Gordon expressed a dualism in his thinking which later Jewish thinkers found difficult to reconcile. He makes a distinction between being a Jew and a man. At home the Jew should live his own life, on the street he must be like the rest of the Russians. Gordon reminds us of the Reform Jew during the war, who would read the Prophets in his home or synagogue on peace, yet as soon as he came in contact with the non-Jewish environment, he imitated the martial mob around him. This contradiction religious reformers have yet to resolve. Out of such a problem, which Gordon did not solve satisfactorily, Zionism was born. In Palestine one need make no distinction between the world of ideas and the world of action, between the Jewish and non-Jewish world. Those who took the idea of social change seriously, realized that it was impossible to identify themselves with a state which was corrupt. One must labor to overthrow any system which denies freedom to human beings. Hence, the working for socialism and communism on the part of so many Jews.

In conclusion, as a religious reformer Gordon was more significant than as a social reformer. As a religious reformer, he resembles Reform Jewry in this country; as a social reformer, he reminds us of the cautious and mild liberals of our own time.

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