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REFORM JUDAISM PRIOR to ABRAHAM GEIGER/
or
THE CONFLICT between RATIONALISM & TRADITIONALISM
in ANCIENT JUDAISM

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By/
Jacob/ S. Raisin.

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לוחות ושברי לוחות מונחים בארון - מנחות צ"ט.
 התורה הזו דומה לשני שבילין, אחד של אור ואחד של שלג:
 הטה בשלח, את באור, הטה בשלח, את בשלח, מה יעשה?
 יהלך באמצע. — י"ח חגיגה, כ"ב, ה"א.

The fashion has recently been set, by those who desire to discredit Reform, to describe it as a parasitic growth or a foreign graft on the tree of Judaism, and to accuse the champions of the Kulturkampf, which rages in Jewry for the last century and more, as actuated in their warfare by the wish to sell the Jewish birthright for a mess of Christian tolerance. Supposing, for a moment, this to be true, the countercharge can easily be made and proven that Orthodoxy itself is not free from exotic growths; that most of the precepts and practices which bear the imprimatur of conservatism, are in reality foreign adaptations, a sort of palimpsest behind which a different hand (1) can readily be traced. But apart from such aspersions which, in the Talmud-phrase, Lomaalin vlo mo'vidin, which are prompted by the "aboriginal human neophobia," and remind us of ~~the~~ similar Catholic taunts with regard to the ~~Christian~~ Reformation—the fact is that the Jewish Reformation is neither of recent date nor due solely to external influences. A thousand subtle forces have been at work preparing Judaism for the revolution which was inaugurated at the beginning of the nineteenth century and is still incomplete. It is written in the Bible, repeated in the Talmud, reiterated in rabbinic literature and, as a limit to its horizon, we needs must look back to the origin of Orthodoxy itself. Modern Reform was adumbrated at the early dawn of Judaism; it is the perfection and fruition.

of the seed sown during the centuries. As the Talmud is the Bible explained, so is Reform Judaism the Bible and the Talmud evolved. One indeed may assert beyond contradiction, that there never was a period in Judaism when the distinctive note of Reform was not struck long and long; that continuous, if not homogeneous, attempts have ever been made to select the essentials from the non-essentials, to eliminate and innovate according to what appeared fit or unfit at the time and place; and that our fearless sages hewed to the line and recked not where the chips did fall. To employ a figure borrowed from the Talmud, the religion of Israel, like the coin struck by Abraham was stamped with youth on the one side even when it bore the engraving of age on the other (2).

It is, therefore, with great pleasure, though not without much diffidence, that I undertake, ~~in obedience to your request~~, to re-tell the tale of the Jewish Reformation and to reconstruct and outline the history of our movement as far as can reasonably be deduced from references to our voluminous literature. Aware as I am of the saying, "Throw not a stone into a well from which thou didst drink" (3), I devoutly pray that none may misinterpret my sympathy with, and tender respect for, all that is good and uplifting in the conservative wing of Judaism.

1) See Br.R. xlviii.9; R.H. Ia (Tos "Middilre"); R.H. i.8, 4; Chagiz Mishnath Hakhamim 205, Bernfeld, Dvath 1.71-83, Warsaw 1897.

2) SAQ 37b; מטבצ של א"א זקן וזקנה מצד אחד, ובחור ובתולה מצד אחר
3) Tanhm "Mattoth" iii.

recall

At the same time I hail with joy those enlightened souls who guided our religion in ascending to ever loftier levels; through whose efforts Judaism, though oft transplanted, has sent down new roots and shot forth fresh flowers with the "rooping of the suns;" and to whom rabbis of to-day are largely indebted for the power to teach and preach "a religion that makes all scepticism absurd".

The Book of Deuteronomy deserves a leading place in the history of Reform Judaism, not only because it is first in point of time but because it is also the first in rank of the literature of the Jewish reformation. It appeared at the time when its want was sorely felt. The long reign of Manasseh, with its persecution and idolatry, undid the few reforms in which Hezekiah sought to give effect to the ideals of Isaiah, and uprooted the seed sown by the prophets. Bamoth were reintroduced; the worship of Baal and Moloch superseded that of Jehovah; and the reformatory efforts of Josiah proved ineffectual to stem the tide of indifference to, and defection from, the faith of the fathers. It was a critical period, the prototype of many more which have occurred in the annals of Judaism. When every attempt failed, a Book was "found" (c. 700. B.C.E.) by a liberal priest and ^{an} erudite scribe, a Book which, according to the best authorities, was no other than the Book of Deuteronomy (2 Kings xxii. 8 f.). It was the first text-book of Reform Judaism, and its author (1) was the first known, or rather un-known, Jew who applied what Professor Lazarus calls the scheidung und sichtung process to the teachings and practices inculcated by his predecessors. Well did he know how to breathe through it whole-souled devotion to God and large-hearted tenderness toward all men.

1) An interesting contribution to the discussion on Deuteronomy is now running in Hashshiloah (Feb. 1910.) From the style and spirit of the book I am inclined to assume that Jeremiah was directly or indirectly responsible for its authorship Cf. Zunz, Ges. Schrift. 1. 219-22

2) Graetz Hist. of the Jews. Eng. tr. 1. 292. J.P.S.A.

"In the language of a loving father whose son, standing before a great goal, is warned not to loose the bright future before him through his own fault, and thus become an object of scorn and disgrace"(2), the writer appeals" in accents which all can still understand... to motives and principles which can never lose their validity and much truth, so long as human nature remains what it is (3)". To him, Jews were no longer slaves (Cf. Lev. xxv. 55), but children whose father wishes them to know and love him (Deut. iv. 35,9; xiv. 1; xxxii. 6,) and who if He chaseneth them, it is "like a man who chaseneth his son"(viii.6.). To him, priestly exclusiveness and sacerdotal mysteries are of little consequence; sacrifices should be restricted, ceremonies may be altered (xii.8; xxix. 11-14), and even the Sabbath was ordained for purely humanitarian reasons (v. 15; Cf. Ex. xxii. 11). Not the select few but all of Israel was to form a Hebrew Ecclesia, a priest-nation (vi. 6 f.; Cf Ex. xix.3), and the Law was to be decentralized and popularized and made a true "heritage of the (entire) congregation of Israel" (xxxi. 12. xxxiii. 4).

That this remarkable Book should have exerted the epochal influence ascribed to it in the Bible and by tradition, can be explained only on the ground that it was a "reformulation", and adaptation to new needs, of an older legislation." (4)

3) Driver, Comm. on Deut., XIII., xxv. N. Y. 1895.
 4) Ib. lxi.

Judaism has from the first harbored two distinct and frequently antagonistic tendencies which may be described, - in preference to the more technical but less general terms, "prophetic" (J. E.) and "priestly" (B), - as Rational and the ^{Practical + Theoretical} Traditional, or Realistic and Romantic. Each of them had its followers, and each of them prevailed in its turn, when conditions and circumstances favored it (5). The former tendency had expressed itself already during Biblical times in abrogating some laws and modifying others. It was noticed by the Talmudists that many statutes such, for instance, as those concerning a profligate son, a faithless wife, a perverted city and an infected house, "never have been nor never will be enforced" (6). It was the same with regard to the Sabbathical year (Shmittah) which was allowed to fall into desuetude (7). We know that ^{the} Abramhamic rite was not observed from the time of the Exodus till the landing in Ganaan, for the reason, given by the rabbis, "that the fatigue of travel or the exigencies of war made it inadequate," even as Solomon, for like reasons suspended the Day of Anonement and Joshua and Saul did not celebrate Sukkoth (1 Kings viii. 65) (8). The congenital holiness of the first-born (Ex xxii. 28) was later rendered redeemable by a ^{peculiar} substitute (lb. xiii. 13; xxxiv. 20), and finally entirely replaced by the consecration of the Levites (Num. iiii. 11-13) (9). A similar transformation took place with the Levirate marriage, which was at first obligatory.

5) See Lazarus, Ethik des Jdtms. §§ 48, 54, 157, Frankfurt o.t.m. 1898. (Same parag. in Eng. tr., J. P.S.A.)

6) Sanh. 7a: בן פורע... ארץ הנדחת... לא היה ולא עתיד להיות

7) Zunz, Gott. Vortr. 11-12, Frankfurt o.t.m. 1892.

8) Jbam 41b, שהיו טרודים במלחמה, Erub 33 b., משה חולש דאורייתא

9) Smith Rel. of the Semites, 464-s. London, 1901.

(Gen. xxxviii. 8, Lev. xviii. 16), then optional (Deut xx. 7-10), and lastly abolished altogether (10). We are told also of certain constructive Reforms, such as the erection of a brazen altar by Solomon, which was a disregard of the express command that an altar should be made of stone or, preferable, of earth (Ex. xx. 24-5) (11); the institution of a Second Passover (Pesah Shenii) by Hesekiah (2 Chr. xxx.), and the change in the order of months made by Ezra the Scribe (Cf. Ex. xii. 2.)

The rise and decline of the priesthood and the sacerdotal cult, is another indication of the triumph of Rationalism in its conflict with Traditionalism. That the priesthood was an in-rooted institution in Judaism, the whole Law bears ample evidence. To many the priests' praxis constituted the entire Law; and, indeed, nearly one-third of the Pentateuch is devoted to it. The priests, too, were the guardians and guides of the people in all matters pertaining to religious well-fare; their functions were not only to teach God's commandments to Jacob (Deut. xxxii. 8-11), but to lead in peace and in war. But this was not acceptable to the Rational tendency in Judaism which denied the prerogative of the priesthood. Were not the priests, Like the rest of the Jews, tabooed from approaching Mount Sinai to witness the greatest Event of all times, the promulgation of the Decalog (Ex xix. 24), and did not their prestige suffer greatly when they were proved to have been the chief instigators in making the Golden Calf (Id. xxxii. 26-8) ?

10) Mielziner, Jewish Law of Marriage & Divorce 54-7 N. Y: 1901
 11) For which reason, according to Wellhausen (Proleg. 3, 45).
 no mention thereof

is made in 1 Kings viii. Cf. Smith, op. cit. 485-7

to the writer in Numbers (xxxi. 28), therefore, Eliezer the High Priest, Joshua the servant of Moses, and the elders of the people were all alike. Solomon ~~revers~~ reserved for himself the right to appoint to the high priesthood whomever he pleased (1 Kings, ii. 27). The same policy was pursued by David and Jehoshaphat (1-Chr xxiii. 13 f.; 2 Chr. xix. 8; xxxv. 3), & Ezekiel, himself a priest, assigns in his eschatalogy the place of honor to the Prince (Nasi, XLi V. 2-3). Hagai not only shows decided preference for Zerubbabel but humorously ~~ex~~ exposes the quibblings of the priests (ii. 10-14); while Malachi (ii. 2,9) ruthlessly attacks the whole dymasty and comparing the offspring of Aaron with their illustrious progenitor, ~~xx~~ he gives vent to his outraged feelings in the words: "I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea ... I also made you contemptible and base before all the people according as you have not kept My ways! "

Here we find the first symptoms of a departure from Orthodoxy, the first breaking with precedent, the first denial of Authority. Traditionalism insisted (Ex. xxi. 28): "Thou shalt not revile the Gods (or those in authority)" &c. Rationalism would say; "It means only when they work for the benefit of the people" (12) Nor was this merely a protest against the priesthood as such; the whole system of sacerdotalism fell equally into disfavor. Need I remind you of the sublime words of Solomon that My House shall be a house of prayers to all the nations." ; of Samuel that to obey is better than sacrifice, and to harken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam xv. 13 f.) the vehement outcry of Isaiah (i. ii f.) against " vain oblations" and insence-abominations; the invectives of Amos

(V. 21-4) against burnt-offerings and meat-offerings; the portrayal of a new, spiritual covenant by Jeran^{am}iah (xxxi. 26-33) ^{the} declaration of Hosea(vi. 6) that God desires mercy and not sacrifice, and knowledge more than burnt-offerings; and the asertion of the Psalmist (Li, 15-16) that the only sacrifice of God is a broken spirit, re-affirmed in Proverbs (xxi. 3, 27) and in fact throughout Holy Writ? How well they succeeded can be seen from the steady rise of the lay prophet and decline of the sacerdot^{al} priest. It was the former and not the latter who kept sway over sovereign and subject alike (1 Sam xiii. 11; xv. 14; 11. xii; xxiv. 10-14 ; 1 King s xxi: 17 f. passim). It was to the prophets that those anxious for knowledge repaired on the festivals (2 Kings, iv. 23). Not Eli the High Priest but Samuel the prophet who " reasoned" the people into a righteous and rational life (1 Sam. ii. 26; xii. 7), became the dominant figure in Israel's history during the Biblical period; not Joshua the High Priest but Ezra the Scribe^m who preferred the pen and book to the mitre and breast-plate and "caused the people to understand the Law" (Neh. viii. 2; xii. 43) (13) was the prominent Israelite of the post-Exilic era. Some zealous Reformer ventured even to insert in the very code of the priesthood as the reason for sacrifices to God, that the Jews "shall no more offer their sacrifices unto the devils" (Lev. xvii. 7), thus dealing a blow to both the priesthood and their office; while Jeremiah (xv. 1) and a Psalmist (XC. 6) singled out Samuel as the equal of Moses himself. It was in this spirit that a later rabbi made bold to assert that Samuel was worth both Aaron and Moses combined, and that had not Moses preceded him as Israel's law-giver, the honor would have had of right devolved upon Ezra (14)

13) Graetz op. cit Heb. tr. 268n. Warsaw 1905.

14) Bam. R. xviii. 7; Sam 21 ^{באורייתא} ^{והתורה} ^{והנבואה} ^{והנביא} & see Geiger

Das (fdtm u.s. Gesch 56, 91, 174 f. Breslau, 1910

For Ezra was indeed the spiritual heir of the prophets, and as a descendant of the liberal Hilkiah and the disciple of the learned Barukh, the amanunnsis of Jeremiah (1), he was destined by nurture and by nature to be the great re-interpreter of Judaism. If some of his actions and utterances appeal to us as limitations, we must not forget that as an ardent patriot he labored not only for the purification of his religion but also for the rehabilitation of his nation. He was the first priest who was unequivocally opposed to priesthood, and whose ideal was the decentralization and popularization of the Law which his priestly colleagues claimed as, by right divine, solely theirs to be kept hidden under the cherubim in the Holy Ark. To him, priests and laymen, rich and poor, were under the same obligation, and in his book there is a striking disregard for popular traditions and supposedly historical incidents (2). He became the center of a coterie composed of priests, scribes, Psalmists, prophets and laymen, all of whom worked for the upliftment of Israel; and through their efforts the seed sown by the Deuteronomists began to flower and produce some fruits. Like the early Rationalists they adhered to the doctrine of Hebrew Ecclesia (Ex. xix. 6; Num. xvi. 3); but they did not stop here. They maintained it too narrow a program for the Servant of God,

"To raise up the tribe of Jacob,
And restore the preserved of Israel;"

1) Shir Hash. R. v.4.

2) Cheyne, Jewish Rel. Life After the Exile, 77-84
N.Y. & London, 1898.

his mission properly should consist in being

" As a light to the nations
That My deliverance may reach to the
end of the earth". (Is. XLix. 8,6).

It was probably during this time that the universalistic prophecies and psalms had their origin, and the Wisdom literature came into vogue. The beau ideal of this enlightened group was that knowledge be increased; and their credo, that all, not merely priests or Levites, nor even Jews alone, but all " That be wise shall shine as the brightness of Heaven; and (all) they that ^{truth} many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever". (Dan. xii: 3-4). Thus before the destruction of the Temple, and within a stone's throw of it, hundreds of synagogues sprang up on all sides, until they reached the formidable number of 460 or 480 (3). To further facilitate and popularize the acquisition of knowledge, a radical reform was introduced into the Torah itself,-- the writing of it in the script common to all; (4) which, judging from later endeavors to attribute this innovation to the prophets and even to Moses, must have encountered, like all reforms, considerable opposition. Moreover, the Torah was divided into books, chapters and sentences, in which certain expressions and narrations were altered, or emended, or omitted, when recited, out of "respect for the public" (5). In those synagogues, and corresponding with the hours of the quotidian sacrifices, short, simple, prayer-services were conducted; during which, especially on Saturdays, holidays and, later, on Mondays and Thursdays, was read the Torah, and at which the laymen

3) Kthub. 35 b; J. Megil. 73b.

4) Cf. Alroth v. 9 (based on Ex. xxxii. 16) San. 21-2; Zbahr. 62.

5) Nadar. 37 b; Megil. 25; Sofr. ix. 8-9 כתובים
Rashi 1 Chr. 7 & Rdaq 2 Sam. xv. 21.

received the same recognition as the priests and Levites (6). True, the latter were still given precedence when "called up" to the Law; but this was rather "for the sake of peace", and the order was not unseldom disregarded when an "Israelite" of prominence attended the services (7). The synagog thus marked the disintegration of the Temple-cult, and reverence for scholarship thus gradually superceded a we of the priesthood. It finally became a common maxim that every table whereon the Law is studied is "The table before God" (altar, Cf. Ex, xx. 24); that one day devoted to study is worth more than a thousand hecatombs; that teaching the Torah is more valuable than building the Temple; that God is to be found only in the synagog and that whoever knows and observes the Law, be hen even a Gentile, nay, a bastard, is as good and great as the High Priest himself (Cf. lev. xviii. 5. (8).

These incipient Reforms, which through the influence of Ezra were started in the "land of Israel," were carried to still greater length in places outside of Palestine, viz. in Egypt, and notably in Alexandria. In that state and city, where Jews already lived in great numbers during the second commonwealth, there developed a strong Rationalistic tendency which aimed at lightening the burdens imposed by the rigid Orthodoxy of the Holy Land. Speaking the Greek language, participating in Greek culture, surrounded by the art, science and refinement for which Egypt was then famous, privileged and propoerous, the Jews

6) Cf. E. Q. 82a.

7) Gitt. 59. רב הונא קרי בבהמא... אלו דבית אמרו מבני דירי שלום: בהן קורא ראשון

8) Aboth 111. 3-7; A. Z. 3a; Shabb 30a: ככל; Peah, 11; J. Brak 11; גדול ת"ת יותר מבנין ביהמ"ק. Mgil. 16 ב. שאתה יושב ועוסק היכן הוא מצוי? בביהמ"ק J. Brak 11; כבוד לך יום אחד; אמילו בכרי ועוסק בתורה ה"ה ככל

there became "Greek not only in language but also in mind"; It was a time, too, strikingly similar to the time of Geiger; when, embittered by the malice of Antisemitic diatribes and attracted by the charms of an alluring philosophy, many began to desert the fold; and when men like Geiger would naturally exert themselves to preclude indifference on to one hand and dis-affection on the other. This was done in almost the same manner as it took place two thousand years later. In Egypt, "the cradle of the nation", Jews first broke with the tradition which declared Palestine and the Temple the back-bone and life-blood of Judaism. Jeremiah, during his visit, (Jer. XLIV.), must have repeated to them also the advice he gave to the exiles in Babylon "To seek the peace of the City...and pray to the Lord for it"(xxix.7); and the silent centuries still further contributed to the trend toward Hellenization. The sentiment which prompted Joshua to threaten the two tribes and a half with extermination, because they set up an altar on the other side of the Jordan (Josh. xxii. 9f), and which filled David with desperation because, being driven out from Palestine it seemed to him as if it had been said to him, "Go serve other gods" (1 Sam. xxvi. 19), - appealed little to the Egyptian Jews. They instituted a Sanhedrin of their own, did not care to return with the rest of the captivity during the time of Ezra, nor did they yield implicit obedience to the many observances which characterized Palestinian Judaism after the great Reformer's death (9). For the first time in Jewish history then erected a magnificent Temple outside of Palestine, with a ritual which combined the spirituality of the synagog with the decorum

9) See Frankel, Weber Paläst. Alexand. Schriftforschung Breslau 1854, Benj. Phil. J.B.S.A; Dei Rossi. Imre Binah ch' v.; Levinsohn, Tudah Byisrael, 54. Warsaw, 1904

of the Temple; and it was not long ere it became a powerful rival to the Jerusalem Sanctuary, and ere it was declared concerning it, "That he who hath not seen it^m hath not seen the glory of Israel " (10). Indeed, the Alexandrian Jews, however, were an ambitious class. While they endeavored to retain those of their own race, they conceived the Jewish mission to consist in winning over the Gentile world to the teachings of their sacred religion. In the spirit of the prophetic school they proclaimed that the children of Israel shall mark out the path of light to all mortals for they are the interpreters of God, exalted by Him, and bearing a great joy to all mankind" (11). This ideal led them, on the one hand, to try to reconcile their fate with the prevailing philosophy and, on the other, to introduce the Bible to the outside world by translating it into Greek. And their sanguine expectations seemed to have been realized to the full. What the transliteration of the Torah did for the Jews in Palestine, the translation thereof did for their co-religionists in Egypt. In a foreign land and in a foreign tongue, the Bible began to be studied as never before. A new school of preaching-rabbis was formed which, like the "sons of the prophets", disseminated Judaism not only among their own people but also among non-Jews; and conversion to Judaism, judging from contemporary reports, was continually on the increase both in Egypt and in Rome (12). Little wonder, then, that while the Palestinian Traditionalists spoke derogatorily of the Septuagint, because "The treasurers of Israel never should have

10) Minah. 109a; Suk. 51 b.

11) Orac. Syb. ed. Alexandre 111. 195, quoted by Bentwich op. cit.

12) Rudkoper, Judaism at Rome Boston 1900 passim. Bentwich Op. cit. 32, 115.

been exposed to the outside world" (13); the Rationilists, regarding it as a favorable means of bringing about a better understanding between Jew & Gentile, as a shield against Anti semitism and a bait for the estranged, -celebrated the day of its completion, (observed in Palestine as a fast day), as a leading holiday (14). And wekk they might; without it Jews might never have had a Philo, whose Life of Moses and On the Decalog form perhaps the first techism - I had almost said Shulhan Arukh, of Reform Judaism.

13) Sofr. 1. 8; Tanh"K; Tisa" 34; Shmoth R. 47

14) Tebeth 8, Mgil. 9 b. Salq. "Bresh". 61.

At the same time that "enlargement and deliverance" rose to the Jews and Judaism in the very place where their people was first in the bondage of body and soul, and while the Philonic school with its allegorizing preacher-rabbis sought to rationalize their faith and empacise the mission of Israel, a contemporary of Philo was laboring for the salvation of his race and religion in their native land. Liberal Palestinian Judaism found its most splendid exponent in the illustrious Hillel Hannasi, whom later generations included in the same category with Ēzra and Moses. (1) His lot fell at a time when the great national tragedy was imminent, and when the national instinct of self-preservation asserted itself in advocating a religion of rigorism and asceticism. The dominant note of the day was separation and exclusiveness. Whatever distinguished Jew from Gentile came to be regarded as Jewish and sacred. The number of ⁿMazarites grew, and Essenism spread far and wide. (2). "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand", was the cry; and, in reponse to it, people gave up their belongings, mourned even on the Sabbath(3), and tried to avert the awful doom by strict adherence to ceremonial ^eLaw. (4). At the conference convoked by the Zealot (Alazar b.) Hanania, several years before the ^{ss} dissolution of the Jewish state, the Traditionalists made a bold assault on the Rationalists and finally carried the day (5).

- 1) Suk. 20a, 48. San 11a, 42; ^{הי חסיד, הי צנין, תלמידו של עזרא}
- 2) Josephus, Ant. XIX, ^{xx}IV. x. 5; Wars. II. viii 3; 1 Macc. iii. 49
- 3) Judith viii, 5-6 Jubilee, end.
- 4) Cf. San. 88 b. (anent philacteries).
- 5) Shabb. 13 B f., esp. 17a; cf. Graetz, op. cit. Heb. tr. II. 89n.2.

It was decreed that ^{not only intermarriage be forbidden but that} all intercourse with Gentiles be discontinued, and that all countries lying outside of Palestine be held in a state of uncleanness. These "eighteen articles" of separation were declared as so imperative that Elijah himself could never abrogate them (6). Henceforth, Kuthites, Sadducees, Angushites (?) &c. were to be shunned, and the testimony of a tax-collector for the Romans was not to be accepted (7). "Ye shall not walk in their ordinances" (Lev. xviii. 3,) was construed to contain an indictment of whatever was not Jewish, Thus R. Ishmael warned against Greek philosophy, R. Aqiba proposed to ban all non-Biblical books; and the hint was given that the deliverance of Israel would be effected again, as it had been once before, if Jews changed not their traditional nomenclature, language and dress (8).

Needless to say, that many of these decretals were seldom, if ever, carried into effect. At best, they proved mere pious wishes, or practices of the over-zealous few. Especially is this true with regard to the last statement anent Jewish names, language and garb. Judging from the terms applied to articles of dress in the earliest rabbinic writings, we can safely assert that their form and style became Hellenic and Roman soon after the Jews migrated to those countries, and continued to change with time and place. (9). They certainly did not cling to Biblical names, as the Bible itself, not to say the Talmud and post-Talmudic literature, bears witness (10). But nothing illustrates so well what Zunz calls the Einbuergerung

6) A.Z. 36a-37b (intermarriage) ואין איש יבנה ביתו ויבנה בית אשתו ויבנה בית אביו ויבנה בית אמו
7) R.H. 22a; J. R.H. 14; Psah 51a: איסור אי אשה נשאי בקרן איסור אי אשה נשאי בקרן
Mak. 5 b. San. 25b, 74 b; הלכות נשואין
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of a foreign language than the gradual ⁿdenization of the Greek and Aramaic. The slow but potent hand of time accomplished what the enlightened leaders were striving for, only that it frequently occurred after it had ceased to be a reformation. Despite the vehement protests against Greek "wisdom" and the Greek tongue in general, Greek finally came to be tolerated as a necessary evil for "those who are near the rulers^m", then venerated for its beauty and antiquity, then consecrated until prayers were permitted to be recited in it, Biblical portions to be read from it, and translations into it were not only recommended but even decreed. Indeed, next to Hebrew itself it came to be regarded as the most sacred of languages, and on Aquila's translation of the Bible was quoted (Ps. XLV.) "Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into thy lips" (11). As late as the middle of the sixth century we read of a heated controversy which took place in Constantinople as to whether the law should be read in Greek or in the ~~original~~ original Hebrew (12); and at a still later period, the author of the Zohar ventured the statement that "without a blemish" (Num. xix. 2) is applicable to the Greek nation ("Because of its it near approach to the paths of belief") (13). The same is true as regards Aramaic :

8) Mid. Thilim cxiv. Leqah T'ob, "Shmoth" ^{לשמות ד' דברים ו'} Min. 99; Mg'il. 25a; San. 11a; Hag. 15b.

9) See Jewish Encycl., Art. "Costume".

10) Ib. Art. "Names."

11) Sotah 49 b: קריבין למלכות Mg'il 9 b: 18 -a: לא התירו בכל לשון לא יצא אצל בלעז יוסי יצא ; J. Sot. viii. 1; Mg'il i. 111: יצא אצל בלעז יוסי יצא

12) Zunz, op. cit. 10-11, 427; Graetz, op. cit., H. t., III. 398.

13) "Smoth" 237 a: אשר אין בה מום דא מלכות יין (דאינון קריבין לארתי מתיאמותא)

In Palestine, ^Hehemiah launched a protest against those who used it in preference to Hebrew (xiii. 24), and in Babylon R. Josie advocated the use of either Hebrew or Persian (14). For many years, it would appear, the Targum was looked upon as, in various respects, inferior to the Septuagint or Aqyila's translation (15), and R. Johanan advised never to pray in the Aramaic tongue. (16). Yet the Targum ultimately assumed an importance second only to the original text, in connection with which it had to be read every week (17); the precept of a certain Tanna was, not to make light of the language itself (18), and the prayers offered in the whilom proscribed language were retained not only by the Orthodox but even in the Union prayer-book and Union Haggadah published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis! Well indeed might a modern editor predict that English, which many an Orthodox rabbi seeks now to exclude from the New York Hadarim and Yshiboth, will eventually become a Yiddish English, and "a Chernowitch Conference at the opening of the twenty-first century will stamp the English jargon as the national language of the Jew" .

But it is to Hillel Hannasi (110 ? B.C.R. - 10 C.E.) that we are indebted for the first direct attempt at repudiating the authority of the Traditionalists and putting a check on the fanaticism of them that walked in darkness. In his saying, "If I am not for myself, who will be; and if I am for myself only, who am I; and if not now, when?" (19),

14) B.Q. 83 a, Sot. 49 b.

15) Cf. Shabb 115 a & Rashi ad: loe.

16) Shabb. 12 b: אל ישאל אדם צרכיו וכו'. Sotah 32 b. שמע בכל לשון

17) Tur. Q.H. 145; Hazzofeh Lhammaggid 111. 34

18) Sot. vii. 2.

19) Aboth 1. 14.

אם אין אני לי, מי לי? וכשאני לעצמי, מי אתי? ואם לא עכשיו - אימתי?

Geiger sees the first ^lcharion call for concerted action in behalf of Reform Judaism (20). But even more explicit is his advice, which struck at the root of Orthodoxy, not to promulgate doctrines which cannot be accepted, lest they be accepted (21). Pseudo-piety he despised; every day, to him, brought with it its sacred duty, and cleanliness and hygiene formed part of his religion. (22). By means of his seven hermenutic principles (later amplified to thirteen and afterward developed to thirty-two) he rendered Judaism a religion which may expand and contract to suit times and circumstances. (23).

With Hillel and his mighty opponent Shammai the two streams pouring into the river-bed of Judaism began their headlong rush, and their disciples and followers, who possessed their zeal but lacked their genius, almost "tore the Torah in Twain" (24). The masters themselves, however, maintained the most amicable relation in their war "in the name of Heaven". The^y often changed sides when reason and nature^m deliberation convinced them of the truth of the opposite argument. They never allowed the battle of words to become an onslaught of personalities (25). True, this peaceful propensity was due to Hillel who, like Aaron, "loved peace and pursued it". But Shammai, too, sometimes yielded to the force of public sentiment, and thus, though this party prevailed at the Hananyah Conference, its decrees were held in abeyance during the life of Hillel.

- 20) OP. cit. 105-6. ^{גייגר}Geiger in all his writings maintains that Shammai & Hillel represented, respectively,
 21) See Weiss, Dor. Dor. Vdorshev I. 162.
 22) Aboth ii. 5. ^{אבות}אבות Bezah 16a; Brak. 63 a. Vayiq. R34
 23) See J. Psah. vi. 1.
 24) San. 88 b. Psah. 51a: ^{לעזק}לעזק כל המדינה
 25) Aboth i, 12, v. 20; Min. 9a; Eduy. iii. 2.
 Sadduceism & Phariseism, or Orthodoxy & Reform, the latter tendency reaching its climax with R. Akiba.
 See Hehalley, 1863, vi. 13-35.

In looking for citations concerning the controversies between Hillel the liberal, - the first to enunciate the Golden Rule for which he was never given credit by those who pretended to follow it (26), - and Shammai the conservative, the conviction grows upon every unbiased student that the cultured Rationalists were followers of the former while the strict ^{Tradition} Rationalists, and the masses, who are ever over-awed by the authority of tradition, though at first admirers of the Babylonian savant, finally decided in favor of the latter. Has it not always been the case in every movement which has as its object the civil or religious emancipation of the human race? And has it not always been the truth that the ideals of the Reformer, albeit by slight degrees and in the face of opposition and denunciation, ultimately gains realization; that "the germs once implanted, the growth though slow is sure"? It was so with the Hillelites. The radical reforms introduced by Hillel with regard to the Shmittah and the redemption of a house (27), suggested and encouraged many others. Maziarism and asceticism were declared to be sinful, as was also the giving away of more than one-fifth of one's possession (28). Pre-eminent among these enlightened leaders was R. Yohanan b. Zakkai, - the "right pillar" to maintain the fabric of Reformed Judaism, and "mighty hammer" to shatter and destroy whatever hindered its onward progress. From the start he expressed his dissatisfaction with the ritual sanctity of Jerusalem by establishing a Sanhedrin in Yammia,

- 26) Shabb. 30 a כל הקטב בתענית נקרא חוטא
27) Gitt 36, Erub. 31 b. See Leiger, Warsaw 1912, Qibzath Maamarim pp. 64 f. on Erub 7c.
28) Nedar. 9-10, Kthub. 50 a: האבנא אל יבזז יתק מחמש; f. Qid. end. עתיד
אדם ליתן דולר על כל דבר שיאמרו לו לא יקנה ממנו

and assuming the right there to judge criminal cases. He further made it easy for those who wished to return to the fold, and treated and greeted Jew and Gentile in the same spirit of peace (29). In Yammia the teachings of Hillel found a host of admirers (30). It was there that R. Joshua b. Hananya, astronomer and metaphysician, held up the Fanatic Essene or Pharisee to derision, and promulgated the principle basic to Reform Judaism "Not to impose upon the public what the majority cannot abide by" (31). The conference of Hananya was to him like a conference about the Golden Calf; it will only add water, he said, to the precious oil of Judaism and will cause it to overflow and spill; and he declared once for all that the so-called supernatural voice can have no deciding power in laws which must accord with human reason (32). In Usha, too, the enlightened head of the Academy, R. Simon b. Gamaliel, laid down the principle of freedom of thought and speech, and endeavored to remove the traditional disabilities of the slave and the woman, and even of the much despised Kuthite (33). In both Academies the principle prevailed that "whether much (ritual) or little it matters not, if it be for the sake of Heaven"; and that "an honest day's work is as great as the observance of the whole Law. (34)

29) Brak. 17 a, B. Q. 94b: מפני תקנת השבים

30) See my Seal Creed & Custom in Judaism, 40 f. Phila. 1907.

31) Sot. 20 a (cf. 22 b); B. B. 60b: חסיד חנוכה ורשע עניו ומכבד פלוס הק מבלי עולות

32) Shabb. 17a: אין מנדין את השמן; המים ממזין את השמן (cf. San. 105a); אין מנדין את השמן; המים ממזין את השמן

33) Moed. Q. iii, 1: אין מנדין את השמן; Sot. 3a. Gitt. 12a, 37 b, 41a, Kthub. 110 b., J. Brak. vii. I,

34) Brak. 17a: אחד המעבד ואחד הממעיט, וכלבד שיכון לבן לשמים Ab. d/R.M. Xvi.; Mkhil. "Bshal". ii.

Were I not disinclined to take advantage of your kind indulgence, I could recall to your minds the numerous host of shining lights in the firmament of Judaism, who either directly or indirectly indentified themselves with the movement inaugurated by Hillel. I could remind you of R. Ishmael b. Elisha (Fabi), a bitter opponent of R. Aquba's casuistry and defender of the rights of women and slaves,⁽³⁵⁾ who when reprimanded for trimming his lamp on the Sabbath gave the factious retort; "When the Temple shall be rebuilt I will bring a fat burnt-offering as an expiation" (36); of R. Gamaliel, who in a similar vein defended his treatment of his slave Tobī, "because he (Tobī) was a great Talmudist (37), and permitted and instituted many in no vatims for the sake of peace or reasons of progress; of the clear-minded R. Meir who separated the orange-rind from the orange-meat, the admirer of Socrates the Gentile and Elisha - Aher the ex-communicated one, who "enlightened the sages in Halakhah", and by reducing R. Aqiba's method ad absurdum won a victory of Rational Judaism (38); of R. Simon b. Yohai, the avowed eclectic and Rationalist, who declared Tiberias a "clean" city though built on a cemetery, and who thus disregarded the laws of purity (39); and of R. Yhudah Hannasi, devote of Greek philosophy, whose proud boast it was that his eminent ancestors did not monopolize the whole realm of Reform, and who lived up to his claim by modifying the custom of

- 35) San. 51 b: ^{בשבת} Sot. 3a: ^{ובי בשביל שאתה דורש בן רבות כוונתו לומר} See Tosaf. s.v. R. Nathan.
 36) Shabb 12 b: ^{קרא וקטק וכתב על הספר: לכשיבנה בית המקדש וכו'}
 37) Suk 20 b.; Gettin 3a.36: ^{ממנו דרכי שלום; id. 61a: ממנו תרון המולם}
 38) Eruv. 13 b. Hag. 15 b. ^{אכל תחלה ושלא שיתלך לבדו} The Tiberians in ^{there is so little a} isted on bathing on Sabbath.
 39) Gitt. 67 a; cf. Josephus, Antiq. XVIII: 11.3. ^{but the} Antiq. XVIII: 11.3. ^{indicates that R. Meir & R. Nathan were}
 The fact, however, that these are names, or nicknames, in the Antiq. indicates that R. Meir & R. Nathan were not the only ones to whom they were applied, but that there must have been schools or sects which succeeded the Antiq. 49b & Qidd. 52b. ²⁰
 This supposition is strengthened from the story in Nazir 49b & Qidd. 52b. ²⁰
 אצל יבנסו תלמידיו של ר' עמר... מכאן שקנתרמן הן ולא ללמוד תורה הן

announcing the new moon, by removing the rigorism from Shmittah and tithes, by ligting the ban laid by the Hannanyah Conference on the intercourse between Jew and Gentile (40), and especially by writing down the traditions in spite of the many protests against it, - protests more bitter, if possible, than those which were fulminated against the Septuagint, - and the assertion that "Who writes down tradition burns up the Law" (41). But what I wish to remind you of is the fact, often ignored or over-looked, that these religious Reforms in Judaism, unlike the civic reforms in many a christian state concerning the Jews, did not remain obiter dicta even in Palestine. Thus the hot springs of Tiberias were kept open for the public on the Sabbath; the places where, for instance, R. Josi Hagglili, or R. Yohanan b. Zakkai, or R. Yhudah Hannassi resided, showed the liberal tendencies of their respective representatives; and a certain R. Isaac ventured the assertion that where the teachings of the broad-minded R. Eliezer were adopted, the people not only escaped the persecution of the tyrant but even enjoyed a good old age (42)! How averse some of them were to Traditionalism can be seen from the statement of R. Yohanan who called the observance of a double-day feast a curse rather than a blessing (43). Insisting that the rabbis have a right divine to abrogate, modify and institute (44), and

- 40) Hulin 6-7; הנהיגו לי אבות להקדיר בו מקום J. Taan. 111.1, J.R.H. 11. 41) Gitt. 60 b. Trumah 14 b., Tmura 14 b. 42) Shabb. 40 א ראו שאין מדבר צומד להן חתרו להן חמי טבחה 46a.130 a; Psah. 112b; Moed Q. 11b. 43) Erubin "Bakal Marbin" קרא עליהן וגם אם נתת להם חקים לא טובה 44) R.H. 25

that "everything depends on the year, the place, the circumstances" they discarded many ancient rites as merely temporal and therefore no longer binding (45). The Biblical legislation, for example, pertaining to male-purification they allowed to be honored in the breach, though the same pertaining to the female they retained (Lex.). On the other hand, the divorce laws which are very lax in the Bible are quite rigorous in the Mishnah (46). Lending money on interest which the Law allows (Deut. xxiii. 20) the rabbis forbade (47). Saturday itself was to them not too sacred to relieve the sufferer and to arrange for the education, even manual, of the children; for, they claimed, it was made for men and not man for it. To avoid any possible disagreeableness they permitted that prayer be suspended in the presence of a Gentile king; that searching for leaven be abandoned in the cranny of the wall separating the home of a Jew from that of a non-Jew; that a perverted city on the boundary line could not be liable to the laws concerning it, "so as not to give the heathen cause for war;" that prayer be said in silence or by a precentor, "so as not to hurt the sensibilities of the repentant" or to relieve those who are not conversant. ^YThough *the influence of* Hillel and Todos of Rome the Seder service was introduced in spite of its being so glaring and imitation of the Roman and

זמן הזה חבל לבי השנים, חבל לבי המקומות, חבל לבי הזמן.
 45) Taan. 14b, Brak. 10 a.; J, Mgil. i. 4, R.H. i. Jomah 69 ^b, הוראת שעה.
 46) Gitt. 32 a, 90 a.; Jbam. 113 b., San 22 a.
 47) B.M. 70 b (Cf. R.H. 18).

Eucharist.

Christian Erercherist R. Ba pleaded for the premission to work on the semi-holidays since the people do not observe them as they ^{The calendar was so contrived that the Sabbaths & holidays should} should not conflict with the required preparations for their celebration, ^{and others} ~~allowed~~ ^{weve allowed} the farmers and laborers to observe even Rosh Hashshannah and Yom Hakkipurim as best they can with the least sacrifice of the time and confort (48). Some prayers which were traditionally recited daily they relegated to the holiday service; others, though they were originated by Gentiles like the three benedictions modled by R. Meir after those attributed to Socrates, they received into the daily ritual; while the evening service they declared as optional and several prayers or portions thereof they removed entirely. ^{disapproved} ^{ing} of the traditional lit^urgy, some rabbis improvised lit^urgues of their own. (49) Though according to R. Aqiba whoever indulged in "profane" literature lost his portion in the world to come, they recommended extra- canonical books, the "Wisdom" of the Greeks, the manners of the Parthians, whom they held up as worthy of emulation (50), and to those who would prate of building "fences" (syaghm) for fear of the much despised ame haarez" (illiterates), they would say in the words of R. Yohanan: "Should God destroy his wor^{ld} because of the fools?" (51). Attached as they were to the Holy Land and the ancient Jewish notables, they yet believed with R. Simon b. Laqish that later generations were even more meritorⁱous than the former ^{with} R. Simon b. Yohai that "wherever thou goest God goeth with thee"; and in their afirm faith that "God

^{7aan. iv. 1; Mid. Mishle ix. 2; Jal. Lev. vii. 12.}
^{Yomah 85b: היא מעלה לבם ואי אתם נתונים לה}
^{במת מצוה דווקא מצודה... מצודה דווקא שבת}
(48) Shabb. 132 b; 150 a; Tbam 7a. 85 b; Brak 19, 32 b., San 16a.
R. H. 34-5, Sot. 32 b; J. Moed Q. 113b. ^{ואלו היה מי שגמגג עמי והיתרתי שיהיו עושין מלאכה בחש"כ. 11.}
49) See Min 43 b., Brak 26, Weiss, op. cit. II. 147; Zunz, op. cit. 380-2 & cf., "Mah Nistannah" in Psah. 118 a & accepted version in Hag. 15 b., Sot.
Haggadah.
50) San. 90 a, 100 b., ^{מילי מעליה תהא דאית ביה דרשיין להו} Br. R. xxxvi. 8, ^{בל דברים הוזה אף את המדיים... את המרסיים וכו'} 23
49 b., Brak. 8 b.,

hath dealt mercifully with Israel by scattering him among the nation, " because he will thus be enabled to realize his mission of making proselytes or " increasing the number of the righteous ones", they rejoiced at the destruction of the Temple which, according to R. Elazar "stood like an iron wall between God and Israel!" and with "Rabbi" suggested the abolition of the fast of Tisha B'ab (52).

מיום שחרב ביהמ"ק נבסקה תומכת ברזל בין ישראל לאציון שבשם

IV.

In spite of the strenuous efforts of the Hillelites, Traditionalism was bound to prevail. The Cimmerian darkness which covered the political sky of Palestine, abruptly broke off the further expansiveness of Judaism in its native land. As the national greatness lay in the past so, the Jews naturally conculded, did also their religious greatness. Henceforth with them Judaism ceased to be creative and remained Traditional, and pertifaction and dogmatism were steadily on the increase.

Fortunately, a new, fresh streams began to pour into the brackish water; and like the one which emanated from the first land of bondage, Egypt, this flowed from the second land of bondage, Babylonia. By the rivers where the former exiles sat and wept when they remembered Zion, there grew up a Jewish settlement which began to dispute its power with the mother country and ultimately became victorious. Notwithstanding the decree of the Hananya Conference that all extra-Palestenian countries be held as unclean; and the repeated asseveration that it is sinful to remove from "the Land" (Palestine) to "without the Land." (1), we are informed of tentative attempts made by Haninah, nephew of R. Joshua, and by R. Aqiba, to secure the independence and equality of Babylon. (2) As years passed by, the ideal had been partially

1) Gitt. 76 b.
2) Brak. 63

realized. and the opinion obtained that the Sanhedrin could be in session without the Land as well as within (3). But here it did not rest. The Babylonians became aggressive. They pointed out that whenever the Torah in Palestine had been forgotten, it was one of their own (Ezra, Hillel, Hiyyah, &c.)^{who} went there and re-established it (4). They, therefore, ventured to assert that to live in Babylon is just as acceptable to God as to live in Palestine; and some even retaliated by declaring it a sin to leave Babylon for Palestine (5). This was a victory for liberal Judaism which surpassed even that won by the Jews of Egypt. The latter, though they built a Temple and translated the Law, still clung to the tradition that "Out of Zion shall go forth the Torah, and the Word of God from Jerusalem" (Isa. ii;) and dedicated synagog and cemeteries in the Holy Land. The former protested their superiority in every respect; snapped the cord that bound them to the land of their fathers; and claimed that if the Palestinian scholars were like men, theirs were like the very ministering angels (6).

In this land, which the proud Palestinians derided as a "land of Darkness" (7), the Jews found a Goshen both of civic and religious light. They were hospitably entreated by those in authority, and their intercourse with their Gentile neighbors was unimpeded. Grateful for their pleasant lot,

- 3) Mak. 7 a.
- 4) Suk. 20 a
- 5) Kthub. 110.
- 6) See Hgill 26a., Qidd. 72 a; Nazir 52 a.
- 7) Brak 25 b. San. 24. בזל... זה תלמודה של בזל... במחשכים קושינו... Min. 52. בזלים כפשים... שמעות חטבות: ע"פ מנ.

they paid no heed to the strictures and rigorisms of the Traditionalists; and as a mark of a appreciation counted their dates in accordance with the common era, not, as was customary, from the creation of the world or the destruction of the Temple (8). There, the shackle of Tradition was shaken off; religion was made to conform to life. New customs were introduced, old ones abrogated, and the saying obtained that "whereever thou goest follow the customs of the place". Mar Samuel, on whom fell mantle of Hillel, among many minor innovations advocated the reformation of the calendar, the emancipation of woman, the inhibition of priesthood and the abrogation of Tithes and fast-days (10). Not satisfied with the principle that "even if a law is regarded as lax in the "Land" it is the law outside of "the land" (11), he deprecated the half-reforms of Hillel, which he denominated "the disgrace of the judges;" proclaimed his famous legal maxim that "the law of each place must be abided by the people of that particular place;" doubted the purity of the Jewish race; taught that the "Days of the Millennium" mean only days of complete freedom and peace; ~~must-be-abided-by-the-people-of-that-particular-place~~ and carried his ardor for Reform to the extent of threatening Rab with excommunication for teaching that a certain food was ritually unclean (12).

- 8) A. Z. 10 a (בגולה אין מונים אלא למלכי יונים); 15-16; Psah 30 b. J. Psah 11. 2; Bresh. R. xi. 3
- 9) Br. R. 48. אגלת לקרתא קלך בנימוסא Hul 5 b, 95 b, E. Q. 80a. M. M. 46 b. A. Z. 36; Gitt 6, R. H. 18 B
- 10) San. 11a הללאל על הלימודי ענין, לתמיד Kthub. 43b, Gid. 70b; Taan. 11a; Psah. 30 a, 54 b; R. H. 20 b; Bkhor. 27a.
- 11) Brakh 36 a; Shabb 139 a: במסותי בחורל כל המיקל באכץ הלבח A. Z. 36^a (משנה א' 27)
- 12) Gitt 36 b: דינא דמלכותא דינא. 10 א. קרא מרובבלא עולגא דדיינא קרא

Dr. Zunz has presented^{us} in his magnum opus with the evolution of the Jewish sermon, and Professor Bacher with the history of Agada, and we now know that not only teaching but also preaching is a long established institution in Judaism. But what is of special interest to us here is, that, like the preacher-rabbis of Alexandria, the Ag^ada-rabbis of Palestine, especially of Babylon, were the banner-bearers of Reform, absolute as well as relative. Agadist^s, says M. Derenbourg, (13) were "No longer interpreters of the Law, but preachers of a socialistic temper, like the old prophets". Had it been otherwise, the conservative R. Joshua b. Lakish would not have boasted, as did the "Rosh" later with regard to philosophy, that he never glanced at an Agada book in his life; and R. Isaac would not have expressed the opinion that people rush to hear words of Agada because the law is not generally known, Nor, on the other hand, would the Agadaist have been called "the wise", or *Agada so extolled as to be regarded the best means "to recognize Him who spoke & the world was."* (14). Like the sacred fire which, according to legend, was buried by Jermiah only to be exhumed by Nehemiah (15), the fires of Rationalism which was hidden by the allegorists of Egypt and the Targumists of Palestine was re-kindled and spread abroad by the Agadaists of Babylon.

- אין בין הצוק ליםות המשיח אלא שיעבוד מלכות: ^{בלבד} *Brak. 34^b, Shabb. 13^a*; כל האומר מצית חשמונאי כאתנא צבדא הוא *Qid. 70^b*
- 13) Quoted by Dr. Kohler *J.Q.R. V. 399.*
- 14) Cf. Zunz *op. cit.* 64, 358 f. & J. *Shabb. xvi. 5, with Hag. 11-16.*
- 15) *Taan. 30 b. Macc. 4*
- הוא אגדתא הכותבה אין לך חלק, הדורשה מתתוך, והשומעה אינו מקבל שבר. מן מ"י לא אסתכלית באגדתא כצונן שתכיר את מי שאמר והיה העולם - למד אגדה

But to form a correct portraiture of the Jewish Reform movement in Babylonia, we must needs resort to the great compilation for which that land will ever remain famous in Israel's history. If the Talmud, in the beautiful simile of Professor Delitzsch (16), is "an enormous theatre, in which thousand^s and thousands of voices, from at least five centuries, speak in confusion," there are not lacking hundreds and hundreds of voices that plead for Reform. I feel, indeed, a veritable embarras des richesses when I behold these treasurers of ancient liberal Judaism, and deeply deplore the dullness of my tools and the smallness of my coffer compared to the multitude of these invaluable nuggets. All I can do is to select^e a few specimens, assort them under their proper labels, and together with what I have already touched upon in the previous section, try to re-construct the actual contents of Reformed Judaism of that time and place.

Consider first of all the liberalism which prompted the Babylonian redactors of the Talmud to give place to these contradictory and cancelling opinions. Does it not indicate the esteem in which they were held even by the conservatives? Would they not have been suppressed even as were certain Mishnayoth by R. Yhudah Hannasi, and certain Biblical books by the Men of the Great Assembly? (17). Or was it that they did not dream of a future scheidung und sichtung, and have thus

16) Jewish Artizan Life in the Time of Christ, Eng. tr.
26, London + N.Y. 1902.

17) Mgil 14: וכל כתבה נכתבה בלשון חכמים.

innocently contributed to strengthen the enemy against whom they waged internecine war? Whatever the reason or cause, the damaging (?) evidence was retained, and a latter-day Reform rabbi may well pronounce over them the benediction of Ben-Zoma, at the sight of a Jewish multitude: "Praised be He, who created them to serve me" (18).

Orthodoxy insists on the worship of the past. Its ^uquaint essence consists in being un-alterably opposed to innovation. It teaches that "the nail of the ancients was better than the loins of the moderns"; that "the heart of the former was like the gate of a palace, while ours is like the eye of the needle"; ⁿthat "if our ancestors were mere men we are like asses, yea, not even like the asses of Ben Dosa and Ben Yair". To make change absolutely impossible, it further declares that "He who differs from his master is as if he denies his God" (19). And since the only condition which rendered the slightest departure from authority permissible was that the latter Beth Din ^hbe superior to the former not only in numbers but also in knowledge, it eviscerated the very vitals of Reform; and if some innovation was un-avoidable, it had to be grafted, sometimes in a very ingenious though very illogical manner, on some ancient, frequently withered, limb of the tree of Judaism (20). The

- 18) Brakh 58 a. Cf. Minah 1 b: ללמדנו? וללל לבטלן? וללל לבטלן? וללל לבטלן?
 19) Jomah 9 b., Eruv 53 a. Shabb. 112 b., Bam. R. xviii. 15.
 20) Edg. 2 a., A. Z. 36 a., San 11 a. מיכא גמירל? מיכא גמירל? מיכא גמירל?
 וללל לבטלן? וללל לבטלן? וללל לבטלן? וללל לבטלן?

conservatives graded the material and animal creation according to certain degrees of sanctity: Palestine was distinguished from the rest of the globe, the Jew from the rest of mankind. These were further divided into various classes, each of which had its special privileges and particular obligations: Jerusalem had its rights and duties, Galilee likewise its own; man his, woman hers; the priests formed a caste by themselves; women, slaves and children severally by themselves. All these obligations had to be accepted as gzeroth (behests), even if they contained a kernel of material or intellectual enjoyment (21). No reasoning about the commandments was to be tolerated, since Qui s'excuse s'accuse, and the only ⁿmostrum for piety is Credo ^{the est} Quia impossibilia. Only Moses was privileged ⁿcalled to know the reasons of most of the laws; and when a student, of his own accord, succeeded in reading the riddle of a Mizvah, he was inhibited from imparting his discovery to others (22). This was not limited to the Biblical legislation. Rabinical ordinances were not explained to pupils until after a period of at least twelve months (23). Over-awed by the authority of antiquity, fearing to transgress the least of the traditional customs, they heaped restrictions upon restrictions; would disallow to the ignorant the very things with which they favored the learned; and avoided one

21) ^{גזרות} Bam. R. xix. i. ^{איתו} Mgil. 25 a. ^{האומר על קן צפור, יצאו רחמיה. משתקין.}
^{א"ר רשאי לעבור על} see Lazarus, op. cit. App. 18.
R.H. 28 ^{א"ר רשאי לעבור על} Brakh. 28 b., Psah. 119 a. ^{א"ר רשאי לעבור על}
Bam. R. xix. 4. ^{א"ר רשאי לעבור על}
A.Z. 35 a. ^{א"ר רשאי לעבור על}

thing lest it might lead to another, or because there was the least doubt about its permisability (24). They believed that all laws were equally binding, and that it is a Jew's duty to observe them all; or, as was the case with the sacrifices, to study and know about them, so that when the redemption comes they should not smack of "innovations" (25).

It was otherwise with the Rationalists. They would differentiate between Tradition and Traditionalism, and reserve the right of reason as to which to select and which to reject from the mass of Jewish ceremonies (26). Emboldened by the Lehrfreiheit which prevailed in the schools of Hillel, they let tradition pass through the sieve of reason, and would not impugn criticism as bordering on skepticism. The Torah to them was "like wheat to be ground into flour; like flax, to be spun into cloth"; it was not intended for ministering angels but for man to live by; it, therefore, can be renewed or altered when required, it will be renewed and altered at the coming Millennium. (27). Accordingly, they would not hesitate to declare their preference for R. So-&-So, to ask upon what ground was formulated law such - & - such, to learn from "the whole world", and to esteem observation more convincing than Tradition (28).

- Shabb. 40 a. משה דבר אחר, ועל דא משום דא.
- 24) A.Z. 36: ועל בנותיהן, ועל יינן משום בנותיהן, ועל דא משום דא.
- 25) Hul. 15 a., Psah. 110 b. משום דא משום דא.
- 26) Hul. 5a., Sifri, "Dbarim," xi. 17. Vay. R. vii. 3. וי' בהם, וי' בהם.
- 27) See Philipson The Reform Movement in Judaism 7, 65. N. Y. 1907. וי' בהם, וי' בהם.
- 28) Min 1 b., 9 a., Brakh. 25 b. למלאכי השרת: וי' בהם, וי' בהם.
- 29) Tbam 62 b., San. 100b; Makhil. Bshel. "i. וי' בהם, וי' בהם.
- 30) B. B. 142 b. xi., R. H. 25b. וי' בהם, וי' בהם.
- & see Zweifel, Sanegor, 75, 122-3, 211-22. וי' בהם, וי' בהם.

They venerated, they did not worship. ^aFor from being Bibliolators, they pronounced that the Scriptures "spoke in the language of men", and that, therefore, no passage can have any other meaning but what is on the surface (33). They passed judgements on the deeds and doctrines of the Bible-heroes; averred that Moses himself had his limitations and could not foresee the developments of the law brought about ^{by} the potent hand of time; affirmed that some of these laws had to be abolished by the prophets, and that many of his contemporaries were fonder of Aaron than of his immortal brother; and hence they concluded that the generation^f (of, e. g., R. Yhudah) which feared God, is more to be respected than that of Moses, and that a truth told by the least of the Israelites should be as acceptable^a as if it were uttered by Moses. In a word, "Jeribaal in his generation is to be listened to as was Moses in his, and every court should enjoy the respect which would be accorded to the court of Moses" (34).

Such being their attitude toward Moses, whose "equal arose not in Israel," there is little to be surprised at in their treatment of the priesthood and the sacrificial cult. It is noteworthy that in their tracing the transmission of the Law from Moses down to the Great Assembly the priesthood is conspicuous by its absence. It was not infrequent that the decisions of the priests were overruled by a court of laymen; and as to ^{their views respecting} the sacrifices we can judge from the beautiful parable about the prince who indulged in forbidden tidbits.

נחמן תורה על ידיו
 33) Brakh. 30/a., 51 b. Shabb 63 a. זבאם 24 a. דברך תורה כלשון
 34) Min. 29 b. Makk. 22 a. דגירות גזר משה על ישראל באר נביאים ובטלום. רבש"ע, שלך אדם כזה ואמר
 Pirge R.E. xviii: והנשים ולא הקרן הצנועים והנשים
 Shmini א. Hqeb"אם שמצת דבר תורה מה קטן שבשכאל והניח ידיו בצניח... כשמעין מפי משה רבך
 San 20 a. R.H. 25a: "שקר קחן" זה דברו של משה זה דברו של משה
 On Deborah + Hulda שמינה וסניין יקירין וסניין שמינה וסניין יקירין
 Sif. 17: "תורה נביאות קנו דהניין יקירין וסניין שמינה וסניין יקירין
 34: (17) "Sif. 17: תורה נביאות קנו דהניין יקירין וסניין שמינה וסניין יקירין

and suggested emendations in the text (38). Equally unimpeded by tradition were they with respect to the authorship of the various books^s and their component parts; and their opinions as to the writers of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel^u, Ruth, Chronicles, the Psalms, the Salomonic books, Job, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah, if perhaps not critically correct are certainly psychologically significant (39). With such fearless seekers after the truth, the plenary-inspiration dogma could have but little weight; and, indeed, judging from numerous remarks they denied it in part or in toto. Not only Ekekiel^z, the Psalms, Chronicals, Ezra, Esther, Canticles, Ecclesiastes &c., which they called Qabbalah, passed through the cricible^u of their criticism, the Pent^atauch^e, - the Torah par excellence, - was not spared, and the^T maintained that Moses was inspired only in a general way and was left to work out the details as best he could (40).

Higher criticism was not held at that time as "higer^h Anticsetimism", but rather as higher, purer Judaism; and, in fact, it was not the Rationalists but the Traditionalists who, finding fault with many a book of Scriptures, surpressed

- ענין כשרות, אין מקדם ומאחר בתורה
 Tan: מי שמכר זה לא אמר זה
 38) Shabb 116 a Midrash Samuel x. 10-16 Sofer. ix. 8-9 Dei Rossi, op. cit. 200, 341.
 "Bshal" xvi. המעשטים לך ותן להם את המעשטים
 39) B.B. 14-16: מכל אלא מכל הדין; San 93 b. Shabuoth 35 b. Tad. 111. 5 Shabb 116 a Schol. R. vii.
Psa. 117 a. Shir. Hash R. iv. אמרו
 40) Brak. על דברי תלמיד... Ngil 16 a. 31 b. Zoar "Voethh" 261; 75a. [am. 16; Zunz op. cit.] 15 f. 46ⁿ B; Levinsohn, Pt. Nat. 36. 1703.

much of our beautiful Wisdom literature, and sought to exclude those which, despite their efforts, found away into the Canon (41). To the Rationalists these heirlooms of our past were valuable intrinsically, as well as for their suggestiveness. if they took exception to their antropomorphisms, and by means of the thirty two hermeneutic rules of ^{R.} Elezer b. Josi Hagglili endeavored to soften the harshness of legalisms (42), they cherished all the relics of antiquity and would not part with the heritage of their father/s. In the course of time these books were no longer discriminated against, and even R. Aqiba asserted that Canticles, - the book which caused the greatest opposition, - was not only holy, but holy of holies, and that whoever regards it as a mere erotic poem causes evil to come upon the world (43). The heterodoxy of yesterday is the orthodoxy of to-day!

It goes without saying that the Rationalists hesitated not to tear the veil from, and to give ethical valuation to, many a Biblical precept, notwithstanding the ban put against such mode of procedure by the rigid Traditionalists. The Bible, especially Deuteronomy, contains a number of "whys" and "wherefores". This was imitated by R. Simon b. Yohai, and this method R. Yhudah Hannasi indulged

41) Shabb. 30 b. בקשו חכמים לגנוז סגרי קהלות ומשלי מכני שדבריהם סותרים זה לזה
 42.) Mkhil "Pithra" E.Q. 83 b. San. 15 b. לנגן האוזן מה שיכולה לשמוע
 43.) San. 101 a. Yad iii. 5., Br. R. xxvi. 7; זיקש קדש קדשים
 Zunz, Op. cit. 90 b.

in with pleasure and profit (44). They did search and find reasons and proofed that the laws of God are nor gzeroth and burdens but a light to the feet of the wanderer in the path of life, and with Rab deplored the suppression of Sefer Yohasin "because it contained many explanations on the Biblical legislation" (45).

The danger, however, that now threatened Israel was not Ecclesiasticism. With the dissolution of the nation and the destruction of the Temple, the priestly institution had to give up ^{its} ghost, and Vespasian with one blow accomplished more ^{an} the ⁿ generations of prophets and rabbis with their perfervid eloquence. The evil now lurked in a plethora of practice, and in an over-whelming scholar-worship. The Talmid Hakham (learned) began to be vested with the privileges which were wrenched from the Kohen (Ecclesiastic). He was at liberty to take interest, and not to pay taxes. (46). The Torah became all in all. "Turn it over and turn it over, for every thing is in it," because for that purpose wast thou created, and the mere searching in it is worth ^y of recompence,"—these sayings of some (47), and the literal interpretation of the verse": and therein shalt thou meditate day and night/" (Jos. i. 8), now

44) R.H. 29 a., San. 21 a., B.R. xvi. 4.

45) Psah. 62 b., Dbar R. vi. 1.

46) B.Q. 41 b: Brak. 28 b., Nder. 62 b.

47) Ab. (v. 27., ii. 9.) San. 51 b.

spurred on the Jews to become, if not, as Philo called them, "a nation of philosophers," at least^{as} as they finally were to be known through Mohammed, "a people of the book". As intimated above, many of the gzeroth were prompted by suspicion of the Ame Haarez. Hostility to the un-learned was carried to such a pitch that they were excluded not only ^{from} ~~for~~ the association of the wise, but almost from the congregation of Israel; and were put on the same level with beasts and vermine (48). It was the culmination of the Hebrew Ecclesia - ideal of a thousand years earlier^{er} and the harbinger of the Haskalah movement a thousand and five hundred years later. As a consequence, everybody who could devoted himself to the pursuit of knowledge even to the detriment of his physical wellbeing, and would sell all he had to contract marriages with the aristocracy of learning. It was very much like a caste system, though the lines of demarkation were continually shifting.

Philo, clear minded and broad of sympathy, was perhaps the first to point out that the un-educated men may arrive at the same conclusion by instinct, as does the learned ^{by} intellect; ^{in a moment of introspection expressed} his envy of the lost^t of his simple co-religionists who did not run the risk^k of skepticism by following the ignis fatuus^u of human reason. The same stand^s was taken by the Talumidists who freed themselves from the hampering ties of Traditionalism.

Nay, they even surpassed him. The "favored-few" idea, to which ^aMyimoni, the philosopher, and de Leon, the mystic, gave[/] utterance, still dominated the mind of Philo, and he still

favored the initiated sect which was capable of receiving his
 esoteric doctrines. Esdras (II. xiv. 46-7) voiced the senti-
 ment of his contemporaries when he suggested, that the truth
 be delivered only: "to such as be wise among the people: for
 in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of
 wisdom, and the stream of knowledge". Not so the Rationalistic
 rabbis. The uneducated they treated indeed as merely grown
 up children who may be un-moral but not im-moral (49), but
 they maintained that he who boasts "that he is concerned with
 nothing ^{but} by the Law, is not concerned even with the Law"; he
 is like one who has no God. They asserted that it was not the
 quantity of study and prayer, but the quality that counted;
 that a short, whole-souled prayer is equivalent to "meditating
 in the Torah day and night"; and Raba advised to tell this to
 the Ame Haarez (50). He who eats of the labor of his hands
 is greater than a Talmid Hakham, he is happy here and happy
 hereafter; the first question in the world to come will be
 "didst thou labor honestly?" (51). As Habakkuk demanded only
 faith in God (ii. 4), and Hillel only love of fellow-men, so
 did they require only denial of idolatry; for mankind could learn
 to be moral by observing nature as well as by learning Torah,
 the laws of which will cease to be operated ^{live} at the advent of
 the Millenium. (52).

- אין בצלי אומניות רשעין לעמוד מבעי דה
 כל הכומר בעכו"ם דרי זה יודי
 כאלו צטק בכל השנה
 בטררה אפילו יום אחד...
 49) B.M. 33.
 50) Ybam. 109 b. Min. 99 b., A.Z.
 17 a., Cf. Yore D. s. 248 & Bacher, op. cit. 57.
 51) Shabb. 31, Brak. 8, Hul. 54 b.
 52) Hul. 5 a. Mgil. 13 a. Erub. 100.
 נדר. 22 b., Nida 61 b.
 כולל
 אם יאמר לך נביא עביר
 על דברי תורה שמע לו, חוץ מעכו"ם.
 מצוות בטלות לע"ל
 בכל : San. 90.
 צנעות מחתול ול
 צנעות מביטוי
 כולל

This liberal tendency runs through the entire Talmudic encyclopedia, and manifests itself in a desire to level all distinctions between the sexes, between Jew and Gentile, between freemen and bondsmen. Woman ^{was} relieved from the obligations which depend on fix^{ed} occasion but enjoined to participate in whatever was not dependant on time; and she was entitled even to read the law in public (53). The guide and rule of action was the convenience of and respect for the public; their aim was to avoid contention and more especially to obviate a possible "profanation of the Name" (54). They laid down the principles which permeated even Orthodox Judaism that danger is more imperative than dogma, and life than Law; that whenever it is possible (to observe a law), it is possible whenever it is not, it is not; that as a rule, the "power of leniency is the best" (55). The Mishnah, even the Bible, must not be taken literally; the downfall of Jerusalem was caused by sacrificing the spirit to the letter; and they re-iterated over and over again the old precept that no law should be framed which is onerous to the people. (56). They clearly would not countenance any of those syagim and gzereth prompted by excessive regard for Jewish observances. Bricks must not be piled up so high that the wall be come top-

- 53) Brak. 20 b., Mgil 22. Sid. 29 b., Brak. 4 b.,
 54) חלול השם, דרך שלום, כבוד הבית, טרת צבור, מבעי דקבין העולם, Brak. 4 b.,
 12 b., 16 a., 19 b., Yofah 86 a., 27 b., 31 a., Yofah 86 a.,
 12 b., 16 a., 19 b., Yofah 86 a., Yofah 86 a., Yofah 86 a.,
 55) Hul. 10 a., 12 b., B.Q. 28 b., Brak. 60 a., Hag. 10a.,
 56) B.Q. 79 b., B.M. 30 b., B.B. 60b., A.Z. 36 a., Gitt. 109 b.

No heresy-hunting and sin-searching for them! They believed with the Deuteronomists that the "hidden things" belonged to God and if "before Him it is knowⁿ, is it known to you?" When some rabbis sought to exclude Sokomon from the category of the righteous, a Voice, they claimed called out in the words of Job (xxx iv. 33) ;" He will recompence him, whether thou choose, or whether thou refuse" (61). The numerous laws were to them not as so many traps to catch the unwary sinner, but rather as so many safety-valves, ^{or} so many beacon-lights, to save him. He who has done but one good deed has acquired a *Παρειλητος*, a defender^m (62). Hence the maxim, that all Israelites have a portion in the world-to-come of which maxims they prefixed^{to} the chapters of that most edifying and inspiring work, the *Pirge Aboth*, ^{the} leniency toward a weaker brother as advocated by R. Yohanan bar Nafha; and the willingness to admit a convert on easy terms, as suggested by Hillel and maintained by R. Joshua b. Hanaya (63). If the Bible discriminated against the Canaanites, ^{+ prohibits intermarriage with them} it was because of their idolatrous practices, of which the Gentiles "without the Land" are exempt; and even of the former the indictment was against their vices, by no means against their virtues (Deut. vii. 3) (64).

- 61) *Shabb. 55, San. 104 b.* ^{בקשו למנות עוד אחד ופתה בק ואמר המצאך ישלמנה}
 62) *Ab. iv. 2, Gid. 39; San. 111 a.* ^{כל ישראל יש להם חולק לעוה"ב}
 63) *A.Z. 26 b.* ^{סמי מכאן מומכר} *Ybam 46 a., San 90 a.*
 Cf. Levinsohn, B. Y. ch. 61 ^{צמון ומאוב טהרו בסתור : 60}
 64) *Hulin 13 b.* ^{הם לאו מובדי ע"ז הם} *A.Z. 36 b.,*
Mid. Mishle xiv. 1, ^{אדוקה מכפרת על אוה"ע} *San 39 b.* ^{במתוקנים שבין לש עשיתן} *Cf.*
Holdheim, Autonomie etc. 115 b. & Das Rel. u Pol. im. Jdtm. 41 f.
 Schwerin 1845.
 See Tos. s.v. 'Dikkh'. ^{דאורייתא שבועה אומנות אבל שאר עכום לא.}

Whoever utters a word, be he even an idolator, should be called rabbi, or hakham . For not creed but the deed is the main concern of Judaism; not priests, ^L Levites, nor Israelites, but Gentiles as well. It teaches that the pious ones among the nations of the earth have a portion in the world-to-come; and that whether man or woman, man-servant or maid-servant, Jew or Gentile, "he who doeth what is right shall reap his reward" (65).

65) B.Q. 38 a. San. 105 a., Br. ^{R.} B. xxxvi. 9, Yalq., Shim.
 "Bres" xiv. 76. צדיקי אלהים יש להם חלק לעולם הבא

V.

I am aware that some will accuse me of prolixity, and that for cursery sketch like mine I have perhaps amplified too much. But I have done so deliberately. The Talmud, on the one hand, has too often been maligned as the agent which has brought development in Judaism to an abrupt end; and, on the other, it has proved the arsenal from which most of the champions of Rational Judaism drew their weapons of attack and shields of defence. It may well be said that if the Talmud is like the sea, its ebb and flow are the Rational and Traditional waves of Judaism. It is in a sense the trunk from which sprouted the two branches which came to be known as Orthodoxy and Reform; it was at the same time effect and cause of the two never-absent tendencies in Judaism.

That in Persia, too, Traditionalism ultimately became triumphant, it was not the fault of Judaism but of the changed status of the Jew. Not in vain did the upholders of the Old accepted it as a principle that when "Israel waxeth fat he kicketh," and that "misery is as the becoming to Jews as a red trapping to a white steed" (1). Threatened with discord within and with attacks from without, writhing under the lash of cruel Caliths and tyrannical Exilarchs, the Jews again began to seek refuge in the performance of multitudinous rites and courage and comfort in the memory of the past.

1) Hag. 9; Vay. R. xiii. xxxv.

Judaism became a Chinese wall² which shut the Jews in⁺ the Gentile world out. The "two colleges" of Sura and Pumbeditha lorded over the Diaspora with a sceptre of iron. Rab's "Bread" lest the Torah be forgotten", his view that the Mizvoth were intended as a strict discipline, and his assertion that "whoever learns from an Amgushi (?) deserves death", became endemic (2). Traditionalism was rampant. R. Meir's lenient decisions were refused acceptance; his name even was but seldom mentioned, because he admired and learned from one who discarded Tradition. R. Elazar was ex-communicated because he sought a reason for washing the hands (3). And the Persian Jews would neither receive from others nor investigate their own treasure. As for the liberal teachings of Mar Samuel --- he was "merely a hakham, not a rabbi!" (4) -- a charge ever since laid at the doors of Jewish Reformers from Maimoni down to Geiger. How dear every tradition became to them can be judged from the naïve question of a rabbi who wanted to know why Ben Mahallalel was not killed for advising his son, as his last will and testament, to follow the majority! (5).

That even then there were not lacking little electric sparks of liberalism to illumine the dense darkness, there are more evidences than one. While many were bowing

- 2) Shabb. 138 b; Jom. 9 b; Vay. R. xiii. 3.
- 3) Cf. Hag. 15 a/ & Erub. 13 b; Brakh. 19 a/; Ed. v. 6-7
- 4) B.M. 85-6.
- 5) Shabb. 88 a/; Laz. op. cit. Ap. 13.

their heads to the decision of the Gaonim, and accepted their dicta as binding as if they were those of Moses, there were others, among the Gaonim themselves, who far from countenancing the "foolish beliefs and superstitious practices" of the people, denounced them. Shrir, Hai and Samuel b. Hafni, espoused the cause of reason in their interpretation of religion (6). It was ⁱⁿ those times that the vowel-points were introduced into the Hebrew Bible, and, but for the objection of Mar Natrunai would have been introduced also into the Scroll of the Law (7). Despite the injunction "not to change the stamp which the sages gave impressed upon the services, and not to go in the ways of the Ammarites" (8), the Pizutim, imitations and adaptations of the secular ^{songs} and sacred lit^aurgies of the Gentiles, found their way into the synagogue, and those who later censured this usage were opposed to it not on the ground of its being an innovation, but because of the poor literary merit of the compositions. In the words of Ibn Ezra, they protested not against those which are as "fine as silk" but those which are as "rough as sacks" (9). A radical departure from Talmudic legislation were the Tagganoth which started under the Saburit^{es} with according to woman the right to sue for divorce on the ground of incompatibility of temper (10), and culminated in the famous decisions of R. Gershom, "the light of the exile",

- 6) Haeshkol 1/1, 88. 3. Yor. Deah, 116; Graetz, op.cit. ^{H.T. IV. 14a.4} Ap. 13
 7) Kerem Hemed, iii. 200; Graetz, op.cit. H. T. III. Ap. 23 b.
 8) J. Brakh v. 9; vi. 10; Shabb. 67 b.
 9) See Dukes, Relig. Poesie, 9. Frankfort o.t.m. 1842, Harizi, Tahkmoni, 182. Warsaw, 1899; Zunz, op.cit. 43 b. 492 c; Ibn Ezra Qsohelet, v.1: אסור שיתפלל אדם ויכנס בתורה
 10) Shaare Zedeq 56a; Tos. Kthub. 63 b. Cf. ed. 77 b.

in abolishing poligamy and instituting the law that no woman can be divorced against her will. These and similar innovations which are to be met with throughout the Middle Ages and throughout the Diaspora, indicate that the creative genius of Judaism, though cowed, was not conquered; and that the glowing embers of Rationalism were still hot under the heap of the cold ashes of formalism(11).

The place, however, where Medieval Judaism could expand and flourish congenially was in the land ruled by the cultured Arabs, where Jews enjoyed once more the civil and social equality of which they had a taste during their early sojournment in Egypt and Babylonia. There again, we find the preacher a dominant figure, and the collection of Agadoth a prominent feature. There again, the Rational genius of Judaism found vent and was given utterance by the most brilliant and enlightened leaders in Jewry. While freedom of action was frowned down, free-thought was still un-hindered and un-incumbered. The reason given in the Talmud for comparing Jews to a dove which when fatigued of one wing keeps aloft by clapping the other, may appropriately be applied to Israel of that day. When ^{the} current of progress was obstructed in one direction, it rushed with even greater ^{or} velocity in another. Traditionalism thrived only in the province of ceremonialism; the "hidden things" and the d^barin s^hebale^hb, were still out of its purview. Mendelson has declared, and Dr. H^oldheim demonstrated, that ancient Judaism

11) See Abrahams, Jewish Life in the Middle Ages, 45-58-⁶¹ J.P.S.A.

never said: "thow shalt^m or shalt not, believe;" but, "thou shalt or shalt not, do" (12). The mission-ideal, though subdued was still manifest; and the Jewish sages set themselves the task to point out the moral values, and enternal validities of pure Judaism, in the cermacular Arabic. They believed with the anonymous author of Tana Dbe Elijah that Israel takes precedence over the Torah not the Torah over Israel. Hafni and Hai the Gaonim, and R. Hananeel b. Hushiel, (1000 = 1050), the first critic of the Talmud, were Rationalists to a high degree (13). The philosophic speculations of Saadyah b. Joseph (892-942), the worthy successor to Philo, in the tenth century, and of Ibn Gabriol who, according to Geiger, was the forerunner of Spinoza, in the eleventh century, stirred up the dormant mind to renewed efforts; and the gentle^x touching appeal of Bahya Haddayam to the "duties of the heart" emphasized again the old truth that it matters not "whether much or little, if the heart be turned Heavenward". (13)

§ An outburst of unwanted enthusiasm evinced itself in the realm of Jewish science. The Bible furnished a fertile field for the re-habitation of the spirit of Judaism. Saadyah translated the Scriptures into Arabic, and, though certainly cognizant of the contention a Greek translation formerly caused in Judaism, and of the latter decision that the Bible may not be translated into

אומתנו אינה אומה כי אם בתורתה *that maintains (Em. Vd. iii. x.)* *speaks against* הדעות המושכות את

- 12) Autonomie xiii f.; Jerusalem in Ges. Schrift. III. 321; Leipzig 1847.
 13) Dbe, Elijah ix. xv. xx. xxv. Trer Y.D. 116; Gratz, דברי הקדמונים אם הם סותרים אל השכל אין אנו חייבים לקבלם on. cit. Heb. tr. IV. 14n. 4: Saadyah ודינאל טעק (Dan. ix. 2, Ezra vi. 15, from Massef, 138-9. St. Pet. 1902) Rab. Haxi calls same Talmudic statements: דברי הבאי
 See Tshub Hagonim, ed. Harkavy, Berlin, 1887, p. 197.

any but the Greek tongue, nevertheless, expected this labor of his to be an expiation for his sin^s. A bold Rationalism and independence of authority is the distinguishing characteristic of the eminent grammarians, Hivi of Balk, the Ibnⁿ Kastars, Mnahen b. Saruq, Yhudah Hayyuj, Dunash b. Labrat and, especially, ^aJonah Ibn Janach, the critic of the Massorah and father of Hebrew syntax. Strange as it may seem, the critical skepticism with regard to scriptures penetrated even into the stronghold of Traditionalism, France, and influenced even such a non-questioning Talmudist as R. Solomon ^zḥaḳi. "Rashi", in his famous commentary, continually reminds us that though the drasha (exposition) may serve the purpose of pointing a moral or adorning a tale, it should not be relied upon in Biblical exegesis (Gen. iii. 8; Naeh. i. 12; Zach. i. 8; Psa. lxxviii. 36). He suggests doubts about the traditional authorship of the Bible, nay, even of its plenary inspiration (Num. xvi. 31; 1 Chr. i. 7; viii. 29; xii. 13). Even more interesting it is to find that his grandson, the "Rashbam", though an authority of ⁿṭfillin, nevertheless accepted or agreed with the views held by Ibn Saruq concerning the interpretation of the verse on which the custom is based (Ex. xiii. 16); and ventured the opinion, so subservient of Tradition, that the Biblical day begins with the morning (Gen. i. 5). Against this view Ibn Ezra wrote his satire, Iggereth Hashshabbath, and denounced him who held it as a rank infidel (Ex. xvi. 25). Yet he himself was certainly no Traditionalist. Though not the first, he was surely the most eminent higher critic of the Bible till the time of Spinoza, who took him as his model exegete. He combated, in

his peculiar way, not only the Talumdists, both as regards their interpetations and inventions (Gen. xxiv. 1, xli. 27; Ex. xxiii. 19; Lev. xxiii. 40), but suggested emendations in the Biblical text (Ex. xxv. 29), ^{declared that fol was a translation (fol ii.)} disputed the infallibility of Daniel, and was the first to call attention to (what is now accepted as in^contr^avertible) the composite authorship of the book of Isaiah (14). It is needless to say that the lucid and thorough going grammarian, R. David Qamhi, never allowed his mind to be clouded by Traditionalism. "The words of the rabbis", he ever maintained (1 Sam. viii. 1; Q/Chr. xvi. 28; 2 Chr. viii. 16, 24; xiv. 17, 25), "cannot out weigh reason"; and like his great predecessors whom he out shone, he, too, took the liberty to correct the text (1 Chr. ii. 15), dispute the authorship, suggest the re-arrangement, and deny certain alleged doctrines of Holy Writ (1 Sam. viii. 10; 1 Kings xvi. 28; 2 Kings viii. 16; 1 Chr. ii. 18). With one sweep he brushed aside the authority of those who were versed in the Talmud but not in the Bible, in his quaint ^ddoggeral:

"Who learned and masterd much of the Torah,
But the science of grammar doth not understand:
Is like one who ploweth and leadeth his oxen
With nor goad nor ^{sur}within his hand."

Of such a spiritual tree a mind like that of Moses Ma-
moni (1135-1204) would be the natural, if not inevitable, blossm.

שקול הדעת הוא יסוד הערכה... והמלאך בין האדם לאליהו הנביא - שכלו: Int. & Com. on Bible: מן השכל

14) Cf. AB. d. R. N. xxxix. Spinoza Tract. Theol-Pol. Eng. tr., ch. viii, ^לקבלה היא נקבל אבל מדרך ^{השכל} Ibn Ezra יקובלו הדברים בעקום שיש להם מכחישם: 1862, & Qamhi, 1 Sam. viii. 1. Sifthe Hakhamim Vayiqra ii. 1. רבותנו דרשו מה שדרשו... אזהרת צבוח מבי הגבורה: Num. xv. 31; פירשו מה שפירשו ^{והטאור מבי משה} ותישב המקרא על פשוטו, דבור על אפנו, והדשה תדרש

But his greatness consists in that he did not limit himself to any one phase of Judaism. His ~~tytanic~~ intellect embraced every sphere of his religion, and he shed lustre on whatever he touched. He bitterly inveighed against the authoritiveness of the Talmudists as proclaimed by the later rabbis, and disparaged many customs as recudescences of Saddu^{cism}~~cism~~. "Why," he ~~exclaims~~^{exclaims} "why should their ~~gzeroth~~ ^(the Talmudists') be more binding than the statutes of the Torah which every Beth Din (ecclesiastic court) may invalidate? Should it even necessitate the abrogation of a positive, or the affirmation of ^athe negative, commandment, we must conform to the requirements of the time. Even as a physician is in duty bound sometimes to amputate a hand or leg to save the rest of the body, so, should the Beth Din sometimes teach to discard certain rites that the rest may remain; as the ancient sages expressed themselves, "Let one Sabbath be broken, that many Sabbaths may be kept." Again, "whether in matters which the modern rabbis know by tradition, or which appear necessary by them by Biblical and Talmudic interpretation, or things introduced by them because of the demands of the time, we are bound to accept their views, and whoever disregards them transgresses a law. Does it not say: According to the Torah which they shall teach you?" (15)

Maimoni thus became the avowed exponent of a Judaism abreast of the time and acceptable to reason, and on his works the noblest thinkers fed for centuries. Reason to him was the court of last appeal, the only infallible guide in the scheidung und sichtung process to which he clung in his

theological and philosophical treatises. Should Aristotle be right, he would not hesitate to interpret the Torah in keeping with Aristotle. In his Yad, Hahazakah, though faithful to Talmudic decisions, ^{he} glossed ^{over} or ^p suppressed such laws as were distasteful to him, while in his Moreh Nukhim he advocated those principles the maintenance of which would form a Jewish community of intelligent-pious ones (Nobonim-hasidim), to whom rational meditation, decorous behavior, and hygienic observation would form an integral portion of their religion (16).

Luzzatto, Graetz and several others, have denounced Maimoni for the attempt to foist a creed upon Judaism (17). The truth is that this expedient was needful to save Jews to Judaism at a time when the observance of the ceremonies was fought with untold daggers. The vehement and prolonged controversy which it aroused was caused not by the Rationalists but by the Traditionalists against his denial of authority in the Yad, his reasoning in the Moreh, and his arrangement of superstition in both.

Maimoni became the storm center of the conflict between Rationalism and Traditionalism, a conflict which continues to his day.

16) Y. H. "Issuye Biah" xi. 7 : מן הצדוקין למדוה : "Mapveh Vloveh,"
iv., Mishna Gilaim v., Haznziken חזקת המנהגים Yd. "H. Deoth," iv. H.
"Sid. Hahod". xxvii. 25, Mor. Nukh 11, 25 (creativity ^ל ninlo), 30,
47, iii. 3, ^ל כל החכמות הלמודיות היו בזמנים 14, 4; [ההגדות הן] על צד מלצת השיור לא יספק ענינם על בעל, 32, 40.
those who believe otherwise he calls ^ל סכלים; 32, 40.
17) Com. to Mishn. San. x: (90a): כל דבר שנתגלה בצמח... אין אנו חושדין, וכו',
בבר זכרתי לך בעצמים רבות שכל מחלוקת שכל מחלוקת
שתקיה בין החכמים שאינה באה לידי מעשה אלא שהיא אמנות דבר בלבד אין צו לכסוק באחד מהם
xi. (resurrection); cf. Naz. v. 5 & "Tosaf. Yomtob" ad. loc.

The battle was waged not only about doctrines and opinions but also about deeds and practices. Already in Ganonic times we hear of numerous people who, like our modern Reformers, discarded religious ceremonies, changed the prayer-book, abolished the dietary laws and did not keep the second days of the festivals. The author of Haqqanah speaks of those who maintained that the laws were intended only for Palestine, ridiculed the dialectics of the Talmud, and took a stand against the religious disabilities of woman. (18). Until the arrival of R. Moses of Couci (c. 1240) we know that tfilin were not laid by the people at large; that evening services were not held; and that there were those who carried their indifference to the extent of disassociating themselves from their conservative co-religionists (19).

18) Haqqanah 15d, 16d, 22bd, 26a; 49b, 66b, 71b. 124d; Saadyah, Em. Vd. 39b. 40a. Shaare Zedeq, 24n. 10; Abarbanel, Yshuath Mshike 15b. Qreskas, Or. Ad. Intr. Shem Tob, Kbod Elohim 28b., Levinsohn B. Yh. 1. 92n; Seiger, op. cit. 400. 19). See Harizi, op. cit. 7, 18, 19, 472-3; Bernfeld Do'v Taharukhoth, 30.

There were also many who were alienated from the synagog (20), and then as now each party laid the blame of the religious disintragation at the door of the other. Not only R. Solomon of Montpellier, in France, R. Moses Taku of Germany, and the "Rosh" of Spain, even R. Moses Nahmoni and R. Solomon b. Adret pronounced the Rambam, Ibn Ezra and Saadyah as heretics and troublers of Israel, assigned their writings to the flames and condemned those who read them as infidels; ⁷ and even the grave of "Rabbenu" Moses suffered desecration at the hands of his fanatic opponents: ^{21/} But the Rationalists, though inferior in numbers, held their ground, and the onslaughts of the Traditionalists only emboldened them in their progressive aspirations.

Ibn Ezra's son became a Mohammedan.

20) How unfounded is the charge of the quasi Orthodox of to-day who identify Reformation with assimilation can be proven not only from the Talmudic laws regarding converts, which must have arisen from the demands of the day, but from the entire history of Judaism. If Levita's grandson converted himself to Catholicism, so did the sons of many more conservative parents and teachers e. g. Ab. nor Alphonso Pfeifferkorn, down to Carl Anton and Prof. Ch. ^{Strom} Olson. How weak Orthodoxy proved to hold the attention of those within the fold can be learned from the numerous references to the indifference to religion, ignorance of the law, and disregard of morality which existed in some of the most conservative communities even during the heyday of Orthodoxy. E. g., R. Tam (Sefer Hayuṣhar iii.)

נזכרו בכל מצות אשר אין בה גזע: ר. טם (Sefer Hayuṣhar iii.)
 נפש, או אבדן הין, והצלימו, עניהם מן החמורות אשר בהם יצאה וקיצת ממון.
 * Hug. Maimoni H. 2. 7. 7. iii. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

At the same time even men like R. Mnahen (Zedah Laderch 1. 37 or 44b. & Zunz 494) decried the lack of decorum in the synagogue which rendered the worshipers ^{כמתקוטטים} as did R. Ephraim Lentshitz (Amode Shesh, p. 39).

כי נשמע קול צוחק בביתך וזוהי חרפה לשכונת וכו'.
 & Mnahem of Papignam ^{עוד אני קורא תגר על החזנים המאריכים בגופים וכו'}
 Address the Rabbi & in Olath Sabbath 1 b. we are told:
 ולא יקו כל דרושיו בדבכים עצומים, כי יקוצו בהם המין העם שהם הרבים.
 בטול תבוקות של בית רבן הוא מצוי בכל קהלה.

R. Samuel Edels (Maharshk Shabb. ch. 16. ^{כל אחד רוצה להיות רב ואגד באין תורה}

R. Mnahem b. Zerah (Zedah Laderckh, intr.) ^{ברוב מקומות הדמן ובחמדת המנוחות...}
 הולכים הלך והסר במצות המנוחות... והם התבילה והברכות... האיסור וההיתר במאכלות ובשמירת השבת והמוצאים

So also Modena (Pahad Yizhaq, s.v. "Heqyem")

^{21/} Solomon Petit erased from the Maimoni's tombstone the words *Shalsileh Nagga'aleh* ^{בה טמון רבנו משה} and replaced them with *Shalsileh Nagga'aleh* ^{בה טמון משה בן מימון המורה והמין} 55.

They protested their innocence of the charges of ^sassimilation; and they claimed, on the contrary, that they aimed to build up Judaism by extirpating the parasites which festered upph its body and sapped its life-blood. Among the leaders of these Rationalists were such men as R. David Qanhi (1160?-1235?), the eminent gramm^arian; R. Jacob b. Mahir Ibn Tibbon, the translator, and R. Jacob Anatoli, the renowned preacher, whose fiery eloquence won recruits from the ranks of the Orthodox. Through their instrumentality, and chiefly owing to the indefatigably labor of the Tibbonites, - the illustrious family which for several centuries kept the light of reason from being extinguished, - the first concerted action in behalf of Reform was taken in Israel; and the meeting convoked at Montpellier with its sentence of ex-communication against those who should malign the name of R. Moses b. Manimon; who should oppose the unrestricted study of science and philosophy, no matter in what language they were treated; or who should condemn an author for heresy on account of his philosophical opinions, may well be regarded as the first Central Conference of Reformed Rabbis in the Diaspora. (2²).

The battle since then, became a battle of ^{little} pamphlets; and in the warfare, than as now, the Rationalists had difficulty in worsting the Traditionalists. Among the great wielders of the quill was R. Ydayah Bedarsi, whose letter to Ben Adret is one of the gems of the literature of Reformed Judaism.

2²) Minhath Qanooth, Nos. 54, 76

"We cannot give up science," he insists; "it is as ^{the} breath of our nostrils. Even if Joshua should appear and forbid it, we could ^{not} obey him; for we have a warrenty, who out-weighs you all-, Maimoni, who has recommended it and impressed it upon us. We are ready to set our goods, our children, our very lives at the stake for it" (22³). A more profound Rationalist, R. Levi b. Gershon, of France, -which offered for a while a place of refuge for Reform-, was even more outspoken in his commentary to the Torah, the "Battles of the Lord," (which the Traditionalists parodied into the "Battles on the Lord"). In the introduction there to he censured those "who avoid whatever is based upon investigation, and philosophic postulates, and is not transmitted from others." He was fearless to the extreme. "Should our research," he declares, "lead us to contradict a statement in the Torah, we would not, because of the Torah, falter to tell the truth ,..... the Torah is not a code which enjoins us to believe what is not so; its main object is to direct us, as much as possible, on the path that leads to truth." ^S These vindicators of truth and science found a responsive note in the heart of many of the brethern. Saadyah, Ibn Ezra, Maimoni himself, were studied, imitated, and commented upon. Talmudists, like "Meiri" and "Kaspi" ventured to ^{blaze} ~~hold~~ out a new ^{Trail} path for themselves in the explanation of the Bible and codification of the Halakha; while the philosophers, like Joseph Albo in Spain and Elijah Selmedigo in Italy, continued the Rationalistic movement in the realms of ~~ten~~ology. Albo was

³ 22) Tshuboth Rashba 418 as rendered in English in Graetz op.cit IV 44

the last but not least of the Arabic Jewish school of Rationalists. To him also the numerous laws were so many avenues of escape, ~~for~~ and with the Talmud he believed he who doeth one commandment is certain of his reward. ^{But} ~~Even~~ More than the ^{R. l.} ~~Rambam~~ he held that innovations in Judaism are permissible not only as temporary measures but for all time, even as Ezra ^{changed} permanently the first month into the seventh because he wished to commemorate the new redemption rather than the old; and, differing from the Rambam, he declared that the basic principles in Judaism are only three, to which if any one, "after mature ^{l.} deliberation, finds himself unable to subscribe, "he sins unknowingly and is still to be reckoned among the wise and pious ones of Israel." He proved this from the Talmud where R. Hillel (and others) disclaimed any belief in a Messiah and were regarded as good and great and faithful Jews (24).

Time, too, helped not a little in healing the breach, and Traditionalism which, in keeping with its principle sees a halo of glory around the great ones of the past, gradually grew to cherish the memory of the very men who were formerly denounced as traitors to Israel's cause.

"The past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not when we moved therein."

Thus Joseph Karo (1488-1575), the pious author of the Shulham

24) Iqarim i. 14 18-21, iii. 14-18, 29, iv. 42.

Arukh, included Maimoni among the three authorities (Alfasi and Asheri!) on whose decision he relied. But circumstances were not auspicious for the spread of enlightenment among Jews of Medieval times. The massacres and expulsions which ravaged the Jewish communities of France, Germany and latterly of Spain, "the Paradise of the Jews", gave a stunning blow to research, and the Jewish intellect concentrated itself in the "four ells of the Halakhah", or sought safety in the fancy flights of the Qabbalah. Judaism became a prey to what Origen would call, "the foolishness of beggarly minds".. The chief concern of the rabbis lay in accumulating Minhagim (customs), and ascribing to them supernatural virtues. Qabbalah was preached from the pulpits, and penetrated even into the prayer-book (34). The very teachings of the Rationalists were enforced in the service of mysticism, and not only were such works as Hekhaloth, Habbahir and Zohar attributed, respectively, to R. Ishmael, R. Nhunyah and R. Simon b. Yehi^a, the zealous Qabbalists entrenched themselves even behind such names as Saadyah, Hai, Ibn Ezra and Maimoni! Modifying the words of Bar-Qapparah, at the death of R. Yhudah Hannasi, we may say of Judaism toward the end of the Middle Ages: "Angels and mortals have contended for the Holy Ark, the mortals have conquered and the Holy Ark is captured."

24) ⁵Thub. Rashba, 414; Chagaz, Mishnath Hakhamim §589

VI.

Gestoert, aber nicht zerstoert, this winged word of Dr. Zunz how true it is of Judaism in general and the Reform movement in Judaism in particular! When Medieval darkness spread over Jews and Judaism in France and Germany, behold the sun of enlightenment dawn in Italy! The material welfare, and comparatively favorable status, of the Jews there called for a re-adjustment of religion with life; and the rigors of the rabbis became burdens unendurable.

There, the movement set agoing by the Tibbonites found numerous adherents after it began to decline in Spain and the Provence. Elijah Delmedigo, while he offered his meed of respect to the rabbis who at all times "were the leaders of our people and its judges," disputed their authority to bind for all time to come. (1). There was R. Jacob Anatolio, the preacher, who settled in Naples, and R. Hillel of Verona the philosopher; and thither King Robert invited the erudite Kalonymos b. Kalonymos. Literature began to flourish almost as it did in the golden days of Spain. The works of Leo Romano, Judah Siciliano and Emmanuel Romi improved the taste and enhanced the appetite for culture. Rationalism made such rapid progress that already R. Zerahyah b. Shaltiel regarded Hillel of Verona as too conservative, and intimated to him to go "back to his native land, put on his ^ltalith and tfilin and regale himself with the delectable Sefer Yzirah. (2).

1) Bhinath Haddath, ed. Reggio 27, 53+8, 71. Vienna 1873.

2) Ozar Nehmad 11. 124, 142.

And again, the study of the Bible came to the front and the mission-ideal took hold of the leaders of Italian Jewry. Elijah Levita, (1472-1549), the grammarian, who shattered the tradition with respect to the antiquity of the vowel-points, also set an example of closer intimacy with Gentiles, and proved that it not only does not de-Judaize, it even helps remove prejudice and calumny. The rise of the Christian Reformation, too, inspired the Jews with the hope of seeing their cherished dream come true through the medium of the holy tongue. "Such" says Levita, "is the fruit of our language when it becomes known among the Gentiles. Therein lieth our salvation" (3). And the fact is undeniable that his influence ^{on} Reuchlin, Aegidio, Fagius, Muenster and others contributed not a little to moulding the Christian Reformation. (4)

In rabbinics, Azariah dei Rossi, (1511-1578), at the same time that Joseph Karo wrote his code in which he embodied much of the dross that accrued to Judaism through the ages, and Ibn Yachya produced his history which contains a meddley of fact and fable, -submitted everything to a searching examination, and his, Mor Onayim proved indeed a light to the eyes of the seekers after truth. "If we moderns," he remonstrated, "are like pigmies, then are we like pigmies who ride upon giants, and can see more than the giants If as regards prophecy the ancients were superior, we of to-day surpass them in matters pertaining to research and investigation If they dug,

3) Msorath Hammassorah, intr.

4) See L. Geiger, Das Stud. d. heb. Sprache, 55 f. Breslau 1870.

we, by their help, have succeeded in securing the water for which they dug" (5). Dissatisfied with the Traditional data based on the Talmud, he called to his assistance not only the forgotten Jewish philosopher Philo, but even the Church Fathers; and his spirit of inquiry led him on to point out the many inconsistencies which had crept into both the Talmuds and the Bible (6).

For Reform rabbis, the life and labor of Leon da Modena (1571-1648) has a peculiar attraction. That many of his biographers, among them Graetz, have condemned him as a heretic and sycophant, should not surprise us when we recall that these epithets were shared by him in common with Dei Rossi, Levita and even Mainoni, Ibn Ezra and Saadyah, and for all we know with Mar Samuel, R. Yhudah and Hillel Hannasi. The student of religious Reformation hardly needs to be reminded that Luzzatto exaggerated when he referred to him as "a water of the sages of the Talmud and Mishnah more than the Qaraites, and a more rabid Reformer than Geiger" (7). Yet, to use a Qabbalistic term, his soul was a mizuz (spark) of the same fire which later kindled the soul of Geiger. He was indeed a connecting link between Geiger and Maimoni. In separate brochures, as well as in his commentary on En Yaacob, he inflicted telling blows on mummified Orthodoxy; and in eloquent

5) Mor Onayim, ch. xiv.

6) Ib. Chaps. v. ix. / xi. xx.

7) Iggaroth Shdal No. 980 (May 25, 1846).

language he pleaded for Reform from the pulpit. He introduced choral services into the synagog, and a systematic schedule into the school. More than this, he endeavored to restore Judaism to its pristine purity. Taking up the code of Asheri as an example, he points out how Judaism was weakened by its excressences; and asks whether it were not reasonable to presume that had the Torah intended that these laws be binding it would have stated so unequivocally? (8) This he repeats in various places in Qol Sakhal and Hay^{ll}noneh; and suggests the abolition of many rites, the relaxation of the rigorisms of the Sabbath and festivals, and the shortening of services. "If the sages of the Talmud", says he, "allowed one on a journey to abbreviate his devotions because of his being busy and worried, so much the more reason is it ad-equated that we prolong not our prayers when we are worried by the galuth and about the means of earning a livelihood" (9). He advocates also the acceptance of proselytes on easy terms, and especially of a more cordial relation between Jew and Gentile. In brief, he asks for the removal of any obstacle which hinders Judaism from realizing its ancient mission and become "a light to the nations." (10).

8) Qol Sakhal, 21, 22, 28, 30, 52-5.

9) Brakh. 29.

10) Shabb. 95, 137; Ybam. 47; Hag. 22; See Liborvitz, R.Y.H./ A.

Modena, 56-9, Vienna, 1896; Geiger in Ozar Nehmad 1, 130-1; Bernfeld, Kaempfer. Geixter in Jdtm., 21-2. Berlin, 1907.

Needless to say, he had little in common with the mystics. He was indeed the first to call attention to the spuriousness of the Zohar, and condemned the belief in witchcraft and the transmigration of the soul, which at that time found a defender in no less a personage than Manasseh b. Israel (11).

The advocates of "ationalism, however, were yet merely "one in a city and two in a tribe." They lacked the dynamic power which comes from concerted action. The many conversions which through the middle ages, from Ibn Ezra to L^evita, harassed the camp of Israel, contributed to the ascendancy of Orthodoxy and the crushing of Reform. There are indeed several modern scholars, among them also Geiger & Graetz, who see even in Qabbalah & Pilp^uṣ^ul, & ^{the} Shulhan^u A^ukh itself, the symptoms of the independence of the spirit of Judaism, and its impatience under the control of authority, and R. Chernowitch of Odesa has built upon this theory a most ingenious ^{sys}tem of historical prospective. Moses Isserles' annotations were prompted, in reality, by the desire to s^how that the Shulhan A^ukh was not yet "the table before the Lord," and to protest against R. Joseph's slavishness to the codes of Alfasi, Maimoni & Asheri, and the mysticism of the Zohar. Nor did Judaism even then surrender ^{to} and the Karo-Isserless code unconditionally and without a struggle, as various remarks in responsa and commentary by such lights as R.R. Mintz, Jaffe, Bachyach and others of sⁱmular standing sufficiently attest. (12) But

11) Cf. Mishmath Hayim I. viii, III. IV. i. xxi, pagims.

^l
By far the greatest bulk of the Jewish literary output down to the end of the eighteenth century consists of responses and commentaries on commentaries, "a command to a command, a line to a line". The chief interest was no longer Emunoth Vdeoth but Sheeloth Utshuboth, and their controversies remind us of the homooousian-homoioussian controversy in Christendom.
Wir debatiren, ob wir Stiefel putzen oder schmieren!

12) See Hashshiloah IV. & VIII.; Graetz, op.cit. Heb. tr., VIII. 460 f.; & my Sect, Creed & Custom, 115f.

VII.

Yet the seed which the enlightened leaders of Israel have scattered was destined to burgeon forth and produce flowers and fruit as soon as the icy layer of prejudice and persecution began to melt. The eighteenth century proved to be the climatic period, and Germany the promised land for a re-juvenated Israel. The admission of Jews into the universities, and the pursuit by them of secular studies was gradually undermining the fabric of Traditionalism; and Germany which had been wrapped in darkness when the light shone in Spain, Provence and Italy, was the first to proclaim the advent of a new day. This "revolution under the form of a law" may be said, for convenience's sake, to have commenced with Mendelssohn's specimen of his translation of the Bible into German (Alim Littrufah, Amst. 1878), which affected Judaism even more than the first translation of the Bible into Greek, and produced the maxim that all Reformation begins with a Biblical translation. Mendelssohn, himself, however, can at best be regarded only as the advance agent, or rather, the unconscious instrument, of the Jewish Reformation. Wessely in his Dibre Shalom Veemeth (1782) was^a more avowed advocate of Reform than Mendelssohn in his Jerusalem, in which though he denies that Judaism is a religion with a creed, and recognizes that "there are no eternal verities which the human intellect can conceive but it has also the power to create," he yet insists that the ceremonial^s laws are binding forever (1).

It was these ceremonials that proved the most burdensome, because they militated the most against the spirit of the time; and the "Rambam" with his emphases on creed would have been more timely than "Rambman" with his stress on deed (2).

For the problem now became, not how to reconcile faith with philosophy, but the Law with Life. To use the current phraseology of the day, the Aufklaererei and Bildung produced a Kulturkampf in which the target was practice even more than precept. In this conflict between the Old and New, the Massfim (1784-1811) took no mean part. They were the outcome indeed of the first ^{centr}conserved action on behalf of Reform Judaism; constituted, if I may say so, the first Jewish Reform Congregation; and met with further reaching results than the concrete form first given it in the Consistory of Israel Jacobson two years before the birth of Abraham Geiger (May 24th, 1810). To them flocked all the idealists who broke loose from the gyves of Traditionalism; from their pages, as from so many pulpits, they preached the principles of ^arenovated Judaism; and in hundreds of cities enthusiastic readers were drinking in their words and joining the ranks. The tendency became a movement which, like an avalanche, ~~it~~ was rolling and growing as it rolled. Beginning with Mendelssohn's advocacy of the permissibility of ~~such~~ such thing as ~~v~~accination, or the postponement of a funeral (3),

2) See Zunz, op.cit. 463 f. & Bernfeld Daath Elohim 378 f. Warsaw 1899.
3) Massef, Sep. 1785 (Bik. Hait. 1822, pp. 23f. 82f.)

and the plea for a pure German, it eventually culminated in the aesthetisation of Jewish worship, the renunciation of obsolete rites, the substitution of German for Hebrew in the service, the introduction of the sermon in the vernacular, and the admission of woman to all the duties and privileges enjoyed by man.

As the language employed by the Massfim, in fact by most of the early Reformers, was the international Hebrew, their audience was not limited to Germany, but was disseminated far and wide ^{over} distant Russia and darkest Galicia. Reform, towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, seems to have been "in the air." Like Wessely, the ²Gon of Vilna mapped out a new ⁴carriculum for the schools, which revolutionized the prevailing outworn system of education, and urged the acquisitions of secular sciences "since by so much as one is ignorant of the other sciences, so much, by and hundred fold, is he ignorant of the science of the Torah" (4). The steady influx of Russian "Maskilim" to Germany, and their personal contact with the "divine philosopher," aided also by the Biur commentary, caused not a few of their countrymen to wake up from their lethargy and inaugurate various Reforms. Dubno, the Massorite, Maimon the philosopher, Schick the scientist, Dr. Hurwitz, Satanow, ²Ipye and Levin the literateurs, and a host of others, were like so many hands reaching out for the light which flooded from Germany but was by an ill fate excluded from their own land.

4) Path Hashshulhan. int.; Plungian, Ben Porath. 33. Vilva 1858.

In Galicia, too, R. Solomon L. Rappaport re-introduced the critical study of the Talmud, and Nahman Krochmal, resuming the thread of the mission-ideal, pointed out in his profound but incomplete Moreh Nbukhe Hazzman, that the kernel of Judaism consists in its striving for absolute spiritualuty, and that the greatest progress made by the Jews was when they divested themselves of the fetters of nationalism, on the one hand, and formalism, on the other (5),—the platform of advanced Reform Judaism in a nutshell.

These exponents of Reform, however, were still as much the slaves of authority almost as their fanatic opponents. The appeal was still made to the Talmud and ~~masters~~ ^{rabbinic} literature. With them it was only a change of masters, a preference for R. So-ben-So to R. So-ben-So. Geiger, the "new Hillel," was the first to announce that the connection with the past means not a subservience to the past authority of any kind, but "the persistence of the living idea which permeates all ages with its vigor;" and "that Reform means for us, changed, new appearance; a rejuvenated life, forms permeated and saturated with the spirit. The difficult and the easy, the whole and the part, are to receive meaning and significance, to uplift the spirit, to kindle the heart, in order that religion may influence the entire view and course of life." (6).

5) Moreh Nbu. Haz. viii: ix. Cf. Bernfeld, D.E. 588 & See M. Raisin in Year Book C.C.A.R. XVI, 273-90

6) Quoted by Philipson, op.cit. 16, 60. See Geiger, op.cit. 162-3
Samuel Jah 1802 2x 13 2018 2018 2018 & L. Geiger, Alrahon, Siaser, 331, Berlin, 1710.

But here I must stop, if I do not desire to transgress the admonition of our ancient sages that "no kingdom may trespass upon its neighbor even the breadth of a hair," or to disregard the boundary set for me by you. I hope, however, that from what has been said you will see^{my} that Reform in Judaism is not a parasitic growth nor a new graft on the ancient tree; that it, too, has its holy ground, its priceless treasures and glorious associations; that in different phases and various guises, it has appeared, re-appeared and appeared again, during the ages prior to Geiger--the "thus far and no further" of my task; and that like the land of Judea according to the Talmud (7), so does the religion of the Jews possess a remarkable elastic property, and while it shrank and shrivelled in one place "expansions and enlargements," real and substantial, ever arose to it from another place.

7) Gittin 57 a. See ^{my}S.C.#C. 132.