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THE JEWISH DOCTRINE  
OF  
PROSELYTISM AND PROPAGANDA.

Its Relation to Pharisaic Theology and  
its Development to the Close of the Mishna.

By  
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*mic. 11/79*

To

DR. KAUFMANN KOHLER

Who Led Me into the Study of  
This Inspiring Subject

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE THEOLOGICAL IMPETUS OF JEWISH PROPAGANDA.

#### I. BIRTH OF THE DOCTRINE.

The theological impetus of Jewish propaganda was born in the Babylonian exile<sup>1</sup> from the union of two ideas,--the idea of ethical monotheism and the idea of the chosen people. Analyzed into its elements this dual idea dissolves into the following logic of thought: In the first place the idea of ethical monotheism, inevitably culminates in the idea of universalism, for the idea of God as the Father of all mankind cannot be conceived without the complementary idea of the brotherhood of man. In the second place the idea of the chosen people, when married to the idea of ethical monotheism, inevitably culminates in the idea of the Messianic future, for if God is the Father of the whole brotherhood of man, His special revelation to the chosen people cannot be conceived as an act of favoritism but only as involving the mission of Israel to bring a united hum-

NOTE        1. Traces of the development of this idea can be seen still earlier in the universalism of Amos and the particularism of Hosea: cf. D. Neumark, in Ozar Hayahdut, article "Ikkarim", paragraph 7.

2.  
anity into the house of the great Father. Thus the unknown seer of the Babylonian exile heard the voice of God proclaim to his conscience: "I will give thee (Israel) for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49.6; 45.6) "Also the foreigners.. will I bring to My holy mountain.. for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56.6,7; cf Jer. 16.19; Zech. 8.21f). "And of them also will I take for priests and Levites, saith the Lord" (Isa. 66.21).

## II. PROPAGANDA RETARDED BY THE PRIESTLY IDEAL.

For nearly four centuries this seed of the propaganda movement did not give root to the healthy plant. Meanwhile its very existence was threatened, and though the non-Israelite could gain admittance to the congregation of the Lord by circumcision (according to Ex. 12.48), still the priestly ideal, under the impetus of the Ezraic reformation, was developing an aristocracy of birth not only in the smaller circle of the priesthood, but also in the larger circle of the nation, thus inevitably developing the doctrine of salvation through birth in the chosen people.

But the grand prophetic development of Judaism was not thus to be cut off in its infancy. Hardly had the development of particularism initiated by Ezra and his party accomplished its purpose in preserving

the nation from disintegration and assimilation, than the prophetic ideal again revived and the sect of the Hasidim was born. For though Christian theologians will not admit it, the true essence of Hasidism, or as it was later called, Pharisaism, as far as any movement can be characterized by one tendency, was, as Dr. Kohler shows in his article "Pharisees" in the Jewish Encyclopedia, not legalism but democracy, which in its wider meaning is universalism. And as the spirit of Pharisaism developed, there also developed a movement for propaganda which became especially strong in Alexandria and the diaspora in general.

Christian theologians claim that this extensive movement for propaganda was a mere accident of history due to the fortuitous inclination of the Jews of that time, but in no way inspired by Judaism; indeed some even claim that propaganda is counter to the spirit of true Pharisaic Judaism. Thau Schuerer says: One should have thought that orthodox Pharisaic Judaism could hardly have been justified in making any effort whatever to obtain converts to the religion of Israel beyond the circle of its own countrymen. For if it be true that the promise applied only to the children of Abraham, then what,

in any case,were the Gentiles to gain by their conversion to the Jewish faith?" (op.cit.2.2.303) One does not have to scratch deep into this argument to find the Christian polemicist<sup>for</sup>,the doctrines of Pharisaic Judaism show patently that propaganda is the inevitable culmination of Pharisaism.

### III. PROPAGANDA THE CULMINATION OF PHARISAISM.

In the first place the Messianic hope, omitted by Josephus because he was writing for Roman readers (so K.Kohler, op.cit.), but really a fundamental doctrine of Pharisaism, looked for the universal recognition of God's kingdom in the future. This doctrine received expression especially in Palestinian apocrypha and Alexandrian pseudepigrapha and also, somewhat later, in Talmudic writings. Practically all the Palestinian apocrypha, and still more so those written from the Pharisaic point of view, express the idea that there will be a Messianic future, and invariably this idea is coupled with the idea of the universal recognition of God. Thus the author of the Book of Noah, only fragments of which are preserved in other apocrypha into which they were incorporated, writing probably before the Maccabean Revolt (so R.H.Charles, op. cit. 2.170) tells us that in the future the children of men shall become righteous and all nations shall offer a-~~men~~ adoration and praise and worship God. (Ethiopic Enoch 10.21) The author of Ethiopic Enoch 83-90, writing during the troublesome days of the Maccabean war (so Charles, But Porter, in his "Messages of the Apocalyptic Writers" claims a later date) tells us that all the heathen

will assemble in the new Jerusalem and the Lord of the Jews will have great joy because they shall all be good and return to His house (90.30). The author of the book of Tobit, writing probably between 150 and 100 B.C., tells us that all nations shall turn and fear the Lord God truly, and forsake their idols (14.6; <sup>3</sup>13.7). Even the author of the book of Jubilees, writing between the years 135 and 105 B.C. and voicing the rigorous view that all the uncircumcized are children of destruction (15.26) tells us that the Messianic kingdom is to witness the

ethical renewal of man (1.29; 4.26), and all nations on earth are to be blessed in Israel (18.6; 20.10; 27.23). The author of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs writing between 109-106 B.C. is very universalistic. He tells us that the light of the Law "was given in order to lighten every man" (T. Levi 14.4). Charles thinks it is a later passage). There is an angel, Michael, who intercedes not only for Israel, but for all the righteous (T. Levi 5.7). The blessings of the Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom will extend to the Gentiles (T. Levi, 2.11; 4.4; 8.14; 18.9; T. Sim. 6.5; T. Naph. 8.3; T. Benj. 9.2; 10.5; T. Jud. 25.5; T. Dan. 6.7; T. Ash. 7.3.). The author of Ethiopic Enoch 91-104, writing probably 94-78 B.C., expresses the same thought, (91.14) as does also the author of Ethiopic Enoch 37-70 writing probably 94-64 B.C. (in ch. 48), and the author (or authors) of the Psalms of Solomon (70-40 B.C.), especially in 17.33. As for the first century of the Christian era, all the Palestinian apocrypha except perhaps Ezechiel 4.5--5.9 admit the Gentiles to a share in the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom: E.G., Assumption of Moses (7-30 C.E.) 10.1; Apocalypse of Baruch (50-100) 41.4.

In the second place, the ethics of Pharisaism inevitably culminates in propagandism. The basis of Pharisaic ethics is the imitation of God as prescribed by Leviticus 19.2, "Be holy as the Lord your God is holy" (Sifra and tanh'v. K.Kohler, op.cit.). And as God extends His Fatherly love to all (Shir ha-Shirim Zuta 1; et al), the essence of the Law is contained in the commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself, (Sab.30a; Abot de R.Nathan, version B.86, ed Schechter p.53, Sifra Kedoshim 4). Here, then, is where universalism passes into propaganda, for the Pharisees possess the Torah which they consider the greatest Truth and Wisdom revealed by God to man, and in order to fulfill the command to love their neighbors as themselves, they were obligated to bring the blessings of this Torah to all humankind. Thus Hillel taught: "Love all human creatures and bring them near to the Torah" (Abot 1.12). How the Pharisees put this doctrine into practice is well attested to by a multitude of records which no one doubts, well epitomized by the famous words of the New Testament: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte" (Matt.23.15).

~~Having digressed somewhat from a purely historical survey, let us now return to the beginning of~~



In the third place the democracy of Pharisaism inevitably culminates in universalism, for though Schuerer claims that only Hellenistic Judaism considered birth as of only secondary importance (op.cit. 2.2.303,304) the fact is that while the Sadducean priesthood prided itself upon its aristocracy of blood, (Sanh.4.2; Mid.5.4; Ket.25a; Josephus Contra Ap.1.7), and declared the Torah to be their heritage, the Pharisees created an aristocracy of learning instead and insisted that the Torah is the heritage of the whole house of Israel (2 M<sup>ac</sup>.2.17). But the Pharisaic contention that the spiritual heritage of Judaism belongs not only to the priests but is the common property of all Israel, inevitably developed into the idea that the spiritual heritage of Judaism may not be

limited to the people of Israel,

but must be accessible to all the peoples of the earth; in other words that salvation is not a matter of birth but of keeping the Torah. Thus the great Rabbi Meir taught that "the Law was designedly given in the free and open desert, lest if it had been promulgated in the Holy Land, the Israelites might say that the other nations have no share in it: therefore, whoever desires, let him come and receive it" (Mek. on Ex. 19.2, ed. Weiss 70a), and that a Gentile who observes the Law is equal to the High Priest, for the Torah says: "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgements which if man do, he shall live in them (Lev. 18.5) and it is not said: "If priests, Levites or Israelites do". Again it is said: Open ye the gates that the righteous people that keep the truth may enter" (Isa. 27.2) and it is not said: "that priests, Levites and Israelites may enter". Again it is said: "Do good, O Lord, to those that are good" and it is not said: "Do good, O Lord, to priests, Levites and Israelites", for the Torah means to include the Gentiles that keep the Law (Sifra Ahare Molk 13.13 to Lev. 18.5, ed. Weiss 86b; cf. Sanh. 59a and 77a; Ab. Zara 3a and 26a; Baba Kamma 38a). As a result they did not hesitate to invent legends claiming that their most prominent leaders and teachers were proselytes.

(Yoma 71b; Sanh. 96b; Git. 57b)

Nor was this doctrine expressed only in their haggada, but it also became the dominating influence of the halacha they developed, with reference to the Ger. Indeed, in contradistinction to the haggada which at <sup>though not so often</sup> times <sup>was</sup> unfavorable to proselytes (cf. ~~M&M~~ the frequently quoted not of Rabbi Helbo: "proselytes are as bad as leprosy for Israel"), the Halaka never excluded the Gentiles from the privilege of converting to Judaism. It may not be thought that they were prevented from doing this by the Mosaic law <sup>which in its strictest form</sup> ~~that~~ allows <sup>only</sup> the third generation of proselytes to enter the congregation of the Lord (Deut. 23.8), for the rabbis never allowed such a little thing, as a Biblical law to stand in their way; witness for example, how they practically annulled the Biblical command that a rebellious son must be stoned to death, by surrounding it with a multitude of qualifications. And indeed, far from availing themselves of the Mosaic laws that prohibit the acceptance of proselytes from certain nationalities, the rabbis practically annulled these restrictions. Thus we read in the Mishna that when Rabban Gamliel was deposed from office as president of the Sanhedrin, (if Weiss's <sup>C</sup> contention that the term בן גוי in the Mishna always

NOTE 1. cf the more ~~convenient~~ <sup>2</sup> law Ex. 12.48.

*This is not W.'s contention, but found in B. Ber. 27<sup>b</sup>. N.*

refers to this event, be correct) Rabbi Joshua maintained that the Biblical law prohibiting Ammonites and Moabites from entering the congregation of the Lord, (Deut. 23.3) should no longer be enforced inasmuch as the warfare of the nations had led to so much intermarriage that there were no pure Moabites or Ammonites, and the Sanhedrin decided the halaka, in accordance with his contention (Yad. 4.4). And we read in the Talmud that Rabbi Dosa ben Horkinos, who was consulted even by his most distinguished colleagues in doubtful cases, and stood in high repute, (cf. Yeb. 16a top) insisted with the strength of an oath that the prophet Haggai declared that the Kardoyim and Tarmodim may be accepted as proselytes (Yeb 16a). The significance of this statement lies in the fact that the Tadmorim or Palmyreneans were considered the bastard offspring of Jewesses violated by Gentiles, (cf. Rashi ad loc. and Yeb. 16b) and according to the Mosaic Law, "a bastard may not enter into the assembly of the Lord" (Deut. 23.2). The Halaka seems to have been decided in accordance with his opinion (corroborated by Yer. Kid. 4.65c which tells us that the Palmyreneans were accepted as proselytes).

We see, then, that both in haggada and halaka Pharisaic Judaism considered birth as of only secondary significance and opened wide the gate of salvation to those that would enter the fold of Judaism. But more than this, Pharisaic Judaism or at least one tendency of Pharisaic Judaism was willing to provide salvation even for those that were not willing to assume the yoke of the Law. Realizing that Israel was a priest-people with a mission demanding the perpetuity of the nation, and that many of the ceremonials of Judaism were intended only for Israel, in order to preserve its solidarity, the great Pharisaic teachers did not demand that the heathen assume the responsibility of the mission of Israel in order to win salvation, but demanded only observance of the Noahitic laws, the laws of humanity. Often this ideal came in conflict with the more particularistic idea demanding conversion to Judaism, but the broader ideal was not only truly a product of Pharisaism but was indeed the inevitable culmination of the doctrine of the democracy of salvation. We shall later in this chapter trace the beginnings of these two ideals in Palestine;

our next chapter will show the two ideas developing side by side in Alexandria, and our fourth chapter will show the later development in talmudic literature of the two Pharisaic institutions produced by these <sup>two</sup> ideals, the Ger<sup>^</sup> or proselyte and the Ger Toshab or semi-proselyte.

In the fourth place the doctrine of the mission of Israel inevitably culminated in propaganda. And this doctrine of the mission of Israel, ignored though it be by Christian theologians, was an essential doctrine of Pharisaism, for it was the logical corollary of the doctrine of the democracy of salvation. When the Pharisees contended that "God gave all the people the heritage, the Kingdom, the priesthood and the holiness" (2 Macc. 2.17, Greek) they not only insisted on the old prophetic ideal of individual salvation but they also reaffirmed the old Mosaic ideal of "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19.6). We shall see this ideal well expressed in the Alexandrian pseudepigrapha, to be treated in our next chapter, and in Philo, to be treated in our third chapter.

#### IV. EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE TWO IDEALS OF PROPAGANDA.

As we have already mentioned, Pharisaic doctrine developed two ideals of propaganda, the one resulting in a movement to convert the heathen to Judaism, the other being to influence the heathen to observe the general laws of humanity. The seeds of this latter tendency can be seen in a fragment of an early Palestinian apocryphum, the Book of Noah, preserved in the seventh chapter of the book of Jubilees. The author of this lost Book of Noah, writing probably before the outbreak of the Maccabean Revolt (so R.H. Charles, op.cit.2.170) tells us that Noah exhorted his children to observe righteousness, to cover the shame of their flesh, to bless God, to honor father and mother, to love their neighbors, to avoid fornication, bloodshed, the eating of blood and finally to tithe their fruit (Jubilees 7.20 f). The implication of this passage is, of course, that salvation is not confined to the Jews alone, but is the reward of all the pious: to procure salvation the heathen need not even convert to Judaism, but must merely observe the laws of humanity, the laws given to Adam and to Noah. This



idea later became the kernel of the institution of the semi-proselyte, or Ger Toshab, and was still earlier adopted in Alexandrian Judaism as the basis for much of the vast propaganda conducted under the pseudonyms of the Sibyl, the early Greek poets and other ancients of authority. In Palestine the broad universalism of the Book of Noah seems to have given away, for nearly three centuries, to the more particularistic ideal of converting the heathen to Judaism, based on the doctrine that salvation is best to be won by the observer of the Torah. Thus in the spirit of the author of the book of Jubilees, who writing in his time, declared that whosoever of the Jews is uncircumcized belongs to "the sons of Belial" and to "the children of destruction" (15.26), John Hyrcanus compelled the Idumeans, when he conquered them (about 125 B.C.) to have all their males circumcized and to accept the Jewish Law. We shall sketch the development of this ideal in our fourth chapter (Section 3, Proselyte-Circumcision).

This spirit of Pharisaism motivated a vast and systematic propaganda, only slight traces of which are left, not only because it was later obliterated by the missionary activity of the Paulinian church, whose great success was in no mean measure due to the foundation laid by Judaism among the heathen, but also because Talmudic Judaism itself, later tried to obliterate all the old traditions of this propaganda (K. Kohler, *Grundriss einer systematischen Theologie des Judenthums*, 56.5). Fortunately, however, hellenistic Judaism has left us many records of the beginnings of propaganda in the diaspora, and Josephus, Greek and Roman writers, and the New Testament give us a picture of its great development; so that with the help of these contemporary accounts it becomes possible to understand the real significance of the later Talmudic references.

## V. SUMMARY.

1. The doctrine of propaganda was born in the Babylonian exile.

2. The growth of this doctrine was retarded by the flourishing of the priestly ideal.

3. Propaganda is the culmination of:

I. The Pharisaic doctrine of the universal Messianic future.

II. The Pharisaic doctrine of social ethics.

III. The Pharisaic doctrine of the democracy of salvation.

IV. The Pharisaic doctrine of the Mission of Israel.

4. The beginnings of the doctrine of propaganda can be seen in early Palestinian apocrypha. Judging from the compulsory circumcision of the Idumeans and the Itureans, Palestinian Judaism at first recognized only the full proselyte. Yet the beginnings of the institution of the Ger Toshab, which was Pharisaic, are to be found as early as the Book of Noah.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF PROPAGANDA IN THE DIASPORA.

The beginnings of the enormous Jewish propaganda conducted by the Jews of the diaspora, from the second century B.C. to the beginning of the second century of the Christian era, are hidden from the eyes of the historian. The earliest record we possess about which we can speak with certainty is the third book of the Sibylline Oracles, consisting of verses that were fabricated some time in the second century B.C., after the beginning of the persecution of the Jews by King Antiochus Epiphanes.

Before considering these earliest Jewish Sibylline Oracles, however, we shall first consider the relation of this movement to the theology of Judaism, and second consider the claims of Schuerer, that we possess records of Jewish propaganda from the third century B.C.

## I. THE RELATION OF PROPAGANDA TO JUDAISM.

Dr. Kohler points out (in the Jewish Encyc-

clopedia, article "Abraham in Apocryphal and Rabbinical Literature"), that although the Bible describes Abraham merely as a Bedouin Sheik wandering from place to place in search of pasture for his herds, the Alexandrian Jews presented him as the prototype of a nation sent forth to proclaim the monotheistic faith to all the peoples on earth. Thus the septuagint to Genesis 12.3 and 23.18 translates  $\text{אִתְּךָ}$  ("with thee") by  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \sigma\omicron\iota$  ("in thee shall all the families of earth be blessed"), and Josephus, (Antiquities 1.8.1), using the works of Alexandrian Jews written in the third and second centuries B.C., under the names of Hecateus and Berosus, describes Abraham as a propagandist who went to Egypt in order to convert the Egyptians to his faith.

We see from this that the inspiring zeal of the hellenistic propaganda was not a mere accident of history due to the fortuitous inclination of the Jews of that time, as some of the Christian theologians vehemently insist, but was quite to the contrary an expression of the theology of <sup>Pharisaic</sup> Judaism. The Jews possess the sacred Truth and the moral Ideal as a special revelation from God. But the logical corollary of ethical monotheism is a united humanity worshipping the one God. The Jews, then,

may not selfishly keep God's Truth for themselves but must disseminate its blessings among all the sons of men. In other words the Jews have a mission: they are to be a "light unto the Gentiles". And thus indeed do the Sibylline Oracles, the earliest propagandic effort about which we can speak with certainty, unconsciously attribute their zeal for propaganda to their recognition of the mission of the Jews, for they too, speak of Israel as a "light unto the nations". And so, too does Philo, in whose works we see Alexandrian Judaism at its culmination, proclaim that Israel has a mission, that it "received the offices of priesthood and prophecy, on behalf of the whole human race" (de Abrahamo, ed. Mangey, 2.15).

## II. WAS THERE PROPAGANDA IN THE THIRD CENTURY B.C?

We shall now consider Schuerer's view that the spurious quotations from the ancient Greek poets which are preserved in the works of Eusebius and Clemens Alexandrinus as well as in the pseudo-Justinian works "De Monarchia" and "Cohortatio ad Graecos" were originally a part of the unknown work written by pseudo-Hecateus<sup>1</sup>. For though Schuerer de-

1. History of the Jewish People 2.3.295.

scribes these poetic forgeries as apologetic, they seem intended as we shall show later, to make Jewish propaganda among the heathen, and so we would seem to have evidence of propaganda from the third pre-Christian century, where Schuerer dates them (op.cit.2.3.297) <sup>1</sup> But as we shall show, Schuerer's view is mere conjecture.

Schuerer dates these spurious poems in the third century because they were originally, he thinks, a part of pseudo-Hecateus. But the scanty fragments of pseudo-Hecateus preserved in the works of Josephus, Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius are not sufficient to give us a clear idea of the whole work, and so it would be very arbitrary under any conditions to ascribe these poems to this work. But especially is this so since pseudo-Hecateus seems to have a different purpose than the Greek poems. For from the testimony of Origen (Contra Gels, 1.15) that Hecateus was so strong a partisan for the Jewish people that Herennius Philo at first doubted whether the work was indeed the production of Hecateus, it seems that this work was apologetic in character (cf. Schuerer, op.cit. 2.3.305) and not intended to make propaganda. But

INSERT. 1. This would mean that there was propaganda before the rise of Pharisaism.

when Orpheus, Sophocles, Aeschylus and other Greek poets are made to speak of God, His unity, spirituality and supermundane character, of the folly of idolatry, of the different lots of the righteous and the unrighteous and of the comparative value of morality and ritual, and Hesiod Homer and Linus are made to speak of the Sabbath, the probability is that the purpose of the authors of these verses was to influence the heathen to accept monotheism and the Sabbath. Indeed, as I shall show later, there are such striking similarities between these poems and the first fragment of the Proemium of the Sibylline Oracles, not only in ideas but even in phraseology, that it is possible that both come from the same period and were intended to serve the same purpose, namely to convert the heathen to the monotheistic and moral ideas of Judaism.

But even granting that these poems originally were found in the work of pseudo-Hecateus, it is uncertain whether they date from the third pre-Christian century. For Schuerer dates pseudo-Hecateus in this century from the fact that it is already cited by pseudo-Aristeas whom he claims flourished not later than about 200 B.C. (op.cit.



25  
2.3.306). But most scholars differ with Schuerer as to the date of pseudo-Aristeas, which seems to constitute "an almost insoluble problem" (Andrews, in R.H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the O.T., 2.85). The greatest diversity of opinion prevails among scholars, as to its date, Andrews dating it ~~XXXXXX~~ in the first century B.C. and Graetz and Willrich dating it as late as the first century A.D. Since it is so uncertain whether pseudo-Aristeas was written, as Schuerer claims, before the end of the third century B.C., it is equally uncertain whether pseudo-Hecateus, which ante-dates pseudo-Aristeas, was written in the third century B.C.

But even granting that pseudo-Hecateus was written as Schuerer claims in the third century B.C., we would have no certain evidence of the existence of propaganda in the third century B.C. For though these spurious poems seem intended to convert the heathen to monotheistic ideas, pseudo-Hecateus seems to be merely apologetic. If, then, these poems were originally part of pseudo-Hecateus, they, too, must have been intended to serve merely apologetic purposes. And this, indeed, is what Schuerer holds,

(op.cit.2.3.296).

We see, then, that there is no certain evidence in these poems of the existence of propaganda in the third century B.C., for in the first place it is uncertain whether they were originally, as Schuerer claims, a part of pseudo-Hecateus, which he claims was written in the third century B.C.; in the second place it is uncertain whether pseudo-Hecateus was written in the third century B.C.; and in the third place it is uncertain whether these verses, if they were a part of pseudo-Hecateus, were intended to make propaganda.

### III. THE EARLIEST JEWISH SIBYLLINE ORACLES.

And so we come back to the third book of the Sibylline Oracles and the two fragments placed as a Proemium in Friedlieb's edition, as the earliest evidence of which we may speak with certainty, of propaganda in Alexandria. From these portions of the Sibylline Oracles we learn that at some time in the second century B.C. after the beginning of the persecution of the Jews by King Antiochus

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Epiphanes, one or possibly more of the Jews of Alexandria composed or adapted verses to denounce idolatry and recommend monotheism, morality and the Jewish law; these he sent forth under the name and authority of the ancient mysterious prophetess known as the Sibyl, who wielded a great influence on the minds of men. Other Jews soon imitated him in fabricating Sibylla, as did later the Christians.

1. The collection of Sibylline Oracles which we have to-day is a chaotic wilderness, to sift and arrange, which will ever baffle the most accurate criticism. This confusion is due mainly to two causes. In the first place, every reader and writer allowed himself to complete what existed after his own pleasure, and to arrange the scattered papers now in one, now in an opposite manner. In the second place, the unknown Byzantine writer who collected the great bulk of the Sibylline Oracles, arranged them according to "similarity of subject", as he himself says in his preface (v. Friedlieb's edition, part 2, pp II-IV).

Such being the confusion of the Sibylline Oracles, it is not always possible to distinguish with certainty between those of an earlier and those of a later date, and it is only with respect to single and comparatively small portions that we can ever pass a certain judgment. Yet all scholars agree that the most ancient and certainly Jewish portions are contained in the third book and the Proemium of the Sibylline Oracles. Gfroerer, Luecke, Friedlieb and Alexandre date these portions as early as the time of the Maccabees, i.e., 170-160 B.C. Ewald on the other hand, dates them as late as 134 B.C. Hilgenfeld, Schuerer and Lanchester ascribe an intermediate date, -- about 140 B.C.

Thus the ancient Sibyll was made to address the heathen in Greek hexameters, to announce herself as the great God's prophetess and the daughter of Noah (Sib. 3.817, 826), to narrate the history of the past, (11.97-161) and make prophecies concerning the future (126-807). But this is only the external form, of this third book of the Sibylline Oracles, in reality these oracles denounce idolatry and its vices, and preach monotheism, morality and the Jewish Law. The Sibyll continually condemns idolatry in terms of unmeasured scorn: the heathen gods are nothing, lifeless and powerless, mere delusions of the mind of man; God is one Being, invisible, self sprung, without beginning and without end. They who worship idols will be visited with fire punishment, unless they repent, renounce idolatry and worship God:

"All the well-made walls of evil minded men  
 Shall fall to the ground, because they recognized not the Law  
 Nor the judgemnet of the Great God. But with  
 senseless mind,  
 Rushing, ye all raised spears against the Temple.  
 And God shall judge all by the sword.  
 By fire and flooding rain. There shall be  
 Sulphur from heaven, stones and hail" (Sib. 3.85f).

Indeed one oracle threatens the heathens that since

"You will not sober and return to a right mind  
 And know God, the King, the All-Seeing One,  
 Therefore the glowing fire shall be your portion  
 You shall turn increasingly through eternity,  
 Ashamed of your false and useless idols".  
 (Proem 2.41 f).

But not only do these oracles denounce idolatry and preach monotheism, they also exhort the heathen to convert to Judaism, at times, as we shall show in the next chapter, to all its ritualistic customs, at times only to its monotheistic and moral doctrines. Thus the Sibyl exhorts Greece: "Serve the Great God that thou mayest partake of these things". (Sib. 3.732). Again the ~~XXXXXX~~ Sibyll exhorts the heathen to convert and accept "the light":

"Stop heedless ones,  
Roaming in darkness and rayless night gloom,  
And leave the darkness of night. Accept the  
  light;  
Come, do not forever seek darkness and the  
  Underworld;  
See how cheering are the beams of the sun".  
(Proem 1.25f)

Still other verses which we shall quote later, exhort the heathen to "serve the Living (God)", (Sib. 3.762f) and "to sacrifice to God hundreds of bulls" etc. (Sib. 3.624 f).

It seems then, that the purpose of the early Jewish Sibylline Oracles was to convert the heathen to ~~NEW~~ Judaism. But since the Sibylline Oracles exist in such a state of confusion that it is often impossible to be absolutely certain of the date of origin of certain parts we shall add some external evidence showing that the Jews of the second century

B.C. were eager to make propaganda, and thus re-enforcing the internal evidence of the Sibylline Oracles themselves.

#### IV. CORROBORATING EVIDENCE.

We learn from Valerius Maximus (1.3.2.) that in the consulate of Popilius Laenas and L. Calpurnius Piso (i.e. 139 B.C.), the praetor Hispalus expelled (or according to another version "compelled to go home") the Jews who tried to convert the Romans to their religion, (according to the other version: the cult of "Sabazius Jovis"; Sabazius is manifestly in place of "Zebaoth", one of the Hebrew names or attributes of the deity). Schuerer (op.cit.1.1.268; 2.2.233; cf. also in Hastings's Dict. of the Bible, extra vol. p.97), claims that the religious propaganda referred to was the work of parties in the train of the embassy sent by Simon Macabeus in the year 140-139 B.C. (according to I Mac.14,24; 15.15f; cf. also Josephus' account Ant.14.8.5 of a decree of the senate during the reign of Hyrcanus III, which Ewald, Grimm, Mendelssohn and Schuerer claim really refers to the one made in Simon's reign). Schuerer's claim is of course mere conjecture,

and is in no way substantiated. There is no hint in either I Mac. or Josephus of proselytizing activity on the part of the embassy. Why then attribute it to that small body of men? But whether or not Schuerer is correct, the fact remains that we have a report from Valerius Maximus that in the year 139 B.C., some Jews tried to make proselytes in Rome.

Yet a single statement of this kind, unsupported by other evidence, is not conclusive. We shall, therefore, give other evidence. We learn <sup>from Josephus (Ant. 13. 9. 1; 15</sup> 7.9; B.J. (I.2.6.) that when John Hyrcannus conquered the Idumeans (about ~~125~~ 125 B.C.) he compelled them to receive the Jewish law and to have all the males circumcised. Aristobulus Judaized the Itureans in the same way when he conquered them about 105 B.C. (Ant. 13. 11. 3).

We see from this that active propaganda was conducted by the Jews as early as 139 B.C., about the time when the earliest Jewish Sibylline Oracles were forged (according to such scholars as Hilgenfeld, Schuerer and Lanchester), or, if the statement of Valerius Maximus be open to suspicion, at least as early as about 125 B.C. With such independent evidence proving that active religious propaganda was being extended about the time the Sibyllines were

fabricated, we have no reason to doubt that these oracles were intended to exhort the heathen to convert, or that they were fabricated in the second century B.C.

Having established the fact that the earliest Jewish Sibylline Oracles were intended to make propaganda, let us now see what kind of propaganda they were intended to make.

#### V. THE KIND OF PROPAGANDA EXTENDED.

We find that some oracles intended to convert the heathen completely to Judaism. Thus the Sibyllist conceives that in the messianic age--

"There shall again be a sacred race of God-fearing  
men  
Attentive to the counsels and mind of the Most  
High,  
Who shall pay honors round the Temple of the great  
God  
With sacrifices of well-fed bulls and unmarred  
rams,  
Offering fat flocks of firstling sheep and lambs  
As whole burnt-offerings in holiness on the great  
altar.  
Righteously accepting the Law of the Most High,  
The blessed shall inhabit cities and rich fields",  
(Sib.3.573 f).

That this sacred race of God-fearing men of the future includes the heathen is specifically declared:

"Men shall hymn with sweet voices:  
Come let us bow to the earth, let us invoke  
The Immortal King, the Great God, the Most High,  
Let us send to his Temple, for he is the only Po-  
tentate.  
Let us consider the Law of God, the Most High,



Who is the most just of all on earth.  
 We had wandered from the path of the Immortal;  
 With senseless minds we worshiped hand-made works  
 Of carved idols and of dead men." (Sib.3.715 f)

Again does the Sibyllist declare that the heathen will  
 accept the Law:

"And thus He will establish an eternal Kingdom  
 Over men; a holy law which He once gave  
 To all God-fearing men..." (Sib.3.776f)

But not only does the Sibyllist look for the  
 heathen to accept the law in the Messianic future, he  
 also exhorts them to do so at once, accounting it for a  
 sin that God will punish that they do not so:

"You have the reward which your folly deserves,  
 Since neglecting the true, eternal God  
 To honor and sacrifice holy hecatombs to Him  
 You perform your sacrifice to demons in Hades."  
 (Proem 1.19 f)

And again:

"All the well-made walls of evil-minded men,  
 Shall fall to the ground, because they recognized  
 not the Law  
 Nor the judgement of the Great God." (Sib.3.685f)

To escape this punishment he exhorts them to repent at  
 once and offer sacrifices to God: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

"But thou, O man of wiles, tarry not with hesitation,  
 but turning round again, make intercession to God.  
Sacrifice to God hundreds of bulls and firstling  
 lambs, and of goats in the circling seasons"  
 (Sib.3.624f).

But on the other hand other passages seem to



Eternal will surely be wroth with him who commits these sins"(Sib.3.762f).

Some scholars claim that the omission of all mention of the law is due to the fact that the Jews who forged the Sibylline Oracles feared that their pseudonymity might be suspected and thus their influence be lost on the heathen whom they wished to convert, but that in reality there were no proselytes save those that accepted the whole law. We shall not discuss this latter contention in this place, except to as its relation to the former assumption. But the contention that those oracles which omit all mention of the law only do so through compromise with circumstances or more specifically, that their pseudonymity may not be suspected and their influence thus be lost on the heathen, is thoroughly disproved by the fact that some oracles do make mention of the law.

But even granting that the authors of such oracles compromise with the heathen, the fact remains that they consider morality of more importance than ritual, or they would not make such a compromise. On the other hand the authors of those oracles which exhort the heathen to accept the Law consider ritual of

more importance than morality. For though the acceptance of the Law involves the practice both of ritual and of morality, the authors of these oracles exhort the heathen to sacrifice to God, even at the risk of betraying their pseudonymity, and do not exhort the heathen to practice morality, even though this would involve no such risk.

#### VI. TWO KINDS OF PROPAGANDA.

H. Maldwyn Hughes (in his extensive treatment of "The Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature", p. 62) says that the Moral Ideal of the third book of the Sibylline Oracles "is realized in the service of the one true God". Later he says that to Israel "has been given the law, which is the embodiment of the Moral Ideal, (Sib. 3.256f, 768)". But these two ideas cannot be harmonized or reduced to each other; they represent two different Moral Ideals: the one moral Ideal being the recognition of God and the practice of morality, the other moral Ideal being the practice of the Law given to Israel. Both moral ideals cannot have been posited by the same man: the Sibyllist who was concerned only with the essence, as it were of Judaism, namely monotheism and mor-

ality, surely did not fabricate the oracles which place great emphasis on the formal side of Judaism, the observance of the Law.

Thus we have evidence of two kinds of propaganda conducted by the Jews of Alexandria in the second century B.C., the one being the expression of a desire to influence the heathen to renounce idolatry and its pagan vices, and to accept monotheism and morality, in short, to gain semi-proselytes, the other being the manifestation of the desire to gain full proselytes, to convert the heathen Greeks into full Jews who will observe the formal, ritualistic and legalistic requirements of Judaism as well as its ethical precepts. But since the Sibylline Oracles exist in such a state of confusion that it is often impossible to be absolutely certain of some oracles, let us substantiate the evidence furnished by these oracles.

#### VII. FULL PROSELYTES.

First, then, as to full proselytes. We know that in Palastine, when John Hyrcanus judaized the Idumeans and Aristobulus judaized the Itureans, they compelled them to accept the law and to have all the males circumcized. But did any of the Jews of Alexandria insist on converts accepting the law?

We learn from the second book of the Maccabees, written by an Alexandrian Jew, that some of the Jews of Alexandria belonged to the orthodox school of thought. For the author of this book never wearies extolling the Temple (2.19; 3.12; 5.14; 14.31; 15.18; et al). And indeed he is so thoroughly a Hasidic or Essenic Pharisee that he does not approve of fighting on the Sabbath even in the defense of life. This establishes the presumption that if some of the Jews zealous for propaganda have such a regard for the Law, they will demand that the proselytes accept the Law. Is there any evidence to substantiate this presumption?

We seem to find evidence to this effect in the Letter of Aristeas. This writing purports to have been written about the middle of the third century B.C. by one Aristeas, a high official in the service of Ptolemy Philadelphus II, king of Egypt, to his brother, telling of the miraculous translation of the Mosaic law into Greek, describing the town of Jerusalem, the Jewish Temple, the Jewish worship and in general the land, which he had himself seen, and giving him the purport of a conversation he had carried on with the high priest Eleazar, concerning the Jewish law and of the

wonderful answers which the Jewish scholars made off-hand to the multitude of questions propounded by the king, on the most important matters of politics, ethics, philosophy and prudence. But this is only the external form: the whole is in truth a panegyric upon Jewish wisdom, Jewish law and the Jewish name in general, written by an Alexandrian Jew and ascribed by him to the heathen Aristeeas that it should have weight with the heathen. It is very difficult from the nature of the letter, to determine whether its author, (or authors, for possibly the section on the law, 138-171 comes from a different author than the rest, as Andrews claims in R.H. Charles op.cit.) intended merely to create a favorable disposition towards Judaism and the Jewish law, as Schuerer claims, (op.cit. 2.3.371) or intended to make religious propaganda or at least to induce the heathen to read this wonderful translation of a wonderful book written by a wonderful people. At any rate its choice of pseudonymic form shows that it was designed for heathen readers and so the great emphasis upon the law shows that at least some of the Alexandrian Jews wished to recommend ritualistic Judaism to the heathen.

But though we have this splendid evidence, we cannot establish its date except within very wide limits.

*There evidence  
and Book  
Macc.  
Isophrase  
of fullness.*  
 its. For, as we have mentioned before, "the date of the  
 Epistle constitutes an almost insoluble problem", the  
 greatest diversity of opinion prevailing among scholars  
 Schuerer dating it as early as the third century B.C.  
 and Graetz and Willrich as late as the first century  
 A.D. Thus we can only say, on the evidence of the Let-  
 ter of Aristaeas, that at some time in Alexandria the  
 Jews wished to recommend ritualistic Judaism to the  
 heathen, if not for propaganda, at least for favorable  
 consideration.

Fortunately, however, we have other evidence  
 beside the Letter of Aristaeas. The septuagint to Esther  
 8.17 translates מְרַבֵּי הָעָם ("many of the people of the  
 land judaized") by "circumcized", which shows that the  
 Alexandrian Jew who translated this book into Greek  
 conceived of conversion as involving circumcision.  
 When, then, was the book of Esther translated into Greek?  
 A footnote to the Greek translation of this book seems  
 to show that it was in circulation before the end of  
 the second century B.C. (Richard Gotheil in J.E. "Bible  
 translations"). Yet Zunz dates the original book of  
 Esther at about 30 B.C., and though others date it much  
 earlier (Reuss, Graetz and Block at 167 B.C., Kuenen and  
 Cornill at 165 B.C. and Hitzig at some time after 238





exhorts the heathen to assume the yoke of the Law) is by itself insufficient, yet combined they constitute evidence fully corroborating the testimony of those Sibylla which show that in the second century B.C., some of the Jews of Alexandria were fired with zeal to convert the heathen <sup>fully</sup> to Judaism.

# VIII. SEMI-PROSELYTES.

Second, as to semi-proselytes: is there any evidence to corroborate the testimony of those Sibylla which exhort the heathen to renounce idolatry and its vices, and to accept monotheism and its morality, that some of the <sup>Alexandrian</sup> Jews of the second century B.C. wished to convert the heathen to the lofty truths of Judaism divorced from the ritualistic requirements of that faith?

In the works of Alexander Polyhistor, Eusebius and Clemens Alexandrinus are found fragments alleged to have been written by a certain Artapanus. The manifest invention of these fragments to glorify the Jewish people establishes beyond doubt that the author was an Alexandrian Jew. Beyond this, however,

these fragments remain in many respects a puzzle. For according to this author the sanctuaries at Athos and Heliopolis were founded by Jacob and his sons, (23.4) and the consecration of the Ibis and of Apis was prescribed by Moses (27.9,12). Yet the author is not a polytheist as can be seen from the fact that he says that Moses divided Egypt into thirt-six provinces, and commanded each province to worship God. Freudenthal (Alexander Polyhistor.149 f) has suggested that Artapanus is a pseudonym adopted by some Alexandrian Jew who wished to be taken for an Egyptian priest, that his writings might have weight among the Egyptians. Schuerer claims that this explanation is surely incorrect. But whether Artapanus was a pseudonym or the author's actual name, the fact remains that an Alexandrian Jew before the time of Alexander Polyhistor, who lived about the years 80--40 B.C., (according to the lexicon of Suidas and the De Gramm. of Suetonius) represented Moses as the founder of Egyptian rites, which he surely never would have done if he had been an observer of ritualistic Judaism, thus showing that at the latest in the beginning of the first century B.C. some of the Jews of Alexandria had either eliminated the ritualistic elements of Judaism or sub-

ordinated them to the intellectual elements, as Artapanus, for example eliminated the ritualistic elements of Judaism or at least subordinated them to the idea of the unity of God. This I believe establishes the presumption that some of the Alexandrian Jews who wished to gain proselytes are adherents of this type of Judaism, they will not demand of such proselytes that they accept the whole law or all of the ritualistic requirements of Judaism. Is there any evidence to establish this presumption?

WE possess to-day a didactic poem of over 200 hexameters assuming to be the product of Phocylides of Miletus, and yet most paradoxically speaking of the one God, and giving moral instruction of the most diversified kind, coinciding most closely with the Old Testament, especially with the Pentateuch. The problem of the authorship of this poem was first seen and solved by Jacob Bernays. He showed that the poem was written by a hellenistic Jew who assumed the name of the heathen bard ("Ueber das Phokylideische Gedicht" 1856), Harnack claims that the author was not a Jew but a Christian, (Theol. Literaturzeitung 1885, p. 160) basing

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his view mainly on verse 104 which expresses a specifically Christian view. But single expressions or propositions in this poem which betray a Christian hand must be attributed to Christian interpolaters, and how freely they dealt with the text is seen in the portion of this poem, (5-79) which by chance has been preserved in the Sibyllines (2.56-148) where it diverges very much from the text and plainly shows the hand of a Christian reviser, (Schuerer, op.cit.2.3.314). For there is no kind of reference in this poem to Jesus, or to the Christ, and what is more significant, the author's moral teaching coincides only with the Old Testament, and betrays no influence of the moral legislation of the New Testament. "This", says Schuerer, "is scarcely conceivable in a Christian author who means to preach morality," (op.cit.2.3.314).

This poem written by a Hellenistic Jew for heathen readers, preaches the laws which the rabbis held are binding on all the sons of Noah, i.e., on all mankind, (Krause in *Revue des Etudes Juives* 47.32). Thus he remonstrates against idolatry, (Sib.2.59) the eating of blood (Sib.2.96) and of the flesh of animals killed by beasts of prey, (Phocyl.139,147), murder (Sib.2.97) etc.. But the great bulk of the poem is a

series of moral precepts on injustice, truth, chastity, honesty, charity and other virtues of social life, on which the author manifestly places the greatest emphasis.

Thus the poem of pseudo-Phocylides substantiates to ~~xxx~~ some extent the presumption established by the fragments of Artapanus, namely that some of the Alexandrian Jews wished to convert the heathen to the intellectual and moral ideas of Judaism without demanding the observance of its ritualistic requirements, for the author of pseudo-Phocylides, eager to influence the heathen, does not preach the Jewish ceremonial law and omits even the Sabbatic command, which is very striking because the author in other ~~aspects~~ respects, enters into the details of the Mosaic law (Schuerer op.cit.2.3.314).

Unfortunately, however the date of pseudo-Phocylides cannot be established except within very wide limits. It could hardly have been written after the first century C.E., but whether it was written in this century or ~~xxx~~ in the two centuries preceding, cannot be determined. For this reason the evidence furnished by this poem, if it is ~~said~~ to have any weight, must be reenforced by other evidence.

This evidence, I believe is furnished by the poems forged in the name of the ancient Greek poets. The date of these poems cannot be fixed except within very general limits. Since they bear no marks of Christian peculiarities (with the possible exception of the fifth line of the long poem ascribed to Orpheus, which identifies the "logos" with the divine teaching (Cohortatio ad Graecos 15 et al.), they can hardly be of later date than the first century C.E. Some of these verses are said, by Eusebius, to have been quoted by the Hellenistic philosopher Aristobulus, who probably lived towards the middle of the second century B.C. (though statements of the ancients do not entirely agree as to his date: v. Schuerer, op. cit. 2.3.237). But such scholars as Richard Simon, Hody, Eichorn, Kuenen, Graetz and Joel have disputed the genuineness of the whole work of Aristobulus mainly because of these poems. At any rate I have discovered that there are striking similarities between some of these poems and the first fragment of the Proemium of the Sibylline Oracles, not only in ideas but even in phraseology:

I. Pseudo-Philemon says:

"Do you think, O Nicostratus, that the dead,  
After luxuriating during life,

Are concealed by the earth, so that from now to e-  
ternity  
They escape the divine power by concealment?  
There is an eye of retribution which sees all  
things."

(DE Monarchia 3; et al.),

and the Sibyllist expresses practically the same thought  
in these words:

"Mortals, men of flesh who are as nothing,  
Why so prompt at self-exaltation, not looking to  
the end of life.  
Do not tremble nor fear God you overseer,  
The Highest Observer, - All Seeing Witness of all  
things."

(Proem 1.1 f)

II. Pseudo-Sophocles says:

"One truly, but One is God" (Cohortatio ad  
Graecos 18; et al) and the Sibyllist says: "There is  
one God, who is Alone" (Proem 1.7).

III. Pseudo-Orpheus declares that "no mortal vision per-  
ceives Him, but He sees all" (Cohortatio ad Graecos 15  
et al and pseudo-Philemon says that God "sees all  
things and is Himself invisible" (De Monarchia 2; et al).  
The Sibyllist describes God as "Ruler of all, Invisible,  
seeing all things but unseen by fleshy mortals" (Proem  
1.8).

IV. Pseudo-Orpheus says "One is self-born". The Sibyllist  
too, describes God as "self-born" (Proem 1.17).

V. Pseudo-Sophocles says:



"One in very truth, God is One  
 Who made heaven and the broad earth,  
 The sea's sparkling billow and the violence of  
winds"

and the Sibyllist declares that

"There is One God who sends rain, winds, and earth-  
 quakes  
 Lightnings, famines, plagues and bitter sorrow  
 Snow storms and hail. Shall I say it in one word?  
 He guides heaven and governs earth. He is the  
 ruler" (Proem 1.32 f).

VI. Pseudo-Orpheus says

"He besides good, sends evil to mortals  
 Both bloody war and lamentable sufferings"

and the Sibyllist expresses the same thought:

"There is one God, who sends rain, winds and earth-  
 quakes  
 Lightnings, famines, plagues and bitter sorrows"  
 Proem 1.32)

I believe that these similarities justify  
 the conclusion that these poems come from the same  
 period as the first fragment of the Proemium of the  
 Sibylline Oracles, (which most scholars date in the sec-  
 ond century B.C., at about the ~~IXIX~~ same time as the  
 bulk of the oracles in the third book of the Sibyl-  
 lines) and were intended to serve the same purpose,  
 namely, under the guise of heathen authority, to con-  
 vert the heathen to the monotheistic and moral ideas  
 of Judaism.

These poems, then, are additional evidence to substantiate the theory that in the second century B.C., some of the Alexandrian Jews wished to convert the <sup>heathens</sup> ~~Jews~~ to the monotheistic and moral truths of Judaism divorced from the ritualistic demands of Judaism. For these poems (excepting those on the Sabbath ascribed to Hesiod Homer and Linus) make no mention of the ritualistic demands of Judaism. The greatest stress is placed on the unity, spirituality, omniscience and retribution of God. Indeed one of the poems, (ascribed by De Monarchia to Philemon, but by Clemens Alexandrinus to Menander) denies the value of sacrifice and proclaims the value of morality, saying that if anyone, by offering sacrifices,

"Thinks to make God well disposed,  
He deceives himself and has a frivolous mind.  
Man should make himself profitable,  
Neither corrupting virgins or married women,  
Not stealing and not killing for gain,  
Nor looking with desire on another's,  
Whether on his wife or costly house....etc.  
Sacrifice to God by observing constant justice"  
(De Monarchia 4; et al).

The evidence furnished in different degrees of certainty by Artapanus, pseudo-Phokylides and the poetic forgeries ascribed to ancient Greek poets, (though independently somewhat uncertain) in combin-

ation substantiate beyond question the reliability of the evidence furnished by those oracles of the third book of the Sibylline Oracles which show that in the second century B.C. some of the Alexandrian Jews, were zealous to convert the heathen to the monotheistic and moral principles of Judaism, without demanding the observance of the ritualistic requirements. Such semi-proselytes are a Pharisaic institution; v. my first chapter, pp. 6, 10; and have a status in the Jewish law, v. my fourth chapter.

#### IX. SUMMARY.

To summarize, we have established these points as to the beginnings of propaganda in the diaspora:

1. The great movement for propaganda in the diaspora began in the second century B.C., after the beginning of the persecution of the Jews by King Antiochus Epiphanus, i.e., not before the development of ~~the~~ Hasidism

2. The Alexandrian Jews in their zeal to convert and influence the heathen, forged oracles and poems in the name of heathen authorities of antiquity. Though there may be various degrees of doubt in such works as pseudo-Aristeas, pseudo-Phokylides and the poetic forgeries, as to whether the purpose was to win propaganda

or merely to serve

as apologetic for Judaism and the Jews, there is no such doubt in the case of the Sibylline Oracles, which were written under the name and authority of the Sibyl in order to convert the heathen.

3. The Alexandrian Jews strove to <sup>Extend</sup> ~~was~~ two kinds of ~~propaganda~~ <sup>propaganda</sup>. Some of the Alexandrian Jews endeavored to win full-proselytes, those who would observe all the ritualistic as well as moral requirements of Judaism. Others strove to convert the heathen to the monotheistic and moral principles of Judaism as divorced from the ritualistic ~~requirements~~ observances.

## CHAPTER III.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF PROPAGANDA AT ALEXANDRIA.

The movement for propaganda begun in Alexandria in the second century B.C. undoubtedly continued, if it did not increase, in strength, through the first century of the common era. It is possible that some of the pseudonymous writings already mentioned were fabricated during the first century B.C. It is also possible that other compositions which denounce idolatry, as for example the Epistle of Jeremy, the History of the Destruction of Bel and the Dragon, and the Prayer of Manasse, were fabricated with the intention of winning propaganda among the heathens. This, however, must remain mere conjecture. But we do know that Sibylla were fabricated during the first century B.C. Thus most of verses 36-92 of the third book of the Sibylline Oracles was fabricated by an Alexandrian Jew at the time of the first triumvirate, i.e. 40-30 B.C.<sup>I</sup>

1. So Bleek, Gfroerer, Luecke, Friedlieb, Hilgenfeld, Reuss Larocque (at least for verses 36-52), Wittichen and Schuerer. Badt dates this section at 25 B.C. Alexandre and Ewald claim that the author was a Christian.

## I. A LATER SIBYLLINE ORACLE.

This section consists of a cry of woe to the wicked race which is full of crimes, and then gives utterance to the prophecy that "When Rome shall rule over Egypt also", then will begin the rule of the Messianic King and the Judgement of destruction. This judgement will be God's punishment for idolatry:

"But at present go on building, o cities, ornament  
yourselves all  
With Temples and stadiums, market places and gold  
images,  
With silver and stone ones, that you may come to  
the bitter day". (Sib. 3.55f)

It was probably during the first century B.C. (as we shall later show) that some Alexandrian Jew wrote the almost unknown book of Asenath, which strangely, indeed, has left no trace in either rabbinical or patristic literature and is omitted from most collections of the apocrypha, probably through ignorance of its existence.

## II. THE BOOK OF ASENATH.

The first and main part of this Jewish apocrypha is a novel or possibly a romance dealing with the conversion to Judaism of Asenath, the daughter of Penephres, priest of Heliopolis, and her subsequent marriage to Joseph. Asenath is first presented to us as a worshiper of idols.<sup>1</sup> But on seeing Joseph, she falls

in love with him, and at his refusal to reciprocate her love because she is a heathen, she spends eight days in fasting and penance, and does other things which we shall later enumerate in detail. Finally exhausted, she supplicates God to have pity on her, and to stretch forth His arms as a loving father and take her to His bosom as she flees to Him like a little child in fear. On the morning of the eighth day an angel tells her to wash and announces that from that day on she should be reborn (of the talmudic dictum: the proselyte is like a new-born babe"). Asenath then washes her face upon which her whole being is so transformed that Joseph does not recognize her. After this, of course, they are

1. My information as to the book of Asenath is based mainly on Dr. Kohler's article in the Jewish Encyclopedia and his unpublished English translation, which he kindly lent me.

2. This mystical idea of rebirth caused by washing the face, is I believe without doubt, eclectic. The book of Kings tells us that after Naaman, the proselyte, dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean". (2Ki. 5.14) This mystical idea is later voiced in the doctrine that the proselyte becomes a "new creature" (Gen. R39), and "like a new-born babe" (Yeb. 48b): cf. K. Kohler, in the Jewish Encyclopedia, articles "Baptism" and "Birth, New". But nowhere in Jewish literature is there a trace of the idea of washing the face, as Asenath does. This I am convinced is based on the idea posited by one of the early Greek schools of philosophy that the face is the seat of the soul.

married. Then follows a series of legends about the sons of Jacob.

This romance was without doubt intended to win over the heathen to Judaism. Asenath is portrayed as the type of a true proselyte: She renounces her idolatry, makes penance for her former sins, and in humility flees (as her name by the transposition of letters implies; i.e., NO, she fled) to take refuge with God as a little child with her father.

But the greatest value of the book of Asenath for us, is the information we may be able to derive as to the requirements which the Alexandrian Jews made of those heathen who wished to convert to Judaism. Asenath, the model proselyte, proceeded in this wise when she wished to convert to Judaism:

1. She spent eight days in fasting and penance.
2. She gave her costly robes and jewelry to the poor to be sold for their needs.
3. She destroyed her idols.
4. She prayed to God in repentance and humility and implored His protection.
5. She washed her face with pure water from the well.

It is very difficult to determine how far the



writer. idealized Asenath, the model proselyte, as doing more than was actually required from proselytes. But it seems quite probable that the proselyte was expected, at <sup>a</sup>least in some Alexandrian circles, to do penance by fasting, and judging from the related practice of baptism, to enter Judaism formally by washing the face, or more probably immersing the whole body in living water. As to the circumcision of the males, we of course have no means of judging from the book of Asenath, whether this was demanded.

But does it not seem peculiar that despite the Mishnaic law, which is presupposed as being of long standing, that the candidate for conversion must offer up a sacrifice (Keritob 2.1), there is no mention of this act in the book of Asenath? It may not be inferred that this shows the book to have been written after the destruction of the Temple, for as we shall ~~MM~~ later show, the offering of the proselyt's sacrifice was not abolished for a considerable time after the destruction of the Temple but was converted, by Johanan ben Zakkai, (as Graetz shows) into the practice of setting aside a coin for the purchase of such a

sacrifice should the Temple be rebuilt. It is possible though that this omission of the sacrifice is due to the realism of the author who knew that there was no Temple when Asenath lived. And it is also possible that the omission of the sacrifice shows the influence of essenism and that there are traces of essenism in the book of Asenath has been pointed out by Dr. Kohler in connection with the prayer made by Asenath after her eight days of fasting. But I believe that the sacrifice is not omitted because of essenic doctrine, but because the offering of the sacrifice was never a condition of conversion, i.e. that conversion to Judaism was never dependent on the offering of a sacrifice (v. infra Chapter 4.section3).

Now to consider the date. There is no reference to this book, either in talmudic<sup>1</sup> or patristic literature.

NOTE            1. R. Abin mentions Asenath as a proselyte in Kohelet Raba to 8.16 but he does not mention the book or tell the story.

Josephus possibly ~~portrays~~ <sup>depicts</sup> that he has read the book of Asenath or knows the story, for though the book of Genesis narrates simply "And Pharaoh...gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Potiphra, priest of On". (Gen. 41.45) Josephus in narrating Joseph's marriage says: "He (Joseph) also married a wife of very high quality; for he married the daughter of Petephres, one of the priests of Heliopolis; she was a virgin and her name was Asenath". (Ant. 2.6.1) Thus Josephus adds two points to the biblical narrative, first that she was of very high quality, and second that she was a virgin; and both of these points are emphasized in the book of Asenath. Yet Josephus does not mention that she was a proselyte, and so it must remain a question whether or not he knew this story.

But it is probable that the book of Asenath ante-dates the first century of the common era, for there is no mention of Asenath having been instructed in the principal laws or ideas of Judaism, and it is probable as we shall show later, that this practice was in use among the Alexandrian Jews at least by the first century of the Christian era. At any rate it is very unlikely that the book of Asenath was written after the first century of the Christian era.

But whatever the date, the book of Asenath shows not only the zeal with which the Jews of Alexandria strove to make propaganda but also the kindly reception given the proselyte to Judaism. Joseph the Jew prayed to God that He should bring Asenath "from darkness to light". All she was required to do was to show penitence for her past idolatrous life and then seal her covenant with God, by the ceremony of washing her face. She was in no way deterred or warned of the hardships involved in the observance of the Law, as was later required by Talmudic law, nor was she encouraged to disparage parents, children and brothers, as Tacitus maliciously claims (Hist. 5.8), in perversion of the legal aspect of the status of the proselyte in Judaism. And after the simple ceremony of washing the face she became transformed, a full Jewess with no disabilities, fit to become the wife even of Joseph, the patriarch of one of the twelve tribes.

It was probably after the book of Asenath was written, that the practice was introduced among the Alexandrian Jews of instructing the candidates for entrance into Judaism, in the principal teachings of the faith.

For we read in the New Testament (Acts 18.24) that after Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome (Acts 18.1,2; Suetonius, "Claudius", ch.25) which was about the year 52, "a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus.. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord". There can be no doubt that Apollos, though he is called a Jew, was a proselyte, for he is called "an Alexandrian by race". Consequently we learn that as early as the first half of the first century of the common era it was customary to instruct proselytes to Judaism "in the way of the Lord". This inference is supported by a Baraita which gives rules as to the reception of proselytes הַנִּזְוֵי בְּיָמֵינוּ (in the present time; Yeb. 47a), thus implying that before the destruction of the Temple there were other rules concerning the reception of proselytes. (cf. K. Kohler in J.E., "Didache",)

### III. THE DIDACHE.

We possess to-day an early Christian manual of instruction for proselytes called "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles". As early as 1886, it was shown by Charles Taylor (in his "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles"), that the first six chapters of this manual were originally part of a Jewish manual of instruction for the reception of the proselytes which was later:

altered and amplified by the early Christians, ascribed to Jesus and the Apostles, and adopted as a Christian manual. Dr. Kohler showed further that this Didache — "Teaching" as it was originally called, corresponded probably with the Hilkot Gerim, (Rules concerning Proselytes) referred to in Ruth R.I.7 under the direction of Naomi. This disposes completely of Hoenicke's contention that in Jewish literature there is no sure testimony of such instructions concerning proselytes (Das Juden Christenthum 273).

Dr. Kohler points out four distinguishing features of the Didache, which at the same time prove that this composition cannot have been made originally by Christians but only by Jews:

In the first place the Didache is characterized by the teaching of the two ways, epitomized in the first two sentences: There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and wide is the difference between. The way of life is this: First thou shalt love God thy Maker (after Deut.6.5); second thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (after Lev.19.18). This teaching of the two

ways run as a leading thought throughout Jewish literature (for references of K.Kohler, in J.E., "Didache"). It was especially emphasized in the preaching to the Gentiles, who were to be won over to the right way, appearing in the earliest Sibylline Oracles (Proem 24; 3.233, 721), as well as in later ones (Sib.3.II; 8.399).

In the second place the Didache states the golden rule, according to the traditional Jewish version, namely negatively, and not positively as the New Testament does (Matt.7.12; et al). It is in this negative form that Hillel (and Akiba) taught it to the proselyte, as the chief commandment of the Law (Sab. 31b; et al).

In the third place the Didache uses the Decalogue as the exponent of ethics in its twofold aspect: duty to God, and duty to man. Dr.Kohler points out that the Didache is in its present shape, greatly disarranged: originally it contained a systematic exposition of the ten commandments. This is in accord with ancient Jewish theology, which considered the Decalogue and the Shema as the fundamental elements of Judaism. The Mishna tells us what they were re-

cited every morning in the Temple. (Tamid 5.1)

In the fourth place the Didache is characterized by its accentuation of the lighter sins and lighter duties, as leading to graver ones. This Dr. Kohler points out, is the very essence of the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law, epitomized by the dictum: "Make a fence around the Law (Ab.R.N.2, ed. Schechter, pp 8,9,12) The later Halakah also requires that the proselyte be taught some of the lighter and some of the graver commandments (Yeb.47a).

Chapters 7-16 also show dependence on Jewish custom, though it is impossible to tell whether these rules concerning baptism, prayer and thanksgiving were contained in the original Didache and altered by the Christians in accordance with their ideas, or were composed in the first place by the Christians (For the evidence supporting the former hypothesis, see K.Kohler in J.E., Didache.

At any rate there is no doubt that chapters 1-6 of the Didache originally constituted part of a Jewish proselytes' manual. And should there be any



doubt of this, it must be dispelled by an examination of the first thirty-two chapters of the seventh book of the Apostolic Constitutions, which contain a version of the Didache which rests upon a more complete Jewish original than the one discovered by Bryen-  
nois. As Dr. Kohler points out, (in J.E., Didache<sup>scat</sup>), its whole tenor is characteristically Jewish, in so far as it has each single precept or sentence based upon some scriptural verse: noteworthy in this connection is the fact that the precept "If any one strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also", is based not on Matthew 5.39 but on Psalm 7.5 (A.V.4)

We see, then, that sometime in the first century B.C., or in the first half of the first century C.E., as we have shown before, the Jews of Alexandria composed a Didache or "Teaching" to be used in the instruction of proselytes to Judaism. And what is

significant about this Didache is that al-  
though it distinguishes between <sup>semi and</sup> full proselytes, I

I. "If thou wilt be able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou wilt be perfect; if not do what

it offers its instructions to both, showing that both have a status in Judaism.

It was prob ably not much later than the composition of the Bidache that some Alexandrian or Egyptian Jew wrote the Slavonic Book of Enoch.

(R.H.Charles dates it between the years I -50 C.C.: op.cit.3. 429 )

#### IV. THE SLAVONIC BOOK OF ENOCH.

This book alleges to be a spiritual legacy left by Enoch to his children. This legacy is a revelation regarding the divine mysteries seen by Enoch in heaven. But this revelation is only the external form: the main purpose of the book is to preach the fear of God and its implications. Thus Enoch exhorts his sons: "And now ,my children, preserve your souls from all unrighteousness, which the Lord hates .Walk before his face with fear and trembling and serve Him alone. Worship the true God and not

thou canst. And concerning food, what thou art able, bear; but of that which is sacrificed to idols, beware greatly; for it is a service of dead gods." (6.2) This is additional evidence supporting my theory yhat the Alexandrian Jews recognized ~~the~~ two kinds of prosekyaes, full and semi.

dumb idols".(66.1f) Against idolatry and immorality Enoch utters the most bitter condemnation (2.2;10.1f; 34.1f;ch 47;66.1f;et al) and describes the terrible place and tortures reserved in heaven "for the dishonest,that work godless things on earth,who make witchcraft and sorcery,and boast of their works who recognized not their Creator but bowed down /yon vain gods" (10.4).

Though it is somewhat uncertain because of the author's choice of a Biblical pseudonym,yet it seems probable that the Slavonic Book of Enoch,was written to attract the heathen to Judaism. For Enoch makes known his revelation to all men: Distribute the books to your children,unto all your generation and amongst the nations who shall have the sense to fear God,let them receive them (48.6). Two ways are set before every man and he can choose either he wills (30.15). The right way is,of course,Judaism.

*It is*  
But, in the works of Philo,who flourished in the first part of the first Christian century,that Alexandrian Judaism reached its culmination. Let us,then, study Philo's attitude toward the proselyte.

## V. PHILO.

Philo emphasizes the fact that Israel is not a caste-nation into which no one can enter save through the fate of birth, and that salvation does not depend on being born a Jew. He devotes a whole treatise to this thesis, namely "de nobilitate", besides treating it passim in other works. He tells us that Abraham, the father of the Jewish people is "the standard of nobleness" to all proselytes (de nobilitate 5). Again he tells us that the most sacred Moses "receives all persons of a similar character and disposition, whether they were originally born so, or whether they have become so through any change of conduct, having become better people.... And these last he calls proselytes" (de Monarchia 1.7, ed. Mangey 2.219)

Nor are proselytes in any way inferior to born Jews. They are given "equal rank and the same favors that were bestowed on the native Jews,..an equal share in all their laws and privileges and immunities" (Ib.).

Moreover God gladly receives proselytes. Thus Philo tells us that the proselyte who is faithful to his

NOTE. 1. This doctrine, as we have seen, is fundamental in Pharisaism.

new life will receive : "as a most appropriate reward, a firm and sure habitation in heaven, such as one cannot describe", while the Jew "who has adulterated the coinage of his noble birth will be dragged down to the lowest depths, being hurled down to Tartarus and profound darkness, in order that all men who behold this example may be corrected by it, learning that God receives gladly virtue which grows out of hostility to Him" (de execratione 6, ed M.2.433).

The kind treatment of proselytes is repeatedly emphasized by Philo. He tells us that the most sacred Moses commanded the Jews to treat them "not only with respect, but even with special friendship and excessive benevolence" (de monarchia 1.7, ed. M.2.219). Moses further commanded the Jews not to curse idols, lest this offend the proselytes (Ib; cf. the talmudic interpretation of "do not oppress the stranger" as meaning "do not taunt the Ger with his former idolatrous life") *B. Mat. 4.10; Berakot B. M. 58b.*

Indeed, special consideration must be shown proselytes above born Jews. For the lawgiver "commands the men of his nation to love the strangers, (Philo is here speaking of the proselytes) not only

as they love their friends and relations, but even as they love themselves, doing them all the good possible both in body and soul; and as to their feelings, sympathizing with them both in sorrow and in joy" (de caritate 12, ed. M.2.392; de poenitentia 1, ed. M.2.405).

Moreover since God "disregards kings, tyrants and men in high commands and honors the humility of the proselytes with precedence", "it is right that the Supreme King, the ruler who has the supreme authority over the whole nation, should be judge in the case of the proselyte" (de creat. princ. 6, ed. M.2.365; de vict. offerent. 10, ed. M.2.258).

It may not be thought that this wonderful spirit of friendliness, kindness and love to the stranger and proselyte is merely the attitude of Philo the man, for as we have mentioned before, Philo shows us that the propaganda movement in Judaism is a direct corollary of its theology: Israel received the offices of priesthood and prophecy on behalf of the whole human race" (de Abrahamo, ed. M.2.15): in other words, the special revelation given to Israel by God involves the obligation of communicating it to all mankind.

Philo never treats of the conditions which proselytes must comply. He uses such general terms as "the renunciation of idolatry (de caritate 12, ed. M. 2. 398), praying to God (de vict. offerent. 10, ed. M. 2. 358), worshipping God (de caritate 12), honoring God (de poenitentia 1, ed. M. 2. 405) and improvement of conduct (de monarchia 1.7, ed. M. 2. 219); but these terms are used only casually and it is impossible to determine anything from them. A fragment (to Exodus 22.21, ed. M. 2. 677) seems to say that the proselyte is not circumcized. But in reality Philo is using this thought only as a text for his philosophical ideas of the circumcision of the passions of the soul, and so no inference may be made from this statement as to whether or not proselytes were compelled to be circumcized. Especially as Philo says expressly that "it does not follow, because the rite of circumcision is an emblem of the excision of pleasures...that we are to annul the law which has been enacted about circumcision" (de Migratione Abraham 16, ed. M. 1. 450). Dr. Kohler suggests (J. E. "Baptism") that the description of the proselyte as coming from darkness to light may indicate a symbolic ceremony, like that used in introducing initiates into the Orphic mysteries. But besides this, Philo gives us no hint as to the conditions which proselytes must comply.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHARISAIC DOCTRINE OF PROPAGANDA

We have seen before, in our first chapter, how the semi-proselyte was required, at least in theory (judging from the Book of Noah), to obey the laws given by God to Noah and from him imparted to his son. The full proselyte, on the other hand, in accordance with Ex. 12.48 was required to have himself circumcized and to observe the Law in general, as we learn from the account in Josephus of the compulsory conversion to Judaism in the second century B.C. of the Idumeans and the Itureans. From the <sup>BARAITA</sup> ~~Mishna~~, we learn that the proselyte had also to take a levitical bath (<sup>Yeb. 46b</sup> ~~Leviticus 14.8~~; ~~Eduyat 5.2~~). Schuerer (op.cit. 2.2.319) and Graetz (Die juedischen Proselyten im Roemerreiche, p. 11) claim that the candidate for conversion had also to offer a sacrifice, but this is not true except in a very restricted sense.

## I. THE PROSELYTE- SACRIFICE.

Schuerer claims that in the Mishna the proselyte-sacrifice is presupposed "as being already of long standing" and "currently practiced in the time of Christ"



(op. cit. 2.2.320). But this is mere conjecture; for the only reference to this requirement in the Mishna is in Keritot 2.1, where Eliezer ben Jacob, in opposition to the "Tanna Kamma", holds that the proselyte may not partake of "Kodoshim" before he offers up a sacrifice. This ~~XXXXX~~ Mishna alone, gives us no reason to believe that it was the Halaka even after the destruction of the Temple, for it is only Eliezer's opinion, and surely gives us no reason to believe that it was the Halaka before the destruction of the Temple, for Eliezer was a Tanna of the second generation (80-120 C.E.).

Yet we know that it was an established Halaka during the last years of the Temple (it is impossible to say, for how long before the Temple was destroyed), for we read in the Gemara that after the destruction of the Temple, Johanan ben Zappai abolished the ordinance that a proselyte should lay aside a coin in substitution for the sacrifice (Kerit. 9a; Rosh H. 31b)<sup>1</sup>.

NOTE      1. Graetz claims that this is a mistake: that after the destruction of the Temple Johanan ben Zak-kai was the only leader of authority that could have decreed such an ordinance, that it is very improbable that he should abolish the ordinance which he himself had established because his activity was of such short duration. Graetz claims his contention is supported by the fact that Eliezer ben

Scholars seem to consider that the offering of the sacrifice was a condition of conversion, i.e., that conversion was dependent on the fulfillment of this condition among others, but there is nothing to warrant such a conjecture. It is true that Judah Hanasi (Rabbi) says that the proselyte must be circumcized, bathe and offer a sacrifice because the "fathers" entered the covenant in this wise (Kerit 9a). But he does not say that conversion is dependent on offering a sacrifice, and since none of the controversies between Beth Hillel and Beth Shammai (Sab. 135a) nor between Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Joshua ben Hananya (Yeb 46a) over the conditions of conversion, mention the offering of a sacrifice as a condition, we cannot accept this one unsupported and rather vague statement as proof of the fact that conversion was dependent on the offering of a sacrifice. It is also true that the author of Masseket Gerim quotes Eliezer ben Jacob as saying that

NOTE 1 CONTINUED. Jacob, who flourished later than Johanan, evidently did not know that Johanan's ordinance had been abolished, for he held that the proselyte must lay aside a coin (Masseket Gerim 2, in ed. Kirchheim, Septem libri Talmudici parvi) for the purchase of a sacrifice should the Temple be rebuilt (op. cit. p. 11).

conversion involves the offering of a sacrifice. But this is evidently the author's interpretation of Eliezer's opinion that a proselyte must lay aside a coin for the purchase of a sacrifice, for the author adds this latter statement as proof of the former. There is however, no reason to believe that Eliezer considered conversion as dependent on the offering of the sacrifice; he merely holds (Kerit. 2.1) that the proselyte may not eat "Kodoshim" until he has offered a sacrifice, just as the Israelite with an issue may not.

Kirchheim claims that the omission of the sacrifice as a condition of conversion in the detailed instructions about the reception of proselytes in the baraita (Yebamot 47a is due to the fact that the author of this baraita is specifying the rules for הן הן (ה) (the present, i.e., after the destruction of the Temple and the abolition of the reform introduced by Johanan ben Zakkai (op.cit. p. 40, note 5). This contention, however, would have weight only if there were other evidence showing that conversion was dependent on the offering of a sacrifice. But as we have seen there not only is no evidence to this effect, but there is evidence to quite the contrary, for no controversy over the

conditions of conversion mentions the offering of a sacrifice as one of the conditions.

There is, then, no reason to believe that the sacrifice demanded of the proselyte during the last years of the Temple, and the coin that he was supposed to lay aside, after the destruction of the Temple, according to Johanan ben Zakkai's ordinance, was a condition of conversion; nor that conversion was in any way dependent on the offering of a sacrifice.

## II. THE PROSELYTE BATH AND BAPTISM.

Possibly the oldest reference to proselyte-baptism is in the Book of Asenath, which we have already treated. We noted with reference to this baptism that it was related to the Babylonian or ancient Semitic doctrine of rebirth through baptism voiced in the story of Naaman, whose flesh after bathing in the Jordan, became like the flesh of a little child (2 Ki. 5.14).

Another expression of this same idea is found in the fourth book of the Sibylline Oracles which most scholars regard as Jewish and date at about 80 C.E. (So

Friedlieb, Ewald, Hilgenfeld, Badt, Lightfoot, Freudenthal and Schuerer). The author of one of these oracles appeals to the heathen world saying:

"Ye miserable mortals, repent; wash in living streams your entire frame with its burden of sin; lift to heaven your hands in prayer for forgiveness and cure yourselves of impiety by fear of God" (160-166).

Anrich tries to show that Judaism considered baptism as a sacrament ("Mysterienwesen" p. 118). And indeed it must be admitted that the doctrine voiced in the story of Naaman, in the Book of Asenath and in the fourth book of the Sibylline Oracles is not very far removed from the idea of sacrament. But this doctrine is not the Jewish doctrine; it is merely the survival of Babylonian or ancient Semitic doctrine (K. Kohler, J. E. "Baptism"). In Pharisaic doctrine baptism was only a ~~means~~ means of levitical purification. Thus Simon ben Yohai explained that when Pharaoh's daughter bathed in the Nile, it was in order to cleanse her from the impurity of idolatry (Sotah 12b). Even among the Essenes, from whom John the Baptist (who appealed to sinners to be regenerated by baptism) came (K. Kohler, J. E. "Essenes"), baptism was in no measure whatever considered a sacrament, for though among the Essenes baptism was practiced

first as a means of penitence, as is learned from the story of Adam and Eve, who in order to atone for their sin, stood up to the neck in the water, fasting and doing penitance (Vita Adae et Evae, 1.5-8) yet later, it became only a means of levitical purification, to insure the pronunciation of the Name of the Lord and the eating of holy things in a state of purity (Tosef., Yad. 2.20: v. K. Kohler, J.E. "Essenes"). Thus when John the Baptist appealed to sinners to be regenerated by baptism, he inaugurated a new movement (K. Kohler, J.E. "Essenes").

Many scholars claim that baptism was a condition of conversion to Judaism at least by the time of ~~EM~~ Jesus (So Selden, Otho, Lightfoot, Danzius, Witsius, Kuinoel, Jahn, Halley, Bengel, Delitsch, Zetzschwitz, Edersheim and Schuerer; opposed to them and claiming a later origin, are Ernesti, Wernsdorff, Carpzov, Paulus, Bauer, Schneckenberger, De Wette, Luebkert and Leyrer). Thus Schuerer says that in the Mishna it is presupposed "as being already of long standing" and "currently practiced in the time of Christ" and gives six arguments which will represent this contention (op.cit. 2.2.320).

One argument is that the "silence of Philo and Josephus, on which so much stress has been laid is of no consequence forever. For as yet no one has ever been able to point out a single passage in which those writers were necessarily called upon to mention the matter" (op.cit. 2.2.323). I believe that this argument is valid.

Another argument is that as the Gentiles do not observe the laws of levitical purity, they are unclean and so could not have been admitted into Jewish communion before bathing (op.cit.2.2.322). But it is impossible to dagmatize on the ground of a re-construction of Pharisaic halaka that by the time of Jesus the proselyte could not have entered into Jewish communion without bathings for we read in the Mishna that even in the time of Beth Hillel and Beth Shammai it was unsettled to what degree a proselyte was unclean, Beth Hillel maintaining that the proselyte is in the category of one unclean from touching the dead and so in need of purification through the ritual of the red heifer prescribed in numbers 19, and Beth Shammai maintaining that he was unclean only till the evening (Pes. 8.8 Eduyot 5.2).

A third argument is that a passage of Arrian refers to the baptism of proselytes. This passage reads: "Whoever adopts the mode of life of the one who has been baptized and elected is really a Jew and is called one" (Dissertat. Epicteti, 2.9). But the reference to "election" ( *ἡρώμενον* ) makes it probable that Arrian was thinking of the Essenes who upon admitting members

pell them to take a fearful oath (Josephus, B.J.2.8.7), for the proselyte to Judaism was not "elected". At any rate Arrian did not write before the second century C.E., and so his testimony cannot in any case establish that by the time of Jesus baptism was a requirement imposed on the proselyte.

A fourth argument is that the author (or one of the authors) of the fourth book of the Sibylline Oracles exhorts the heathen to bathe in living streams (as we have quoted above). But this author, if not influenced by the Babylonian or ancient Semitic doctrine of rebirth through baptism, was influenced by the early Essenic idea of cleansing oneself from sin by bathing in a living stream, which is quite different from the Pharisaic doctrine of cleansing oneself from Levitical impurity.

A fifth argument, based on the fact that the two last-mentioned testimonies speak only of baptism and say nothing whatever about circumcision is that baptism was necessary "even in those cases where full admission to the fellowship of Israel had not taken place." But as we have seen, both of these authors referred to the Essenic doctrine of baptism and so do not prove that



baptism was a condition of conversion according to Pharisaic Judaism'.

A sixth argument is that "in the Mishna, the taking of the bath by the proselyte is already presupposed as an established and authoritative practice" (op. cit. 2.2.323). Now the only Mishnaic reference to the bath in connection with the proselyte is Pesahim 8.8 (=Eduyot 5.2), which states that if a Gentile is circumcized on the day previous to Passover, he may according to the opinion of Beth Shammai, bathe and partake of the Pascal lamb, but according to the opinion of Beth Hillel he may not partake ("he that is circumcized is like him that is separated from the grave"), for he remains unclean, according to Lev. 19.11, for at least seven days. This attitude is a reflex of the controversy between Beth Hillel and Beth Shammai, on the necessity of circumcision: Beth Shammai, in insisting on the necessity of circumcision, naturally attributed to it a somewhat sacramental character as reducing the impurity of a proselyte from that extreme degree due to touching a corpse, to ordinary levitical impurity, so that a mere baptism enabled him to partake of the Pascal lamb in

levitical purity; Beth Hillel, in minimizing the necessity of circumcision naturally attributed no such sacramental value to circumcision, and consequently considered the proselyte even after circumcision, in the category of those unclean by touching the dead. But the fact that both Beth Hillel and Beth Shammai considered the proselyte as levitically unclean even after circumcision, in no way proves that baptism was considered a condition of conversion, i.e., that conversion was in any way dependent on baptism.

Another argument, not advanced by Schuerer but by other scholars, is that it is inconceivable that Judaism borrowed the baptism of proselytes from Christianity, and so Judaism must have practiced this rite before the rise of Christianity. But such an argument betrays a woeful ignorance of the real facts connected with the rise of Christianity. John the Baptist was an Essene, and it was from the Essenic doctrine of baptism that he created his new doctrine (v. K. Köhler, J. E. "Essenes") just as the author of the Book of Asenath and of the fourth book of the Sibylline Oracles voice this same Essenic doctrine of baptism. Nor is it necessary to hold that just because the Jewish doctrine of

the baptism of proselytes developed after the Christian, that it was borrowed from the Christian, for after all baptism was an institution of Pharisaic Judaism and the baptism of proselytes was common in some Essenic circles before or at least at the time of the birth of Christianity.

We see, then, that there is no evidence to show that baptism was a condition of conversion to Judaism by the time of Jesus. But more than this: there is positive evidence which shows that it became a condition of conversion to Judaism nearly a century later. This evidence is the baraita Yebamot 46b which shows us that it became a controversy among the rabbis of the second generation of Tannaim (80-120 C.E.) whether baptism was an indispensable ceremony in conversion to Judaism. Joshua ben Hananya, who seemed to sympathize with the opinions of Beth Hillel, maintained that baptism was the only indispensable ceremony of conversion to Judaism, from which we must infer that it was a practice, at this time, at least in some circles of Judaism. But Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, who upheld the opinions of Beth Shammai maintained that circumcision was the only indispensable

ceremony of conversion to Judaism, from which we must infer that baptism was not established in the halaka as an indispensable element of conversion. And indeed this baraita tells us that the rabbis combined these two opinions and established the Halaka that both circumcision and baptism are indispensable ceremonies of conversion to Judaism (Yeb 46b).

### III. PROSELYTE-CIRCUMCISION.

As we have seen, the liberal view voiced in the book of Noah, that the heathen may secure salvation by observing the Noahitic laws, found fruitful soil in Alexandria and became the basis of a great part of the propaganda extended under the guise of the Sibyl and other ancients of authority. In Palestine, however, this liberal view seems to have been superseded by the more particularistic view that the heathen should be circumcized and become full Jews. Thus, in the spirit of the author of the book of Jubilees, who writing in his time, declared that whomsoever of the Jews is uncircumcized belongs to "the sons of Belial" and to "the children of destruction" (15.26), John Hyrcanus compelled the Idumeans, when he conquered them (about 125 B.C.) to have all their males circumcized, Aristobulus compelled the Itureans to do likewise (106 B.C.), when he conquered them, as did Alexander Jannaeus (c.88 B.C.) the inhabitants of the towns which he conquered (Josephus, Ant. 13.15.4). When the Arabian Syllaus sought the hand of Salome, Herod the Great demanded that he should first be circumcized (Ant. 16.7.6). When Agrippa I promised his daughter Drusilla to Prince

Epiphanes, it was on condition that he be circumcized. When he refused to do this, Agrippa II, since his father had died meanwhile, gave his sister to Azizus, King of Emesa, who declared himself willing to accept Judaism (Ant. 20.7.1.).

Some scholars maintain that for a time it was not the unanimous opinion among the rabbis that circumcision was indispensable for complete conversion to Judaism. In this connection they quote the baraita Yebamot 46a, which tells us that Joshua ben Hananya maintained that baptism alone was indispensable for conversion, and often also the story told by Josephus that when Izates, King of Adiabene, became a proselyte to Judaism his instructor, the Jewish merchant Ananias, dissuaded him from being circumcized (Ant. 20.2.4.).

But this evidence may not be accepted as proving that Pharisaic Judaism was willing to admit proselytes fully into Judaism without demanding circumcision. It is true that Ananias, according to Josephus, tells Izates that "he might worship God without being circumcized, even though he resolved to follow the Jewish law entirely, which worship of God was of a superior nature ~~to circumcized. But this, as we have seen, is the~~ Pharisaic principle that birth is secondary to the observance of the Torah. Even Rabbi Hilel maintained that a Gentile who observed the Torah is equal to the High

to circumcision". But this by no means implies that Ananias would consider him a full Jew or proselyte even should he not be circumcized. Indeed the fact that Ananias added that God would forgive him for omitting this rite because of the extunating circumstance that he did so in order not to lose his Kingdom, shows that he was no more willing than Eliezer the Zealot to dispense with circumcision. But while Eliezer considered circumcision and full incorporation into the Jewish people as of all importance and so could not tolerate <sup>un</sup>circumcision, Ananias, on the other hand, considered the worship of God as "of a superior nature to circumcision" and for this reason was willing to compromise for the sake of expediency, not however on the ground of full conversion but only on the ground of what might be called semi-conversion.

There remains, then, in support of this contention that some of the rabbis did not consider circumcision an indispensable condition of conversion, the single statement in Yebamot 46a that Joshua ben

Hananya declared him a proselyte who had taken the levitical bath even though he had not been circumcized. But Joshua cannot possibly have referred to full proselytes; the only possible interpretation of this statement is that in opposition to Eliezer ben Hyrcanus who voiced the harsh view that there is no salvation for the heathen except through complete conversion to Judaism, he maintained that it is not necessary for the heathen to become full Jews in order to procure salvation.

For in the first place there is no evidence of any conflict in Judaism as to the necessity of circumcision for the proselyte. Even Alexandrian Judaism, represented in its culmination by Philo, shows no evidence of such a conflict.

In the second place Beth Hillel, the more lenient of the two schools, and with whose attitude Joshua was in sympathy, was at one with Beth Shammai in demanding that the proselyte be circumcized,



Beth Hillel dissenting only in the one particular that a drop of blood be shed during the operation, Beth Sham-mai contending that this was necessary (Sab.135a).

In the third place Joshua ben Hananya, though not a fanatic was strongly opposed to Christianity. For this reason his Midraah is very often in opposition to some explanation of scripture in a messianic sense. And more particularly, he was opposed to the Christian doctrine of the abolition of the Law by the Messiah. For this reason he declared that Elijah, when he comes, will neither declare clean or unclean. It is, then, very improbable that he should on the one hand accede to the Paulinian doctrine of non-circumcision and on the other hand demand as the only condition of conversion to Judaism the same ceremony demanded from the heathen by Christianity.

In the fourth place, in opposition to his colleague Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, who denied salvation to any of the heathen, Joshua contended that those heathen that observe the seven Noahitic laws will have a por-

tion in the world to come (Tosef. Sanh.13.2; Sanh. 105a). There can be no doubt, then, that Eliezer's insistence on circumcision was insistence on full conversion to Judaism and Joshua's contention that baptism was sufficient was a contention that one need not convert fully to Judaism in order to secure salvation.

This brings us to a consideration of the Pharisaic institution of the Ger Toshab.

#### IV. THE PHARISAIC INSTITUTION OF THE GER TOSHAH.

During the Graeco-Roman period Judaism attracted not only many proselytes who were willing to cut all ties binding them with ancestral religion and race and to be incorporated completely into the Jewish people by converting completely to Judaism, but also a still greater number of those who allied themselves more or less closely with the Jewish communities, took part in Jewish worship, observed the Jewish ordinances with a greater or less degree of strictness, but were not willing to cut all ties of family and people by converting completely to Judaism. These latter were the "God-fearing" so often mentioned in Josephus e.g., Ant. 14, 7.2) and above all in the New Testament (Acts 11.1, 2; 13.16, 26, 43, 50; 16.14; 17.4, 17; 18.7).

It has become quite a habit of late among Christian theologians to follow Schuerer in his contention that Judaism never recognized the semi-proselyte, that Judaism considered all who were not

Jews and full-proselytes as heathen. But one does not have to scratch deep into such scholarship to discover the Christian polemicist.

It is possible that as Schuerer holds the God-fearing of Josephus and the New Testament are not identical with the Gere Toshab of the Mishna. But this if true is only because Pharisaic halaka with respect with the proselyte had not yet developed by the time of the birth of Christianity, and not because the Ger Toshab was a mere alien, for as we shall show, this latter idea is erroneous.

It is also possible that by the time of Jesus the appellation "proselyte" was not applied save to those that were full proselytes, but that is merely a question of language and not of doctrine. For as we have seen in the course of our investigation there were two tendencies active in Pharisaic propaganda, the one initiated by the Book of Noah and culminating<sup>in</sup> that large portion of Alexandrian pseudepigrapha intended to convert the heathen to the monotheistic and moral ideas of Ju-

daism, the other initiated by the more particularistic view that salvation is only ~~obtainable~~ to be obtained through Judaism, culminating in a powerful movement to make full proselytes.

The term "Ger Toshab" is in itself very significant. In the Pentateuch there are several references to the "Ger" and the "Toshab", the alien and the resident sojourner. And yet though the Ger and the Toshab represent two different categories, as is seen even in rabbinic literature (cf Gen. R. 58 which, referring to Gen. 23.4 says the Ger is a tenant and the Toshab a proprietor; cf also Tanh. B'har 1, referring to Lev. 25.35 speaks of sojourners and settlers) yet the rabbis, in order to establish a status for semi-proselytes from the Bible, combined both categories and created from it a new one, the "Ger Toshab".

When this term came into being is uncertain, except that it was some time before the Hadrianic persecution, for Akiba and Jose the Galilean seem to have had a controversy as to what degree the Ger Toshab must observe the Sabbath (Kerit. 9a; cf Mek. Mishpatim 20).

As a further possible clue for the date of the origin of this term is the fact that Johhna ben Hananya, though undoubtedly referring to the institution of the semi-proselyte, does not use the term Ger Toshab, and it <sup>is</sup> probably for this reason that later rabbis miss the point / ? of his controversy with Eliezer ben Hyrcanus.

Yet late as the term Ger Toshab seems to have come into being, the institution is undoubtedly much older. Bertholet's contention that the "God fearing" of the Acts are circumcized and full proselytes (op. cit. 328-334) hardly deserves consideration. For the full proselyte was considered a full Jew. This is proved especially by the reference to the Alexandrian proselyte in Acts 18.24 as "a certain Jew named Apollos". Consequently it cannot be that the "Fearers of God" constantly set off against the Jews (Acts 13.16, 26, 43; 17.17 et al.) are always full proselytes. The probability is that neither proselutai or the Greek expression for "fearers of God" are always used consistently. This may be seen from Acts 13.43 where both terms are found in conjunction.

That the Ger Toshab was not a mere sojourning alien, as Schuerer claims, is obvious from the fact that the rabbis would not have had to coin a new term to designate such a person, since in the Mosaic law he is designated as a Toshab. But what is still more significant is that the first discussion about the Ger Toshab is a controversy over the degree to which he must observe the Sabbath. Yet the Sabbath is not enjoined on the Ger Toshab in the seven Noahitic laws. This shows that this discussion arose from the fact that so many heathen "Fearers of God" were observing the Sabbath (Josephus, *Contra Ap.* 2.39; Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.96; Tertullian, *ad nationes* 1.13), and the rabbis wished to give them a status as semi-proselytes.

In the period when Rabbi Meir flourished, the controversy as to the requirements imposed on the Ger Toshab broke out anew. Rabbi Meir maintained that to be a Ger Toshab one must assume the obligation before the Haberim, to abstain from idolatry. The sages differed with him and maintained that a Ger Toshab must observe

the seven Moahitic laws. Schuerer claims that this was "a barren theory which was never reduced to actual practice" (op.cit.2.2.319). But even if this were true, it does not affect Pharisaic doctrine; the fact remains that the rabbis considered even the pious heathen worthy of salvation, and later this doctrine was incorporated into the Mishna (Sanh.13.2). But Schuerer claims further that this doctrine of the Ger Toshab was thrown together only in an off-hand way and was not seriously thought out: "A more careful comparison of the Old Testament regulations with regard to the Gerim would have led to different results". "Unfortunately Rabbi Meir. You could not study the Torah under Dr. Schuerer".

Masseket Gerim gives this description of the Ger Toshab in the name of Judah bar Ilai: one who has assumed the obligation not to eat carcasses...His bread and his oil and his wine are clean. It is forbidden to oppress him or keep his wages over night. We do not allow him to intermarry with us, yet we do not lend or borrow from him on usury (Gerim 3). This passage epitomizing the status of the Ger Toshab, shows clearly



that he is considered a Jew in all social relations except intermarriage, and is not to be treated like a heathen.

NOTE: In explanation, though not in excuse, I must add that this chapter is not complete: it should end with a discussion of several subjects, notably among them the development of the doctrine of propaganda in the haggada and the status of the proselyte in Judaism.