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Subject: Jewish Education in the Period of Transition following
Mendels^Aohn.

*Submitted as Thesis for Graduation, 1918.
by Alexander Segel.*

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I. Introduction.

A. Statement of the Problem.

Jacob Joshua, who died at Frankfurt a. M. in 1756, tells in the introduction to his "Pene Yehoshua" of the vow he had made in his youth, while prisoner in the ruins which buried his family. He promised that if God would deliver him, he would devote all the days of his life to the study of the Talmud and the Commentaries, "to explain where the Tosafoth seem to contradict Rashi, and to make clear where the Tosafoth leave any doubt". Odd as this vow may appear to us today, it is a true index of the life of his generation. His contemporaries, especially those in the Ghettos of Germany, had no interests beyond those of studying rabbinical treatises, and presenting subtle arguments to harmonize all possible contradictions in the Talmud and its commentaries. The walls of the Ghettos, formed a practically water-tight protection against the mighty secular currents set in motion by the Renaissance. Jacob Joshua never dreamed of Jewish life coming into contact with secular thought; much less of Judaism ever having a conflict and compromise with secular life. When Jacob Joshua died in 1756, the Ghetto dikes were holding perfectly against the intellectual waters raging without.

Less than one hundred years afterwards, the leader of Orthodox Judaism in Germany, Samson Raphael Hirsch, founded the Buerger and Realschule, 1853, with the motto "Torah with Derech Eretz." This, Hirsch explained, signified that "the essence of the religious life as well as the life of general culture must be fostered with equal care." In one hundred years the ideals of Jewish Education had widened from the narrow rabbinical limits of ignorance of general civilization, to include all secular progress. This transition in Jewish Education, was in reality consummated a full generation previously, when Isaac Bernays, the teacher of Samson Raphael Hirsch, himself a University graduate, transformed the Hamburg Talmud Torah, 1827 into a modern elementary school in order to check the growth of incipient Reform in Hamburg.

This precipitous transition in Jewish life, which makes the last half of the 18th Century one of the epochs of Jewish History, can be seen more clearly in the career of Pinchas Horowitz, (1731-1805), upon whom Jacob Joshua's mantle fell at Frankfurt a.M. Horowitz conducted himself as the faithful guardian of rabbinic scholastic traditions. He opposed bitterly Mendelssohn's Translation of the Bible, even approving the action of those who burned the Eibur at Wilna, 1782. In 1794, when a group of Frankfurt parents announced their plan to establish a school where their children might be prepared for a practical life, thru instruction in German, French, Writing, and Arithmetic, Horowitz placed the proposed school under ban, December 8th, 1794, and prevented its establishment for the time being. Yet the progress of modern culture after the French Revolution was so sweeping that even the Gibraltar-like Horowitz was moved in 1803 to give his endorsement to Wolf Heidenheim's German translation of the Mahzor, - a work closely akin to Mendelssohn's translation, which Horowitz had condemned twenty years before.

The writer of this thesis believes that the transition in Jewish Education, like that in the Jewish Life of Germany as a whole, although set in motion by Mendelssohn during his lifetime did not assume definite form until after his death, 1786. Therefore while presenting a resume of the forces at work and the progress achieved up to the time of Mendelssohn's death, the author will try to give a detailed picture of the development of Jewish Education only after 1786. His terminus ad quem will be the year 1815, so fateful for all Europe and especially for the Jews, - the year in which a new day dawned for the Jews, - after which the bright sunshine of political freedom was never entirely dispelled by the night shades of oppression. For by the year 1815, the Educational Enlightenment had made its way to the heart of Hassidism in Russia; had inspired the founding of modern schools at Ternopol, 1813 and at Brody, 1815. By the year 1815, the Educational crisis in Germany was already entering upon the period of compromise, when the liberal leaders of Orthodoxy were beginning to accept the Mendelssohnian principle of spiritual union with their environment, as long as the traditional Jewish practises were not violated or sacrificed. After the year 1815, enlightened Orthodoxy insisted upon modern secular culture as an essential complement of Jewish learning, thus turning away from the standpoint of Orthodoxy, when Jacob Joshua, author of Pene Yehoshua dominated Jewish Life, to follow the spirit of Mendelssohn.

B. Aspect of Incipient Transition. (1756-1786).

In the same year that the author of "Pene Yehoshua" passed away, a young contemporary, Moses Mendelssohn, who had dared forth upon the fearful waters of secular culture, had arrived at the point where Germany's literary men welcomed him into their midst. And even the court expressed its desire to make the acquaintance of "the young Hebrew who wrote in German. Mendelssohn, however, was not the only one whose thirst could not be slaked by Talmudic studies. More than a century before David Oppenheimer, rabbi of Prague, had gathered together many volumes, a goodly number of which were on profane subjects. (cf. D. Fraenkel, Monats. 1885, p.148. In Metz, 1652, a Physician Tobiah Nerol, by permission of the Elector of Brandenburg, had studied at Frankfurt a.Oder. And just after Mendelssohn trudged into Berlin, the ichthyologist Bloch, received his Doctor's degree at the University of Frankfurt a.O. (cf. Guedemann, Jewish Encyc., article "Education".) In 1752, Heine's maternal grandfather received a medical degree at Duisberg. Shortly after Mendelssohn's welcome into the literary life of Berlin, Kalman Cohen of Düsseldorf wrote an arithmetic (1758) which was used in all the schools. And about the same time there lived in Königsberg, three brothers, Friedlaender, who vied with one another in collecting books, art pieces, and costly works on History, Natural History, and the Fine Arts in German, French and English, (cf. Jolowicz, quoting from L. V. Paezko "Versuch einer Geschichte und Beschreibung von Königsberg.") And by 1769, two Jews had entered the Gymnasium at Karlsruhe. (cf. Deutsch's Notes on Graetz, and also Geiger's "Geschichte der Juden in Berlin" I, 93.) Even in Russia the Gaon of Vilna (1720-97) was exhorting the Talmudists to study secular sciences, since "if one is ignorant of the other sciences, one is one hundred fold more ignorant of the sciences of the Torah. For the two are inseparably connected." (J.E.)

By entering the literary circle of Germany, Mendelssohn incited all the Jewish youths of Germany, whose desire for knowledge outstript the Talmud, to break through the intellectual barriers of the Ghetto. Thus originated the crisis, which could not be settled, until conservative Judaism began to absorb modern culture, as it had absorbed Hellenic and Arabic cultures centuries before. German Judaism had appropriated to itself the duty of guarding Jewish life and especially Jewish education from the inroads of secular learning. When therefore the problem of secular culture appeared upon the horizon, the great rabbis of the day, the young contemporaries who had outlived Jacob Joshua, such as Horowitz, Ezekiel Landau and Jacob Emden, attacked non-Jewish culture with all the fury that Elijah vented against the ancient Baalim. They hoped to avert the evil by crushing the desire for extra-Talmudic culture. One of Mendelssohn's schoolmates was expelled from Berlin for being caught with a German book. (cf. Geiger's Geschichte der Juden in Berlin) Peter Beer in his autobiography (Lebensgeschichte p.10) tells how at Ezekiel Landau's Yeshiva in Prague, he was seen reading "Tusch's moralische Briefe," and narrowly escaped dismissal with a warning.

A medical student wrote to Emden, inquiring whether he might dissect an animal on the Sabbath, and in his reply in the negative, (Sheeloth Yabetz, p.41) Jacob Emden expresses his contempt for secular studies. But in his autobiography, (Megillath Sefer, pp 96-98) confesses how he had longed for secular wisdom, and how only his devotion to Judaism restrained him from drinking deeply of the fountain of non-Jewish wisdom. His faithfulness prompted him to exhort even the renowned Mendelssohn to guard his feet from leaving the right path. He feared lest Judaism be poisoned by "the evil dog" (secular culture) Mendelssohn was rearing in his home.

In their concern for Jewish Education, however, the Orthodox leaders had hedged it about to such an extent that it had lost much of its vitality. The intelligent Jewish youths were therefore intellectually undernourished, and began to break down the hedges about their education. (cf. Autobiography of Solomon Maimon, and Herz Homberg's sketch of his life). In 1761, Daniel Itzig and his partner Ephraim petitioned the authorities for permission to establish a home for poor children, in which the wards were to be taught Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, History, Geography and German by Christian teachers, as well as specifically Jewish subjects by Jewish instructors. The authorities almost fainted when they read this petition, showing such a progressive spirit among the despised Jews. (cf. Geiger's "Geschichte der Juden in Berlin", p.84). In 1770 the year that L. V. Baizko describes the feverish cultural activity of the Friedlaenders at Koenigsberg the Jews of Halberstadt wrote to Mendelssohn, urging him to arouse the Jews of Halberstadt to the study of the Talmud, which is gradually decreasing, they complained. (cf. Bernfeld Dor Tahapuchoth, p.78). The only reason why secular culture failed to arouse the Jews of Germany to the high pitch of excitement, with which the Jews of Alexandria and Spain reacted to the newer currents of thought in their days, was as the Jews stated to Wessely: (Dibre Shalom ve-Emeth, Letter I, ch.3), "we are allowed to own no property; we are allowed to deal only in petty business". But the soil of Jewish Life in Germany was lying fallow, prepared to nurture the shoots of modern culture, as soon as faithful servants of God should till the soil and implant the seed.

The great-souled servants from without the Jewish people, who sowed the seed of secular culture in the Ghettos of Europe, were the noble German Reformers in the period preceding the French Revolution. Lessing, Germany's greatest poet, in 1779, led the way by proving to a disdainful world and an astonished Jewry, in his drama, "Nathan the Wise, that "there is really a Jew who has achieved fame in language, mathematics, world-wisdom and poetry". (Lessing in a letter). The drama aroused a greater spirit of tolerance among the enlightened Germans. It inspired the Jews to exert every effort to win respect among their fellowmen. It touched a responsive chord in the hearts of the other magnanimous Germans, causing them to sound similar notes. Christian V. Dohm, the humanitarian among Germany's nobility, followed Lessing in his remarkable treatise, "Ueber die burgerliche Verbesserung der Juden". (Berlin, 1781).

In this work he advocated absolutely equal rights, unlimited freedom of occupation, and up-to-date educational opportunities for the Jews, without the government's interference in religious practices. In the very same year, 1781, as though inspired by Dohm's treatise, Emperor Joseph II of Austria issued his famous "Tolerance Edict", bringing to actuality most of the liberal theories of the humanitarians of the day. He promised the Jews complete political equality when they proved that they were prepared to receive it. This decree had a wonderful effect in arousing the Jews of Germany as well as Austria from their religious and intellectual seclusion. A longing for the means of preparing the children for civic equality began to arise in the liberal groups. In this emergency, Pasedow, the eccentric but stimulating educational reformer came to show them the way. He opened to their children as well as to all others of whatever station in life his Philanthropinum at Dessau (1774-92) to prepare them for supreme civic duty. This school was the model for the first modern Jewish school the Freischule of Berlin (1778 or 1781) as well as all the other progressive institutions which followed the lead of the Freischule.

The Freischule of Berlin owed its creation to the triumph within the Jewish fold, who implanted within their people a desire for practical education. First among them was Mendelssohn, whose very life served as a constant hope for his oppressed brethren. He had overcome defects of body and lack of opportunities, and had achieved international fame. The Jews of Germany as a whole could overcome their defects if they would follow his suggestions. He led the way for a better education of the young, by teaching his children the elements of the newer instruction advocated by Rousseau. He gave to the whole people the translation of the Scriptures he had written for his children. Many Jews, so Jost testifies in his History, used Mendelssohn's Translation not only for religious inspiration but also as a foundation for other studies. It was Mendelssohn also, as David Friedlaender's nephew relates in the *Biographie universelle* (V. Jedidja. Vol. 5) who guided in part the instruction of the richest Jewish sons and prompted them to devote themselves towards helping their poorer brothers secure an adequate preparation for their tasks in life. As a practical beginning he influenced his devoted disciple, David Friedlaender, who continued his labor after him, to establish the Freischule upon the plan of the Dessau Philanthropinum. It was Friedlaender who thus carried into practice the educational visions of Mendelssohn. The third of Israel's sons to sow the seed of a new order in Jewish Education was Naphtali Herz Wessely. He had assisted materially in providing the sound course of studies for the Freischule. When Emperor Joseph II made known his liberal decree, it was Wessely who appreciated its far-reaching significance for all Jewry. And because he was practical-minded he immediately addressed the first of his notable Letters (*Dibre Shalom ve-Emeth*) to the Jews of Trieste urging them to take advantage of the educational advantages proffered them. A conflict arose over his letter, which the ultra-conservatives misunderstood. But through the conflict, Wessely proved to many that educational advancement was not against Jewish traditions. Thus he laid a foundation within the soul of Judaism for Educational reforms.

II. Jewish Education in Germany in the Period of Transition following Mendelssohn.

Thirty years separate the death of Jacob Joshua from that of Moses Mendelssohn. These thirty years however brought but little tangible advance as far as Reform in general and Jewish Education in particular were concerned. The reason for this seems to be the result of Mendelssohn's strictly Orthodox actions and life. Despite his practical inclinations, and radical ideas, his rigid Orthodoxy restrained him from laying hands upon Jewish institutions as they existed. His only concrete activity determined the founding of the Freischule, which embodied his conception of a liberal, practical curriculum. But during these thirty years precious seed had been sown - seed vital enough to cause a transition in Jewish ideals if the soil was prepared to receive it. Before considering the influence of these forces therefore we shall turn our attention to study the condition of Jewish Life at the time of Mendelssohn's death.

From the answer which so many gave to Wessely's plea for educational reform, we can see how the economic status of the Jews was potent in determining their attitude towards stimuli to progress. As late as 1784 Mendelssohn had written to Herz Homberg lamenting the fact that the only professions open to Jewish youths were "medicine, petty business, and 'schnorrning'." In 1786 for the most part the Jews were limited to money-lending, business in stalls, and factory concessions. Jolowicz states that in Koenigsberg the Jews were excluded from the main business district as late as 1808 and that only in the era of reconstruction after Jena were they admitted into the business section. Mendelssohn himself had said that he feared to urge newer, broader conceptions upon his people, lest these ideas should make the Ghetto intolerable to them. He took a chance with his own children, and educated them to the best of his ability, trusting that the denial of opportunities would not embitter their lives. He tried to prepare them to meet all circumstances as noble men and women. But the masses of Jews refused to study for naught. For them the jargon of German and Hebrew sufficed in their miserable affairs. Jost described their attitude in his history by remarking that they took a little humor at their expense along with their transactions - they had to make a living. A minimum of business arithmetic, furthermore, equipped them for their petty dealings. As long as the doors to economic advancement were closed to them, the Jews, as a whole, refused to concern themselves with secular knowledge and culture. Only a few like Friedlaender looked far enough into the future to prepare some poorer children for the larger opportunities in the distance. The overwhelming numbers were afflicted with inertia until the so-called Tolerance Edict after several years began to set them in motion by promises of economic improvements.

The political status of the Jews in Germany up to the time of Mendelssohn's death was an exact counterpart of their economic life. Conditions varied to some extent with the different states, in which the Jews were settled.

But the situation in Prussia may be taken as fairly typical. There, Frederick the Great, crystallized the Government's attitude towards the Jews in a decree in 1750. The Jews were divided into six groups, practically all of whom were treated as tolerated aliens. Moses Mendelssohn, for example, was permitted to reside in Berlin only by virtue of his being an employee of a privileged Jew. But not even the privileged, were granted the rights of ordinary citizens. The number of Jewish families in the cities was limited. The number of marriages in a year was also specified by law. A marriage license, moreover, could be secured only by a heavy expenditure. When Mendelssohn married he had to buy three hundred dollars worth of porcelain as a tax upon his wedding. Jews were not permitted to travel freely, either. Everywhere they were halted and compelled to pay a poll tax, just as though they were cattle. When privileged Jews were permitted to enter cities usually closed to their race, they were compelled to report to the police, and an officer of the law was detailed to "escort" them through the city to their destinations. Under such political circumstances, there could be no incentive to cultural development. None of the Jewish ceremonial observances, mannerisms or peculiarities of speech formed as huge a barrier between them and their non-Jewish environment as the walls of the Ghetto or the political limitations to which they were subjected.

Centuries of economic and political oppression such as this, produced upon the Jews not only external blemishes of speech and manners, but also moral defects. The blighting effect upon the consciousness of the Jews was more marked if possible than the visible defects. Their pride and self-respect were almost destroyed. They became a nation of groveling shop-keepers and pack-merchants, despicable even in their own eyes. Only their domestic life saved them from utter degeneration. Mendelssohn himself had written concerning them: (v. Geiger: Geschichte der Juden in Berlin, Vol I, p.74). "The civic oppression to which a prevailing prejudice condemns us, lies like a dead weight upon the pinions of our spirit, and renders them unable ever to essay the lofty flight of the free-born." It was the life-task of both Mendelssohn and Wessely to arouse the Jews from their lethargy to a spiritual reawakening.

If the Jews were ever to be awakened from their cultural lethargy, the educational system and ideals of the time would have to be altered. The prevailing educational standards at Mendelssohn's death were determined by the deficient ideals of general culture. The teachers, as a rule, were traveling Poles, whom the governments shunted about, never permitting them to remain for more than three years in any one place. The profession of teaching was subsidiary to those of cantor and "schochet". Jost tells us that in his youth (cf. Vor einem halben Jahrhundert) every community required the services of a man as "chazzan" and "schochet," and gradually custom decreed that the duty of teaching the young also be assigned to him. For the last task the essentials were a loud voice, a weighty stick and a stout right arm. As a rule the ignorance of these teachers, according to Jost's testimony, was equaled only by their cruelty and the indifference of the authorities. (v. Jost: "Offenes Senatschreiben an... Streckfuss", p.64 also). The class room was generally a dingy, unsanitary

room in which all the pupils, of whatever age and grade were huddled together. The curriculum was limited to the study of the Bible, Mishna, Talmud and Commentaries. The teacher did not present his subjects systematically, but began a new Sidre or Pentateuch-portion every week, regardless of whether or not the pupils had learned the contents of the preceding lesson. The aim of this type of education was to ripen the pupils in Talmudic disputation, to which the teachers often sacrificed the time apportioned to even the study of the Bible. A minimum of writing and arithmetic was also included in the Cheder course. But this must have been far below the necessary requirements, for when the Talmud Tora in Hamburg (1795) was founded, it limited its educational reforms to the introduction of courses in writing and arithmetic. According to Jost, none of his Cheder teachers were at all acquainted with secular knowledge or the fine arts. Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century many of the old-fashioned teachers refused to teach Hebrew grammar on the ground that Hebrew was God given and did not require man made rules. But despite all these deficiencies in method and content, the Chedarim were not greatly inferior to the general elementary educational-system of the time. (cf. Duschak, Paulsen, Monroe). On the contrary Jewish parents were willing to sacrifice large sums of money and years of the youth of their sons to the old-type of Jewish education only because in later life the Chedar-trained pupils were the business-superiors of their non-Jewish competitors. Talmudic training seemed to justify itself in every Ghetto situation.

When the Jews were enclosed in the Ghetto, profane learning was not necessary for a livelihood. (cf. Pernfeld-Lor Tahapuchoth"). It was only when the attitude of the communities toward the inmates of the Ghetto was rendered more mild thru the influence of Dohm and the prestige of Emperor Joseph II, and advantages were extended to them, that a need arose for secular knowledge to take advantage of the new opportunities. It must be understood, however, that Germany did not adopt a new policy in a day, nor did the German principalities keep together in opening their portals to let in the light of the Tolerance Edict. It ~~was~~^{is} impossible, therefore, to mark off distinct stages in the broadening of the economic and political opportunities and the consequent growth in the cultural demands of the Jews of Germany. Mayence e.g. in 1787, under the influence of the Tolerance Edict, opened several privileges to the Jews within its limits. Sporadic improvements such as this, however, could not induce the Jews to support schools for more modern instruction. It was only after the French Revolution, under the power of French arms, that the improved status of the Jews was bright enough to persuade them to improve their educational methods and to complement the specifically Jewish curriculum with secular studies. (cf. Festschrift...Philanthopinum, Frankfurt, 1904).

With the period of German reconstruction, after Jena, 1806 there came a decided amelioration in the political and economic condition of the Jews. In 1807, David Fränkel reported in the "Sulamith" that the exclusion of Jews from all State positions was being decreased.

In the same year the Jews of Frankfort on the Main were permitted to enter the trades. So Geisenheimer immediately added a manual training course to his Philanthropin. In 1808 after French occupation, Westphalia vouchsafed equal rights to the Jews. To seize hold of these benefits the school at Seesen under Israel Jacobson developed into a Buerger and Handwerkschule, - a school similar to an industrial high school. The school in Wolfenbuettel followed the example of the school at Seesen in transforming its character in order to train the younger generation into useful citizens. Both Jost and Geiger emphasize the great power of equal civic rights upon the cultural and educational development of the Jews of Germany. Probably antecedent to the economic and political causes for the transition in Jewish cultural ideals, were the intellectual and religious forces. Bernfeld states in his "Dor Tahapucoth", p.79, that even in the days of Frederick the Great, 1740-1786, there were many "disbelievers". As far back as 1770, Mendelssohn wrote to a relative, Elkan Ferz, that "the fundamentals of our religion depend upon our intellect". The rationalism of Voltaire and the naturalistic doctrines of Rousseau were in the atmosphere and penetrated into even the walled Ghettos. Mendelssohn himself inculcated their teachings into his disciples. In his "Leesebuch fuer juedische Kinder" Mendelssohn, objecting to "beliefs", rendered the "ani maamin" of Maimonides' thirteen Principles of Faith as "ich erkenne fuer wahr and gewiss", - "I recognize as absolutely true." In his "Jerusalem," furthermore, he spread this spirit of rationalism throughout intellectual Jewry. The people at large thirstily imbibed it, even though the rabbis as a whole, and possibly Mendelssohn himself did not suspect its anti-rabbinic nature. One of the effects of the new rationalism is visible in the library of the Jewish Community of Berlin, which contains no Hebrew book nor one of a Jewish religious nature. (v. Felix Lazarus's list of volumes in Monatschrift, 58, p.335).

The economic, political and intellectual forces affected Jewish Education only indirectly as they produced a fermentation in Jewish Life. It was the formulation of Rousseau's educational principles into curricula by Basedow, Mendelssohn and Wessely that determined the exact line of development of Jewish Education in the period of transition after Mendelssohn. Basedow's Philanthropinum at Dessau, 1774, founded on Rousseau's ideals, became the model for later schools both Christian and Jewish. Its object was to educate citizens of the world, who would at the same time be ideal German subjects. The vernacular German was emphasized as the medium of instruction. Languages were taught by the so-called "natural method". Manual and industrial work was introduced as much for social as for educational purposes. The course of instruction was intended to equip the pupils for making a livelihood, if necessary. Children of all denominations were accepted and treated as equals. The truths of religion were imparted without the prejudices of the existing religious teachings. (V. Monroe: History of Education, p.579).

Mendelssohn's plan for Jewish Education was parallel to Basedow's for general education. He wished to have the young generation secure information of the sciences, of the German and French languages, of book-keeping and mathematical-

geography, in addition to a thorough knowledge of Bible and Talmud. (v. Kayserling Life of Mend. p.335). Wessely's detailed outline of instruction for the community of Trieste, contained in the second letter of his book *Libre Shalom ve-Emeth*, was more concrete than Mendelssohn's, and became the model curriculum for the next two decades and more. Both Mendelssohn and Wessely emphasized the function of the schools to prepare the pupils for earning a livelihood, for polite intercourse with their neighbors, and for ideal citizenship in the German Empire. The Meassefim through their publication became the promulgators of these educational ideals and thus exerted a powerful influence upon the development of Jewish Education. They made repeated references to the Berlin Free School, established 1778(?) under the guidance of Mendelssohn, Wessely and Friedlaender, printing comments from non-Jews in its praise, and challenging the conservatives to examine its content and method of instruction. (cf. Ha-Meassef-Tebeth, A.M. 5544).

Before considering the development of Jewish Education after Mendelssohn, it will be necessary to dwell briefly on the conflict precipitated between his followers and the conservatives, - a conflict which retarded the transition for several decades. The stand of Mendelssohn and his "school" in favor of secular education, aroused an increasingly more vigorous opposition, which clung the more closely to the old-onesidedness. (cf. Guedmann: *Quellenschriften-Introduction*). The opposition was intensified greatly by the sacrifices which many of the advocates of secular culture were willing to make. Jost in his history, Vol. IX, p. 11, describes how many of Mendelssohn's followers attempted to surrender not only their Judaeo-German language but also the Jewish national cohesion, and even the knowledge of the sources of the Jewish religion, and lore, for their entrance into the political, social and intellectual life of the world. In contrast to these, the goal of the conservatives was to preserve all the distinctive Jewish religious ceremonies and forms. Mendelssohn's disdain of Talmudic Pilpul and the jargon, - the incrustations upon Jewish life-, had been converted in his disciples into a contempt of the very content of Judaism as developed in the ages succeeding the Jewish canon. The Berlin Free School and its models disregarded instruction in Judaism. They accepted the religious point of view of the Philanthropinists, based on the deism of Rousseau's vicar of Savoyard. Such an attitude when pushed consistently was indeed subversive of the individuality of the Jewish religion and the Jewish people. It is fortunate that the later compromise between the Orthodox and the school of Mendelssohn was a compromise only in the method of instruction and in the secular portions of the curriculum, and not in the distinctively Jewish branches of study.

C. The Development of Jewish Education in the
Period of Transition following Mendelssohn.

It should be noted that all the schools erected by the devotees of Enlightenment in the first two decades of the Transition were primarily intended for the poor or for those who could not afford private teachers. It was after 1806, that Bock planned his school at Berlin for well to do Jewish children. The curriculum of the schools therefore was taken up for the most part with those studies that would prepare the pupils for earning a living. Friedrich Nicolai in his description of Berlin, about 1795, reports (quotation from Ritter) that the course of studies at the Berlin Free School consisted of "writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, drawing, Hebrew, German and French, and mathematical geography. (v. also Geiger, Vol. II, p. 137.) He reports also that most of its graduates became tutors, teachers, or business employees. Only a few attended higher schools and dedicated themselves to the sciences. The Talmudic course especially suffered from the economic conditions. The hours per week specified for Talmudic study were lessened to make way for the newer studies designed to prepare the scholars for a livelihood. As soon as business opportunities were opened furthermore, parents began to remove their children from school often before Bar-Mitzvah. As a result the majority were prevented from ever becoming proficient in the Talmud. (v. Jost's Memoirs.)

The schools in the first two decades and more of the period of Transition were characterized also by a lack of trained teachers and text-books. Jewish Education was pursuing an untried course and therefore had to get along without adequate equipment until it could develop its own. Until 1809, according to Jost, practically every teacher was an autodidact. Even the Cassel Consistory had only autodidacts and lacked method. These untrained teachers were not prepared to write suitable text-books. So they imitated the Christians. They copied Christian writings in publishing even religious text-books. David Fraenkel in "Sulamith" 1807, in depicting the conditions states that heretofore they have made great use of Christian catechisms, and because it was obviously impossible to reproduce them word for word, they have made alterations wherever absolutely essential. It was only with the years and with patient effort that the teaching staff, method, and text-books were improved.

Because of Mendelssohn's prestige and the tolerance of the rabbis, the first Modern Jewish School, the Freischule, 1778^(?) was established in Berlin. Thus Prussia became the seat of the first Jewish cultural and educational center. But the economic and political conditions of the era were not favorable to consistent progress. The schools which came into existence through the impulse of the Berlin Free School were not prosperous. Even the Freischule retrograded. In 1807, David Fraenkel in "Sulamith" commented upon its deterioration and expressed the hope that its new director, Rendavid, would save it.

In the year that Mendelssohn died, 1786, the Samson Free School was founded at Wolfenbuettel. It can not however strictly speaking be considered one of the modern schools created

under Mendelssohnian incitement. We can see from Jost's memoirs that it remained a Cheder until 1806, when with the advent of Ehrenberg it was transformed into a progressive school. The first real attempt to follow the example of Friedlaender, in establishing the Berlin Free School was made at Koenigsberg, the cultural center of Germany second only to Berlin. But the attempt was frustrated by the conservatives. Sentiment for improved education, however, was so vigorous, that it produced a permanent breach in the community. (cf. Jolowicz:) The first successful effort was made at Breslau by Joel Loewe, one of Mendelssohn's disciples, who became the director of the Wilhelmsschule. (v. Monatschrift 37; 194 ff.) Its curriculum was very ambitious. It quickly disintegrated because the pupils were not adequately prepared for such an elaborate course of studies. Of a school at Karlsruhe, founded in 1795, the writer could find but little information. (v. A Z J., 1908, p. 353) In the following year, however, Hirsch Borchard financed a school at Halberstadt, which was really the first to make a compromise between the traditional curriculum and modern secular requirements. Borchard specified in his will that Talmud be given a prominent place in the course of studies. But on the other hand, his school, Hascharath Zewi, aimed to give instruction in the branches of general culture. In June, 1798 at Hanover, another school, the David'sche Stiftungsschule was founded on the model of the Berlin Free School. (cf. A Z J. 1852; 431) That year a girls' school was also erected at Hamburg. In the following year a group of young men at Dessau organized a society, the Chinuch Neahrim, to give secular instruction to the poor. They did not, it seems, succeed in establishing their school until 1801, when Israel Jacobson, who was erecting his school at Seesen, came to their aid.

Israel Jacobson had all the necessary qualities for stimulating a regeneration in Jewish Education. He had received an excellent training both in Jewish matters and in the fields of general culture. In addition he was endowed with the spirit of philanthropy. Altho his income was large, he retained a minimum for himself. A man learned in the Talmud had advised him that he who would help to prepare for God's Kingdom on earth, should devote himself to the education of the young, in particular of the needy. So he dedicated himself to the emancipation of the Jews, especially thru modern education. His school at Seesen, 1801, became the center of the second stage in the development of Jewish Education. The Free School at Berlin had endeavored to foster a healthy growth in Jewish Education. But, as we noted before, conditions were not yet ripe. The political situation became favorable only after French arms and ideals invaded and secured possession of Western Germany by the treaty of 1795. On the threshold of a new century Jacobson began at Seesen his labors, which rejuvenated Jewish cultural conditions, and in a few years transformed the whole content and method of Jewish Education throughout Germany.

Jacobson's school in the Harz mountains was organized with a religious and industrial curriculum, intended to satisfy both the progressive and conservative groups. (cf. Arnheim:

"Die Jacobson Schule zu Seesen.") In this school, Jacobson endeavored also to overcome the existing prejudice between the Christians and Jews by rearing together children of both religious denominations. The spectacle of Jewish boys with covered heads at the side of their little Christian school-mates praying to their common Father was the greatest factor in securing political equality for the Jews of Germany. (cf Jost's History.)

Through Jacobson's inspiration the other Jewish schools of Western Germany were also insured a healthy growth. We noted above his relation to the organization of the Franzschule at Dessau, of which David Fraenkel became the director. He also had a great deal to do with the establishment of the Frankfort Philanthropinum in 1804, ten years after Hurwitz suppressed the first attempt to found a modern school. Jakob Susskind Stern, who undoubtedly had intimate connections with Jacobson, had formulated a plan for its establishment in the same year that the school at Seesen was founded. (v. Festschrift Philanthropinum . . . F. a M., 1904.) In 1806, Jacobson influenced his father in law, Isaac Herz Samson, to remodel the school at Wolfenbuettel. Jost, in his memoirs, gives a vivid picture of the wonderful changes for the better that came with the new director. Jacobson's prestige continued to spread and brought about the founding of three other schools, at Cassel 1809, at Paderborn 1811, and at Hildesheim, 1812. He also incited the establishment of the first successful Jewish normal school, at Cassel in 1810. (v. Monatschrift, 58; 335 ff.) It is not certain whether he was sponsor for the last Free School in the period of Transition, the Israelite Free School of Hamburg, 1815.

As economic conditions improved under French rule and influence, a new type of ^{school} Jews came into existence among the Jews of Germany, namely the trade-schools. These schools were intended to train poor children for handicrafts so that they might earn a living in a manner considered more respectable than merchandising. The first society to foster trades among the Jews was formed at Cassel, 1802. It was Jacobson once more, who in his effort to emancipate his brethren seized upon the further plan in 1805 to train Jews as artisans. (v. Jewish Encyc. - "Education") In this project he was encouraged by the government of Westphalia, even though not whole-heartedly. After 1807, he introduced into his school at Seesen a type of cooperative course. Several boys, who worked with their masters during the week were given instruction on Saturday and Sunday in writing, arithmetic, and German. The idea of fostering trades soon became very popular among the Jews of Germany, probably because of the desire to remove prejudice against them due to their engaging in mercantile affairs. In 1812, a society for promoting arts and crafts was organized in Prussia. During succeeding years many similar associations came into being.

After 1809, Jewish schools did not increase in numbers as much as conditions would seem to warrant. The reason for this is that about this time (v. Jost - Voreinem halben Jahrhundert) the principalities of Germany initiated a consistent movement to induce Jewish boys to attend the Christian public schools.

In Prussia they had been admitted several years before. David Friedlaender in a letter to Wolfssohn, Dec. 17, 1802 (v. Monatschrift, No. 58, p. 200) complains that the non-Orthodox parents have taken too great advantage of this permission. When in Frankfurt, the hot-bed of Orthodoxy, the municipal Musterschule opened in 1803, one fourth of its total registration was Jewish. In their efforts to have the Jewish children educated in the public schools, the rulers did not hesitate to use their power. In 1810, Bonin, a Jewish schoolmaster of Prussia asked permission to give public instruction. His request, though granted by lower officials, was denied by those in higher authority on the ground that Jewish children should, as far as possible, be educated in the Christian schools. The establishment of specifically Jewish schools, therefore, could not be considered with favor. (v. Geiger: Juden in Berlin - Anmerkungen, p 239.)

The more modern Jewish schools established in the period of Transition following Mendelssohn showed aptitude for appropriating better methods of instruction. David Friedlaender at the head of the Freischule in Berlin introduced all the advanced principles of Basedow. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Geisenheimer, of the Frankfort Philanthropin, took a trip to France with the object of studying and adopting the Pestalozzian method. By 1807, H. M. Bock had the confidence to appeal in Berlin for an elementary school for the well-to-do on the assurance that his course of studies, his teachers, and text-books would be as progressive as the best non-Jewish. Felix Lazarus in the Monatschrift, No. 58, is authority for the statement that the Jewish elementary school at Cassel, established 1809, was far superior to the then existing non-Jewish elementary schools. Jewish Education as a whole, however, by the close of the period of Transition had not had sufficient time to retrieve all the lost ground. Minister Schuckmann of Prussia on Nov. 2nd, 1812, summarized the situation as follows: "Jewish Education is very deficient and undeveloped both with respect to conditions and methods of instruction as well as with respect to the persons dispensing this."

In the three decades of the Transition, from 1786-1815, Jewish Education had been transformed. The establishment of schools in the large cities forced the Orthodox to make some concessions to secular culture. By 1805, the spirit of Mendelssohn had penetrated into one of the strongholds of Orthodoxy. In that year a Talmud-Torah for the poor was established in Hamburg. Through the insistence of S. R. Hirsch's grandfather, Mendel Frankfurter, who had become acquainted with Mendelssohn, the Talmud Torah was compelled to introduce the minimum elements for a civilian livelihood. Even the Chedarim underwent changes. The school-rooms were made brighter. Teachers who had method were substituted for the Melammedim. The school discipline improved perceptibly. (v. Strassburger, p. 200.) Zunz at the celebration of Mendelssohn's centenary in 1829, made the statement "there is not one Jewish School in Germany, in which for the past number of decades, the German Translation of the Bible has not been used." By the close of the period of Transition, according to Jost, in his History, IX, p. 186, even rabbinical institutions found themselves compelled to take notice of the

preparatory studies in general demand. In fact as a triumph at the close of the Transition the Vice-Oberlandrabbiner, Weil, gave his consent to the establishment of a school with preparatory elementary classes, and even secured contributions for it.

III. CONCLUSION.

This presentation concludes with the year 1815, when the Orthodox began to regard secular knowledge as the prerequisite of a complete Jewish Education. But the problem of Jewish Education was not solved by that step. Today it is just as perplexing as ever.

Through a careful comparison of the crisis in Jewish Education in the period of the Transition with that of our time, we are struck with the fact that the problem has completely reversed itself. After Mendelssohn there was the danger of Jewish Life becoming stagnant unless the waters of secular culture should be permitted to flow through it. Our fear today is lest Jewish Life may dry up by reason of its cutting itself off from the ancient wells of Jewish learning.

Jewish Education in the period of conflict following Mendelssohn has a lesson for us today. It is especially urgent for our progressives, who are taking the stand of the Mendelssohnian "school", which, in its fervor to escape Jewish separatism, fell into the mire of irreligious and superficial universalism. David Friedlaender, Mendelssohn's Elisha, had the courage to press onto the inevitable goal of such one-sided over-zealousness.

Looking back upon the conflict between Mendelssohn's followers and the conservatives, we appreciate that while the suggestions of the former were well-taken, the fears of the latter were just as well-founded. There is the ever-present danger that an over-emphasis of universalism results in a neglect of the treasures and spirit of Judaism. With this added peril to Jewry: that a modern Friedlaender can find not a few Probst Tellers, who will grant him leave to flee Judaism. Under modern conditions only social anti-semitism can coerce a Friedlaender to remain within the Jewish fold. For such Judaism is truly a curse; from such Judaism can derive no beneficial stimuli.

If Judaism is to emerge unimpaired from its intercourse with secular culture, - a crisis which has not been passed since the days of Mendelssohn, - we must strike a happy medium between the conflicting parties of the period of Transition. We must with Mendelssohn's disciples insist upon the appropriation of all secular progress. But at the same time, we must with the sincerely conservative of that era, insist upon equal devotion to the heritage of Judaism.

Just upon his graduation rejected an offer to become a rabbi in Israel, and instead took up the profession of a teacher, because he believed that the salvation of Judaism lies not so much in a change of customs and ceremonies as in an adequate method of Jewish Education. The writer begs to submit that a study of the cultural crisis in the period of Transition following Mendelssohn will justify the standpoint of this sincere and scholarly historian.