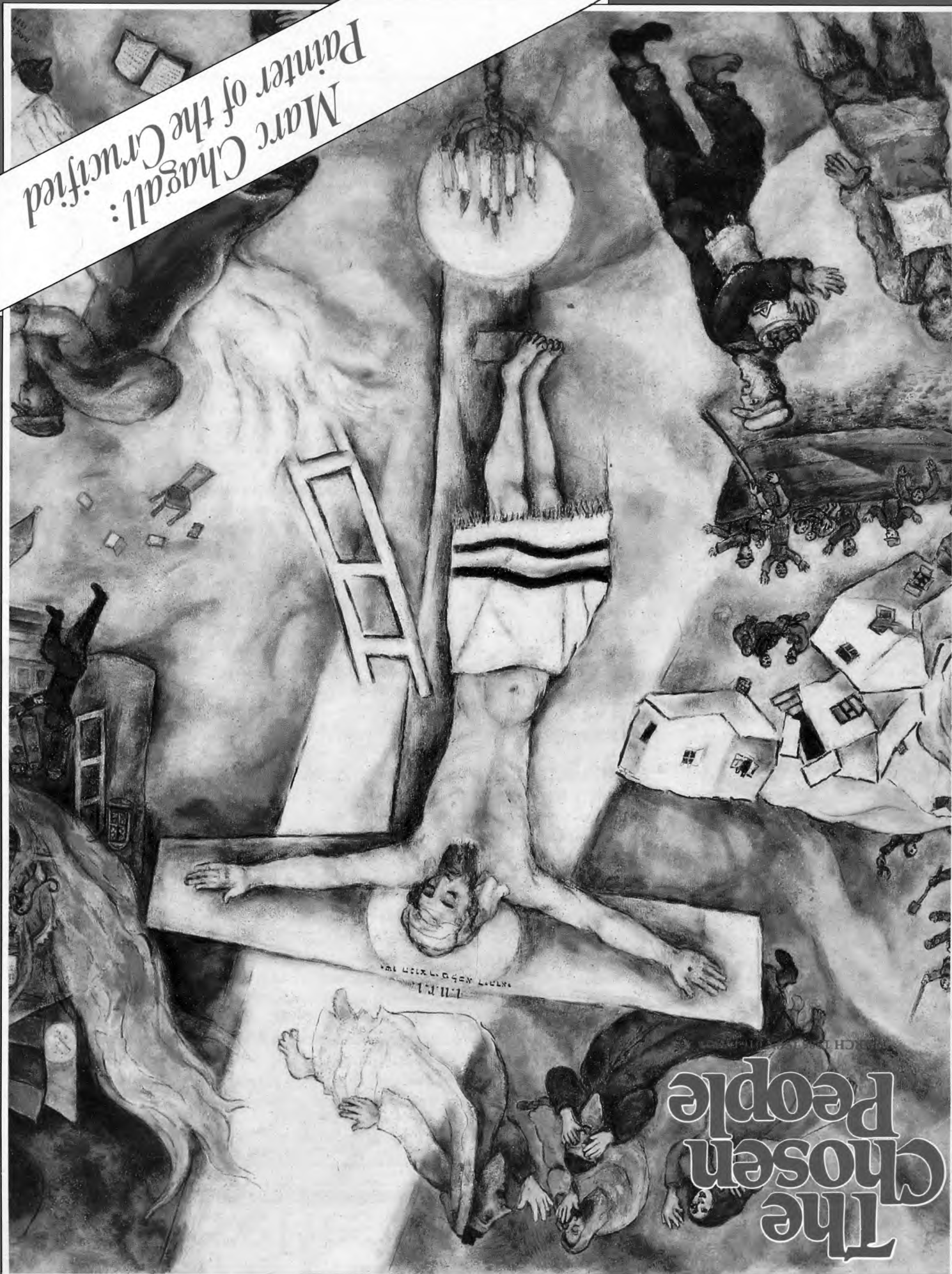


Marc Chagall: Painter of the Crucified



The Chosen People



The central issue dividing Judaism and Christianity is not the cross but the resurrection of Yeshua. Certainly the cross has been the symbol of persecution and suffering through the centuries. It is an accepted fact that Yeshua died. History records that He died on a cross. However, it is only the New Testament that tells of Yeshua's resurrection.

Until recently most Jewish scholars rejected the belief that Yeshua was raised from the dead. One Jewish scholar, Pinchas Lapide, has broken with tradition. Although he does not yet believe that Yeshua is the Son of God or the Messiah of Israel, he does emphatically believe that Yeshua was resurrected from the dead, as the following quotes from his book *The Resurrection of Jesus* indicate.

"I cannot rid myself of the impression that some modern Christian theologians are ashamed of the material facticity of the resurrection. Their varying attempts at dehistoricizing the Easter experience which give the lie to all four evangelists are simply not understandable to me in any other way. Indeed, the four authors of the Gospels definitely compete with one another in illustrating the tangible, substantial dimension of this resurrection explicitly" (p. 130).

He further states, "If God's power which was active in Elisha is great enough to resuscitate even a dead person who was thrown into the tomb of the prophet (2 Kings 13:20ff.), then the bodily resurrection of a crucified Jew also would not be inconceivable. 'Or have I no power to deliver?' (Isa. 50:2), asks the Lord of those who are hard of believing" (p. 131).

He then goes on to summarize, "If desertion by God and suffering mortal tortures are the end of a great hope-filled person, how can people continue to hope for goodness and justice amidst a world that remains both inhumane and alienated from God? Many in Israel who then knew of Golgotha were confronted with these questions—until the disciples' testimony of the resurrection revived many a ruined hope and enabled them to cope with all the barbs of doubt. Only the resurrection opened their eyes and hearts for the paradox which lies at the roots of every faith. Death was neither a defeat nor ruin but . . .

"Indeed this world remains unsaved, and we all are still suffering in it just as we also are still responsible for it. But that experience of a handful of Bible-believing Jews who were able to carry their faith in God into the Gentile world must surely be interpreted as a God-willed encouragement in a world that so often seems hopeless" (p. 146).

Thus, Lapide sees in the cross the hope of the resurrection. He sees the resurrection as a fact. Lapide does with words what Marc Chagall has done in his paintings. Both men wrestle with the central issue of Yeshua's death and resurrection.

In this issue of *The Chosen People* you will be brought face to face with other Jewish people who have found life through faith in Yeshua. They too have wrestled and struggled over the question of whether Yeshua is the Messiah and the Son of God. Like Jacob, who wrestled with God at Penuel, these Jewish people have met God face to face through the Person of Yeshua.

In Messiah,

HAROLD A. SEVENER

The Chosen People

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Chagall, "White Crucifixion," 1938, oil on

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MARC CHAGALL

A Jewish Artist Paints The One Who Was Crucified

For 1900 years no well-known Jewish artist dared to paint the figure of Christ on the cross. Then Marc Chagall, a Jew, painted Jesus as a suffering Jewish Savior. What was behind this unique painter's vision of the Messiah?

By DR. DANIEL FUCHS

Marc Chagall is the most well-known and most beloved Jewish artist of the twentieth century. He was born in the small, picturesque village of Vitebsk, Russia, and grew up in a devout Jewish family.

Although Chagall left Russia in his youth, his paintings abound in Russian folklore and Jewish symbolism. They often depict his sad and joyous memories of the past and reflect his love for his parents, eight sisters, and a brother.

He was a gifted, joyful man who had a lively imagination and who thoroughly enjoyed his painting. His appealing pictures, often replete with dreamlike, floating figures, seem to be dreams about the scenes, the people, the animals, and the houses of his childhood. He painted a rooster three times as large as a man; he drew a chicken with an unlaidd egg inside.

Chagall so beautifully recreated his delightful, gay, fanciful visions that they delighted not only young people, but the young in heart also. But Chagall was more than a vivid portrayer of his imagination, and it is a mistake to think that his themes were all lighthearted.

"Chagall has shown himself to be the greatest religious artist of our times: in his 'Biblical Message' . . . he recreates God and his angels who have guided Western man in a continuous tradition as old as the people of Israel. In this art all is majesty and, often, foreboding, for modern man has stepped aside to worship other gods. Indeed, in this century he has taken his own God in vain, and Chagall has not failed to indict him in that masterpiece, *White Crucifixion*" [see front cover].

Susan Compton, *Chagall*, p. 13.

White Crucifixion (1938)

Chagall painted his *White Crucifixion* in 1938. This was the first of his many crucifixion paintings. Shining down

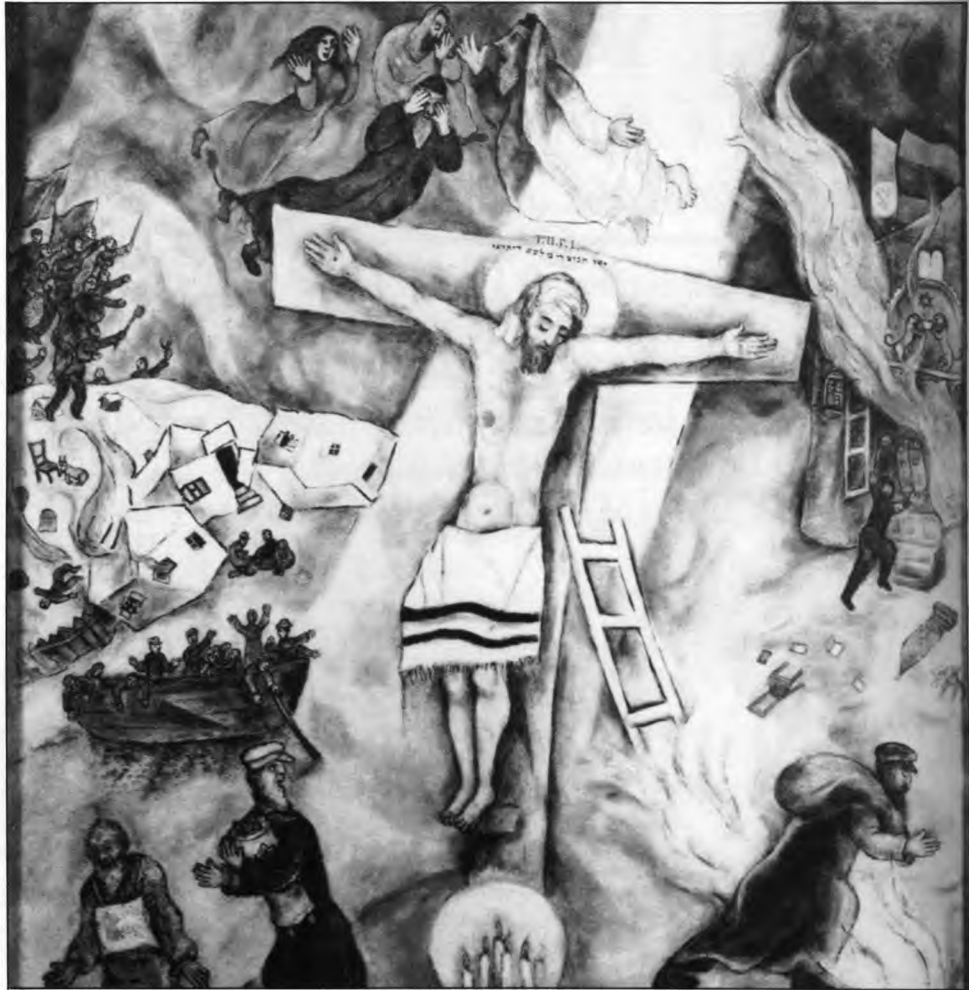
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Crucifixion in Yellow (1943)

the center is a pillar of light, and in it the cross rises. Our Lord is nailed to the cross. At Jesus' feet is a lighted menorah, brilliantly radiant. His loins are covered with a *talit*, a Jewish prayer shawl. Encircling His head is a corona of light, and over it in Hebrew is written "Jesus of Nazareth,



White Crucifixion (1938)

Chagall: Early Influences

Marc Chagall (Moshe Shagal) was born in 1887 in Vitebsk, Russia. His family was of the religious communities of Hasidim, so since childhood Chagall was surrounded by the mysterious world of the Cabbala (mystical Judaic writings). In 1907 he made his way to St. Petersburg (since renamed Leningrad) and was a student at the Zvantseva School of Art.

In St. Petersburg, Chagall was influenced by Mark Antokolsky, the most important sculptor in Russia at the time. Antokolsky, who was Jewish

published letters reconciling Jesus with Judaism, but he believed that the followers of Jesus had distorted His teachings. As early as 1910, Chagall painted *The Resurrection of Lazarus* with a Star of David on Lazarus' tomb.

White Crucifixion (see cover) can be seen as a political statement made as a result of the artist's visit to Poland in 1935. It was the closest he felt he could go to Vitebsk. There, he found himself overcome with a sense of anguish for Jews in the restricted ghettos of Poland.

Marc Chagall died on March 28, 1985, at the age of 97 at his home in St. Paul de Vence, France.

King of the Jews"! Above the spelled-out Hebrew words are the Latin initials INRI.

It is a Jewish Christ whom Chagall painted. For instance, in *Crucifixion in Yellow* (1943), Chagall painted Him hanging on the cross, His loins covered with a *talit* and His head covered with a *tefilah* (phylactery), which is a small black box containing a scroll of parchment upon which are written Exodus 13:1-16 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21.

In *White Crucifixion* there is a ladder. Its bottom rungs stand in the flames of a burning scroll. However, the ladder is not consumed; it rests against the cross.

There are many ladders in Chagall's paintings. In *Crucifixion in Yellow*, a Jew is placing a ladder between the Torah and the cross. Why a ladder? Chagall himself told of his uncle who was a painter and carried a ladder around on his job. But in *White Crucifixion*, Chagall is not thinking of his uncle painting a house. In his Jewish upbringing there was another ladder—Jacob's.

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Gen. 28:12).

In *White Crucifixion*, the suffering Savior is surrounded by His suffering people. In the skies above the cross, aged, grief-stricken Jews hover over the horrendous scenes. They are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Rachel, who is once again "weeping for her children" (Jer. 31:15).

There are both male and female soldiers in the hordes attacking from the upper left of the cross. Their arms wield swords and weapons of all kinds. They carry two red flags. They are attacking a tiny village. Is it Vitebsk?

The houses have been razed to the ground; chairs are tumbling from the homes. Someone is jumping from a burning building; the homeless are sitting on the ground.

On the waters below, an overcrowded boat is drifting. It's 1938, and the Jews have no place to go. These are the tragedies of war.

Beneath the cross of Jesus are the victims of persecution: A mother is clasping her child to her heart. A Jew is clasping a Torah; he has a desperate look that says, "Where shall I go?" Next to him is an aged Jew with a sign on his chest. Susan Compton writes about this sign as follows:

"The picture was originally more specific than it is now, for before overpainting, the old man at the lower left had 'Ich bin Jude' (I am a Jew) written on the plaque which he wears round his neck." *Ibid.*, p. 214.

Multiply each of these figures by 6 million, and you realize the suffering caused by racial persecution.

Religious persecution is also depicted in *White Crucifixion*. Look at the right side of the picture. A synagogue is burning. You can still see the stones of the Ten Commandments and a relief of two lions, symbols of the Eastern European synagogue.

In the lower right corner, a fleeing Jew is carrying all his possessions in a bag on his shoulder. He is fleeing through the flames of a burning Torah. But the Torah is not consumed, neither is the ladder at the foot of the cross, which is also engulfed in the flames.

In the midst of these compassionate scenes hangs the Crucified One, whom Marc Chagall identifies with all suffering Jews.

Was Marc Chagall a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? At one time he said, "I am not, and never have been religious" (Lionello Venturi, *Marc Chagall*, p. 45). Among the Jewish people, however, this statement could be understood in the sense that he was not Orthodox.

Self-Portrait with a Clock (1947)

In 1947 Chagall painted one of the most unusual self-portraits in the history of art, *Self-Portrait with a Clock*. The painter is standing in front of a picture of the crucifixion that he has just finished.

Once more, the Lord is robed in a *talit*. A figure in bridal white is about to place a kiss on His cheek. Is this Chagall's beloved wife, Bella, who had died two years previously?

Chagall stands before the painting, the brushes and palette are in his hand. He looks melancholy as he reverently contemplates the cross. His head rests against a sad-eyed donkey. The picture is finished. But it's not clear why the painter is so sad.

Above Chagall's head is a clock. It is in the curved shape of a bird with hand-shaped wings. The time is three o'clock.

Look carefully at the head of our Lord. Opposite the bridal figure is a picture of a rooster. It is painted to be both hidden and apparent. In order to see it, the viewer must look at the painting intently.

Why a rooster? Was it just another of Chagall's beloved animals? There may be a clue to the answer to these questions in a custom that for centuries has been observed by Eastern European Jews. The custom was called *Kapparrah*. The word *kapparrah* signifies a "means of

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Self-Portrait with a Clock (1947)

atonement” and is from the Hebrew root word meaning “to cover.”

The expression *kapparah* refers to an animal used as “a sort of vicarious sacrifice on the day previous to the Day of Atonement. As a rule, a cock is taken by a male, and a hen by a female person; and after the recitation of Ps. 107:17-20 and Job 33:23-24, the fowl is swung round the head three times

while the right hand is put upon the animal’s head.

“At the same time the following is thrice said in Hebrew: ‘This be my substitute, my vicarious offering, my atonement. This cock (or hen) shall meet death, but I shall find a long and pleasant life of peace.’

“After this the animal is slaughtered and given to the poor, or, what is

*I am Your earthly son
I can barely walk
You filled my hands with brushes and colors
But I don't know how to paint You.
Should I paint the sky, the earth, my heart
Burning cities, fleeing people
My streaming eyes
Or should I escape, fly toward whom?
He who generates life here below
He who dispenses death
Perhaps he will see to it
That my picture is illumined. . . .*

Marc Chagall, poems 1940-1945

deemed better, is eaten by the owners while the value of it is given to the poor.

“Whenever possible, a white fowl is used, because of the words in Isa. 1:18, ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow’ . . . ; sometimes a ram is slaughtered instead, in reference to the ram caught in a thicket (Gen. 22:13).

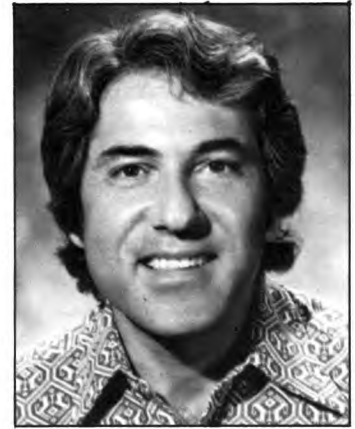
“The ceremony is interesting as being the solitary remnant among modern European Jews of their ancient sacrificial system; the cock is the modern counterpart of the scapegoat.”

W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box,
*The Religion and Worship of
the Synagogue*, pp. 445, 446.

Was Chagall bowing to his *kapparah*, his sacrifice? We do not know. One thing we do know: For 1900 years no well-known Jewish artist until Chagall dared to paint the figure of Christ on the cross. Then, at the close of the nineteenth century, Marc Chagall, a Jew, painted a Jewish Christ so that the world may see Him. In Chagall’s art, we see Jesus as a suffering Savior.

There is a future Day of Atonement when Israel will pray, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5). □

He Went Looking for Himself And Found God



Writer David Chagall, a Pulitzer Prize nominee and a cousin to Marc Chagall, thought he was too "super-charged" to need God. Then an assignment in San Francisco made him realize there was something missing in his life.

Testimony of David Chagall

As a reader of *The Chosen People* magazine, you know that God leads and directs your missionaries. But God is also very much a part of the creation of each issue of the *The Chosen People* magazine. A few weeks ago as we in New York prepared this special issue on Marc Chagall, our Western Regional Director in California, Daniel Goldberg, "just happened" to meet the great painter's cousin. Dan had no idea that we were preparing a special issue on Chagall the painter. But he contacted us by letter saying he had met David Chagall, Marc Chagall's cousin. David Chagall, a Jewish believer, enthusiastically shared his testimony with staff writer Amy Rabinovitz.

—Editor

The intriguing world of publishing and international art is seen by most of us only fleetingly through magazines and movies. To some, it may seem like a glamorous, exciting way to live; to others, it may seem shallow.

To David and Juneau Chagall, that world was home. Cousin to Marc Chagall, perhaps this century's most celebrated Jewish artist, David is the author of three novels and a political book, his byline frequently appearing in prominent publications such as *TV Guide* and *Los Angeles Magazine*. Juneau is an artist, sculptor, and photographer. They traveled in a world of images, philosophies, and the rarefied air of international gatherings and Parisian cafes.

Not Outside God's Grasp

As slick and sophisticated as David Chagall's world may have looked to an outsider, it was not a world outside God's grasp. But it wasn't exactly open to God either. One time, in Majorca, a fellow writer shared his faith with David.

"He told me that Jesus died for our sins," David recalls. "But I thought I was much too tolerant, too open-minded, too super-charged to need God. I told him, 'That's great for you,

but I can't believe in anything I don't have to work for.' "

When did God actually step into David's life? As it is for many of us, the exact date is hard to determine.

Was it when David was a boy growing up in an ultra-Orthodox Jewish family as he memorized the Hebrew Scriptures by rote?

Was it years later when his father lay dying and David sensed a deep, spiritual conflict raging in this man he loved? He approached his father, hesitantly offering to pray with him.

Although sick and weak, his father had the strength to show his amazement:

"Pray? Are you crazy?"

David didn't know exactly how to answer that question. Perhaps he *was* crazy.

A San Francisco Odyssey

The most pronounced appearance of God's hand in David Chagall's life came when his publisher sent him to

continued on following page

San Francisco in 1967.

"My [earlier] book *The Century God Slept* dealt with the beatnik era from a personal vantage, so the publisher thought I might be able to view the San Francisco scene and turn out something quick about the hippies," he explains.

"When I got there, I was very taken in. It was the beginning of flower power, anti-establishment, and tuning into yourself. I was older than the hippies; they were mostly in their late teens, and I was about thirty-six. But I saw them trying to turn inward to discover themselves, and I thought it made a lot of sense."

Making sense was important to David. Although the stereotyped image of a writer is often that of a person extremely sensitive to emotions, David had a sharp analytical mind and a sense of order that he prized above anything spiritual or emotional.

The Antithesis of Peace

In school David's best subjects had been physics, math, and science. His degrees, both BS and Masters, were in social sciences. He was aggressive and ambitious, two traits that he wielded successfully in his career yet that seemed to be the antithesis of the inward peace the hippies were seeking.

"After San Francisco I realized something [in myself] was missing. I began to meditate, not because I thought I was looking for God but because I was looking for myself. But something spiritual started, or perhaps it was merely rekindled. I realized I had made art a god and that my love of science was due in part to my need for some practical way to explain the truth I sensed in the universe."

The Bible: An Adventure

As David began to realize the fallacies in his thinking, other things in his life began to change.

"I stopped smoking, stopped using drugs, and started sleeping better. I started reading the Bible and found myself engrossed with the Person of Jesus. He had such strength and wisdom. The whole Bible became a won-

derful adventure."

David continued reading his Bible, always separating himself from the personal message it held. The "quick," six-month novel he was supposed to turn out took four years and was released as *The Spieler for the Holy Spirit*, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

It wasn't until almost ten years had passed, however, that David came to the conclusion that God was a real, personal, and living Being.

"I began to put Him to little tests. I'd ask for help and direction in every-



David recalls the change in himself: "After San Francisco I realized something [in myself] was missing. I began to meditate, not because I thought I was looking for God but because I was looking for myself. But something spiritual started, or perhaps it was merely rekindled."

day things. I saw that I was happier and more peaceful and that I was beginning to turn from the 'real world' to the spiritual. I was seeing which one held the greatest reality.

All the Way for God

"Occasionally I'd watch Christian preachers. I was astounded by their faith versus the remoteness of faith in

Judaism. Their fervor to go all the way for God impressed me. I tuned out the evangelistic invitations and appeals that were part of the preaching because their cliches bothered me. That plus the fact that they so openly appealed to people who seemed much needier than me. But I wanted to share one thing with these men: I wanted to take God seriously.

"During all this time, there was never a wrenching experience, but there were some conflicts, like my deep regard for Jesus versus the feeling that He was the God of the enemy. But that was more a sense of disloyalty than hostility, a little like being a Penn State alumnus and rooting for Syracuse.

Ask Jesus

"More time passed until a day in 1984 when I noticed something was wrong in my times with God. I was perplexed. Every time I had talked to God in the past, I had received help. Now, there was a block. I couldn't seem to get through. As I kept asking about this, a voice within me said, 'Ask Jesus.'

"I began to talk to Jesus. I already knew Him impersonally, but as I spoke, I knew I was being confronted by the One who was the way, the truth, and the life. In a flash I called out, 'Dear Lord, now I know who You are. Thank You for Your goodness and mercy, and for forgiving me.'

"I suddenly saw Jesus as the King of kings, the Son who was also Almighty God and the Everlasting Father. No longer was He a secondary God, a God of the enemy. He was my Lord. What's more, meeting Him was like meeting Someone I had always wanted to know.

"For an old egotist like me, perhaps the most astounding aspect of knowing the Lord is that, contrary to all the kings of history, here was a King of humility. I wanted to know the truth, and in Jesus I have found the One who tells me, 'He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic. 6:8).'" □

News from Israel

Return of the Sanhedrin?

Orthodox zealots from Israel's right-wing factions have formed a nonprofit legal society with the avowed purpose of replacing Israel's democratic state with a Jewish theocracy. Based on *halakhah* (Jewish law), the new government would be regulated by a Sanhedrin (a religious council of seventy-one learned elders) that would replace the High Court of Justice and the Knesset (Parliament).

Although such a proposal hardly stands the chance of being approved in current-day Israel, this is yet another sign of increasing tension between extreme Orthodox Jews and the more moderate, secular, and liberal segments of the population.

Israeli University "Proves" Scriptural Accuracy

Haifa's Technion University tackled a long-standing debate over the order of the first five chapters of Lamentations. Employing computer analysis, Professors Moshe Pollatschek and Yehuda Radday have shown that the claim that chapter 2 is the oldest and chapter 3 the latest part of the book "does not stand up."

Their analysis "provided a remarkably clear indication that the order of the chapters is in fact exactly as it appears in the Bible," Radday told *The Jerusalem Post* (from *The Jerusalem Post*, December 21, 1985).

Is It Safe To Go To Israel?

Recent world events prompt this question from several Christians. The answer is an unqualified yes. We travel via El Al, Israel's own airlines—the safest airline flying internationally! Yes, Israel's sophisticated security measures and special luggage handling techniques cause some inconvenience but all agree they are worthwhile as they allow us to sleep soundly as we fly from New York to Tel Aviv. I look forward to being with you in Israel with Chosen People Ministries Israel Tours. Shalom! Irwin Rocky Freeman, Tour Director.

Tour Prices

June 2-12, Sept. 22-Oct. 2, \$1795 from NY (\$2475 Canadian).

For further information write Tour Director, Box 2000, Orangeburg, NY 10962.

For our Western Region Friends

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Banquet"**

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sponsored by Calvary Church of Santa Ana,
Pastor David Hocking

If you have ever wanted to demonstrate your love for Israel and her people, then here is a perfect opportunity. You'll enjoy a delicious meal and hear Harold A. Sevener (President, ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries) speak on current events in Israel. A local rabbi will bring greetings from the Jewish community, and singer Dorothy McPherson will be the featured soloist. A special offering will be received for the Alyn Hospital for handicapped children in Jerusalem.

Call Paul Dirks for more information: (714) 973-4800.



By HAROLD A. SEVENER

The



ffense

*Some Christians
holy. They accuse
by the cross. Sadly,*

When I first saw Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion*, I was awestruck. Whether he had intended to or not, this famous Jewish painter managed to capture the agony, the despair, and the stumbling of the Jewish people over the Person of Christ. Yet he also captured the hope and prophetic fulfillment of the One who had humbly died on that cross. I very much wanted to share this great work with our *Chosen People* readers.

There was only one problem. We have purposely avoided picturing the cross in *The Chosen People* because the cross has often been associated with wholesale annihilation and persecution of the Jewish people. Many of our Christian readers give the magazine to their Jewish friends who don't yet know the Messiah, and we don't want a symbol charged with tragic connotations to obscure our message of the loving Jewish Messiah.

The Cross of Today

To most people, both Christians and non-Christians, the cross is a universal symbol of Christianity, much as the Star of David represents Judaism.

of the Cross

revere the cross as an object, as if it, in itself were those who shrink from this practice as being offended this has nothing to do with the offense of the cross.

To most Gentiles, believers and non-believers, the cross represents love and the vigilant spiritual battle fought by Jesus Christ.

During the years preceding Yeshua's death, the cross was an abomination to the Jew. The Jewish people never practiced crucifixion.

However, to the Jews the cross is a frightening symbol that conjures up visions of the Crusaders as they marched through Jewish ghettos slaughtering people and forcing them to convert by threat of death. To the Jewish mind, the cross symbolizes a Gentile world committed to the destruction of Judaism.

How could two groups of people look at the same symbol so differently—one seeing in it a symbol of love; the other, a symbol of hate?

The most obvious answer is that almost 2,000 years have passed since the death of Yeshua. During that time there have been many misuses and

abuses of the cross, as mentioned above.

The Cross of Yesterday

During the years preceding Yeshua's death, we see that the cross was an abomination to the Jew. The Jewish people never practiced crucifixion.

There are two different words translated *hang* in the Old Testament: *talah* and *yaqah*. Both Hebrew words refer to hanging without impaling one with nails or spikes.

According to Jewish law, there were only three ways a criminal could be executed: stoning (cf. Lev. 24:16-23; Dt. 13:10; 17:2-7); burning (cf. Gen. 38:24; Lev. 20:14; 21:9; Josh. 7:25); and hanging or suspension from a tree or gallows (cf. Josh. 8:29; 10:26; 2 Sam. 4:7-12).

Hanging was normally reserved for the execution of non-Jews, but biblical law did demand that the body of anyone executed by stoning or burning should also be hanged after the execution (cf. Dt. 21:22, 23).

Crucifixion as a means of execution is found in Assyrian, Egyptian, Persian, Greek, Punic, and Roman literature. It may have been imported into Israel by the Persians (cf. Ezra 6:11). As the standard Roman mode of execution for non-Romans, it was practiced on a

large scale in Judea under Roman occupation.

Josephus reports many incidents of crucifixion often as part of religious persecutions.

"Antiochus IV crucified Jews in Jerusalem who would not relinquish their faith (Ant., 12:256). Two thousand rebels were crucified by Quintilius Varus (Ant., 17:295). . . . [About A.D. 52], there was another wholesale crucifixion of zealots at the hand of Quadratus (Wars, 2:241). . . . When Jerusalem was besieged, Titus ordered all Jewish prisoners of war to be crucified on the walls of the city and there were as many as 500 crucifixions a day (Wars, 5:449-51). . . .

"Josephus also reports crucifixions at the hands of the Jewish king Alexander Yannai, adding that this act of cruelty was an imitation of gentile usage. While he and his concubines were carousing, he ordered 800 Pharisees to be crucified and their wives and children killed before their eyes (Ant., 13:380-1), an atrocity said to be alluded to in the Qumran commentary on the Book of Nahum (4QpNah 2:13) with the postscript: 'such a thing has never before been done in Israel, for the Scripture [Deut. 21:23] designates a man hung up alive as a reproach unto God.' "

Encyclopedia Judaica,
vol. 5, pp. 1134-1135.

The Cross of Jesus

How strange that Jesus, who would have been familiar with the odious connotations of crucifixion, often made references to the cross (cf. Mt. 10:38; 16:24) in describing the burden of life that one must bear who follows Him. Such a life demands a commitment that may include a painful, odious, and unjust death.

Was the Savior, in His references to

continued on page 14

Rx for Hopelessness

Sam Nadler, Missionary, N.Y.

Barry began coming to our Thursday night Bible study after he saw an ad we had in the *Village Voice* inviting inquiries. He was Jewish, in his early thirties, and said that he had always "sort of" believed in Jesus.

Over the next several months he came regularly, often staying afterward to talk. During this time he made a firm commitment to Christ and began bringing his brother to the Bible study with him.

One night after the study, Barry handed me a letter. Instead of reading it immediately, I talked with his brother and found that he was eager to accept Christ. That night, the joy in seeing this young man come to faith almost overshadowed my curiosity about the letter.

But when I got home and opened it, I found a tale that brought even greater joy to my rejoicing heart. It told the story of how Barry had been about to commit suicide when he saw our ad and decided to try our meeting as a last resort. He told how God had used us to turn his life around.

There was one line, however, that was especially meaningful. It was a prayer which God had already answered so beautifully that same night—a prayer that expressed the thing Barry now wanted most: that his brother would soon come to faith. □



Northeast Regional Director Sam Nadler is a native New Yorker who came to Christ in 1972.



He's from Kansas; she's from New York. Now Bill and Edith Freeman serve the Lord in West Los Angeles.

No Way He Could Shake Her Faith

Edith Freeman, Missionary, CA

Lee is only seventeen years old and a new Jewish believer in the Messiah, but God is doing exciting things through her.

When she first came to faith, a friend of hers put us in touch, and we began regular discipleship lessons.

During that time her parents sent her to a social worker and a rabbi, hoping she would abandon her faith.

Lee's strong testimony so astounded the rabbi that when she told him that any Jewish person who carefully read the Scriptures would surely come to believe in Jesus, he finally realized there was no way he could shake her from her faith.

Imagine my surprise when I realized that the rabbi she was meeting was the

same rabbi Bill and I have been witnessing to.

Just recently she arranged with her high school Comparative Religions Class to have me come and present my testimony.

She is also praying about attending a Bible college rather than the University of California as she had been intending.

I would love to have our *Chosen People* readers pray for this young woman.

And pray for the rabbi too. It seems that God is intent on continuing to witness to him. □

Three Shaky Words And One Lonesome Tract

Vi Berger, Missionary, IL

I was mopping my kitchen floor, so when the phone rang, I had to tiptoe across still wet spots, then make a last-minute lunge for the phone before the caller hung up.

"HELLO," a woman yelled.



from the field

"Look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."



Vi Berger is Midwest Church Coordinator; but as this story shows, her ministry does not end at 5.



Sam and Jenice Miller came on missionary staff after STEP and are serving in Houston.



In the sunny climate of San Diego, Irv Rifkin ministers to a wide range of people.

Although his voice was warm and his manner lively, he was bedridden, and the ashen pallor of his skin indicated he was a very sick man.

We found ourselves talking quite comfortably, even though he had not expected my visit. The Lord formed such an instant bond of friendship and trust between us that I could quite bluntly say, "Dear friend, you are obviously quite ill. Do you know where you are going when you die?"

"No," he replied soberly, an honest appraisal of his life passing through his eyes. "But I want to know."

I reviewed several Scriptures with him, including his need for a blood atonement (Lev. 17:11) and for the atonement of Messiah (Isa. 53). He had no questions and apparently no reservations about this step of faith.

"If you put your trust in Him, you will know eternal life with God. Mr. Wilson, do you believe you have sinned before an almighty God?"

"Yes," he replied, a positive note adding surety to his quiet voice.

"Do you want to receive the Messiah?"

"Yes, very much."

We prayed together that day, Mr. Wilson trusting God for his new life. I've returned several times since, and each time he is strengthened in his faith. Join me, won't you, in praying for this new brother in Messiah. □

"Are you the people who stuck this pamphlet in my door? Well, are you?!"

My husband, Barry, and I had done door-to-door evangelism the night before and left tracts at homes where no one answered. The caller's tone of voice told me she wasn't calling to order extra copies.

"My sixteen-year-old daughter found this and read it. Who gave you the right to do this?"

"God did," I answered, hoping I didn't sound as upset as I felt.

"Where do you think you're coming from?" she yelled.

"The Scriptures . . .," I tried to explain.

Her voice got even louder. "Don't you understand—we're Jewish."

"Yes, I understand. So was Jesus. . . ."

The next thing I heard was the dial tone. Even as I began to pray for her, I felt angry at

myself for not saying anything more profound.

In the midst of my frustration, it was as if the Lord asked me, "What three more powerful words could you have used than God, the Scriptures and Jesus?"

A tremendous peace came over me, and I was able to pray wholeheartedly for this woman. Perhaps with the prayers of our *Chosen People* readers, my shaky proclamation and one lonesome tract can help this family find the greatest peace of all. □

The Lord Had Prepared Their Hearts

Sam Miller, Missionary, TX

Sam Miller reports that during a visit to Philadelphia, his sixty-four-year-old Uncle Morris and seventy-five-year-old Aunt Hannah both prayed to receive the Lord. The Lord has been preparing their hearts for some time through a num-

ber of witnesses—three cousins in the family who are believers and an aunt who is also a believer—and through the ministry of some TV preachers whom Morris and Hannah watch on Sunday mornings. They've indicated a desire to meet with other Jewish people who believe in Messiah, so please pray for their growth. □

Death Was Near and So Was the Lord

Irv Rifkin, Missionary, CA

I had no idea how Mr. Wilson would greet me. All I knew was that his niece, a Christian, had met a friend of mine at the San Diego Zoo and asked to have someone visit "her Jewish uncle."

To my delight, Mr. Wilson welcomed me heartily. I could tell, however, that it was an effort, for he was eighty years old and dying.

The Offense of the Cross

continued from page 11

the cross, memorializing the cross itself? Throughout the New Testament, it is not the cross as an instrument of death that is memorialized, rather the death itself (cf. 1 Cor. 1:17, 18; Gal. 5:11; 6:12, 14; Eph. 2:16; Phil. 2:8; 3:18; Col. 1:20; 2:14; Heb. 12:2). Also, Jesus told His disciples to memorialize the Passover, not the cross.

The Cross as Christian Symbol

The cross never really became popular as a Christian symbol until after the visit of Helena, the mother of Constantine, to the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 326. According to tradition, she found the original cross upon which Messiah was crucified. Splinters of it were sent throughout the Holy Roman Empire.

To this day, the supposed cross, or rather fragments of it, are shown to the people once a year at the church at Rome. Such was the origin of the cross as a relic and reminder of Jesus' atoning work.

It is interesting that Clement of Alexandria does not mention the cross among Christian symbols on signet rings and in the catacombs. He does mention the ship, the dove, the fish, the anchor, and the harp. The sign of the cross does not appear in the earliest frescos of the catacombs. The Latin cross is first found on the tomb of

Galla Placida in A.D. 451.

Deny the Cross?

So, then, what am I saying? Am I suggesting we deny the biblical expression "the offense of the cross" (Gal. 5:11)? No, I am not. Some Christians revere the cross as an object, as if it in itself were holy. They accuse those who shrink from this practice as

Our Messiah, who died, who was buried, and who rose again, is Himself the stumbling block. He is a stumbling block to anyone who seeks to come to God apart from faith.

being offended by the cross, and thus, as being offended by the sacrifice of Messiah. Beloved brethren, this has nothing to do with the offense of the cross.

The word translated *offense* in Galatians 5:11 comes from the Greek word *skandalon*. It literally means "a trap, a snare, an impediment placed in the way that causes one to stumble or fall."

Thus the cross is a stumbling block, but in what sense?

The True Stumbling Block

Paul uses the same word in Romans 9:33 as a reference to the Messiah: "I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." Messiah came to give His life as a ransom for sin. He came as a suffering Servant (cf. Isa. 53). He offered His life as an atonement for sin.

Our Messiah, who died, who was buried, and who rose again from the dead, is Himself the stumbling block. He is a stumbling block to the Jews. He is a stumbling block to the Gentiles. He is a stumbling block to anyone who seeks to come to God apart from faith.

Jesus' death was not meant to be offensive to the Jewish people, nor was the cross meant to be offensive. *The offense is the reminder that man must come to God through faith* (cf. Heb. 11:1-12:2). This is the truth many stumble over and are offended by. Yet this is the truth that will lead many to a personal relationship with their Messiah.

Now, more than ever, we must be renewed in our commitment to preach about the Messiah, His death, His atoning work, and His great sacrifice on our behalf. Through such a powerful message all symbols will become faint, for His true and shining glory will be the only great reality.

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Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Does the Greek New Testament prove the fact that the virgin Mary had other children after Jesus was born?

ANSWER: The key passage on this is found in Matthew 1:25. The important phrase is "knew her not til" (KJV). Certainly the emphasis in this phrase is meant to reiterate the miracle of the conception of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. While an argument against the perpetual virginity of Mary cannot be based on this passage, certainly had Matthew been familiar with this notion, he surely would have been much more explicit concerning it than he is in this text.

Actually the phrase "knew her not til" only informs us of the virginity of Mary up until the birth of Jesus, but it does not tell us anything concerning her virginity afterward. However, one might say that if the idea of Mary's perpetual virginity had been familiar to Matthew, he would have written more specifically concerning it.

There are also other passages that seem to support Mary having other

children after Jesus (see Mt. 12:46; 13:55, and Acts 1:14).

QUESTION: I cannot find a word about broken matzo in the New Testament, yet your tract entitled *The Afikomon or the Broken Matzo* speaks of it. Can you explain?

ANSWER: The reference to the broken matzo is found in Matthew 26:26. Although Scripture literally states, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it," we know that the bread which He would have taken and broken was matzo. Jesus was celebrating Passover (Mt. 26:17), and the festival of Passover begins with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when only unleavened bread (or matzo) can be eaten by observant Jews. Since Jesus obeyed the Law of Moses (Mt. 5:17), to do otherwise would have made Him a sinner, and Jesus did not sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5).

Therefore, the bread that Jesus broke must have been matzo, or unleavened bread, as our tract *The Afikomon or the Broken Matzo* contends.

QUESTION: Why is there a difference between what you teach and what is written in the King James Version of the Bible?

ANSWER: I would have to say that the ABMJ does not teach anything different from that which is written in the King James Version. We accept the Bible as the Word of God, both Old and New Testaments, verbally and plenary inspired, and that it is authoritative and accurate historically, scientifically, morally, and theologically.

The King James Version is an Elizabethan translation, and while it is an excellent translation, the language does not always communicate effectively in our modern day. The King James Version was translated in 1611, and we live in 1986. Word meanings have changed over the centuries. Sometimes there are differences that inhibit one's understanding of the meaning of a given text. However, we would agree that the King James Version is an excellent translation of the Bible.

For more information about introducing your Jewish friends to the Messiah, please contact a regional director near you

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