

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

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JOSEPH HOFFMAN COHN, *Editor*

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Proselytes Not Wanted

FROM THE JEWISH CHRONICLE of October 17, 1952, we quote the following report:

Speaking on Shemini Atzeret in the Alexandra Road Synagogue of the Southend and Westcliff Congregation, Rabbi P. Shebson said that one of his most disturbing experiences during the past few months had been the continuous bombardment by persons acting on behalf of non-Jews who wished to enter the Jewish faith.

Nobody, said the rabbi, was deceived by these interested parties. He served notice on Southend Jewry that he took a most serious view of the present trend and would in no circumstances be an accomplice to any act which weakened the fabric of Judaism.

There might, he went on, possibly be a very occasional case of exceptional and outstanding merit that justified a recommendation to the Beth Din, whose decision was final and overriding. But he would hamper and hinder and try to prevent any Jew or Jewess seeking to obtain religious sanction for an alliance with a person originally of another religion.

Why do the Jews not send out missionaries to propagate the great values for which it is claimed Judaism stands? The knowledge of the omnipotence and unity of God, the revelation of sin and atonement, and the highest moral and ethical codes, are all contained in the book we call the Tenach. Why, then, are there no agencies organized by the Jewish authorities with the object of converting non-Jews to the Jewish faith, if Judaism has, as it is claimed, a message to the world? Is it just selfishness, or are there other reasons?

IS JUDAISM A SELFISH RELIGION?

Nevertheless, we do hear occasionally of non-Jews becoming Jews, but when we examine these cases closely we generally find that the reason for the change of religion is brought about by the desire

of a non-Jew to marry a Jew.

Rabbi Shebson, referred to in the extract from THE JEWISH CHRONICLE, condemned, in no uncertain terms, attempts by non-Jews to enter the Jewish faith. He can see no other motive behind such an application than the desire to contract a marriage with a Jew. Rabbi Shebson can see no other reason why a non-Jew should wish to become a Jew. Is there no possibility of someone approaching Judaism with other motives? Rabbi Shebson thinks not; and, in any case, the motive does not appear to interest him very much. The question is, what merit can the applicant bring to Judaism? Consequently, if anybody is accepted and is permitted to enter the Jewish faith it means that the Beth Din has carefully considered the application, and only after the most exhaustive enquiries has come to the conclusion that the applicant has "exceptional and outstanding merit" that will be an asset to Jewry.

This seems to be very selfish. It is not what the religion can give to the proselyte, but what the proselyte can give to the religion!

With all the tremendous "spiritual background" claimed by the rabbis, has Judaism no other message to give to the world? Has Judaism no message from God to the troubled individual? Can Judaism do nothing for the soul burdened with sin, who wishes to make his peace with God? Is not "Judaism" bankrupt?

HAS JUDAISM A MESSAGE?

If Judaism has an unequivocal answer to these burning and important questions of sin and man's relationship with God, then surely it is the bounden duty of the rabbis to make this known far and wide. They should send out missionaries and

teachers to the far corners of the earth to proclaim their message from the streets and from the housetops. It is a serious sin to withhold such a gospel, or good news.

And yet, we are told, that when a would-be proselyte comes and asks to be permitted to enter Judaism, an investigation is made by the highest ecclesiastical court to find out what the poor suppliant can give to Judaism!

There is only one logical conclusion that can be drawn from this. Judaism does not send out missionaries simply because it has no gospel, or good news, to proclaim! The best Judaism can offer is the Day of Atonement. And even if this is kept to every last detail in all sincerity, a Jew may not presume to know that his sins are forgiven. He may hope that God will forgive him. He can only know the results on the Day of Judgment.

The blind cannot lead the blind. Judaism has no message of salvation, and no Savior. Judaism says, "Do, do,—and perhaps all will be well with you in the end!"

HERE IS THE SECRET

No, it is not selfishness that keeps Judaism out of the mission field. It is because in Judaism there is no gospel, or good news from God, in spite of the fact that the Jews gave the Tenach to the world. Why have they missed the boat? The same Book that Jews have given to the world contains all that can be known about sin and forgiveness, and yet Judaism has lost the path that leads to God. They have the Book, but reject the only key that will enable them to understand it. The Tenach is the only authority that the missionary takes as he goes among the heathen, the cannibal and the idol worshippers. It is only through faith in what is written in our Tenach that the missionary can lead the seeker after truth to a true knowledge and experience of sins forgiven and peace with God.

What is the secret? The answer lies in the book we call the New Testament, which is also a Jewish book. Just as God used the Jews of ancient times to make Himself known to the world, so He took Jews 2,000 years ago, and through them made known His message of Salvation.

The Wonderful God of Israel

The Word of God tells of four ways in which the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob still keeps His hand upon His covenant people, the Jews, since our deliverance from Egyptian bondage to the present hour, when so many of us have lost our faith in Him and put it in social and political idols. Are you interested enough in this matter to send us 5¢ in stamps for a copy of our leaflet, "The Wonderful God of Israel"?

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL, 236 W. 72nd ST., NEW YORK 23, N. Y.

The New Testament is almost entirely written by Jews, and in the first instance the message went out to Jews, and was preached by Jews. It describes the work of the first missionaries, who were Jews, and the first believers in Christ, who were all Jews.

And what is the message of the New Testament? The earliest Jewish missionaries did not say that if you are of exceptional and outstanding merit you may join the religion. They said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and because of His exceptional and outstanding merit your sins will be forgiven, and you will experience that inner peace that only comes to those who know that their sins are forgiven."

You, too, who read these lines can also have this precious experience. Do you want it? It is without money, and without price. It requires no other consideration or investigation than the heart-searching realization that you are a sinner in the sight of God, and need a Savior. Believe what He offers you. He accepts you as you are, a sinner in need of a Savior. He asks no merit on your part, only that you need Him.

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE?

The Gospel, or Good News, of Salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does not look for merit in you,

nor does it ask anything whatsoever from you. On the contrary, you have to acknowledge that you are nothing in yourself—no self pride—are completely helpless—can do nothing yourself, and have nothing that can avail you before God. All that is required of you is to confess that you need a Savior from sin.

God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Acts 16:31.

To enjoy peace with God through the forgiveness of sins, all you have to do is to believe! So simple, but so difficult for a Jew who has only been taught to do.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16.

Your only merit is your need; accept Him and take all He gives with the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6.

You, too, dear reader of these words, can have the supreme happiness and peace that comes with the conscious knowledge that your sins are forgiven. Accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. But do it now.

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THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

And he said,

A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father.

But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I

have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found. Luke 15.

פראָסעליטען נישט געוואונטשען

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פראָסעליטען נישט געוואונטשען

מיט דעם אונגעהוירן „גייסטליכן אונטערנרונד“ וואָס די רבנים בעזיצן, האָט אידנטום קיין אנדערע נוטע בשורה צו געבן צו די וועלט? האָט דאָס אידנטום קיין בשורה טובה פון גאָט פאר דעם באַ-אומרואיסטן אינדיווידואַליסט? קען דאָס אידנטום נאָר נישט טון פאר די זעלע בעלאַסטעט מיט זינד, וועלכע פאַרלאַנגט צו מאַכען שלום מיט גאָט? איז נישט אידנטום באַנקראַפּט?

האָט אידנטום אַ בשורה טובה?

ווען אידנטום האָט איין קלאָרן אַנטוואָרט צו די ברענענדע און וויכטיגע פראַגן וועגן זינד און דעם מענטשענס בעציהונג מיט גאָט, דאָן זיכער איז עס איין פאַראַנטוואָרטליכע פליכט פון די רבנים דאָס צו בעקאנטמאַכן ווייט און ברייט, זיי זאָלן אַרויס-שיקן שליחים און לערערס צו אַלע עקן פון די ערד אויסצורופן איר בשורה טובה פון די גאָסן און פון די דעכער. עס איז אַ זער ערענסטע זינד צוריק-צוהאַלטן זאָ אַ בשורה, אָדער גוטע נאכריכט. און דאָך איז אונז געזאָגט געוואָרען, דאָס ווען אַ ציר-קינפטיגער פראָסעליט קומט און בעט מאָן זאָל אים ערלויבן אַנצוגעמען דאָס אידנטום, אַ אויספאַרשונג ווערט געמאַכט ביי דעם העכסטן רעליגיעזן געריכט אום אויסצוגעפינען וואָס דער אַרימער פראָסעליט קען געבן דאָס אידנטום!

עס איז נור איין לאַגישער זין וואָס מען קען אַרויסציהען פון דאָנען. אידנטום שיקט נישט אַרויס שליחים איינפאַך ווייל עס האָט קיין בשורה טובה, אָדער גוט נאכריכט אויסצורופן! דאָס בעסטע וואָס אידנטום האָט צו אָפּפערן איז יום כפור. און אויב ער האַלט שוין יום כפור ביז צום לעצטען איינצעלהייט מיט ערענסטקייט, דאָך קען ער נישט וויסען דאָס זיינע זינד זענען פאַרגעבן. ער קען האָפּן דאָס גאָט וועט אים פאַרגעבן. דער רעוולטאַט קען ער נור וויסען אין יום הדין.

אַ בלינדער קען נישט פירען אַ בלינדן. אידנטום האָט קיין בשורה פון ערלייזונג, און קיין עררעטער. איז זיך זאָגט, „טו, טו טו — און פיליכט וועט אַלץ גוט זיין אין די ענד!“

מאַכט מיט די אויפגאַבע צו באַקערן די גוים צו דעם אידישן גלויבן, ווען אידנטום האָט, וואָס זאָגט אַז עס האָט אַ אויפגאַבע פאַר די וועלט? איז דאָס ענאָאיוס, אָדער זענען דאָרט אנדערע אורזאַכן?

איז אידנטום אַ ענאָאיסטישע רעליגיאָן?

דאָך הערען מיר פון צייט צו צייט דאָס נישט-אידן ווערן אידן, אָבער ווען מיר בעטראַכטן די פאַלען גענוי געפינען מיר אין אַלגעמיין דאָס די אורזאַכע פאַר ענדערן רעליגיאָן איז דאָס אַ גוי וויל היראַטן אַ איד. רבי שבת, שוין ציטירט אָבן, אַ טייל פון אידישן קראַנטיקל, ער פאַרדאַמט, אונטער קיין אונזיכערע טערמינע, דעם פאַרלאַנג ביי די גוים צו אָננעמען דעם אידישן גלויבן. ער זעהט קיין אנדערן מאָטיף אונטער זאָ אַ בלאַנק אַלץ דעם פאַרלאַנג צו היראַטן אַ איד. רבי שבת זעהט קיין אנדערע אורזאַך וואָרום אַ גוי זאָל פאַרלאַנגען צו ווערן אַ איד. איז עס נישט מעגליך דאָס עמיצער קומט צום אידנטום מיט אנדערע מאָטיווען? רבי שבת זעהט קיין אַרומ אים נישט ניי; און אין יעדן פאַל דער מאָטיף שיינט אים נישט צו אינטערעסירן זער פיל. די פראַגע איז, וואָס פאַר איין געוויזן קען דער בע-טרעפּענדער ברענגען צום אידנטום? די קאָנסעק-ווענס, ווען עמיצער איז אָנגענאָמען און איז ער-לויבט אַריינטרעטן אין אידישן גלויבן מיינט דאָס דער בית דין האָט זער פאַרויכטיג שטודירט דעם בלאַנק, און נור נאָך פיל נאכפאַרשן איז געקאָמען צו דער איבערצייגונג דאָס דער בעטרעפּענדער איז אַ אויסנאַם און אַ געוואונטשענער מאַן און וועט זיין אַ מעלה פאַרן אידנטום.

דאָס שיינט צו זיין זער ענאָאיסטיש. עס איז נישט וואָס די רעליגיאָן קען געבן דעם פראָסעליט, אָבער וואָס דער נייבאַקערטער קען געבן די רעליגיאָן!

פון דעם אידישן קראַנטיקל פון אָקטאָבער 17, 1952, מיר ציטירען דעם פאַלגענדן רעפּאָרט: רעדענדיק אַן שמוני עצרת אין די אַלעקסאַנדראַ ראָד סינאַגאָג פון דרום-זייט אין וועסטקליפּ קאָנ-טריינישאָן, רבי פ. שבתן האָט געזאָגט דאָס איין פון זיין מייסטן אהנאנגענעם ערפאַרונג אין אייניגע פון די פאַרנאַנגענע מאָנאַטן איז געוועזן דאָס דויערענדע באַמבאַרדירן ביי מענטשן אַרבייטענדיק אין דעם אינטערעם פאַר נישט-אידן וועלכע וואונטשן אַריינצוטרעטן אין אידישן גלויבן.

קייער, זאָגט דער רבי, איז געוואָרן פאַרמירט פון די אינטערעסירטע גרופּפן. ער האָט אָנגעמערקט אַן די דרום-זייט אידנטום דאָס ער האָט גענאָמען אַ זער ערענסטן שטאַנדפונקט פון די איצטיקע באַ-וועגונג און אין קיינע אומשטענדן צו זיין אַ אַנטייל-נעמער צו יעדער טאַט וועלכע שוועכט דעם פאַבריק פון אידנטום.

עס איז מעגליך, זאָגט ער ווייטער, עס קאָן זיין אַ זער זעלטענער פאַל פון אויסנאַם און ספעציעלער פאַרדינסט וועלכע באַרעכטיקט אַ רעקאָמענדאַציע צום בית דין. וועלכע דעציזיע איז געווען אַ מער-הייט און איז אזוי געבליבן. אָבער ער וואָלט שטערן און נישט צולאָזן און פראַבירן צו פאַרמירן יעדן איד אָדער פרוי וועלכע זוכען צו קריגן רעליגיעזע ערלויבניסן פאַר איין פאַראייניגונג מיט אַ פּערזאָן וועלכער שטאַמט פון אַן אנדערע רעליגיאָן.

וואָרום שיקן די אידן נישט אַרויס שליחים צו פאַרשפּרייטן די גרויסע און קאָנסטאַרע לערע וועלכע דאָס אידנטום באַזיצט? דאָס וויסען פון גאָטעס אַלמעכטיקייט און אייניקייט, די אַנט-פּלעקונג פון זינד און פאַראיינבאַרונג, און די העכסטע מאָראַל און עטישע געזעצן, דאָס אַלץ ענט-האַלט דאָס בוך וואָס מיר רופן תנ"ך. וואָרום דאָן זענען קיינע אַנענטורן אָרגאַניזירט ביי די אידישע