

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

Subscription Price 50¢ a Year.

MAY 1962

Vol. 46 - No. 9

Can God Deliver Us From Persecution?

By SANFORD C. MILLS

FOR centuries Jews have been asking, Why are we hated, and persecuted, and sometimes killed?

I am a Jew and I know whereof I speak. From the days of Egyptian bondage, in age after age, right up to the present time, we have been, and still are, discriminated against, jeered at, mocked, and falsely accused. The record is there for all to read.

The record will also show that throughout our history God has punished every persecutor of our Jewish nation. God has done it in the past and He will do it in the future.

But it is not the punishment of our persecutors that I am presenting for discussion here. The only question I am raising is, Why does not God deliver us from our persecutors?

Is it not time for us Jews to look into this subject very seriously? Is it not time for us to examine our Jewish faith in the light of God's Holy Scriptures? Have we Jews been right in always blaming our persecutors for our miseries? Catholic priests and Protestant ministers have in too many instances taught their people to blame the Jews for every local and national calamity, including war. Gentiles and so-called Christians alike have been prone to lay the blame for almost every major and minor misfortune upon the Jews.

I am not seeking to exonerate our persecutors. God will mete out their punishment in His own time and in His own

way. "To me belongeth vengeance" (Deuteronomy 32:35). "I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

I am thinking we are putting the blame for the hatred and persecution of which we are the victims in the wrong place. There comes a time in every person's life when he must examine his conscience, his conduct, and his faith in God. Why hasn't God answered our prayers? God spoke to our forefathers and our prophets. Why doesn't He speak to us? There was a time when God delivered us from our persecutors and tormentors. Why doesn't He do it now?

Let us examine our Hebrew Scriptures and see what our past experience with God has been.

OUT OF EGYPT — OUT OF THE WILDERNESS

When Israel was in Egypt, they cried unto God and God heard:

And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them (Exodus 2:23-25).

The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush and told him that he had come down to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt and bring them unto a land flowing with milk and honey. God said unto Moses, "Go in un-

to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Let my people go.'" Finally, after many miracles performed by Moses, and many plagues brought down upon the Egyptians by God, the children of Israel were delivered from Egyptian bondage. Gone were the privations, the persecutions, the slavery. God heard their groaning and answered their cry by raising up Moses to deliver them. After their deliverance, were they grateful. No! They thrust Moses from them and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, and they prevailed upon Aaron to make them a calf of gold, which they worshipped instead of God. Even then, God did not forsake them but continued to guide and protect them throughout the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. In the face of their continued groaning and complaining, God performed miracle after miracle before their very eyes. Here is the record of Scriptures:

When they (the children of Israel) came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and ordinance, and there he proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee (Exodus 15:23-26).

Notice that Scripture says that the Israelites "murmured" against God and Moses. This "murmuring" is repeated again and again throughout the sacred books of Exodus and Numbers.

The point I wish to make is that the children of Israel asked God for freedom from the bondage of Egypt and God answered their prayers and gave them freedom. Were they grateful for, or even satisfied with, God's answer to their prayers? No! What does Scripture say was the result of this ingratitude and dissatisfaction? That out of the 600,000

Why Does God Permit Suffering?

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men, besides children, which Moses led out of Egypt, only two out of all that multitude reached that land "flowing with milk and honey" — Joshua and Caleb.

Surely there shall not one of these men (600,000) of this evil generation see that good land, which I (God) swore to give unto your fathers, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the Lord. Also the Lord was angry with me (Moses) for your sakes, saying, Thou also shall not go in thither. But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it (Deuteronomy 1:35-38).

This means that God permitted 599,998 men to die in the wilderness journey from Egypt to the Promised Land!

WHY DOES GOD PERMIT HIS CHILDREN TO SUFFER?

Did this wilderness experience teach the children of Israel the solemn lesson God wanted them to learn? The Scripture says:

The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice (Judges 2:20), therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children served Chushanrishathaim eight years (Judges 3:8).

This story of Israel's disobedience and God's punishment is repeated over and over again in the history of our Jewish people. Why does God permit His children to suffer in this manner? Isn't it because of disobedience and isn't disobedience sin? Who is to blame? Pharaoh? Chushan-rishathaim? Jabin king of Canaan, who oppressed Israel for twenty years? The Philistines? Nebuchadnezzar? These were merely the human instruments used by God to inflict the punishment. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Who is to blame? The sinner, of course. And who has been the sinner throughout Israel's history as recorded in Holy Scripture?

Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say Go, number Israel and Judah... And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly... So that Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men (2 Samuel 24:1,10,15).

Again, the same old story — **sin.**

The Old Testament Scriptures are filled with examples of this kind, from beginning to end. And none of these persecutions and punishments was brought upon Israel by the priests of other re-

ligions, like the worshippers of Baal or Molech. No more than, in these modern days, have Catholic priests and Protestant ministers been teaching their people to ostracize, discriminate against, or persecute the Jews, or that the Jews killed Christ. The examples I have cited from our Old Testament Scriptures happened hundreds of years before Jesus Christ walked the hills and valleys of Palestine. In all of these persecutions *we ourselves* brought them upon ourselves. We have no one else to blame, for the old adage is as true as it always has been, "Whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

CAN GOD DELIVER US? YES — IF WE RETURN TO HIM

We Jews must return to God! Then, and then only, will God deliver us from our persecutors and tormentors. God has promised to do it, but He will do it *only* if we return to Him:

If they (the children of Israel) shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me (God), and that also they have walked contrary unto me (God);...

Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land... And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord (Leviticus 26:40, 42,44,45).

Sin must be atoned for, and it must be God's way, not our way. Our prophet Isaiah writes. "The Lord has laid on **him** the iniquity of us all... for the transgression of my people (the children of Israel) was **he** stricken... when thou shalt make **his** soul (*nephesh*) an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53:6,8,10). Here is the only answer and solution to our problem.

Who is the "he," "him" and "his" in these verses? Surely not Israel, for how could Israel be stricken for Israel? Or when was Israel made an offering for sin? No! It is no other than the One of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah of Israel! He is the only One who can give Israel her heart's desire — **DELIVERANCE!**

Indeed, the true cause of Israel's persecution and oppression among the nations for so many centuries, is not Jew-hatred or anti-semitism, but that as a nation we are not right with God. Were we obedient to Him and living in His will, there is no doubt that long ago He would have answered our prayers and that no Pharaoh, Chushan-rishathaim, Jabin, Nebuchadnezzar, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler or Eichmann would have prevailed.

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Established by Leopold Cohn in 1894



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Published monthly to make

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Not only does this truth apply to us as a nation, but the spiritual uncertainty and the religious crisis which is apparent among our Jewish people all over the world today, is due to the fact that as individuals we are not right with God.

Let us go back to God's Word. Let us acknowledge that we are sinners before Him, and let us accept the sacrifice of His Son, our Messiah, and we will be at peace with Him. There is no other way.

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רעה ישׂראל

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א מאַנאַמליך בלאַט צו ערקלעהרען צו ישׂראל דעם אמת'דיגען משיח
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צו קען גאט מאכען אז מען זאל אונז נישט פארפאלגען?

פון סאנפארד ס. מילרס

וואו עס פליסט מיך און האָניס. " משה רבנו איז געקומען צו פרעה און האָט צו אים געזאָגט: שלח את עמי! שיקט ארום מיין פּאָלק! און נאָך פּאַר-שידענע אותות ומופתים וועלכע משה און אהרן האָבן באַוווּן אין מצרים האָט פרעה אַרויסגעלאָזט די יידן פון מצרים. אזוי ווי די יידן האָבן פּאַר-לאָזט מצרים איז גלייך פאַרשווינדן די פאַרפאַל-גונגען און דאָס שקלאַפּעריי. האָט האָט זיך צוגע-הערט צו זייער געוווּן און ער האָט זיי געהאַלפּן. נאָך דעם ווי זיי זיינען באַפּרייט געוואָרן פון גלות זיינען זיי געווען צופּרידן? דאַנקבאַר? ניין! זיי האָבן געבענגט צוריק נאָך מצרים און נאָך די עניפּטישע געטער. און האָבן געהייסן אהרן'ען אז ער זאָל פאַר זיי מאַכן אַ נאָלדן קאַלב וועלכען זיי האָבן געדינט. אָבער גאָט האָט די יידן סיי ווי נישט פאַרלאָזט. און האָט זיי געהאַלטן פּערציק יאָר אין דער מדבר און גאָט האָט באַוווּן איין מופת נאָך דעם אַנדערן. דאָס גאַנצע לעבן פון די יידן אין דער מדבר איז געווען אַ מופת. אין שמות קאַפּיטל 5 געפינען מיר ווי אזוי די יידן האָבן גע-מירמלט קעגן גאָט. זיי האָבן נישט געהאַט קיין

מיר זיך אזוי ווי גאָט האָט געבאַטן? פאַרוואָס טוט גאָט נישט צוהערן זיך צו אונזער געבעט? גאָט האָט גערעדט צו אונזערע עלטערן, טאָ פאַרוואָס רעדט ער נישט צו אונז? עס זיינען געווען צייטן ווען גאָט האָט אונז געהאַלפּן קעגן אונזערע פּאַר-פּאָלגער, אָבער היינט זעט מען גאָר נישט.

ארום פון מצרים און פון דער מדבר

ווען די יידן האָבן געליטן אין מצרים אונטער דעם ביטערן יאָך פון פרעה מלך מצרים האָבן יידן געבעטן צו גאָט און גאָט האָט דערהערט זייער געבעט. אין דעם חומש שמות לייענען מיר:

און די קינדער פון ישׂראל האָבן געזיפּצט צוליב זייערע פאַרפאַלגערס, און זיי האָבן גע-וווּנט. און גאָט האָט דערהערט זייער געוווּן, און ער האָט געדענקט דעם ברית וואָס ער האָט געמאַכט מיט זייערע עלטערן אברהם יצחק ויעקב. (שמות קאַפּיטל ב: פּסוקים כ"א, כ"ב).

אַ מלאַך פון גאָט באַוווּזט זיך צו משה און זאָגט צו אים אז גאָט וויל אַרויסנעמען די יידן פון מצרים, און וועט זיי אַריינברענגען אין „אַ לאַנד

הונדערטער יאָרן האַלטן זיך יידן אין פרעגן: פאַרוואָס האָסט אונז די פעלקער, פאַרוואָס ווערן מיר פאַרפאַלגט? און אויך געמאַרדעט? איך בין אַ ייד און איך פיל עס אויף מיין אייגענער הויט. פון די צייטן זינט יידן זיינען געווען אין גלות מצרים ביז היינטיקן טאָג ווערן מיר יידן פאַרפאַלגט, געלעכטער און חוזק באַגלייטן אונז אומעטום וואו מיר קומען. מען באַשולדיקט אונז מיט פאַלשע בילבולים. יעדער וואָס וויל קען לייענען די יידישע געשיכטע וועט ער אליין זען. גאָט האָט אויך באַ-שטראַפּט יעדן יידן פאַרפאַלגער, אַ וויסטן סוף האָבן איינגענומען אַלע די וועלכע האָסט אונז. דאָס האָט מען געזען אין דער פאַרגאַנגענהייט און דאָס וועט אויך זיין אין דער צוקונפּט. אָבער איך בין אינ-טערעסירט מיט דעם מאַמר צו באַהאַנדלען די פּראַגע: פאַר וואָס מאַכט נישט גאָט אז מען זאָל אונז מער נישט פאַרפאַלגן?

עס איז שוין די העכסטע צייט אז מיר יידן זאָלן זיך אין דעם בעסער פאַרטראַכטן. עס איז געקומען די צייט ווען מיר מוזן זיך אַריינטראַכטן אין אונ-זער אמונה אין ליכט פון דער הייליקער תורה. די פּראַגע איז צי זיינען מיר יידן גאָר נישט שולדיק אין אונזערע ליידן? מיר ווייסן אז זייט דורות פלעגן קאטוילישע ווי אויך פּראָטעסטאַנטישע גלחים אַרויף לייגן אויף אונז יידן די פאַראַנט-וואָרטליכקייט פון אַלע צרות וועלכע זיינען געקו-מען צו אַ פּאָלק. איך בין נישט פאַראינטערעסירט ריין צו וואַשן די יידן פּרעסערס און פאַרפאַלגערס. גאָט איז גרויס און מעכטיק און ער וועט זיי אַלע שווער באַשטראַפּן פאַר פאַרפאַלגן אונז. איך האַלט אז מיר יידן מוזן איינמאַל פאַר אַלעמאַל זיך אָפ-געבן אַ חשבן הנפש און זען צו מיר פון אונזער זייט זיינען גערעכט אין גאָט'ס אויגן. צו פירן

פאַרוואָס ליידן מיר?

מיר זיינען שטאַלץ דערמיט אז גאָט וועט נישט דערלויבן אז אונזער פּאָלק זאָל אונטער-גיין. אין יעדער גענעראַציע איז געווען אַ היטלער ז"ש אָבער גאָט האָט אים פאַרניכטעט. גאָט וועט אויך פאַרניכטן אַלע יידישע פּיינט. אָמן. אויב איר ווילט וויסן מער דערפון, ביטע שרייבט און מיר וועלן אייך שיקן אַ ביכעלע וועלכעס באַהאַנדלט די פּראַגע.

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