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Do the Rabbis Teach True Judaism?

by Solomon Birnbaum

OUR people often complain about the high price that is being exacted of them for being Jews. "Look at us," they say, "are we not terribly persecuted? Is it possible to pay a heavier price for the cause of Judaism?"

But this complaint is unjustified. Jews never had to pay a price for being Jews. Just the contrary. They have always been well rewarded for it, provided they were truly such. We were never the losers in that transaction, but always the gainers.

We suffer not because we are Jews, but because of sin; because we have departed from Judaism:—from the way which God had set before our people to walk in.

The word "Jew" is not merely a term denoting racial lineage. It stands for a definite religious and moral standard, for a definite attitude of faith and loyalty to God, to His laws, and His promises. Our history tells us that our misfortunes date exactly from the time when we departed from it and substituted for it a Judaism entirely foreign to the Bible. Only since then did we begin to pay the price.

And this is what we ourselves many a time confess before God in our prayers: "Because of our sins have we been driven out of our land and have been thrust far from our soil . . ."

THE TRUE CAUSE OF OUR SUFFERINGS

The only way then for removing the

hand of punishment from our heads and exchanging it into a hand of blessings is to turn back to God and to the standard which He has ordained:

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it (*Isaiah 1:18-20*).

"But is this not taking an exceedingly harsh view of the situation?" One might ask. "Modern scholars have come to a different conclusion. They have discovered that the cause of our persecution is that our Judaism makes us different from our neighbors; and since society resents differentism, it naturally reacts against it in the form of persecution. However, to be different is no sin; it is just the price of Jewishness."

To this we can only reply that this is not the Bible point of view, and not the only point in which some scholars flout the Bible. The false prophets have always been at loggerheads with the prophets of God. Needless to say, those false prophets never represented true Judaism, although at times they nosed themselves into its position laying exclusive claim to it.

HAS RABBINISM PRESERVED JUDAISM?

But again we hear someone object:

"Our orthodox Rabbis honestly and sincerely endeavored to preserve Judaism, and that is why they made all those rules and regulations for us to follow. Without them we Jews would have long ago disappeared among the Gentiles, and there would have been no traces left of us in the world at the present time. The fences which they raised up around the Law and the Jewish people served a very important and useful purpose."

To this the answer is: Our rabbis should never have worried about making fences in order to preserve the Jews. God long before had pledged His word to do so. Israel would have remained a nation even without the rabbis' help. The only thing God required of His people was to endeavor to understand His will and to obey Him. As it is clearly shown in the following:

Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night. . . . If those ordinances depart from me, saith the Lord then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus saith the Lord; if heaven above can be measured and the foundation of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord (*Jeremiah 31:35-37*).

The survival of Israel among the Gentiles, therefore, did not depend upon the rabbis, but it was the Lord's doing!

But would the Gentiles have treated us better or would they have respected us more had we been, what you call, true Jews?

Most assuredly they would! In fact, the Gentile attitude was to indicate to us, Jews, and to act as a test to reveal which kind of Judaism was genuine, and not our own estimation. Moses said:

Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me. . . . Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations (*Heb. Goyim*) which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. (*Deuteronomy 4:5,6*).

Why Does God Permit Suffering?

We are proud that God will not permit our nation to be destroyed. In every generation there have been Pharaohs and Hitlers who have sought to destroy Israel; but God has destroyed them and Israel still exists. But why does God permit our nation to suffer so? If you would like to read more about this, write for a copy of our free pamphlet, "Who Gave Israel to the Robbers?"

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL, 236 West 72nd Street, New York 23, N. Y.

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The test here is: Not wisdom and understanding in your own eyes but "in the eyes of the goyim—the Gentiles." It is not for us to say, "Vos vaist a goy" (What does a Gentile know?) but rather we should be on the alert and watch ourselves that we may not make the name of God a reproach among the Gentiles.

IS CHASSIDISM TRUE JUDAISM?

This writer once met a Jewish gentleman who appeared to be the last word in orthodoxy. Everything about him was meticulously according to the specifications and rules of the rabbis. His hat, his peyoth (side curls), his beard, his kaftan (long coat) with the girdle, etc., bore all the earmarks of synagogue piety. His shtreymel (head gear) was a marvel of orthodoxy. It had exactly thirteen points of tufts of fur around the rim, each tuft to symbolize one of the thirteen articles of the Jewish Faith. Altogether the shtreymel was so large, we had never seen the like of it before. The people who passed by on the street stared at that man in astonishment, shaking their heads.

Now we do not wish at all to be hypercritical or to make sport of the orthodox Jewish fathers, but let me ask any intelligent Jew: Is this the sort of Judaism which the Bible advocates? Is this "your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the Gentiles," so that the Gentiles watching us might exclaim, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people?" Intelligent Jews with one consent cry: "No! The more orthodox we are according to this fashion, the more ridiculous we make ourselves in the sight of the Gentiles; away therefore with such orthodoxy!"

"What do you really want?" someone might again ask. "You say that orthodox Judaism is no good, that Reform Judaism is no good, then what kind of Judaism is the proper one? Do you mean to say that we should go back to the days of Moses and reestablish the priesthood and the sacrifices? But how can we? We have no Temple in these days; we are in Galuth?" Although we have our own state we are still in the Galuth—most of us physically, and all of us spiritually.

A TRUE JEW — ONE WHO BELIEVES GOD'S WORD

No, my dear friends, we need not turn back to the priest and the sacrifice in order to become true Jews. As in the olden days, to be a Jew meant to obey the words of Moses, God's appointed leader of Israel for that age; so for the present age the God appointed leader of His people is "the Prophet like unto Moses," and they who obey Him are the true Jews at this present time. Here is what Moses himself says about this matter:

And the Lord said unto me (Moses)... I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (*Deuteronomy 18:17-19*).

"That is all very well in theory. But who is this prophet like unto Moses? Is he here? Don't you think I would be glad to know him and to follow him?"

HOW SHALL WE KNOW HIM?

God has not left us without the means whereby we might recognize him. One of the tests which He put at our disposal is: the words which this prophet shall speak. If we can find one claiming our allegiance today, of whom it can truly be said that the words which he spoke were not his own but actually the words which "God put into his mouth," then he is that prophet, and he it is, who has the right to our obedience.

"Is there such a man for our day? That is all I want to know!"

A famous Jewish scholar, the late Dr. Joseph Klausner, of Jerusalem, published a book in the closing paragraph of which he makes the following statement:

"In his ethical code there is a sublimity, distinctiveness and originality in form unparalleled in any other Hebrew ethical code; neither is there any parallel to the remarkable art of his parables."

Evidently Dr. Klausner has reference to both a very famous personality and to a very famous code of law. And we might ask, first: who is the personality he speaks of? Is it Moses, or Isaiah, or Rabbi Akiba, or Maimonides, or perhaps Buddha or Confucius or Mohammed? No, he does not refer to any of these, nor to any great rabbi of the Talmud. Of whom then does he speak? The title of the book tells us of whom he speaks, it is: "Jesus of Nazareth!" To Him and to no other does he pay such glorious tribute!

And we again ask, of what kind of code does this Jewish scholar speak? Does he speak of the Law of Moses, of the Books of the Prophets, of the Talmud, the code of Hammurabi or any other Rabbinical or pagan code of law ancient or modern? No, the code to which Dr. Klausner refers is none other than the book called the New Testament in which are found the treasures of the teachings of Jesus! The teachings of the Lord Jesus, therefore are found to be more excellent, more sublime and more original than any other teachings, surpassing even the Law of Moses and the words of the prophets!

And now we have arrived at the following inevitable conclusion: if the code of Moses is the word which God has put into his mouth, how much more divinely inspired are the words of Jesus which

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according to the testimony, are more excellent, more sublime—unparalleled?

JESUS IS THE PROMISED MESSIAH

Jesus, therefore, is the Prophet like unto Moses, who is set forth by God before Israel in our present day to follow Him who follows and obeys Him is the true Jew. To such as follow Him He is found to be more than a prophet—verily the Messiah, the Son of God, full of grace and truth! They also no longer need external proofs to the Divine inspiration of the words of Jesus. His own testimony is enough; and He said: "My teaching is not mine but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God; or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:16,17).

Jews like these who follow Him have no price to pay for their Judaism. But rather they are rewarded with God's greatest blessings—the gift of eternal life, of forgiveness of sin, and of all the riches of His glorious grace.

Why not cast aside all prejudice and become a true Jew and accept your Messiah Who is the Prophet like unto Moses? We Jews have so many walls built around ourselves which separate us from Him; and yet He always has His hands stretched out to us in tenderness and compassion, saying, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest."

אָנכי
הוא
הַרְעָה
הַטוֹב
יוחנן 10-11

רעה ישׂראל

וְהַקְמֹתִי
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יחזקאל 23, 2

א מאַנאַטליך בלאַט צו ערקלעהרען צו ישׂראל דעם אמת'דיגען משיח

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דער פרייז פאר זיין א ייד

פון פראפ. שלמה בירנבוים

פון זיינע נביאים?

וואָס איז יידנטום?

עס איז זייער אינטערעסאנט צו באַמערקן אז נאָט האָט געמאַכט די גוים אַלס אַ מאַס אונז צו ווייזן ווי מיר האַלטן אין דער וועלט. אין חומש דברים לערנען מיר: נאָט זאָגט „זע, איך האָב אייך געגעבן געזעצן און דינים אזוי ווי דער האַר האָט אונז באַפוילן, דעריבער האַלט זיי און טוט זיי, ווייל דאָס איז די חכמה פאַר די אויגן פון די גוים וועלכע וועלן הערן פון די געזעצן און זיי וועלן זאָגן: „דאָס גרויסע פּאָלק איז אַ זייער קלוג און פאַרשטענדיק פּאָלק.“ פון דאָנען זעען מיר אז נאָט האָט געמאַכט די גוים אז זיי זאָלן אָפּשאַצן אונזערע ווערטן און זאָגן אז מיר זיינען אַ גרויס און קלוג פּאָלק ווייל מיר האָבן אַזעלכע געזעצן. מיר האָבן נישט די רעכט צו זאָגן: „וואָס ווייסט דאָרט אַ גוי?“ ווייל אז נאָט ב"ה אַליין האָט זיי אויסגעקליבן צו זאָגן „מבינות“ אויף אונז, טאָ ווער'ישע קען זיך אַ קעגן שטעלן?

נישט לאַנג צוריק האָט דער שרייבער פון די שורות באַגענוגט אַ ייד מיט אַ שטריימל, און אַ גארטל און אַ זיידענע קאַפּאָטע. אַלע פאַרבייגעהער האָבן זיך האָפּעשטעלט און דעם יידן נאָכגעקוקט.

זינד זיינען מיר פאַרטריבן געוואָרן פון אונזער לאַנד. דאָס מיינט פשוט אז מיר זיינען אַליין זיך מודה אז אונזער לידן קומט פון אונזערע זינד. עס געפינען זיך אָבער אַזעלכע וועלכע זאָגן אז אונזער לידן איז נישט קיין רעזולטאַט פון אונזערע זינד נאָר ווייל חסדישע און פשוטע יידן פירן זיך אַנדערש ווי די גוים און יעדעס אַנדערשקייט רופט אַרויס ווידערשטאַנד. מיר אָבער ווייסן אז צו זיין אַנדערש רופט נישט אַרויס קיין פיינטשאַפט. אזוי למשל איז קיינער נישט ביזן אויף די יאַפּאַנעזער וועלכע פירן זיך אַנדערש פון די אַנדערע מענטשן. מיר לידן דערפאַר ווייל מיר האָבן זיך געמאַכט אַנאַדער יידישקייט, נישט אַ יידישקייט פון אברהם, יצחק ויעקוב, און אויך נישט קיין יידישקייט פון משה רבנו און ישעה און ירמיהו, נאָר אַ ניי יידיש-קייט וואָס איז לנגמרי פרעמד צו נאָט און צו זיין תורה. אַ יידישקייט וועלכעס איז געשאַפן געוואָרן פון אַ פאַר „גוטע יידן“ רבנים און בעל דרשנ'ס. אַ יידישקייט וועלכעס איז ווייט פון דעם תנ"ך ווי מורה איז ווייט פון דעם מעריב, און ווייל מיר האָבן געמאַכט דעם אויבן דערמאָנטן אַנאַליז מוזן מיר זיך פרעגן: וועלכעס איז דאָס געטליכע יידנטום און וועלכעס איז דאָס וועלטלעכע און רבנישע יידנטום וועלכעס איז אזוי ווייט אַוועק פון נאָט און

אונזער פּאָלק באַקלאַנגט זיך אָפט אז עס איז „שווער צו זיין אַ ייד.“ אָבער אין דער אמת'ן איז נאָר נישט שווער צו זיין אַ גוטער ייד. ווען מיר האָבן געליטן אַלס יידן איז עס נישט געווען ווייל מיר זיינען געווען שלעכטע-יידן. ווען מיר זיינען געווען גוט דאָן זיינען מיר געבענשט געוואָרן מיט פיל ברכות. ווען מיר האָבן זיך געהאַלטן ביים ריב-טיקן יידישן גלויבן איז עס געווען גוט פאַר אונז יידן.

אָבער פיל יידן זאָגן: „זעט ווי מיר מוזן לידן, זעט ווי די גוים פאַרפאַלן אונז! קען מען דען נאָך צאָלן אַ גרעסערן פרייז ווי דעם וועלכן מיר צאָלן?“

יא, עס איז טאַקע אמת, מיר יידן לידן זייער פיל, אָבער דאָס לידן איז נישט אַ רעזולטאַט פון זיין אָפּגעהיטן און יידישקייט נאָר פאַרקערט, מיר לידן ווייל מיר זיינען נישט געטריי צו אונזער יידישע ירושה.

וואָס הייסט זיין אַ ריכטיקער ייד?

דאָס זיין אַ ייד איז נישט געמיינט אז ווען איינער איז געבוירן אין אַ יידישער היים איז ער שוין אַ ייד, נאָר זיין אַ ריכטיקער ייד איז איינער, וועלכער פירט אַ יידיש לעבן לויט דעם יידישן רעליגיעזן און מאָראַלישן וועג. דאָס הייסט אז זיין אַ ייד מיינט פריער פון אַלעס צו זיין געטריי דעם יידישן נאָט, און צו זיינע געזעצן. די יידישע געשיכטע לערנט אונז אָבער אז מיר זיינען אַוועקגענאַנגען פון די יידישע געטליכע געזעצן; אזוי ווי דער גרויסער זעער ירמיהו קלאַנט: „וואָרים מיין פּאָלק האָט געטאָן צוויי שלעכטע זאַכן: מיך האָבן זיי פאַרלאָזט און אנשטאָט צו שפּען קוועלדיק וואַסער האָבן זיי זיך גענומען גראָבן קאַליעדיקע ברונעמער וועלכע קענען קיין וואַסער נישט געבן.“ און מיר זאָגן אויך אין אונזערע תפילות „פאַר אונזערע

צו קען אַ ייד גלויבן אין דעם געבורט אויף ישוע דורך אַ נס?

צו ווייסטו אז עס איז נישט אונגלויבליך אז מרים די מוטער פון ישוע האָט אים געבוירן אַן אַ מאַן? און אז אַ ייד קען אין דעם גלויבן? אויב דו וואַלסט געוואַלט מער וויסן דערפון, ביטע שרייבט צו אונז וועלן מיר אייך אַרויס שיקן אַ ספּעציעלע בראַשור דערוועגן. מיר וועלן גערן ענטפערן אויף אַלע בריוו וועלכע מיר וועלן דערהאַלטן.

אַדרעס: דער SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

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