

AHASVERUS NEARING THE GOAL OF HIS MIGRATIONS.

A PRESENTATION OF THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM IN MODERN
JUDAISM.

BY AHASVERUS LVII.

RELIGIOUS narrowness has always been an implacable enemy of art and poetry. Hussites and Puritans destroyed the most beautiful monuments of medieval art in their blind fanaticism against what they termed idolatry. Medieval monks used the most valuable manuscripts of classic writings as parchment good enough for "The Hours with the Holy Virgin" or similar books of devotion. Early Christians destroyed ancient temples together with the most artistic specimens of ancient sculpture. Missionaries in Germanic and Slavic countries or the conquistadores of Cortez obliterated every vestige of ancient culture and thus deprived the world of an inestimable treasure of information on ancient civilization. Undoubtedly when the Jews conquered Palestine they raged with the same fierceness against the relics of old Canaanitish art and religion.

In the same way the narrowness of the medieval church caricatured the beautiful myth of Ahasverus, the restless wanderer who longs for death, but to whom this salvation is denied. The tale of Ahasverus who dashes himself into a raging fire or down steep precipices, uselessly trying all methods of ending his life yet not able to die, is an allegory of what our experience teaches us daily in the lives of individuals dragging out a useless and burdensome existence in hospitals, in penal institutions, in hovels of misery, and on beds of terrible suffering. Similarly Ahasverus is an allegory of a cause that has outlived its purpose and continues to exist as a curse to its supporters. Unfortunately Christian fanaticism in the Middle Ages added two features spoiling the beauty of the myth. It makes Ahasverus exist as a warning example for good Chris-

tians and a testimony to the truth of the fundamental dogma of Christ's divinity, and it makes Jesus, who on the cross prayed, "Forgive them for they know not what they do," a vindictive fanatic.

Suppose that Ahasverus, of whom no mention is found in the Gospels or in any literature up to the thirteenth century, were a historic personality. Suppose an ignorant cobbler in Jerusalem, to whom naturally the vote of the Sanhedrin was a divine command, just as an order of the Bishop is to the Irish peasant, or the ruling of the Pope to the Tyrolese mountaineer—suppose this poor cobbler saw in Jesus, as he could not otherwise, a dangerous infidel destined to corrupt the whole nation and to deprive it of its divine protection. Suppose he said harsh words to one who was a martyr for a nobler conception of religion. Would he be different from those who condemned John Huss or Savonarola to the stake, or from those who jeered at John Brown when he was led to the gallows?

This is a side remark which has little to do with the question. The main issue is of an entirely different nature. For centuries it was an unsympathetic or hostile outside world which saw in Judaism an Ahasverus, a cause long dead and still persisting in living, or pretending to live and suffering justly in consequence. Its lot was like that of a monarchical party in a republic. Now it is different. For a century the feeling within Judaism has been that the allegory of Ahasverus is a photographic presentation of Judaism and its conditions. Perhaps nobody has presented it in a clearer way than did Heinrich Heine, the brilliant Jewish genius, himself an Ahasverus, vacillating between proud self-assertion and cowardly mimicry. His statement, "Judaism is no religion, it is a misfortune," expresses a sentiment shared by a great many members of his church, people, or race—whatever the unique organism may be called. An idea of the number of his sympathisers may be formed from the statement made by Michael Beer, the brother of the famous composer Meyerbeer, a talented poet who died in the prime of manhood, in a letter to Heine, written from a French seashore resort. "Yes, dear Heine," said he, "if I could wash off my Judaism in the ocean, but no ocean has water enough to cleanse us from this stigma." This is the cry of the Jew, longing to be a member of human society without constantly being classified as a Jew. It is far more frequent than outsiders will suspect, who may be misguided by a more or less self-deceptive, hypocritical gasconading.

Theodor Herzl, undoubtedly the most popular name in the Jewish history of the last decade of the nineteenth century, the founder of modern Zionism and the advocate of the reassertion of

the Jews as a nation, preaches merely a gospel of despair. Jews ought to assert themselves as Jews, because it will not help them if they try to be absorbed by humanity. In his tragedy, "The New Ghetto," the hero, a rather remarkable, almost prophetic presentation of the author's life, dies from wounds received in a duel, which he fought with one who insulted him as a Jew. His dying words are: "Tell my people they shall go out." How they shall go out the dying man has no time to tell. Nor had the poet who wasted his life on a bewitching utopia.

In the same fragmentary way the same topic is treated by Herzl's compatriot, the highly gifted Vienna poet Arthur Schnitzler, in his novel, "The Way Out." He does not indicate where this way out can be found for Ahasverus, the Ahasverus of our days, the Ahasverus of the fifty-seventh generation, but every one of his characters is groping for it. Every one of his characters, physicians, politicians, bankers, and authors are sighing the sigh of Ahasverus. Their greatest trouble is that they feel that their life as Jews is a penalty, a life sentence imposed upon them, a yellow badge, not of cloth worn on their garments as their ancestors were compelled to wear, but a yellow badge all the same. They feel that they stand for no positive program, as one of their most talented men, the German author Berthold Auerbach, has expressed it, when he makes one of his Jewish characters say, "The modern Jew is not so much a Jew as he is a non-Christian."

A negative program is hardly a program at all, as we can see from the slow growth of the liberal churches. Their condition is exactly the condition of modern Judaism with the difference that the latter has the racial element to prevent its followers from desertion and often to compel them to self-assertion. The difficulties of modern Judaism are in the main those of all religions. The God who created the world meets with an unanswerable question mark in Kant's philosophy, in the theory of evolution, and in the discoveries of geology. The God who rules the universe is again question-marked by the Copernican system, which altered so completely our conception of heaven and earth. Belief in the Bible as the revealed word of God finds again its obstacle in historic and philological criticism, as it developed within the last century. Finally heaven and hell, the most powerful arguments in favor of any religious organization, have not merely the Copernican system with the philosophy of Spinoza and Kant and inexorable historic criticism against them, but above all the arguments of the apologists of so many centuries. In all these respects Judaism has to share the difficulties of other

religions, but in addition it has some of its own. Because its professors are a minority, their faith suffers from lack of prestige, and their religious practices are in conflict with the most imperative demands of public and private life.

A fine psychological observation of the Talmud says that one should not belittle the pagan religion in the presence of a proselyte of the tenth generation. There is naturally a sentimental attachment to our own past, as well as to the views of our ancestors, even when we have completely outgrown them. Thus the Jew will find something poetic in his rigorous laws regulating diet or Sabbath observance, although he may have ceased practising them long ago. They are connected with the dearest memories of his childhood, with his veneration of his father, and his love for his mother. He will remember how happy he was in the days when life presented no puzzle, when every question had its definite answer, either in what he knew, or believed he knew, or in his confidence that others knew what he was lacking. Undoubtedly the Christian feels the same way unless he is still in the early stage of scepticism, which fills the man with iconoclastic prejudices, and consequent lack of appreciation of the poetry of the past. Yet the sentimental Jew who has outgrown his traditional views will at best say that the Judaism of his early youth tried to teach him that two times two are five, while Christianity may appear to him as teaching that two times two are five and a half. The Christian will reverse the simile, and his is the advantage of having the majority behind him.

The spiritually emancipated Jew remembers the prayer of his childhood in which he asks for the favor of God who has promised to keep his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He finds now that if the venerable patriarchs, who have been dead for thirty-odd centuries, are not a mere production of mythical fiction, they can not furnish him any claim on anything he desires, and that praying as he did, he drags God, the wise and just, down to the level of a whimsical tyrant or a shrewd politician who bestows preferment on the ground of the petitioner's backing. Still the same Jew in all likelihood feels that the formula, "We ask for Jesus' sake," is still more illogical. He asks for a favor on the ground of the unjust execution of a well-meaning, noble-hearted social and religious reformer. Why not ask for John Huss's sake, for Savonarola's, for Giordano Bruno's sake, for Mary Fisher's, or for John Brown's sake? At any rate it is a question whether two times two are five, or two times two are five and a half. The latter is somewhat more remote from the truth, but both are equally false.

In European health resorts we often see the weird figure of the Polish Jew, dressed in his gaberdine, conspicuous by his long beard and the side curls of his hair. It is the fashionable Jew from lands of Occidental civilization who is provoked at this spectacle, which he thinks—and in all probability correctly—drags him down in the social estimation of his neighbor. To the Polish Jew this costume is a sign of loyalty to his ancient faith. It is his interpretation of the divine command: "Ye shall be unto me a peculiar people," and as such is laid down in the authoritative codes of Jewish law, although even the most observant Jew of western Europe, not to speak of America, has quietly dropped this and similar laws as obsolete. This emancipated Jew, however, takes no umbrage at the appearance of a monk or a Catholic prelate who self-consciously parades the dress, or some conspicuous insignia of his ecclesiastical station. He does not even feel offended at the appearance of a Quaker, whose costume is an exact analogy of the traditional Jewish robe. The reason is obvious. The Franciscan friar, the nun, and even the Quaker, are parts of the large and powerful Christian community. The Jew is a member of a small minority. Therefore in wearing a Jewish costume he brands himself as an inferior, while the Christian clergyman wears the uniform of a great army, respected for its power all over the world.

A still greater difficulty arises from Jewish religious practices. The observance of dietary laws is not merely an inconvenience requiring self-abnegation, it is also a sort of self-ostracism. The Jewish banker—such specimens are very rare in civilized countries—who takes part in a banquet of a bankers' association, and lets all dishes pass him, with the exception of fruit or ice cream, feels humiliated by this conformity with the requirements of his religion. The conscientious Catholic who, participating in such a banquet on a Friday, abstains from meat, does not experience the same feeling of ill-case. He is one of two hundred millions, and in many countries his religion holds the reins of power. To this is added the conflict with practical requirements. The Sabbath law is a serious obstacle in industrious and active communities. In many instances it is even a plain impossibility. The Jewish newspaper man, police official, railroad conductor, hotel keeper, and letter carrier, can not possibly observe the Sabbath. The Jewish merchant, barber, or huckster, is almost prevented from complying with the Sabbath requirement, and the more energetic is the community in which he lives, the more this difficulty increases. Consequently, even if he is entirely uninformed on the metaphysical side of the religious prob-

lem, he is conscious of the hopelessly wide chasm which yawns between his life and the theory which he professes.

By drawing a line through the map of Europe from the mouth of the Vistula River extending to the eastern shore of the Adriatic, we can divide the Jewry of Europe into two camps. The one west of this boundary line is in a process of hopeless disintegration, while the other still continues in its ancestral conditions. There are of course exceptions to this definition, for we still find amongst the western Jews some who cling with enthusiastic loyalty to their inherited religion, while even in the darkest Orient (not excepting Palestine, the catch-basin for all religious eccentricities) specimens of advanced thought, including Voltairian hatred of all religion, are exceptionally found. The situation of western Europe is far more emphatically duplicated in the United States, the only important center of Jewish population outside of Europe, while northern Africa and the settlements in Asia may be generally classed with Eastern Europe.

This condition of slow disintegration of Judaism began with the French Revolution, when the removal of Jewish disabilities coupled with secular education began to undermine the venerable fortress of the Jewish religion. As long as the Jew lived in circumscribed areas, closely huddled together with his people, observance of his religious practices was a requirement of his social standing; and his life, almost exclusively that of a small shopkeeper and a hawker, had for centuries been accommodated to the requirements of his faith. The Jew who lived in an Alsatian village, pursuing the occupation of his ancestors for centuries, visiting villages and towns in his neighborhood to buy cattle, to sell dry goods, to attend fairs and the like, used to come back to his village on Friday to attend the synagogue on Sabbath, and if he had any social ambitions, they were perfectly gratified by a dinner of the charitable society of his place, or by attending a Jewish wedding, and his highest ambition for public life was that of holding a position as warden of his synagogue. As soon as these disabilities were removed and the people from such a village moved to Paris or even to Strassburg, they found themselves facing obstacles which had been unknown to them before. Their occupation was not adapted to the observance of their traditional laws, and the society into which they were thrown demanded an entirely different mode of life. In some instances, perhaps in the majority of cases, the first generation would still cling to their old habits, but the succeeding generation, not imbued with the force of religious sentiments and old habits, drifted away. Thus we can

see that all over western Europe, as well as in America and even in the European settlements in important trade centers of the Orient, Sabbath observance is an exceedingly rare phenomenon.

With this emancipation, the estrangement from public worship goes hand in hand. A man who in his younger years was in the habit of attending the worship at the synagogue regularly, when the Sabbath was to him a day of rest, might after he ceased observing the Sabbath in a great many, perhaps in the majority of instances, still manage to spare an hour or two from his business in order to attend the synagogue. His son, who from early youth never acquired that habit, did not feel the necessity, and thus the great majority of the Jewish population in large centers are more or less estranged from that expression of religious feeling which is found in attendance at public worship. It has been figured out by statistics, which are as complete as we can have them under the present circumstances, that seventy-five percent of the Jews of New York are not connected with any synagogue. This figure may perhaps have to be reduced, for a great many Jews who are not members of a synagogue may still attend services on the two great holidays, New Year and the Day of Atonement, and in all likelihood give their children some modicum of religious education, and require the services of a minister in case of death or at a wedding. At any rate the religious life which finds expression in attendance at public worship or in the observance of the religious law, which in the case of Judaism is most evident in the observance of the Sabbath and dietary laws, is a hopelessly rare phenomenon in all large cities of Europe and America, and inasmuch as the tendency of the Jews as a mercantile people is to move into large cities, this condition can only become more and more pronounced in the direction of a further estrangement from religion.

Another important feature which works against the maintenance of religious life in Judaism is the departure from the former spiritual life, particularly from the old system of education. In olden times a Jewish child received an exclusively religious education. The boy when he was five years old, and often at an earlier age, was taught to read Hebrew, and as soon as he had mastered the alphabet was initiated in the Bible and Talmud. The education of girls was very much neglected and, where any attention was given to it, was confined to just as much Hebrew as was necessary in order to follow the services of the synagogue. Then their education stopped. The boy who gave promise of mental attainments continued to study rabbinical literature, and in later life he either entered the business

of his father if the son of wealthy parents, or if he married into a wealthy family for which Talmudic attainments were a great recommendation, he was placed in business by his father-in-law. Otherwise he became a rabbi. In very great exceptions he would take up the study of the medical profession, the only one open to the Jews. As the right of residence, and in many instances even the right to practise medicine, was limited to the ghettos, such cases must have been very rare, and even in these rare instances the studies were considered a practical attainment, like a commercial education or training.

With the beginning of the new era, which set in even before political rights were given to Jews, secular education began to spread and with it came naturally an estrangement from the old spiritual life. The Jewish boy attending a secondary school soon found out that he was considered a sort of semi-savage, and he threw himself into that new life with a vigor, as is always the case with those who by untoward conditions are retarded in their mental development. A strong illustration of this point is seen in the case of Isaac d'Israeli, who, becoming imbued with a taste for literature, drifted completely away from the fold of Judaism. This of course was not true in every case, but even in those cases where the cultured young man still retained his love for Judaism, the attractions of Shakespeare, Locke, or, as the case may be, Schiller, Goethe, Voltaire and Rousseau, proved greater than of the Talmud with its intricate discussions of questions that had lost all vital interest. In this way a wide gulf was formed between the past and the present, and the habits of thought, which up to the end of the eighteenth century were altogether molded by religious views, became more or less amalgamated with that of the environment, or to put it more strongly, the spiritual life of the Jews became secularized.

The chasm between the life of the Jew of to-day and that of his grandfather or great-grandfather can best be illustrated by individual typical instances. In the first half of the eighteenth century there lived in Ferrara a practicing physician, Dr. Isaac Lampronti, who is the author of a most stupendous rabbinic encyclopedia, dealing with all the intricacies of rabbinical law. What this means the uninitiated reader will easily learn when he is informed that Lampronti devotes an essay, filling some thirty closely printed pages, to the discussion of what grace is to be said when one takes a cup of chocolate. The reader uninformed on rabbinical law, and he is by no means confined to the non-Jewish camps, must understand that rabbinical law prescribes a different kind of grace for each class of

food. If we compare this Dr. Lampronti with a Jewish physician living in the same country one hundred and fifty years later, and for this purpose we shall select the celebrated Cesare Lombroso, we can see at once the wide gulf between Judaism of the nineteenth and twentieth, and Judaism of the eighteenth century. These conditions are still more pronounced in northern and western Europe, for these countries were far behind Italy in their secular culture, as far as their Jewish communities are concerned. It was under the influence of the rationalistic ideas dominating the last decades of the eighteenth and the early decades of the nineteenth century that the governments introduced compulsory education among the Jews. The representative spiritual leaders of the latter in large Jewish centers such as Frankfort on the Main, Prague or Berlin, opposed this idea with all their might. Still more was this the case in eastern Europe, in the old Polish countries and in the Orient. Even now the battle is not over. The representatives of strict orthodoxy in Palestine, as well as in North Africa and in Turkey, put all possible obstacles in the way of the missionary work carried on by the Alliance Israelite Universelle, and similar societies. A typical case is that of the struggle of the Alliance to open a school for secular instruction in Tripoli 1876. There the local rabbis would under no condition permit the establishment of even an elementary school. The progressive element appealed to the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, Abraham Ashkenazi, who rendered a decision that as long as the instruction was limited to the acquisition of a European language which helps a man in his earning capacity there could be no objection, but no geography, history, or any other heretical science must be taught. In Jerusalem to-day one who sends his children to a kindergarten, is deprived of participation in the alms sent from abroad for distribution among the poor. One can hardly blame these fanatics for their attitude because they know, or rather, instinctively feel, that from the moment secular education enters a community, the religious life becomes adulterated.

The surest way to measure the weakness of religious life is naturally the examination of practical observance. It has been figured out by careful calculation that at the most generous estimate there are only five percent of Sabbath-observing Jews in the city of Berlin, with its 140,000 Jewish people. Somewhat better are conditions in London with its large foreign population recruited from the Polish ghettos, but even there, optimistic estimates place the Sabbath-observing population at twenty percent. More unfavorable are conditions in America, particularly when we do not take as basis

the ghetto industries and sweatshops in which Jews predominate. If we limit our observation to the native and naturalized element, Sabbath observance is so rare that it could only be expressed in mills or perhaps in tens of mills. Undoubtedly the same conditions prevail when we take devotional exercises or the observance of the dietary laws into consideration. The orthodox Jew never neglects to perform his three daily devotions, which in the morning are particularly solemn by the use of a scarf in which the worshiper wraps himself, and by the use of the phylacteries. The age of thirteen was quite a solemn epoch in a boy's life, for then he was given his phylacteries which he was henceforth to use every morning in performing his devotions. It is safe to say now, that in the lands of western civilization only a small fraction of the boys are initiated in that practice, and only a negligible quantity of these continue it after reaching manhood. In the eighteenth century a man like Moses Mendelssohn, whose name stands as a symbol for the introduction of modern culture into Jewish life, would not even drink a glass of wine, which his friend Lessing had touched. Theoretically Mendelssohn had outgrown the belief underlying such observances, but in practical life ancient traditions clung to him as closely as the physical traits which made him a Jew. In modern days it is safe to say that the number of households in which the dietary laws are observed—speaking of course of countries in which the Jew lives on a footing of political and civic equality with his neighbors—is insignificantly small, and even in a considerable fraction of those which for sentimental reasons continue to observe the dietary laws, the individual members of the household disregard these laws with perfect equanimity when away from home.

While it is comparatively easy to form an idea as to loyalty to Judaism when we observe the conformity to religious practices, it is exceedingly difficult to form an opinion on loyalty expressed in convictions. The non-Jewish reader will realize this from his own experience in ecclesiastical circles. How many of those who are church members, who attend church services fairly regularly, and even take a leading interest in church affairs, are spiritually identified with church teachings? How many of those who had their children baptized actually believe that unless this ritual were complied with, their offspring would suffer the pains of hellfire for eternity? Within the Jewish church conditions are not different, but there is another difficulty from which most of the Christian churches are free. The Jew has no pope, no church council, no catechism, no synod, in fact no universally recognized ecclesiastic authority. What

he believes is his own business, a matter between himself and his God. The safest guide to the conception of what Judaism as a church teaches is the prayer-book in which are recorded the religious conceptions of the community, as they have developed through centuries.

Taking this prayer-book as the basis for our investigations, we find that the modern Jew is as far from his official creed as he is from the catechism of the Roman Catholic church. The guiding thought of the prayer-book is that Israel has been scattered throughout the world as punishment for the sins of the fathers and that this temporary condition will come to an end when all Israel will turn to the Father in heaven, or at the time of the fulfilment, which God alone knows, and then the scattered remnants of the chosen people will be brought back to the land of their fathers. There the Temple of Solomon will be rebuilt in all its glory, the descendants of Aaron who are still privileged characters in the synagogue, will be reinstated in their sacrificial duties, and the whole sacrificial cult will be reintroduced, thus again as in former years effecting its work of atonement for the sins of the individuals as for those of the community.

Outside of a few mystics no Jew in lands of civilization takes this view seriously. It is safe to say that even the emotionally religious Jew would shrink in horror from the idea that the killing of bullocks and rams and lambs, the sprinkling of their blood, and the burning of their fat, should form an edifying spectacle for him. It is true that within the last century some progressive rabbis and scholars have tried to prune these ideas from their prayer-book. The result was an emasculated ritual which by its inconsistency and its thin air religion leaves the worshiper absolutely cold. The worst feature of it is the substitution of an adulterated idea of the mission of Israel. This is no more, as Isaiah and Zechariah have predicted, a repatriation of Israel with an addition of peoples from the four corners of the earth who shall come every Sabbath and every new moon to worship the Lord of Hosts on the holy mount in Jerusalem, but it is the rather platitudinarian idea of making the belief in one God universal. Whether the manufacturers of such a revised creed were conscious of the fact that monotheism, at least in the conviction of some people, is compatible with the trinitarian idea, and that even the consistent Jewish monotheism would still leave open the question how this God created the world and how he stands in relation to the individual who offers petitions to him, is hard to

say, but it is sure that the critical examiner of this revised creed will find no answer to such questions.

In addition to this central idea, the question as to the inspiration of the Bible must stand foremost. Judaism, lacking a central church organization and concerned almost exclusively with the definition of ritual practices, devoted little attention to the clear presentation of this dogma. Still every synagogue retained the reading from the Bible as the most solemn part of its service. In almost every synagogue this part of the worship is performed with great solemnity. The Pentateuch, written on scrolls of parchment, bedecked with embroidered covers, and ornamented with silver and jewels, is taken out from a shrine, carried around the synagogue in solemn procession, opened and elevated before the devout worshippers, and read after an offering of thanks to God, who "has chosen us from all nations and given us his law." Thus in the main the inspiration dogma of the synagogue is the same as that of the church, with the exception that the New Testament is not included in the canon of inspired writings.

Modern historic criticism has played havoc with this theory. It is recognized that in these inspired writings there are scribal errors, which often make the text unintelligible. It is recognized that in the Pentateuch there are different sources of legislation, centuries apart. It is recognized that some elements are adaptations of myths which were taken over from Mesopotamia, and it is admitted that some of the laws, such as death penalty for Sabbath breaking, are repulsive to the ethical conception of modern man. It is further recognized that some Biblical books, like the Song of Solomon or the Forty-fifth Psalm, are erotic poetry without religious significance; that others, like the Book of Esther, present a narrow chauvinistic conceit; others, like Job, are agnostic, and again others, like Ecclesiastes, are directly materialistic. The author of the last-named book boldly states that he does not know whether the "soul of man goeth upward and the soul of animal goeth downward."

Thus we arrive at another dogmatic difficulty, which is common to both Judaism and Christianity, the question of life after death. The Jew in this respect has an advantage over the Christian, because his Bible, with the exception of one passage in the Book of Daniel, does not teach bodily resurrection, and even the idea of a future life in which the good are rewarded and the wicked punished is not found in it. It might even be stated that, leaving the scepticism of Ecclesiastes and the agnosticism of Job out of consideration, the constant dwelling on prosperity and long life as reward for good-

ness proves that the Judaism of the Bible did not teach a life after death in the only sense in which this would be of interest to the religious mind. On the other hand it must be admitted that the testimony of the Talmud and of the New Testament and the teachings of the ritual, clearly make the belief in heaven and hell an integral part of the present Jewish religion. It may be said even more emphatically that modern Judaism, in its adaptation to the requirements of the age, has made the belief in a future life the central thought of religion, just as it is the case in Christianity. The best proof of it is the service for the dead, which having developed in medieval times evidently under the influence of the Roman Catholic church is the most popular part of the religious devotion in modern times. The Jew, if he is only slightly connected with the synagogue, will not miss attending it in the year of mourning following the death of a near relative, when he recites the Kaddish prayer which is a rather bombastic eulogy of God with prayer for the realization of the kingdom of heaven. Similarly he will attend the special services for the dead held on certain holidays; and in the large cities of Europe where the synagogue accommodations are insufficient, special overflow services are held on those days. To the great mass of worshipers such compliance with tradition is simply a habit, to others who feel that their general mode of thought is quite remote from that of the synagogue, attendance at such a service means an emotional expression of their affection for their deceased parents. Few, if any, closely examine themselves as to the real meaning underlying their attitude. It is safe to say that if they were asked whether they believe in a heaven where those who abstained from forbidden food and any labor on the Sabbath day are rewarded by having a good time, "eating of the Leviathan with garlic sauce," as Heine puts it, and drinking of the wine which has been stored up from the crop harvested between creation and the days of Noah when man first began to use it, they would laugh at the idea. They would also indignantly repudiate the thought that one who smoked a cigar on the Sabbath—an offence considered a blasphemy amongst the orthodox—will go down to a place many miles below the surface of the earth and be roasted there for eternity, or at least for twelve months. Such notions the liberal Jew would say are childish, but if he were asked what he would substitute for them or whether there was any logic in the belief in heaven without its indispensable counterpart, hell, he would be unable to give a satisfactory answer.

Now the question arises, what keeps the Jew a Jew, if in thought

and practice he is consciously widely separated from those traditions which he knows to be an indispensable feature of Judaism? In answering we must exclude the masses of Jews in uncivilized countries, and the few specimens in the western world who do not consider it even necessary to reply to such a question. Lessing's "Nathan the Wise" contains the sympathetic figure of the friar who in his simplicity says, "If I were not obedient without asking questions, would this be obedience?" Similarly Samson R. Hirsch, the literary champion of uncompromising orthodoxy in lands of western civilization, said in the introduction to his apology for Judaism, that the revealed will of God is sufficient reason for all our religious life and thought. There are other people guided by an emotional attitude to things religious. One might say they think with their hearts. Religion appeals to us, they will say, as a beautiful elevating sentiment, and while in regard to details we are not always able to answer the questions, the fundamental idea of a God governing the world is perfectly satisfactory to us, and is a stimulus to make us live a good and useful life. Many others—and I am afraid they form the vast majority of the cultured Jews—take Judaism simply as a fact from which they can not escape, and it must be admitted that they are right. Michael Beer, whom we quoted in the beginning as one who regretted that he could not wash off his Judaism in the ocean, expressed a truth to his friend Heine, whose life shows the strongest evidence of this theory. Heine did try to wash off his Judaism by embracing the Protestant church and by going even so far as to publicly deny that he had ever been a Jew, and yet he, one of the greatest lyric poets of German literature, is denied a monument in the city of his birth, and the one monument which a generous admirer succeeded in placing in a remote corner of New York, was twice mutilated by vandals. Why was this done? The only answer is that he is hated as a Jew. A similar instance is furnished by the life of Disraeli. If the religious side of the question were considered, Disraeli, the son of a father who was only a nominal Jew, and himself educated as a Christian, should not be classed as a Jew. Yet even a liberal like Gladstone, who shocked the friends of his youth by voting for the admission of the Jews to Parliament, speaks of his political opponent as one who displays the vindictiveness typical of his race. Even way back in medieval times, when anti-Jewish feeling was largely based on religious hatred, we hear of Pope Anacletus II, who had to suffer from prejudice because he was a great-grandson of a converted Jew. It is difficult to explain this complex phenomenon of animosity against the Jew which is found in Chris-

tian as well as in Mohammedan countries, and to a certain extent was even noticeable in the Hellenic world of Alexandria as well as in Rome.

My idea is that the main psychical force which accounts for this phenomenon, is the snobbery inherent in all mankind, which hates where it can not despise, and despises what is different from itself, and this sentiment is intensified by a religious fanaticism and maintained by this mental inertia which accepts views and prejudices of the past without questioning. Be it as it may, the fact remains that this hostile attitude which does not allow the Jew to get rid of his Judaism, which sees the Jew, and only the Jew, in him, even when he rises high above mediocrity, as poet, artist, or statesman, is the strongest cement to solidify social consciousness amongst the Jews. A fine psychological observation of the Talmud says that the ring which Ahasverus handed to Haman had greater effect on preserving Judaism than all prophets and prophetesses with their preachments. Individual Jews have often been absorbed by their environment. The main condition is and was that they should not soar above the average. No one can trace to-day the descendants of those who embraced Christianity a century ago. A student of genealogy recently found out that one Count Fries, who belongs to the exclusive circles of German aristocracy was a descendant of a Berlin banker, bearing the typical name of Daniel Itzig. If Count Fries or his sister, who is a Countess Coudenhove, were to land in New York to-day, all the exclusive clubs of the metropolis, or of Newport, would throw their portals wide ajar to receive such a distinguished guest, while these very same portals would remain tightly closed to such a respectable, generous, and even wealthy Jewish banker, as Daniel Itzig was. Open the gates to Daniel Itzig, let the King of Persia hand the ring to Mordecai instead of Haman, and the king's namesake, the cobbler of Jerusalem, will find the coveted resting place which has been denied to him for almost twenty centuries.