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PHILIP SLOMOVITZ
Editor and Publisher

CARMI M. SLOMOVITZ
Business Manager

SIDNEY SHMARAK
Advertising Manager

CHARLOTTE DUBIN
City Editor

Sabbath Scriptural Selections

This Sabbath, the 28th day of Tamuz, 5727, the following scriptural selections will be read in our synagogues:

Pentateuchal portion, Num. 33:1-36:13. Prophetic portion, Jeremiah 2:4:28, 3:4. Candle lighting, Friday, August 4, 8:29 p.m.

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Social Action Needed More Than Legislation

A week of terror, of fears and anxieties, has ended. Now we are commencing a long-term testing period, as we enter into the challenging days during which solutions must be found for conditions to which the horrors we experienced are attributable.

There is general agreement that what had occurred was not a race riot, that the Negro community has suffered more than the white, that an irresponsible element among the Negroes saw fit to resort to vandalism, to looting, to violence, and some whites assisted them or acted on their own during the final hours of sniping.

Now the law-makers are at work, and with the resumption of sanity, the return to clear thinking, we must consider seriously whether the need is for legislation or a much more vast program of social planning.

There is good reason for believing, in view of the experiences in Detroit, of the earlier lessons in Newark, Watts, Harlem, Rochester and many other communities, that while legislation is vital for the retention of a law-abiding spirit among people and for the assurance of peace and amity among all citizens, law-abiding alone is not the means for solving social problems. Those who participate in riots, who do the looting, who give vent to pent-up emotions very often are unaware of the very existence of laws aimed at preventing their lawlessness.

That is why the congressional anti-riot measure or any similar proposal may have no effect on existing conditions. What is needed is a social study, a human determination to correct the errors of a century, based on the people's will for harmony among all citizens, with just rights and equal opportunities for all.

There is no doubt that black power or white power, when it is exerted, when its brutal aspect of superiority or quest for domination is appealed to, contributes to the horrifying events that have marred the tranquility of our communities. But the elements resorting to such appeals are minorities in both ranks and what is needed is correction of the social system involving the majorities. The overwhelming public opinion is for justice to the Negro and for the curbing of any possible factor that might contribute to rioting.

To strengthen the views of the majorities and the feelings of the American people there is need for social readjustments, for assurance of just dealings with Negroes leading to the elimination of all obstacles towards the roads to equality and fair opportunities. The fact that riots have developed in communities where it has been known for many years that there are inequities, that, as in Newark, Negroes are nearly half of the city's population but are living in squalor, points to a lack of understanding of the existing problem.

It is a problem that cannot be solved overnight. But it must be solved by the social engineers in our midst, by earnest efforts to bring whites and blacks together as a single team to plan the abolition of obstacles on the road to justice and to establish a common understanding in a program for amity that might assure unanimity in action to strive for an end to hatreds that lead to rioting, looting, murders.

In some instances, anti-Semitic feelings played a role in race riots. There was a measure of it here, but what had happened primarily was that lawless elements ran amuck. There was a period of hate and of avarice, and looting resulted.

Indeed some Negro black power propagators have seen fit to inject the Jewish issue into the discussion on the racial problem. Car-

michael, Brown, Powell and others resorted to it. It is important, therefore, to recall a recent statement by an eminent Negro leader on the existing situation. It is relevant to the issue and it has received the endorsement of the Jewish Labor Committee.

Bayard Rustin, in an address to the JLC, said, in part, in reference to Negro reactions in their relationship with Jews:

Nobody can be right, because the objective situation is so bad. So they turn on the Jews. And that is precisely because they had faith that the Jews, who had known persecution, would continue to stand with them as they had from the beginning in this fight.

They say, "The Jews have power. They control the unions. They own the banks. They've got power. If they meant business, we wouldn't be in this condition. The hell with them too." Then they turn on the trade union movement. "If they really meant business," they say, "conditions wouldn't be this way." And then come the white liberals.

But let's remember that all whites except the police and the Jews have deserted the Negro ghetto. What can you expect, when the general attitude is to say, "The hell with all the white people! These conditions get worse and worse and they do nothing about it. They have the power, we do not. We need power." And so Negroes end up with the eloquent frustration called Black Power. Meaningless? No doubt; yet it answers a need. Stokely Carmichael knows the advantage he enjoys, knows he doesn't have to offer a social, economic or political program to get applause. He need only give vent to the despairing anger of the ghetto, and "triumph" over those of us who see no value in anger except as it inspires mobilization for change.

Now when everybody's deserted the ghetto except the Jewish merchants and the police—even if the police behaved like angels and if the Jewish merchants behaved like angels—they would automatically be turned on, for the very simple reason that you can always turn on those who are near you and with whom you do business and about whom you care. The young Negroes are not jumping on Wallace. They don't care about him. But they have a relationship with the police and the Jewish merchants. And the Jews and the police, for the next few years, are going to take all the pressures, all the emotional confusion that many ghetto people feel about whites.

Is the answer, then, that Jews should desert the movement? Isaiah and Jeremiah made it very clear long ago that one is not a Jew because he declines to mix milk and meat in the same pot, or because he's circumcised, or because he follows the law of the Tora. One is a Jew because he stands for social righteousness, is opposed to injustice wherever it is, first of all in himself. That is what we blacks have learned from the Hebrew prophets.

There is no doubt that Rustin, as a spokesman for the Negroes, expressed his views with sincerity. Jews, however, have cause to be disturbed by affirmations of anti-Semitism by Negroes, even if their attempt to philosophize is aimed at minimizing the ill effects of such attitudes.

The existing misunderstandings, prejudices, ill feelings are manifold. They are part of the existing racial issue. They must be corrected. And for that purpose we need social engineering, not politics.

And if the social engineering is made practicable, we can hope for an end to rioting and looting and we can all contribute towards the relief of the thousands who are suffering innocently from the crimes of a small minority of deluded and possibly also demented law-breakers.

Meanwhile what is needed is firmness—the determined policy of local, state and federal governments to punish law-violators while fulfilling the obligation of wiping out injustice by instituting social programs to eliminate want and ignorance. Crime must not be condoned and justice must be enforced to the fullest degree.



Jewish Liturgy's Development, History of Synagogue, Prayer

Schocken Books has reissued, as a paperback, one of the most instructive books available on the subject of liturgy, the prayer book, development of services, the Siddur and Mahzor—their origin and their liturgical order.

In "Jewish Liturgy and Its Development," Prof. A. Z. Idelsohn describes the form of worship and of the prayers in ancient Israel and the reforms that were initiated in the course of time. He describes the forms worship took in the Temple in Jerusalem, dating back to 980 BCE, tells of radical reforms that were introduced by King Josiah during the Second Temple and of their radical reform influences upon the worship of Israel.

In his analyses, the author describes the Temple service, the order of which is retained in the Mishna. He explains how during the Second Temple there developed a sanctuary that was destined to replace the Temple—a sanctuary that "was unique in its purpose, for it was dedicated to the study of the Holy Scriptures and to prayer without sacrificial rites. Its origin seems to date back to the exile era, when people would congregate for worship and for divine instruction. When Ezra instituted public instruction on Sabbaths and festivals, the need for a 'house of assembly'—'Beith Haknesseth'—in Greek Synagogue—was strongly felt . . ."

In his explanation of the growth of liturgy after the Second Temple's destruction, Dr. Idelsohn explains the formulation, by Rav Amram Gaon, of the first prayer code. He describes the fixing of the Amida, the Eighteen Benedictions, the addition of an Arvith service to the two already observed, the Shaharit and Minha. "Later," he writes, "the institution of the three daily services was accredited to the patriarchs"—the morning service to Abraham, the Minha to Isaac and the evening service to Jacob.

The poetry of the services, the Piyutim, are reviewed historically and there is a listing of the Synagogal poets of the Arabic world and their poetry.

The influence of the Kabbala upon liturgy similarly is outlined and the description of the liturgy, the defining of prayers—of the Kadish, Shema, Amida, KeduSha, etc.—provide valuable guides to all who seek knowledge about Jewish religious services, the prayers, their sources, etc.

The detailed explanations of the Amida and other prayers, of all the benedictions, of the holy day services as well as the daily and Sabbath observances, are minute in their details and the authoritativeness of the author of this valuable work elevates it to considerable significance for those seeking knowledge about their observance as Jews as well as students of the history of religions.

The author explains the merits of private devotion and he states that "private devotion has been the source out of which fixed public and private worship sprang forth." Out of it, he states, there developed the "tehinoth," the literature of private devotions.

The "Tehinoh," he explains, "deal not only with religious matters, such as mercy, forgiveness, but also with the daily life of the medieval Jew in his insecure trade and occupation. The wife deals with his well-being during his travels on business through districts which had no protecting laws for the Jew . . . The 'Tehinoh' are folk literature . . . They are the prayers of the people, reflecting the uncritical sincerity of humble men and women . . ."

An important chapter in "Jewish Liturgy" is devoted to "The Liturgy of Reform Judaism."

Appendices are devoted to analyses of "Jewish Elements in the Early Christian Liturgy," "Rabbinic Elements in the Karaitic Literature," "Poetical Insertions for Special Sabbaths and the Three Festivals," "Selihoth and Kinoh." There are many explanatory notes and a general index and the index to Hebrew prayers and poetry is most valuable in the search for specific liturgical facts.

Implications of Intermarriage

The rising rate of religious intermarriage has the rabbis talking like psychiatrists and the psychiatrists like rabbis.

This is the impression one receives from a comparison of "The Psychological Implications of Intermarriage"—the proceedings of a 1966 Conference addressed by leaders in that field—with "Intermarriage and the Future of the American Jew"—a previous conference which examined the subject from the religious point of view. Both conferences were sponsored by the Commission on Synagogue Relations of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York.

"The Psychological Implications of Intermarriage" was published by the Commission on Synagogue Relations, 130 E. 50th, NY 22.