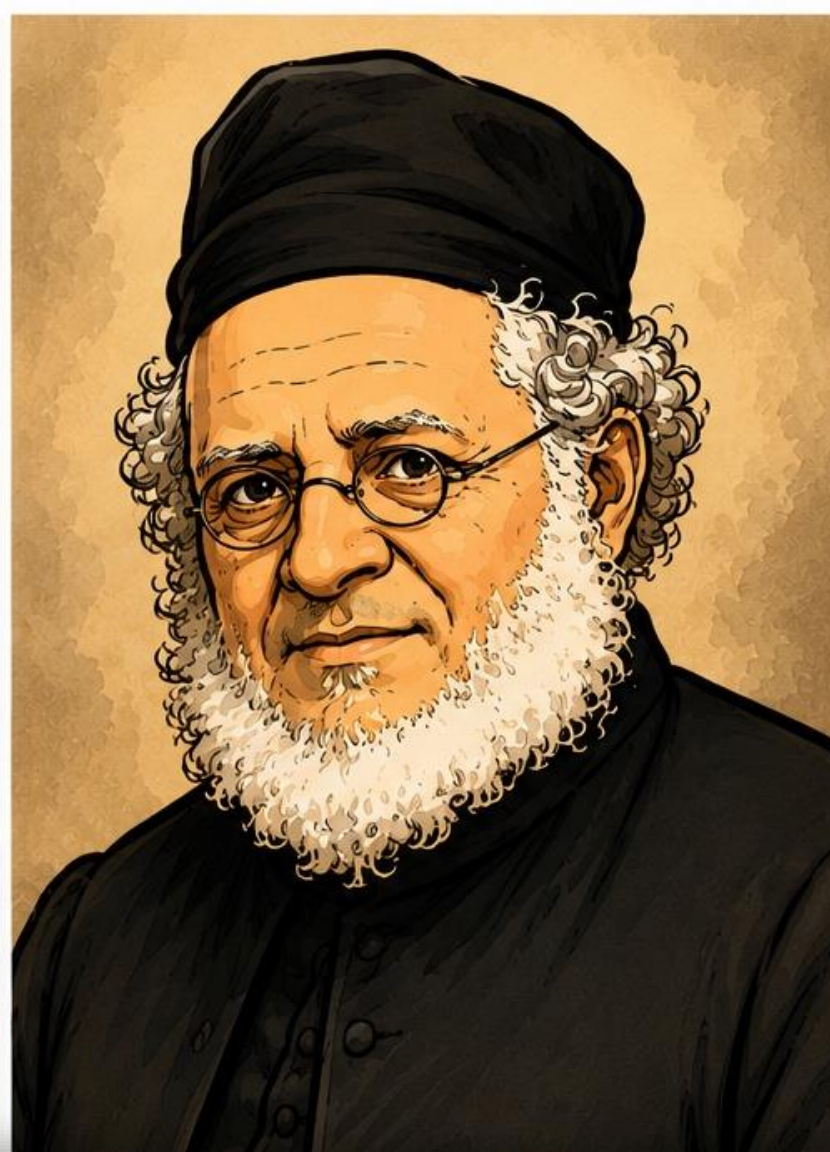




Charleston's Jews and the making of Orthodox Judaism

Zev Eleff

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN CHARLESTON, (S. C.)

ON THE 21ST OF NOV. 1825,

BEFORE THE

Reformed Society of Israelites,

FOR

PROMOTING TRUE PRINCIPLES OF JUDAISM ACCORDING
TO ITS PURITY AND SPIRIT,

ON THEIR FIRST ANNIVERSARY.

By ISAAC HARBY, a Member.

— PARSUS ET INPARUS,
“(Ut me collaudetis) si et vivo carui amicis,
“CAUSA SUI PATRIS.”—HOM. *De vera nobilitate*.

CHARLESTON:
PRINTED BY A. T. MILLER.
4, Broad-street,
1825.

that neither in the Petition, which first convened this respectable assemblage of Israelites, nor in the Constitution which grew out of the rejection of that Petition, unheard and uncanvassed, and which Constitution stands at once the monument of your firmness and your moderation,—was any such abolition contemplated. They well knew that every prayer, every ceremony, calculated to add dignity to external worship and warmth to true devotion, was the ardent wish of the members who compose your Society. Our desire is to yield every thing to the feelings of the truly pious Israelite; but to take away every thing that might excite the disgust of the well informed Israelite. To throw away Rabbinical interpolations; to avoid useless repetitions; to read or chaunt with solemnity; to recite such portions of the Pentateuch and the Prophets, as custom and practice have appointed to be read in the *original Hebrew*; but to follow such selections with a translation in *English*, and a lecture or discourse upon the Law, explanatory of its meaning, edifying to the young, gratifying to the old, and instructive to every age and every class of society. Is this abolishing our mode of *sacred* worship? Is this sapping the foundations of our venerable faith? No, my friends;—this is stripping it of foreign and unseemly ceremonies; divesting it of rubbish, and beautifying that simple Doric column, that primeval order of architecture, which raises its plain but massy

head amid the ruins of time and the desolation of empires!

It is remarkable, and it is well it should be so—that the human mind is prone, naturally prone, to suspect every thing mysterious to be founded in fraud—every thing dark to be surrounded with danger. The bigot tells you, seek not to understand what is above your comprehension; seek not for reason, where you have only to exercise faith.—But the learned King has said, “Wisdom is too high for a fool, but those who seek wisely, shall find good,”—and the proverb of the heaven-gifted Solomon is confirmed by the doctrine of Philosophy, which tells you, that *faith* is the result of rational *demonstration*, not of blind acquiescence.

The object then, which we have in view, is too obvious to be misrepresented *with effect*, for any space of time longer than that necessary for giving the enquirer an opportunity to undeceive himself. Let that enquiry be made in the spirit of candour, and we fear not the result.* Every enlightened friend of Religion must approve our cause.

It is not intended to impugn the motives of our opponents. They shall not be charged with the weak ambition of holding a power they know not how to exercise, or of grasping tighter those reins which they fear may soon be snatched from their hands. But it is intended to call upon the good and the wise and the pious, out of this Society, to aid

* See Note (B.) in the Appendix.

Sorry -
 This is indeed a
 fascinating document
 but unless you can
 a more perfect
 & publish it later.
 I am sure it will
 seemingly correct or
 inaccurate transcription
 will show the entire
 of your reader in your
 scholarship as a great
 whole will be a great
 shame.
 [I have read this & find it
 very interesting]

APPENDIX H
Remarks on Harby's Discourse
Delivered in Charleston, (S.C.)
on the 21st of Nov. 1825
Before the
Reformed Society of Israelites
on their First Anniversary
By a Congregationalist
of Richmond, Virginia
January 1826

We have read the discourse delivered by Mr. Harby to an
 assemblage of persons calling themselves the Reformed Society
 of Israelites in Charleston transmitted to us by a member of
 that body. It was our first intention to let it pass
 unnoticed - but on further reflection the bold and
 unhesitating manner of the author seems to defy any
 explanation on the part of the congregationalists; we will
 nevertheless presume to examine the principles he advocated
 and test their solidity and their orthodoxy by the
 translations of Holy writ. The matter contained in the first
 pages of the address is a repetition of the remonstrances to
 the Junta, tho it is not everywhere in unison with it -- this
 part of the subject has been already noticed in communications
 to the corresponding Society. The impression we received in
 sending that remonstrance has been fully confirmed by the
 recent address, that the object of the master spirit was to
 destroy the ancient fabrick of Israelite worship and to
 gradually undermine all confidence in their religion under the
 pretext of divesting it of Rabbinical impurities and
 interpretations. The Seal of this gentleman (who presents
 himself to notice in the character of a reformer) is to us a
 little paradoxical for if we are rightly informed he has not
 been a member of the Jewish congregation for the last Ten
 Years or subjected himself to any inconvenience by conforming

cF Harby
 1. the ...

to either the Mosaic or Rabbinical laws. We fear he knows too
 little of the customs, their origin, force or value and/or
 that little is indebted to Hebrew writers.

We shall continue to remark on some parts presented to
 our view in a style rather too familiar for the subject, and
 combining topics totally irrelevant to it. Like Luther, he
 is desirous of being a pioneer whose pious zeal is to clear
 the paths and deliver his countrymen from the bigotry of ages.
 We are however disposed to doubt the affinity of their
 respective cases, as well as the correctness of the assertion
 that "the pen of Luther was the great intellectual lever which
 shook the papal supremacy to foundations." Were we disposed
 to contest this position we have ample means at hand to prove
 that reformation cannot be solely credited to Luther, others
 had preceded him without success, but many powerful causes
 contributed at that precise period to promote a change -- a
 combination not likely to occur in favour of the present
 champion of Jewish reform. We refer those inclined to pursue
 this unpromising subject to Buchats history of the
 reformation, to Homer, and to other historians. We have no
 wish to examine a controversy which led to blow and slaughter,
 to the fire and the stakes, to every degree of atrocious
 persecution and spiritual intolerance - we take no interest in
 the variant faith of the hundreds of sects to which that
 reformation has given birth. They should serve however as
 lessons to our brethren and teach them to avoid the shoals and
 quicksands upon which others have been wrecked. In discussing
 a subject interesting only to the Jew we should studiously
 avoid all contact with any of the prevailing sects of the
 popular religion, - professing equal respect for them all. We
 do not mean to insinuate that the intellectual powers of the
 author of the discourse are inferior to those of his great
 prototype or that they are incapable of paying "the mountains
 of bigotry from that foundation in which they have been
 imbedded since the days of Moses," could he exercise his
 powers on a less confirmed, less stubborn and less stiff
 necked ~~sons~~ The reformation now proposed we believe has
 nothing to plead in common with that which is held out as an
 encouraging example to the disciples of his school. The
 synagogues possess no wealth, the Rabbis no immunities, they
 pretend to no vicarious authority to pardon sins, lay claim to





“This synagogue is our *temple*, this city our *Jerusalem*, this happy land our *Palestine*, and as our fathers defended with their lives *that temple, that city and that land*, so will their sons defend *this temple, this city and this land*, until the last drop of our blood shall be shed on the shrine of our religion and our country.”

-- “The Building of the Temple,” *Charleston Courier* (March 20, 1841): 2

“I have not seen the paper you sent containing an account of the Charleston congregation but have heard some passages quoted that are certainly unorthodox. “This is our temple, this is our city, this is our Palestine.” Is it possible a Jew can write or speak so? Then where is the truth of prophecy [sic]? Where the fulfillment of promises? What is the hope of Israel? Of what does the scattered people bear witness? Alas we may hang our harps on the willow and weep for the spiritual destruction of Jerusalem when her own children are content to sing the songs of Zion in a strange land and deny the words of God so often repeated by the prophets. I am afraid the good people of Charleston are paying too much for their organ and allow more important objects to be sacrificed. Certainly the greatest enemies of the Jews never have denied their claims on the country inherited from their fathers, or doubted they would be restored to it in the time God shall appoint. How then can the Charleston congregation sell their birth right for a mess of pottage? But I beg your pardon, as I said before I speak from hearsay and would fain hope there are watchmen at their posts, scattered among the people who will warn them when they are in danger of falling into error by the spirit of innovation which has been the vice of ages among other religious denominations.”

-- Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Gratz Cohen, March 29, 1841, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH



THE OCCIDENT,

AND

AMERICAN JEWISH ADVOCATE.

Vol. V.]

TISHREY 5608, OCTOBER 1847.

[No. 7.

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BY THE REV. JACOB ROSENFIELD, AT THE CONSECRATION OF THE ORTHODOX SYNAGOGUE, CHARLESTON, S. C., ON FRIDAY THE 1ST DAY OF ELUL, 5607, 13TH OF AUGUST, 1847.

PRAYER FOR THE CONGREGATION.

ALMIGHTY God of Israel, Lord of Hosts, Father of all Creatures, King of all Kings, Thou who dwellest in infinite regions, whose footstool is the earth, Thou who art the Creator of myriads of worlds with innumerable creatures, who praise, reverence, and glorify thy holy and blessed Name! look down favourably from thy dwelling-place, the heavens, upon this house which we have erected to thy sacred Name, and which we now consecrate to thy holy worship. Accept our exertions in thy blessed cause as a sacrifice upon thy altar, and may our praises and thanksgivings ascend as a sweet savour before thy throne of glory. O Lord, most gracious and benign, there is none like unto Thee in heaven above or on the earth beneath. Thou didst keep the covenant with our ancestors and give unto them the land of thy choice. Thou didst make them prosperous and place them above the nations of the earth; yet, as they violated thy covenant, and transgressed against Thee, Thou didst scatter them over the face of the whole earth. The holy land is a wilderness, in the hands of other nations; the holy city desolate, and the temple, once thy dwelling-place, is razed to the ground. O Lord, what can we do to reconcile Thee? how can we serve Thee to atone for our sinfulness? We are but feeble mortals, neglectful of our duties, led

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astray through our weakness; we entirely throw ourselves on thy mercy and unbounded compassion; for Thou wilt not abandon thine inheritance, nor forsake the children of thy covenant. O God of Israel, Thou hast not yet found us worthy of restoring our country to us, and rebuilding our Temple;—yet our hearts are anxious to worship Thee, and approach Thee in prayer and thanksgivings. We have therefore erected this house to thy Name, and we now consecrate it to thy worship. We have no sacrifices to offer up to Thee; but, O Lord, we will endeavour to approach Thee with purified hearts and clean lips, with prayers deep and fervent, with praises and thanksgivings, to exalt and glorify Thee and thy holy Name. O Lord, mayest Thou be in our midst and bless us, and may thy divine *ruach* ever rest in this house; mayest Thou hear the prayers and supplications of all who pray to Thee in this sanctuary. Console the afflicted, heal the sick, give food to the hungry, sustenance to the needy, forgiveness to the sinner, reflection to the wicked, and true repentance to the violators of thy sacred law. O most gracious God, shower thy heavenly blessings upon this congregation, who have erected this building to thy holy worship. May peace and union ever prevail among them; may the spirit of piety and true faith animate them ever to adhere firmly to thy holy law, and to set up to thy divine precepts; may a feeling of brotherly love and charity ever keep them united as members of one family, and assemble them in this sanctuary to praise Thee and thy holy and exalted Name. O Father, fill our hearts with humility and reverence; may true piety dwell in our midst; may we never become haughty and presumptuous, or forgetful of Thee. Remove sickness and other evils from our midst, and when we approach Thee in prayer and supplication, hear us, O God, most graciously. Hear the child that supplicates thy divine blessing in behalf of the beloved parent. Hear the mother when she prays for her children's welfare. Hear the widow and the fatherless who look up to Thee alone for protection. Hear the old and decrepit, and give them strength to endure patiently the trials of life. Hear all who seek Thee in this sanctuary and assist them, in thy infinite goodness. Bless, O Lord, all those who have been zealous in the erection of this sanctuary; bless the president and trustees of this congregation with thy divine grace; inspire them with true piety and a devotional zeal to maintain our holy worship as we have inherited it from our ancestors, and guard us against innovation, or anything that may tend to disturb the harmony of this congregation. Bless, O Merciful Father, every individual member of this congregation with health, contentment and happiness. Bless

NEWS ITEMS.

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BALTIMORE.—The new Synagogue consecrated two years ago is already too small for the Israelites of Baltimore, and they are about erecting another house of prayer, not far from the first. We learn that a lot one hundred feet by fifty has been purchased in the neighbourhood of Baltimore and Eden Street, and that it will not be long before active operations are commenced.

CHARLESTON.—We call the attention of our readers to the consecration sermon of the Rev. Mr. Rosenfeld, delivered at the opening of the Synagogue Shearith Israel, on the 1st day of Elul. It must be borne in mind, that the persons who now worship in the new house, were driven from their former place of worship by the decision of the Court of Appeals, confirming the reform party in possession of all the property and buildings belonging to the old Beth Elohim Congregation. We do not now wish to discuss the merits of the case; as our friends are sufficiently acquainted with them from many notices which the Occident has contained on the subject. Enough that many thought that they could not conscientiously worship with their former associates; and Mr. Rosenfeld's words are well calculated to set forth the grievances under which they laboured, whilst they contain exhortations to righteousness, and prayerful appeals to the Deity in all occurrences and trials of life. May they sink deeply into all hearts.—We regret to be reminded that several typographical errors have crept in the address, which our readers will please to correct. Page 332, line 7, after "swear" add "There are two ways of serving the Lord," 1st. In, &c.; page 333, line 17, for "nations," read "actions." Same page, line 29, read "The Lord thy God shalt thou fear, Him shalt thou serve; what is meant by service? nothing but the service of the heart." Page 334, line 6, for "is to be expounded," read "is to be expounded."

EDUCATION.

We call the earnest attention of our readers to the school which Mr. E. Block, now of Baltimore, contemplates opening in New York. Mr. B. is an old friend of ours, and there is no man among us, who possesses more general and classical knowledge, and whose manners are more calculated to win the affection of his pupils. We are confident that whatever Mr. B. promises will be faithfully executed, and that the important task of opening a seminary of classical learning, combined with religious instruction, could not fall into sadder hands. New York, from the number and wealth of its Jewish inhabitants, is precisely the spot where the attempt can best be made with hopes of success; and we trust, that our friend may meet with the encouragement which will authorize him to commence operations at the earliest date.

So it was that, on July 14, 1840, a special meeting of the Board of Trustees received a petition from thirty-eight members, requesting that the Board call a general meeting of the congregation to consider the propriety of erecting an organ in the synagogue:

We, the undersigned members of the congregation of K. K. Beth Elohim, feeling a deep interest in our religion, and anxious to embrace every laudable and sacred mode by which the rising generation may be made to conform to and attend our holy worship,

Respectfully petition Your body, to call a General meeting of the congregation at the earliest and most convenient period you may deem proper . . . to discuss the propriety of erecting an organ in the synagogue to assist the vocal part of the service.

Your petitioners would be among the last to ask for innovation in any respect in relation to the usages and formula of the Service. But your body is aware, that in this petition, there is nothing incompatible with the practice of our brethren where they continue strict conformists. It is a matter of notoriety that farther than a century back, an organ was made part of the service in the city of Prague, the capital of Bohemia, and at a later period, organs have been introduced in other parts of Germany and in the South of France.

The majority of the Board [4 to 1; Joshua Lazarus, dissenting] insisted that this petition was contrary to the first article of the Constitution, which provided that the mode of worship in the synagogue should be continued according to the *Minkhag Sephardim* [Spanish-Portuguese custom] as always practiced in the city and which prohibited any alteration in the service. Therefore, they said, "The petition just read . . . is a violation of the constitution . . ." but desiring to gratify the petitioners, the Board would call a general meeting of the congregation for Sunday, July 26th at 9 A. M.¹⁹

This Board acted quite differently from that of 1824 which had rejected the petition of the Reformed Society of Israelites. It was obvious to them that this memorial had far larger backing among the members — and also the support of the rabbi.

Despite diligent search, the writer has not been able to ascertain the weather in Charleston on that July day of 1840, but whatever it was outside, it was hot inside the meeting. Ninety members were present and the first conflict arose when a resolution was presented to invite the Reverend Poznanski to attend and enlighten the congregation about the subject before it. But this resolution was voted, 56 to 31.

¹⁹ KKBE Minutes, July 14, 1840, pp. 101-103; *State ex relations*, pp. 5-6.

The *hazzan* arrived, expressed his definite approbation of an Organ and quoted several authorities to substantiate his view that it was approved by Jewish law, — although, unfortunately, neither the minutes nor any of our sources record the authorities he quoted. He answered a number of questions, after which he asked permission to retire.

Abraham Molse (a former active member of the Reformed Society of Israelites) then submitted a resolution, seconded by Dr. P. M. Cohen:

Whereas, instrumental music, the universal language of the soul . . . has been felt and cultivated by all nations . . . be it resolved as the determination of this congregation, that, as early as possible, an Organ shall be procured and erected in the new Synagogue to be purchased by voluntary contributions, and not drawn from congregational funds.

The Chair, Mr. Nathan Hart, declared the resolution out of order as contrary to the first article of the Constitution. M. C. Mordecai appealed from the decision of the Chair and his appeal carried 47 to 40. Then the resolution for the Organ was voted upon and carried 46 to 40.

It is of human interest that, despite the intensity of feeling that must have been expressed in this meeting, a resolution of thanks was voted to the Reverend Poznanski, "for his prompt responding to the call of the congregation" and adopted; and also a resolution, "that the thanks of the meeting be tendered to the President for the dignified manner and impartial conduct during the meeting," was unanimously adopted.²¹

Although none of our sources record the authorities quoted by the various contestants in this matter and, in the court case that was to follow, this testimony was not admitted for the record, obviously the opinions of leading Jewish authorities at this time had a decided bearing upon the whole matter. Similar questions were agitating European Jewry at this period. Therefore, let us consider here a summary of views of leading European authorities on the question of an Organ in the synagogue.

When the Hamburg Reform Temple began in 1817, German prayers, a sermon, choral singing and organ music were introduced. Israel Jacobson, to whom the new prayer book was dedicated, was instrumental in securing a number of rabbinic opinions in favor of the new Temple and its worship service. Among the leading re-

²¹ KKBE Minutes, July 26, 1840, pp. 107-111, which list the names of those present and those who voted for and against the organ.

Emboldened by their control of the congregation and Board, the Reform group began to make and suggest a number of other changes such as the modification of the Maimonidean creed and various traditional prayers and hymns, to the extent that the more moderate Reformers within Beth Elohim, although satisfied with the organ, became alarmed that things might go too far. So dissension and conflict began to brew. Thereupon, peacemakers on both sides arranged a meeting of the entire congregation on July 28, 1841, which 62 members attended. The following compromise resolutions were offered, proposed by Abraham Molse, Jr., a member of the Reform group, and seconded by S. Valentine, a member of the Traditionalist group within the congregation:

Resolved that the form of service adopted by the Board of Trustees up to the present period is acceptable to this meeting and will be regarded as established and permanent.

Resolved, that should the Board of Trustees consider any changes in the Hebrew expedient, they are respectfully requested by this meeting to submit such changes to the people composing the congregation for their acceptance or rejection. . . .

The Board agreed to abide by these resolutions. Then the following resolution was passed and inserted in the Constitution as the 16th article:

The organ, erected in the Synagogue, may be used on all occasions of Divine Service, and it shall not be in the power of any Parnass or President, or any other presiding officers, nor in that of the Board of Trustees, or any administration whatever, either to stop or suspend the use of said organ on any occasion whatever, unless sanctioned by three-fourths of the *Yekidim* within one mile of the city.²²

It is interesting to observe that the Reformers who had taken the position that the term *Minkhag Sephardim* did not preclude ritual changes, were now careful to place in the Constitution itself, a specific provision that a discontinuance of the organ should require a three-fourths vote, not only of those present at a congregational meeting, but of all voting members within one mile of the city.

In passing, it is to be noted that on August 2, 1841, the Board rejected the invitation of a circular from Philadelphia suggesting the formation of a union of Jewish congregations of America, for fear of ecclesiastical authority which might be hostile "to the march of improvement or to the progress of enlightened reform."

Yet, at the same meeting (practical things being practical things),

²² KKBE Minutes, July 28, 1841, pp. 177-183; *State ex relations*, p. 10.

it was agreed to ask Shearith Israel to join with Beth Elohim in hiring a *shohet*, and to signify what portion of his salary it would be willing to contribute.¹⁸

Despite the peace meeting of July 28, 1841, the moderates within Beth Elohim continued to fear that more reforms were still pending, so when a vacancy occurred on the Board of Trustees, they managed to elect Abraham Tobias, on February 20, 1842. The Board now consisted of Abraham Ottolengui, President; J. C. Levy, Vice-President (often absent from the city); Abraham Moise, Solomon Moses, Abraham Tobias, Isaiah Moses and Isaac Woolf. The first three represented the definite Reform group. Solomon Moses and Abraham Tobias had originally voted for the organ, but were among those who feared further reforms, and soon were to align themselves with Isaiah Moses and Isaac Woolf, who had voted against the organ, to form a Traditional party within the Board.

Surely enough, on May 7, 1842, the Reformers, in the words of the Traditionalists, wanted "to abolish the long established and time honored service on the Festival of Weeks called *Tecun* [תענית], which caused great excitement, and was considered too great an innovation, even to command a majority of their own party."¹⁹

But more was to come. On the first day of Passover, 1843, the Reverend Poznanski delivered a sermon advocating the discontinuance of the second day of the Holy Days, which aroused further strong opposition. A special meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on April 19, 1843, which wrote the *hazzan* asking him to inform it if in the future he would continue to advocate "innovations of the established forms of service as observed by us and all the congregations of Jews throughout the world." The Board contended that his suggestion was "a violation of the Constitution and calculated to create discord and anarchy."

Poznanski replied that he had been authorized by a former Board of Trustees "to make such remarks and observations as I deem proper" and that the majority of those who now disapproved of his sermon had previously well known his opinions on the subject in question. He concluded that since lecturing was not a part of his

¹⁸ KKBE Minutes, Aug. 2, 1841, pp. 150-153.

¹⁹ *State ex relations*, pp. 12-14. *Tecun* [תענית], sometimes called *Tikkun*, for Shabbat eve, is a special book, a form of anthology, which contains excerpts, the beginning and the end, of all of the books of the Bible and of all the Orders and Tractates of the Talmud; also bits of the Zohar and, in addition, prayers and piyyutim referring to the 613 precepts [mitzvot]. In the knowledge of this writer, this is the only time in the history of the conflict over Reform, that such great excitement and concern were displayed over this liturgical item.

original duty anyway, he would discontinue all lectures and would also discontinue reading prayers in English, and confine himself to Hebrew, "the performance of which only devolves on me as your *hazzan*."

This was a response with a vengeance and the Board voted 4 to 2 that his reply was not satisfactory to them, and asked him to reconsider his remarks (here begins the four to two split on the Board that was to figure so strongly in the events ahead. Abraham Ottolengui, the President and Abraham Moise, holding the Reform point of view and voting with the *hazzan*, while Solomon Moses, Abraham Tobias, Isaiah Moses and Isaac Woolf formed the majority of four, voting against Poznanski and further reforms. J. C. Levy, Vice-President, a Reformer, happened to be out of the city during this crucial period.)

At a subsequent meeting of the Board four days later, the reply of the *hazzan* was on hand and read:

... With the sole view of restoring and preserving peace and harmony in our congregation, I am determined, in accordance with the words of your query, not "to propose or advise in my future lectures, innovations of the established forms of service, as observed by us and all other congregations of Jews throughout the world" until the general desire of the congregation to hear the truth on any religious subject, and to have our holy religion divested of all its errors and abuses, shall be expressed to me through their representatives, your Honorable Board, although to deliver either lectures or prayers in the English language is not a part of my duty.

This letter, beginning in a conciliatory manner, but certainly not ending that way and revealing the *hazzan* as quite determined in his point of view, was also declared unsatisfactory by the same majority of the Board, and a congregational meeting was called for three days later to consider the matter further.

In the interval between the Board meeting and the congregational meeting, strenuous peace efforts were made between the two groups so that, when the congregation met, Nathaniel Levin (a Traditionalist) offered resolutions approving the actions of the Board and also (amazingly),

That the letter of the Rev. Hazan, of the 22nd inst., wherein he exhibits an entire deference to the opinions of his congregation, in his earnest desire to preserve the harmony which has so long prevailed among us, be accepted by this meeting, and that this meeting does not intend any reflections on the Board of Trustees or the Rev. Hazan.

And this was adopted by a vote of 39 to 12.

But peace was very brief that day. For Abraham Tobias, who had perhaps not agreed to the peace overtures and was still quite suspicious of the *hazzan* on the basis of some recent conversations with him at which time he had asked Poznanski, "Where these changes were to end?" and the *hazzan* had replied, "that he knew no stopping place to Reform in this enlightened age," then proposed this resolution:

Resolved, that the established service of this congregation embrace all the Mosaic and Rabbinic Laws.

This resolution was defeated by the close vote of 27 to 24 — and then things really began to happen.²⁰

The Traditionalists within Beth Elohim, not failing to note that with a change of only two votes they would have succeeded in passing the above resolution, decided on a bold move that was to have far-reaching repercussions and catapulted the affair into the civil courts. They called a meeting of their group on April 30, 1843, with Abraham Alexander in the chair, who stated that the purpose of the meeting was to unite with

the Remnant of Israel (Sheeret Israel) to stop the progress of Reform in our Synagogue, and to prevent the destruction of our holy religion.

The following was then voted:

We, the subscribers, members of K.K.B.E., for the purpose of restoring the true spirit of our religion, in conformity with the Mosaic and Rabbinic laws, and to reinstate the mode of service in the Synagogue in Hazell-Street [now spelled Hasell], as it was practiced heretofore in the old Synagogue, do hereby invite the members of the congregation Sheeret Israel [spelled various ways in these sources and also known as Shearith] to unite with us to carry that object into effect.

Thirty-four members of Shearith Israel agreed to rejoin K.K.B.E. on the following conditions:

1. That the moderates within Beth Elohim join with them to "use their utmost exertions to restore the service in the Synagogue in Hazell-street, as it was practiced in the old Synagogue heretofore."
2. That we will maintain a Jewish religion in the true spirit of Mosaic and Rabbinic laws, and will resist any alterations in the mode of service hereafter, of whatever nature they may be.
3. That a Mikveh be erected.

²⁰ KKBE Minutes, April 19, 1843, April 23, 1843, April 28, 1843; *State ex relations*, pp. 14-18; Richardson, pp. 259-260; Eliaz, pp. 214-215.

MASONIC HALL, ST. PAUL STREET.

SYLLABUS OF A Course of Six Popular Lectures ON THE POETRY OF THE HEBREWS,

AS CONTAINED IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURES,
By the REV. MORRIS J. RAPHAEL, M. A. PH. D.,
RABBI-PREACHER AT THE SYNAGOGUE, BIRMINGHAM, ENG.

Tuesday **LECTURE I.** *January 29, 1850*
INTRODUCTION. Definition of Poetry; difference between Sacred and Profane Poetry. Genius and poetic superiority of the Hebrew Language. Parallelism. Sacred Poetry identified with the History and Institutions of the Israelites; its progress to be traced through FOUR periods.—First Period, Fragments of Antiquarian Poetry. The Patriarchs. Joseph. The blessing of Jacob. The book of JOB; conjectures on the time and place of its composition. Was Job an historical or only an allegorical personage?

Saturday **LECTURE II.** *Feb. 2.*
First Period Continued. The book of JOB. Under what species of poetic composition ought this book to be classed? Proved to be a Dramatic Poem. Its general design—its plot or action—its dramatic personae. Job; his wife; his three friends. Character of the dialogue—its connection and progress.

Tuesday **LECTURE III.** *" 5th*
RETROSPECT OF FIRST LECTURE. Second Period. The national poetry of the Hebrews originates with Moses; his writings the standard models of all subsequent Hebrew poets. Means by which he exercises his great and lasting influence on the minds of the Israelites. Moses' Ode on the Red Sea; his last song; his blessing; the 90th Psalm. The book of *Jasher*. Deborah's Ode.

Thursday **LECTURE IV.** *" 7th*
Third Period. Condition of the Israelites prior to the reign of David. His poetical talents early developed; the vicissitudes of his life; their influence on the character of his poems. The collection of *Thillim* or Psalms. The authors of that collection. Didactic poetry of the Hebrews. State of the nation at Solomon's death.

Saturday **LECTURE V.** *" 9th*
Fourth Period. Prophetic poetry, only found in the Sacred Scriptures. Balaam, the non-Israelite prophet; his style. "Schools of the Prophets." The meaning of the word *Nabi*, (prophet—orator.) The authority of the prophets; whence derived; its influence. Prophecy; its general design; characteristics of prophetic poetry.

Monday **LECTURE VI.** *" 11th*
Fourth Period continued. Isaiah; his times; character of his compositions; sublimity. Jeremiah; his times; character of his compositions; pathos. Ezekiel; character of his compositions; force. The minor prophets. Captivity in Babylon; its influence on the language and habits of thought of the Israelites. The three last prophets. Close of the Canon of the Old Testament. Concluding remarks.

N. B.—The various translations introduced are original.

Ticket for the Course.....Two Dollars.
Single Ticket.....Fifty Cents.

Tickets for the course may be had at the Book Stores of ISAAC P. COOK, 76 Market street, JOSEPH ROBINSON, 117 Market street, JAMES S. WATERS, 244 Market street, and at the door.
Single tickets at the door of the Lecture Room.

Doors open at 7 o'clock. Lectures commence at 7½ o'clock, P. M.

Printed by BULL & TOTTLES, 134 Baltimore street.

On Tuesday morning 12th (11 o'clock) 547 P. am a lecture for the 'Aged Women's Home'; about 225 present, probably more tickets were sold—price 50 cts.

Lecture was on Samson's





After having thus shown you that the message imparted by God to his Prophets is true, and what that message predicts: After having shown you that Messiah the king is not yet come, but that his coming and the restoration of Israel are events that assuredly will come to pass, I have now only to conclude this discourse by pointing out to you,

"What are the practical results of our investigation? What are the lessons you are to carry home with you from the Synagogue?"

The first of the practical results, the lesson which you are at once called upon to carry out is "faith in God and in his holy word." Alas! that it should be necessary to tell Israelites they must put faith in God's word—Israelites who for centuries, I may say for thousands of years, have derived their happiness nay their very existence, from the liveliness of their faith: Who when they beheld new systems rise around them, and thrive and prosper and acquire fame and power and dominion, still cling to their own hopes, the precious treasure bequeathed unto them by their pious fathers, undivided faith in the truth of God's holy word. And what efforts have not been made to shake and overthrow that faith? Force and fraud, persuasion and prosecution have alike been exerted in vain. For whether the effort was made in favor of a doctrine that professed to teach and convert by the sole influence of its spirituality—or of that other doctrine, which, the sword in one hand and the book in the other, was making the conquest of the world—whatever were the pretensions of these Doctrines, Israelites still brought them to the test of Truth, as in God's holy word—and still found them wanting. And each pressure from without made Israelites cling to their faith with greater firmness, like the traveller in the fable, who the louder the storm howled, the more fiercely the blast raged, still wrapped his mantle more closely around him. But alas! like that traveller, sunshine is to effect what the storm could not accomplish. We are to yield to prosperity what we refused to adversity. We are to sit down contented in these United States of America—here is our Jerusalem. We are to give up the restoration of Israel for we are already free citizens. Such are the doctrines now propounded from the pulpit by men, who in the words of the Psalmist, "take counsel together against the Lord and his Messiah," and yet would persuade us that they

are Jews. They tell us that the idea of a Messiah is childish—each age produces some master-mind who becomes the Messiah to that generation. Does he indeed. Pity it is that each succeeding generation finds out how the Messiah of the preceding age was not the true one: how after all, he was but a pseudo-prince—of peace. You tell us that these United States are Jerusalem, that Israel wishes for no restoration, and has none to expect. And so, because a handful of Jews have in these States recovered those inalienable rights which belong to them as men: Because here are a few—not one in a hundred, of the professors of the faith of Israel throughout the world, are relieved from that grievous pressure from without, against which their brethren in the faith have every where to bear up: Because *here* the lowest, the most material of their animal wants can be provided for with abundance, and the finger of scorn is not actually and pointedly held up at the Jew; therefore, he is to sever his hopes and interests from his suffering brethren, and is not only to rob them of that energy, that moral motive which so long has sustained them, but is even to outrage their feelings and lacerate their hearts by telling them that their constancy is folly, their firm adherence to principle stiffneckedness,—their deeply rooted faith a delusion. O monstrous ingratitude, that the first use Israelites make of the mercy of their God, who, removing the galling yoke from their necks, permits a few of them as freemen in a land of freedom, to enjoy the precious gifts of liberty,—the first use they should make of his mercy is not only to deny his truth and insult his word, but even to deride their less favored brethren, who in the midst of sorrow and suffering still cling to the hopes of their fathers. O ingratitude most monstrous! O infatuation most lamentable! O selfishness most base, that calously enshrined in its own brief, fleeting present, proclaims aloud that it scorns the recollections of the past, renounces the hope of the future, and that it has no community of feeling with true Israelites. And this is done by men who long have groaned under the pangs of bondage in the old world; whom that very bondage perhaps forced to seek a home in the more genial regions of this hemisphere: men who perchance have left fathers, brothers, friends behind them, that in bitterness of soul, crushed into



carriage: "We have invited you hither to defend our principles, and since these are possibly unknown to you, I place myself at your service to impart them to you." "Thanks, that is not necessary," I answered, quietly. "I have come to set forth my principles." "In truth, you are the man for Charleston," exclaimed Dr. Roderigos, extending his hand to me, and pressing mine warmly so that I began to feel at home. I was domiciled in splendid rooms. A negro was placed at my disposal. I was the guest of American aristocrats for the first time in my life; for there was but one German in the whole congregation, the members of which were influential merchants, bankers, lawyers, physicians, authors, politicians, public officials, most of them rich, and descended from old Portuguese families. Proud were they of their descent and their civic standing. They were people of culture and refinement. The most prominent members of the congregation visited me within the course of a few hours, and I perceived at once that my surroundings were entirely different from what they had been hitherto. Mr. Poznanski continued to patronize me in the most amiable and condescending manner. He even explained to me, who found it difficult to sit quiet for one minute, that it was good form to sit with folded hands in society. He also told me, who had nothing to conceal, and hence always spoke as I thought, that one must speak slowly and deliberately; in short, he wished to fashion me according to the Charleston pattern. I listened to him without laughing and without showing any impatience, until he ventured to suggest that I read him

my sermon for fear lest there be some Germanisms in it. "If there are, you would substitute Polisms for them," said I. "I speak German better than you do, and write a better English than you will ever speak." Thus ended the first act of the drama. Poznanski undoubtedly thought that I was an ill-mannered boor, who would not take any advice. He put a good face on the matter, so that we always treated one another cordially, although he was rich and proud, and blessed with a goodly share of self-consciousness.

The magnificent temple was filled Saturday morning with fine gentlemen and ladies, Jews and Christians, the sons and daughters of the first families; even a colonel and his granddaughters sang in the choir. There was an air of aristocracy prevalent; all, too, were Americans to the core. And here was I, poor wretch, the only German in the whole assembly. I, who was not yet four years in the country, was to give satisfaction as a speaker to these people! The more I perceived that the eyes of all were fixed on me, the more terrified I grew, particularly because I was conscious of all my weaknesses, having just heard so many orators in Washington. If I could have retreated with honor, I would have done so very quickly. If I should be attacked by nose-bleed, coughing, asthma, or something else of that kind, thought I, the matter would be only postponed. Therefore be brave; the world belongs to him who dares. It must be done; therefore let it be done quickly. I would in all likelihood have hesitated long, had not Poznanski had the splendid idea of introducing me in a well-memorized speech. When I heard him

not acting in the spirit of persecution.—In concluding these hasty remarks, written just before making up our magazine for this month, we would state that we place the Occident entirely at the service of Dr. Wise, to offer any comment, explanation, or rejoinder to the present communication, and we should rejoice to see him come out of the fire of trial purified and restored without taint or thought of blame to the position in public confidence, which his talents so well enable him to occupy. We assure him in sincerity, that whatever spirit of persecution or personal animosity others may indulge in, we have none of it, and that we would gladly suppress all from appearing in the Occident, if this could mend the matter; but as the Anonymous has already given it publicity, our silence would be ridiculous affectation. Eu. Oc.

To the Editor of the Occident.

Sir.—Diffidences which have arisen in the Congregation Beth-El, in this city, and which threaten to affect alike the character and well-being of that congregation, make it my duty to publish through the medium of your work, the subjoined document, and to ask all Jews, ministers, as well as competent laymen, throughout these United States, whether a man who avows two fundamental articles of the Jewish faith is a fit and proper person to hold the office of Rabbi and preacher in a Jewish Congregation?

I am, sir, yours respectfully,
LOUIS BRANER,
President of the Congregation Beth-El.

Albany, July 22, 1819.

We, the undersigned, at the request of Mr. L. Spauler, do herewith certify that we were present at a public controversy held in this city between the Rev. Dr. Raphael and the Rev. Mr. Poznanski, and that at the said controversy, the Rev. Dr. Raphael propounded them two questions to the meeting; the first was:—

"Do you believe in the coming of the Messiah?"

To which question the Rev. Dr. Wise, of Albany, who was present, answered instantly in a loud and distinct voice,

"NO!"

The second question was,

"Do you believe in the resurrection of the dead?"

The Rev. Dr. Wise was again heard by us in say in a loud and distinct voice,

"NO!"

Given under our hands and the seal of the Congregation Shearith Israel, this day, the eighth day of July, 1819.

[Signed]

SAMUEL HART, Sen.,
President of the Congregation Shearith Israel.

JOSEPH ROSENFIELD,
Minister of the Congregation Shearith Israel.

S. VALENTINE,
Secretary and Treasurer.

Sworn to and signed by, the Rev. J. Rosenfeld, Mr. Samuel Hart, Sen.,
and Mr. S. Valentine, in the presence of
L. J. Moxley,
Notary Public and Q. U., Ea. Off.