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SUMMARIES

THE LAWS OF SACRIFICE OR TELLING THE STORY OF THE EXODUS?

by Sagit Mor (pp. 297–311)

The well-known story, found in the Passover *Haggadah*, which depicts a group of scholars gathered with Rabbi 'Aqiva in Bene Beraq, telling the story of the exodus from Egypt, has a parallel in the Tosefta. Tosefta Pesahim 10:12 portrays Rabban Gamaliel and the elders occupying themselves with the laws of the paschal sacrifice in the city of Lod.

The fact that the tradition found in the *Haggadah* is not evidenced in rabbinic literature, coupled with the fact that its linguistic structure is identical to the Tosefta tradition is suspicious. It is the author's contention that the story told in the *Haggadah* did not actually transpire; rather it constitutes a tendentious creation. In this article the author offers a reading which analyses the formulation of the stories with attention to their participants, the place of gathering, the behavior of the sages and the location of the students.

Consequently, these two stories do not constitute parallel traditions regarding the same event. Evidently, the Tosefta used one episode that transpired in the Yavnean period as a source for *halakhah*, i.e. to demonstrate the proper actions to be taken on Passover night after the Temple's destruction. The second episode is a fictional Babylonian creation (for which the talmudic redaction is a *terminus post-quem*, as it is not attested in any Talmudic tradition!) which was inspired both by the event in Lod as well as by the story of Rabban Gamaliel's removal (in its Babylonian version). This fiction operates in a manner similar to the Tosefta's treatment of the Lod episode, but with the intent of fortifying the *seder* ritual as constructed by the Mishnah and enhancing the validity of the *Haggadah* as a means of telling the story of the exodus from Egypt. The story's author thus sought to distance the form of the *seder* night ritual from the pattern which was fashioned in Lod and Yavneh, which apparently continued to have followers in *Eretz Yisrael*.

We must therefore understand the *Haggadah* tradition to be polemical. The authors of the *Haggadah* tradition were familiar with the Tosefta text and made use of it in order to create an alternative, divergent, story. The goal of the *Haggadah* story's authors was to suggest alternative contents and means for fashioning the Passover eve ritual after the destruction of the Second Temple, means which differed from those of the group convened in Lod and which represented the *Eretz Yisrael* tradition.

This close reading enables the suggestion of an escalating divergence of values between two differing approaches to the interpretation which should be given to the crisis of the times and, therefore, to the correct response.

CHRISTIANITY, PHILOSOPHY AND POLEMIC IN JEWISH PROVENCE

by Daniel J. Lasker (pp. 313–333)

Although Jewish anti-Christian literature is generally seen as a response to Christian missionary attacks, this understanding of the Jewish need to argue against its daughter religion is often insufficient to explain fully the phenomenon of the Jewish polemical literature. For instance, Jews argued against Christianity in Islamic countries despite the almost complete absence therein of Christian missionary activity. Likewise, the vigorous Jewish debate against Christianity in medieval Provence was only partially a result of the aggressive Christian attempts to convert Jews beginning in the thirteenth century. A fuller understanding of Jewish polemical literature in Provence can be attained in the context of the special relationship between Jewish and Christian intellectuals at that time.

Jewish philosophy entered Provence in the twelfth century with the immigration of refugees from Muslim Spain who brought with them scientific and philosophical traditions. These immigrants, particularly the Ibn Tibbon and Kimhi families, found that the local Provençal Jews were halakhically adept but philosophically ignorant. Thus, for intellectual stimulation, these immigrants seemed to have turned to the local Christian intelligentsia, with whom they maintained both personal and professional (e.g., as translators, doctors and astronomers) relations. Frustrated with what they perceived as local Jewish ignorance and disdain for science, these Jewish intellectuals often compared their Christian colleagues favorably to their Jewish co-religionists, praising the former's devotion to philosophy despite their mistaken religious beliefs. Christian scientific achievements, along with a perceived Christian interest in Maimonidean philosophy, led the Jewish intellectuals to feel that their own community was intellectually inferior to Christian society.

The opponents of philosophy, those who were responsible for the great Maimonidean controversies of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were aware of the closeness of Jewish intellectuals to the Christian community. They accused the Jewish philosophers of adopting Christian techniques, such as allegorization of the Biblical text, and they argued that such affinity to Christianity led to Jewish abandonment of the historicity of the Biblical text and punctilious observance of the commandments. Furthermore, a Jewish commitment to allegory could all too easily lead to a blurring of the boundaries between Judaism and Christianity. The Jewish defenders of philosophy were aware of these accusations, and they responded to them by emphasizing their loyalty to the Jewish

tradition. Nevertheless, such accusations caused further Jewish intellectual discomfort vis-a-vis the dominant religion.

In light of these social and intellectual factors, it is not surprising that Jewish philosophers in Provence perceived a need to polemicize against Christianity, lest anyone think that their closeness to Christians should be understood as an endorsement of Christianity. Jewish arguments against Christianity, as found in the works of Jewish Provençal thinkers such as Joseph and David Kimhi, Joseph ibn Caspi, Nissim of Marseilles, Levi ben Abraham of Villefranche, Jacob Anatoli, and others, should be understood not as a response to Christian mission but as an internal Jewish intellectual need. This picture of Provençal Jewish anti-Christian polemics mirrors similar phenomena in Italy and Ashkenaz, leading to the conclusion that philosophy and polemics entered the Jewish discourse in Christian Europe hand in hand.

THE TASKS OF THE POLISH JEWISH INTELLIGENTSIA

by Ela Bauer (pp. 335–357)

In 1890 Nahum Sokolow, the leading Jewish journalist in Poland during the 1880–90s, published a series of articles in the Polish–Jewish periodical, *Izraelita*, which was printed a year later as a book entitled *Zadania inteligencji żydowskiej* (The Tasks of the Jewish Intelligentsia). In these articles, he presented a list of demands that were aimed at the circle he defined as the Jewish Intelligentsia. This circle, he believed, bore a responsibility to drive Polish Jewry towards modernization by increasing their involvement in the life of the nation. This was not the first time that Sokolow addressed this intellectual circle. Between the years 1881–1890 he dedicated much of his writing in Hebrew and a great deal in Polish to this effort, which in 1890 was brought together into an integrated and organized program. This program focused upon five principal areas; preaching, the role of rabbis in Jewish life, the intelligentsia as communal leaders, *hadarim* and popular Jewish literature.

With this program Sokolow hoped to influence the components of the multinational mosaic of Polish society at the end of the nineteenth century. The program and its application to the Jewish intelligentsia were heavily influenced by the Polish intellectual climate of the time. A close examination of this program can help clarify the role of the different strata of intelligentsia, Russian, Polish and Jewish, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

RESEARCH NOTES

**‘FOR HE IS IMPURE AMONG ALL THOSE WHO TRANSGRESS HIS WORDS’:
SIN AND RITUAL DEFILEMENT IN THE QUMRAN SCROLLS**

by Hanan Birenboim (pp. 359–366)

Some scholars have already asserted that the Qumran sect possessed a unique notion of the human body, whereby it was perceived as sullied, unclean and abominable from birth. In these notes the author suggests that this notion is the reason that bodily discharges cause ritual defilement. According to the Qumran sect, they are an extreme expression of the body's abominable condition. This also provides an explanation for the view, expressed in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, that sins cause ritual defilement: as bodily discharges, sin is also a manifestation of the body's wretchedness, the more so, since man usually commits a sin because of his material desires. Some scrolls preserve liturgical texts for purification that contain blessings to be recited during the purification process. The penitential tone of these blessings is undeniable but this does not mean, as some scholars maintain, that the Qumran sect thought that every impure person is in need of atonement because his impurity is a result of sin, but rather, when a person who is impure (from any source) undergoes a process of purification, he first evokes his inherent impurity, which is generally expressed in bodily discharges and sins, and then he gives thanks to God since purification is a gift of Divine grace. According to the approach conveyed in the writings from Qumran, purification is a supernatural phenomenon that God has bestowed upon the 'sons of light'.