

A

0
0
0
0
3
5
5
0



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

California
Regional
Facility



5-

Jews and Judaism in America

LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE A MEETING

OF THE

LITERARY CIRCLE

OF THE

SHANGHAI ZIONIST ASSOCIATION

ON

SUNDAY, 17th December, 1905.

BY

N. E. B. EZRA.

RE-PRINTED FROM "ISRAEL'S MESSENGER."

29th December, 1905.

PRINTED BY DE SOUZA & Co.

Journal of the American Society of Mathematics

5

117

288

The first part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the function $f(x)$ defined by the equation $f(x) = x + f(x^2)$. It is shown that $f(x)$ is a continuous function of x for $x > 0$ and that it satisfies the functional equation $f(x) = x + f(x^2)$ for all $x > 0$. The function $f(x)$ is also shown to be increasing and concave down for $x > 0$. The second part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the function $g(x)$ defined by the equation $g(x) = x + g(x^2)$. It is shown that $g(x)$ is a continuous function of x for $x > 0$ and that it satisfies the functional equation $g(x) = x + g(x^2)$ for all $x > 0$. The function $g(x)$ is also shown to be increasing and concave down for $x > 0$.

Jews and Judaism in America *

The subject of my paper to-night is by no means comprehensive. I wish to give only a short account of the growth and development of Jews and Judaism in the United States, although I would fain do sufficient justice to the vast and rich history the Jews have built in the land of the Stars and Stripes. Please remember that I have not had the privilege of visiting the new world, and that my knowledge of the history of our brethren in America is only derived from that wonderful storehouse of Jewish history and literature the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, and the American Jewish publications. I would therefore, crave the indulgence of my audience who may find fault with some of my statements and conclusions and ask them to deal leniently with me and remember that to err is human, and more particularly when such errors and shortcomings are unintentional and unbiassed. Having premised thus much I shall proceed to lay before you a few historical facts regarding Jews and Judaism in America.

The Jews in America have recently celebrated with great *eclat* and Thanksgivings the 250th anniversary of their settlement in the United States. No one will question their right to commemorate this historical event, inasmuch as they have been a powerful factor in aiding in the development of the various cities in which Providence has thrown their lot, and contributed largely towards maintaining the philanthropic institutions of the different places in which they have settled. Furthermore, they

*Lecture delivered before a meeting of the literary circle of the Shanghai Zionist Association on Sunday 17th December 1905, by N. E. B. EZRA.

have practically demonstrated their loyalty to the land of their adoption by shedding their blood on the battlefields, and in various other ways, until, they are at present, second to none in their patriotism and zeal to their Motherland. This fact is admitted by no less a person than the present head of the Republic—Theodore Roosevelt. They have likewise contributed largely by their wisdom, broad-mindedness and public-spirited actions towards destroying to a great extent public prejudices towards them, and to-day they live on terms of perfect equality, harmony and brotherhood with their fellow-citizens of other creeds. To-day the Jews are represented in America in every walk of life, professional, commercial, educational industrial and financial. This end they have achieved by dint of honest perseverance and labour.

The city of New York has a population of over 750,000 Jews, which is the largest assemblage of the race to be found in any place out of Russia. The history of the growth of Jews in New York falls into three periods; the first runs to 1812, when the community totalled 500 souls; the second, the period of German emigration runs to about 1881; the third period extends from that date to the present time when the Jewish population is estimated at over 750,000. Very rapid is the growth of the community, which is mainly due to the persecution of the Jews in Russia and Roumania. New York possesses about nine homes and hospitals; about fourteen educational and charitable institutions; six clubs and thirty—five synagogues. It has been jocularly remarked recently that New York will soon have a right to be known as the “city of Synagogues.” As far back as 1748, a Swedish naturalist, Peter Kahn, wrote: “There are many Jews settled in New York, who possess great privileges. They have a synagogue and houses, and great country, seats of their

own property, and are allowed to keep shops in town. They have likewise several ships which they freight and send out with their own goods. In fine, they enjoy all the privileges common to the other inhabitants of this town and province."

Of all the institutions, the Jewish Theological Seminary stands first and foremost in the mind of the thinking Jew. The future of historical Judaism depends largely on this Seminary, which has been founded by the late Dr. S. Morais, of blessed memory. At present it is presided over by an illustrious scholar, Dr. Solomon Schechter, and the Seminary has an endowment fund of over \$1,000,000 (Mexican,) which was secured by individual subscription. New York has over 110 congregations, exclusive of numerous small ones. I have singled out New York above all the other cities in the United States, because it has the largest Jewish population. Time and space within the limited compass of this essay, would not permit any detailed accounts of such other places as Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, San Francisco and many others, where Jews have built and developed important Jewish institutions, which stand for the glory of Judaism. I will therefore only make a brief reference to them.

Philadelphian Jewry owes much to the zeal and ability of the late Isaac Leeser who wrote and edited some good works, in the early part of the Jewish settlement, on Jewish religion and ethics. His ten volumes of discourses on the Jewish religion, which were delivered in his lifetime, stamp the author as one of the most ardent and zealous champions of orthodox Judaism on record. He laboured indefatigably for the weal Jewry in his days; and never wavered one jot in his attitude of opposition to the rise of the reform movement. His apprehension that the innovations demanded by the advocates of "New" Judaism

would engulf the Jewish religion in the long run, proved sadly to be true, as I will show you later on.

The city of Chicago has become notorious as a hot-bed of anti-Judaism. The community is presided over by a distinguished modern Jeroboam, namely, Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, (who, by the way, has recently celebrated his 25 years of activity in Sinai Temple Congregation.) This rabbi, (mind you I do not say *Jewish* rabbi) has fathered the reform movement with all his might and has carried the campaign so far as to deliberately alter the Decalogue Sabbath into the first day of the week. With characteristic energy this modern apostle of new-fangled Judaism has officiated at a marriage ceremony between Jews and Gentiles. His "radicalism" is so extreme that he is hardly to be distinguished from a Christian clergyman. It is said that he finds pleasure in seeing his views and actions assailed by his opponents, which only proves an incentive to him to add more fuel to the fire.

Cincinnati, is renowned for its seat of Jewish learning, to wit, the Hebrew Union College, which was founded by the late Dr. I. M. Wise for the purpose of raising and equipping Rabbis in Israel with reform proclivities. At present it is presided over by Dr. K. Kohler and his extreme radicalism proves that the College no longer stands for the glory of Judaism but just the opposite. Were Dr. Wise alive to-day he would lament over the departure of this glory. But circumstances have changed and those who are powerful to take action tolerate such differences of opinion.

San Francisco possesses over 20,000 Jews, most of whom are under the baneful influence of Dr. Jacob Vooranger, a most radical reformed rabbi, and who was one of the advocates at the recent Central Conference of American Rabbis, urging the necessity of substituting

Sunday as a day of rest unto Israel, instead of the Decalogue Sabbath. Recently, Dr. Voorsanger created a sensation in orthodox Jewish circles by announcing his conversion to the Mosaic dietary law. It so happened that he was delivering a *drosoko* according to orthodox style on the second day of the New Year, before a conservative congregation at San Francisco, in the course of which he, "inveighed against the *Shochotim*, of his country who refused to be examined or to show their knives to the Rabbis. This refusal the preacher stigmatized as *Chilul Hashem*, just like many other reprobable acts which he enumerated. Then towards the end of his discourse Dr. Voorsanger said that it would naturally be expected that he should practice what he preached, and therefore he announced his resolve not to turn tail on his own utterances." This piece of news, wittingly declared a Jewish journalist may be greeted with the Psalmist's words, *Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad.* To my mind, most of the reform rabbis in America are woefully deficient in the knowledge of true Judaism. They know very little of Hebrew; they ignore the laws of *Schulhan Aruch* and most of them never care to study them. Once a question was put to one of them, whether according to the Jewish law, a deer was prohibited or not, when he, who was not less ignorant than the majority of his congregation, answered in the affirmative. Therefore most of the so-called rabbis hailing from this camp, hardly deserve the title affixed to their names. Amongst them may be found the *Chutzpah* or *Shegets* rabbi, and preferentially represented by the "half-baked" product. He derides the Talmud (of which he is densely ignorant); sneers at Jewish customs and observances, mocks at every attempt to retain the ancient form of Jewish worship. On Sabbaths, at the conclusion of the services, he lights a cigar in the vestibule of the

temple, openly buys sliced ham in a *delicatessen* store for his Sunday supper, and on Passover eats pigs' knuckles and sauerkraut at the restaurant. In every phase of his ministerial life "his chutzpah reaches to the verge of Heaven"; but as for his being a *Jewish* rabbi, God save the mark!

Then there is the *ham-eating* rabbi. He is a modern production. It is true that the Bible strictly forbids any Jew from partaking of swine's flesh whether it appears as Westphalian ham, or served as liver and bacon, pork and neans, or pigs' knuckles.

Latterly, and to the disgust of every self-respecting Jew, there has appeared the *Christological* rabbi, or the so-called "intelligent Jew," who, seeking to stand well with his "church" colleagues, always speaks of the author of Christianity as "the gentle Nazarene", "the humble Galilean rabbi", "the Sweet Teacher in Israel", etc., and other allusions which are nauseating to the average Jewish stomach. He generally is a silly young ass without experience, gleaning materials for his homilies from the Christian sermons which he reads. His library is stocked with Spurgeon's, Colleyr's, Beecher's, Phillips Brocok's, Guthrie's, De Witt Talmage's and perhaps Cardinal Newman's sermons from which he largely draws. His audience probably never read Christain sermons,

And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head should carry all he knew.

There is the Episcopalian rabbi, who knowing little and caring less about the Jewish liturgy, seeks to conceal his own shortcomings by imitating the Episcopalian form of service. He strives to introduce that non-descript production, yeleft the "Union Prayer Book", has "processionals" and "recessionals" at funerals, administers the "rite" of confirmation. Another never preaches Jewish sermons

and has but a limited knowledge of Hebrew, and the pulpit essays he delivers are adorned with poetic flowers culled from his book of quotations to the delectation of simpering young misses. He organizes Browning clubs, Shakespeare circles, Ruskin guilds, a culture circle and Thomas Davidson class. He may occupy the Jewish pulpit, writes a recent critic, he may be the recipient of a large salary (as he usually is) but it is questioned whether he can be properly termed a *Jewish* rabbi.

Another extinguished, I beg pardon distinguished, reform rabbi, on his return recently from Japan, whither he had gone to advise the Mikado how best to make peace with Russia, occupied himself in revising and reorganizing the missionary system of the Presbyterian Church. Truly, remarked another journalistic critic, our European brethren have not the faintest idea of the manifold occupations of an American rabbi!

It has not been stated in vain, and there is a great substratum of truth in the statement that, the history of the Jew seems to indicate, in general that his faith flourishes only at the soil of persecution, and in an atmosphere of intolerance and oppression. As soon as these accessories are lightened or removed, the necessity for the comforting influence of his religion seems to pass away; and he becomes at first lax in matters of ritual, then indifferent in matters of faith, and finally altogether callous. No where does this colour of belief show manifestly and strongly itself than in the land of the free—America. The reform movement in America was begun on or about 1825. Its advocates never intended it to be as it is represented in its present condition. Our sages have a wise saying to the effect that, good actions beget good actions, and evil beget evil. The latter is truly applicable to Reform Judaism. First, moderate reform, then radical Judaism, and then

assimilation which I will presently prove.

During 1869 after much agitation mainly through the influence of the late Dr. D. Einhorn, a conference of rabbis was convened in Philadelphia, at which the following principles of Reform Judaism was enunciated:

1. Israel's Messianic goal is not the restoration of a Jewish State and its seclusion from other nations, but the union of all peoples in the knowledge of the One Supreme God, the unification of all mankind, and their elevation to purity and holiness.

2. The destruction of Israel's independence is not to be considered as the punishment for Israel's sinfulness, but as the fulfilment of the divine purpose in sending Israel forth into the world upon its priestly mission, to lead men to a correct knowledge of God and to the performance of His will.

3. The Aaronic priesthood and the sacrificial services in the Temple were but preparatory and temporary steps to the better fitting of Israel for this world-wide task. They have therefore disappeared now forever; and all references to them in our prayers should be in the way of historical mention only.

4. The belief in a resurrection of the body has no religious foundation in Judaism: the belief in the immortality of the soul is the proper formulation for our belief in this connection.

5. The employment in worship of the Hebrew languages, in which the priceless treasures of divine revelation have been preserved and the immortal monuments of a literature dominating all civilization have been handed down, must be regulated by the knowledge or ignorance of that language by the people for whom the ritual is arranged.

The male child of a Jewish mother is by the fact of its birth, just as much as the female child, a member of the Jewish community, even without circumcision.

With the lapse of time, men begin to grow more thirsty and hungry for changes and reform. Let us continue to make changes, was the order of the day. What need we care? We are living in a free country and anything that savours *Jewishness* should be tabooed. Therefore another Conference was convened at Pittsburg in 1885, at which the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Art. 1 declares that Judaism conveys the highest conception of God of His relation to man; that God is the Creator and Ruler of the World, Father and Educator of the human race.

Art. 2 treasures the Holy Scriptures as the record of divine Revelation, and of the consecration of the Jewish people as the missionaries of the One God. In composition and literary arrangement, the Scriptures are only the work of men, with the unavoidable limitations of their age.

Art. 3 welcomes the result of natural science as the best help to the understanding of the working of divine Law in the world, the Bible serving as guide to illustrate the Divine Power working within us.

Art. 4 regards the Mosaic laws as intended for the training of the Jews of Palestine in their former surroundings: that only the moral laws are divine; and that all social, political, and priestly statutes, inconsistent with our modern habits and views, are to be rejected.

Art. 5 declares that the Mosaic-rabbinical laws on diet, purity, and dress fail to imbue modern Jews with the spirit of priestly holiness; and that their observance to day would obstruct rather than enhance moral and spiritual elevation.

Art. 6 proclaims Israel's Messianic hope to be the hope for the establishment of the authority of peace, truth, justice, and love among all men. No return to Palestine is expected, nor the re-institution there of a Jewish State, or of a worship conducted by descendants of Aaron.

Art. 7 declares Judaism to be an ever-growing, progressive, and rational religion of modern civilization, and asserts the necessity of preserving identity with the great past of the Jewish nation.

Art. 8 hails the efforts made by various religious denominations toward removing the barriers separating sect from sect.

Art. 9 declares it to be the duty of Jews to spread the knowledge of their religious truths and mission among Jews and Gentiles.

Art. 10 declares the present agitated state of Judaism to be a period of transition from a blind belief in authority and exclusion to a rational and humanitarian conception of religion; and that the masses, therefore, should be enlightened as to the history and mission of the Jewish people, and the social and spiritual condition elevated through press, pulpit and school.

It is hardly necessary to state that some of the clauses in the foregoing gave rise to bitter controversy in the both camps of Judaism, and consequently the orthodox section was alarmed at the state of Judaism, who foresaw the mischiefs and the unending clamouring for innovations it would lead to. As a result of this, a Jewish Theological Seminary was founded in New York in May, 1886, by S. Morais, for the purpose of training rabbis in traditional Judaism, and with a view to counteract the growing tendency of overthrowing the old historical Judaism. The discussion, be it noted, between both sections in America has not been abated one jot and it

continues as fiercely as ever. Each endeavours to expose the fallacies and the shortcomings of other; each endeavours to convert and to win more adherents to his ways of thinking and living and at the close of the nineteenth century we find Judaism all over Europe and America sharply divided into two opposing camps. Of late the differences of opinion have been deeply intensified rather than minimised, owing to the ascendancy of Dr. K. Kohler, a most radical reformed rabbi, to the Presidential chair of the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. This rabbi and teacher in Israel has thrown a bomb-shell by presenting an ultimatum to the Jewish world that the "Bible and the Talmud as taught by him, are not binding and authoritative." Nay, the Bible which we have hitherto been taught with our life-blood to look upon as our precious legacy and "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob", is now declared by the official leader of Reform Jewry in America, to be a collection of folklore and its contents borrowed and robbed from the code of Hammurabbi! What then is the future of reformed Judaism in America? Will it meet the same fate as that of the Berlin reformers? Experience teaches us so and the earlier they throw off sailing under false colours the better it will be for Judaism in general and the Jews in particular. As of old, Jewish champions of True Judaism are not wanting in Israel and to-day the faithful followers of the "old path", fired with the spirit of Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah and others are valiantly struggling against the "new" spirit, the spirit of deformed Judaism that has set in in the free soil of America.

Now, a word on the position and influence of Zionism in the United States. Unlike other countries, Zionism had to struggle hard in winning adherents to its cause. Much of its success may be attributed among others to Mr.

J. de Haas who, with characteristic energy gained numerous followers. It should be remembered that at the Pittsburg Conference, to which I have already alluded, the Reform rabbis declared "That no return to Palestine is expected, nor the re-institution there of a Jewish State." This has greatly hindered the rapid progress of Zionism and some no doubt finding their principles assailed, look askance to the ideals of Zionism, and thus endeavour by all means in their power to nullify its power and growth. In spite of all this, Zionism has over 30,000 followers in America, and amongst them may be found the flowers and blossoms of the noble sons of Israel.

My paper has become too discursive and to my regret I feel obliged to leave out several other important elements connected with the subject. There are many things which I have left out unsaid and to which I hope to recur on some other occasions. Speaking generally about the Jews in America, my opinion is that, taken all in all, they are a force and an element of usefulness to their brethren all over the world. They have always been to the fore in any endeavour which tended to raise the status and ameliorating the position of the persecuted Jews abroad. Whatever power they possessed in all their spheres of life, they have used for the advancement of the cause of their suffering brethren; and the tie of brotherhood which bind them together always grew stronger, specially when the lives of their persecuted brethren were in jeopardy and distress. The faithfulness of the Jews in America to their suffering brethren has been an example to the world.

In America there are over sixty Jewish weeklies in English and each in its own way endeavours to propagate its views and the views of its officials whom it represents. The editors and publishers are most of them Rabbis; some of whom regard this work as a labour of

love rather than of making any pecuniary benefits.

In bringing this paper to a close I desire to point out that notwithstanding the differences of opinions and beliefs which some of our brethren have introduced in the course of the development of Judaism in America, we have setting aside all our pre-conceived notions, yet to learn much from either their failures or success. To take but one example. We have all heard of the recent princely bequest of one of our Philadelphian brethren, to wit, Moses A. Dropsie, of a sum of nearly two million Mexican dollars for the establishment of a Jewish University in Philadelphia, where a thorough training in Hebrew literature can be acquired. Who amongst us ever thought of such a noble scheme? Alas! were a history of the Jews in India, China or the Straits, for the last 50 years to be recorded what a sorry mess of the spectacle will it disclose to outsiders? We were indeed capable of utilising our powers to promoting any pious wish, if only we essayed to do it. But no; we never thought of such a sublime thought. We remained in the background; we remained indifferent and callous for the future concern of Judaism; we were given freedom and lost faith; reaped the advantages of our modern civilization but offered nothing toward the spiritual betterment of ourselves. And here we are, standing on the brink of spiritual bankruptcy, without a leader, without a true knowledge of Judaism; and like a steamer without a captain sailing unconsciously on the rock of indifference and debasement. From whence shall a light of Jewish renaissance radiate upon us? The outlook is gloomy indeed and if we will not be up and doing, soon the board of the existence of our soul will be laid low, only to be debased and sunk deeper. The religious problem of the Jew is agitating the mind of every thinking Jew and

it becomes difficult of any solution when a leader in Israel is wanted. Our neighbours in America are doing their share of duty and by means of Jewish publications and Jewish colleges they have contributed largely towards altering the gloomy aspect of Judaism amongst its followers. To their zeal and enthusiasm, the civilised world is indebted for the twelve volumes of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, which has been completed on the eve of the 250th anniversary of the settlement of the Jews in the United States. Every thinking Jew should feel proud to-day at the appearance of this monumental work, which gives a full record of his history and religion from the earliest time down to the present day. Let us while taking note of this hopeful literary production, never forget to bow our head in reverence to our brethren in America, who contributed largely to make it a success. We may not agree to follow them in all their ways of thinking and living but let us not withhold this meed of reverence which they are entitled to. Taking the position of the Jew in America all in all, we can truthfully extend our hand of fellow-ship to each and everyone and say to them in the words of our mother Ruth

עַם עַמִּי וְאֱלֹהֵיךָ אֱלֹהֵי

“Thy people is my people
And thy God is my God.”

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

QL JAN 16 1996
REC'D LD-URL

DEC 04 1995

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 003 555 0

Uni
S