

LONGING FOR THE DAWN.

(BY REV. M. I. COHEN.)

The artist perceives in the universe beauty, the philosopher rationality, the religionist spirituality. To them the good, the true, and the beautiful are ultimate realities which they seek to realise and embody in actual life. Literature, art, science, philosophy, and social institutions are so many expressions of the rational soul of a people, objectifications of the visions of its idealists. In ancient Israel literature was the main form of expression of this national soul. The long battle against idolatry prevented Jewish vision from seeking expression in art. Political conditions prevented a fusion of Hebraism and Hellenism. And loss of national independence put an end to the possibilities of a fuller embodiment of national idealism. The long Galuth and its conditions forced national thought entirely into one direction. The Judaism of the Ghetto, while a genuine manifestation of the Jewish soul, was yet but a partial embodiment of the Hebrew spirit. For the Hebrew genius, if unitary, was none the less comprehensive. If God was the source of the moral ideal, yet His seal also was truth. Man could not be defeated in his search for the good and the true, because his Creator was the source of both. And if the Jew offers blessings at the sight of the great sea, of the stupendous works of nature, of a beautiful woman, or of the opening buds of spring, may we not truly say likewise that God is the source of the beautiful? In other words, the good, the true, and the beautiful are not ultimately disparate ideals. They have a common origin, and man develops his entire nature as he seeks them all. Of such a one we may say with Isaiah, "He shall see the King in His beauty." What does this mean but that the Messianic age of mankind represents the fullest possible embodiment in human society of the true, the good, and the beautiful. The era of emancipation has made impossible for us a one-sided devotion to any one particular aspect of idealism in exclusion from other aspects. A freely evolved, regenerate Jewish life must give full expression to the totality of our idealism. The Einsteins will give us science, but Einstein sees that the National Home will give us back our soul. The Bergsons will give us philosophy, but Bergson has helped to dethrone Materialism, and Professors Lazarus and Herman Cohen have philosophically justified the sublimities of Judaism. The Jews have taken to art in every shape and form. May they not give us a drama as sublime as that of ancient Greece, which shall not merely purge by pity and terror, but inspire by truth, beauty, and holiness combined, and will hold up the mirror, not to nature, but to nature conceived as the mantle of Deity? And when the veteran of history has attained full self-emancipation, and complete self-expression, what a divine music may he not produce! The 19th century has but given a hint of what the Jew may achieve in the plastic arts. The Chaluzim bear within their souls the fiery ideal of a perfected society. We remember how Professor Drummond kept his science and his religion in separate water-tight compartments, until spontaneously they overflowed and coalesced. So must it be in a freely evolving Jewish society in which the Hebrew genius seeks self-realisation. Alexandria and Spain show us that under favourable conditions the Jew must needs

seek to harmonise his faith with the other elements of Hebrew thought. The "People of the Book" cannot separate literature and life, thought and action. The orthodox Jew may contend that his religion is perfect *ab initio*, and is insusceptible of development. And there are idealists who will seek to embody their visions independently of religion. But in a land where the children are brought up on the Bible, in which Hebrew literature in its totality is the perennial spring whence the soul of the nation is fed and inspired, where life is modifying ancestral law before our eyes, where conditions conspire to produce a unique comparative theology, and to body forth to the mental vision the conception of a religion of humanity, is it conceivable that religion and philosophy, science and faith will not profoundly influence one another? The doctrine of the Meshiach, as Ahad Ha'am has pointed out, is really the doctrine that the super-prophet is yet to come. Now it cannot too strongly be emphasised that these vast spiritual possibilities of a Palestinian Renaissance are contained in germ in the soul of the Jewish people of the world. Though we look to Erez Israel to reinspire the Galuth, it is we who must bring to Palestine the spiritual gifts which have to be transformed. We must bring our soul that it may become the Neshama Yeseira of the future. The strength of our movement, and the guarantee of its ultimate victory, nay, its very source and origin, lie in the conviction of the greatness of the spiritual task that awaits us in the new life. Hence these thoughts define the nature and tasks of Jewish life in the Diaspora here and now, and determine the functions of Jewish communal life in every community throughout the world. Long ago Prof. Shechter pointed out that the universalist who has discarded nationalism is as one-sided an exponent of Jewish idealism as the secular nationalist who disregards the spiritual meaning of the whole of Jewish history. We must express our national personality in devotion to the true, the good and the beautiful, and it is precisely this devotion, conscious, deliberate, and profound, which must give its peculiar passion, power, and specific characteristics to Jewish nationalism. In a deep sense the problems of Palestine must be settled by us even before we go to Palestine. Not the Arab question is the crux of our problem, nor the attitude of the Mandatory Power, but the idealistic conviction and passion that alone can unite and consecrate the whole Jewish nation. We must foster the Jewish ideal that the ugliness, the falsehoods and the unholliness of Jewish life may disappear. It is loyalty to an ideal standard that alone can transform Jewish life in the Galuth, and guarantee the success of the infinitely difficult task of national and spiritual self-regeneration. The future exists already in the souls of the young. It is they who must arise and give at all events a partial expression to it here and now. They must reveal a Judaism, true to the past, consistent with the teachings of Jewish history, yet alive to present needs, and inspired by the vision of the future. From the start Jewish thought was determined by the conviction that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and consistently it visualised the goal of history in the outpouring of the spirit upon all men in the coming of the day when "the earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Judaism stands for the sanctification of life, it aims at a perfected society in which the co-operation of God and man is necessary to the realisation of the *Tov Meod* of the human drama.

Here and now we must seek to see the King in His beauty, to keep ever before us the vision of the "Far Off Land" of our ideals. Let us mount Pisgah, though we die in the desert. We see that the vision of Pisgah to-day, as of old, yields leaders whose natural force is not abated, whose eye burns with undimmed fire, and from whose shining face the light of inspiration radiates to countless souls. South Africa is to-day a blessed spot in the Diaspora. But spiritually all is not well with us. May it not be that the evils in our own life and characters are in no small degree instrumental in closing our doors against the Jewish immigrant? May it not well be that a noble Jewish life would be far more potent in aiding our brethren than all the efforts of Boards of Deputies could ever be? In feeding the soul of our community we shall create those powers that most effectively shall serve our people in its sorrows, and most surely build up the land of our future. A happy new year must for us essentially be defined in spiritual terms. Our Zionist efforts are constantly frustrated by inner weakness. We are ever dependent on external forces, and even the efforts of our visitors are rendered largely nugatory by our spiritual weakness. As for our nation as a whole, so for each community, the path of salvation lies in auto-emancipation. May the New Year see a richer development and evolution of the inner forces of our community in South Africa. May it witness, too, a general improvement in the Jewish position the world over. May we see therein the definite dawn of a better day for Israel and mankind.

GREETING TO THE NEW YEAR, 5684.

Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, speak:
 Tell her in tones which her spirit shall cheer,
 That she no more need her scattered sons seek,
 For she is still to their memory dear.

And they will—yearning to rest grateful eyes
 On her domain of resurgent world-fame—
 Help her accomplish her noble emprise,
 Radiant with energy, faith and high aim.

But she must wait till her gates open wide,
 And there may enter with confident step
 Jews of all countries and tongues, side by side,
 Catching no more strident strains of Hep! Hep!

Then shall they feel that they're coming back Home
 Children all welcome to Mother's Retreat,
 Never again o'er the wide world to roam,
 Seeking a refuge which nowhere they meet.

Then single-hearted devotion they'll give
 To her who gathered them under her wing,
 And a new life of true service they'll live,
 While in thanksgiving their Psalmists will sing.

Then to Mount Zion thy God will restore
 His Divine Presence, to stay for all time,
 While from Jerusalem rings forth once more
 Israel's own Torah in accents sublime.

A. P. BENDER.

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