

# JOHANNESBURG'S NEW SYNAGOGUE.

## Official Opening and Consecration.

(Specially reported for the S. A. Jewish Chronicle.)

On Sunday afternoon, punctually at 3.30, the opening and consecration of the largest and most beautiful synagogue in South Africa was celebrated in the presence of over 1,500 people, representing not only every section of the Jewish community on the Witwatersrand and even beyond the Reef, but also of the general community.

Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau performed the ceremony, whilst the Rev. S. Manne officiated, assisted by a large choir under the conductorship of Rev. Hirschowitz, Mr. D. Foote being at the organ. The choir and organ were heard but not seen, as their place is in a gallery above the Ark, entirely screened from the view of the worshippers.

Rabbi Dr. Landau, together with the Rev. S. Manne, Rabbi Friedman, Rev. W. Woolf, Rev. Harris Isaacs (of Kimberley), Rev. E. Lyons, Rev. Lipkin and other ministers from various congregations on the Reef, each carrying a scroll of the law and followed by the Executive and Committee of the Congregation as well as representatives from the sister Congregation, proceeded round the synagogue towards the main entrance, where Senator S. Marks asked Rev. Harris Isaacs to present Dr. Landau with a golden key.

This key is a beautiful work of art having the *Mogen David* and crown on the one side and the following inscription on the other:—

JOHANNESBURG HEBREW CONGREGATION.

ADATH YISROEL.

Presented to

RABBI DR. J. L. LANDAU, M.A.,  
PH.D.

on the occasion of his opening

The  
PARK SYNAGOGUE

JOHANNESBURG,

23rd August, 1914.

1st Ellul 5674.

(The words "Adath Yisroel" are in Hebrew. The key is the work of Messrs. Bischoff and Myers.)

After Dr. Landau performed this opening ceremony, the procession passed into the synagogue and up the centre aisle to the Ark, whilst the Reader and choir rendered "Ma Tovu" and "Boruch Habbo." The procession then made a number of circuits round the *Almemar*, whilst the Reader and choir sang Psalm 30, after which Mr. S. Raphaely, the President, opened the Ark, and the scrolls were placed therein. The *Mincha* service followed, after which Rabbi Dr. Landau, ascending the pulpit, delivered the following address and

prayer of consecration:

Taking as his text Deuteronomy X. 12—14, the learned Rabbi said:—

"My dear friends, After the hymns of praise which express our feelings of deep gratitude to the God of our fathers, for all His heavenly gifts and mercies in the past, it is but meet we should reflect on the religious and historical importance of this sacred function, and thus endeavour to turn this fleeting moment into an abiding blessing.

The Johannesburg Hebrew Congregation has inscribed its name in indelible letters upon the annals of the Jewish Community of South Africa. From the very day of its inception it has striven vigorously to raise the status of Judaism in this country and has, since then, occupied a pre-eminent position among its sister-Congregations. You, my dear Congregants, were responsible for the founding of important educational Institutions, such as the Jewish Government School and the first Jewish Library, and you have materially helped to establish and to develop our various charitable organizations. You, therefore, rejoice to-day in the happy result of your pious labours, in the remarkable success of your praiseworthy efforts. You look upon this stately and imposing edifice, which you have reared to the Glory of God, with a feeling of gratification that makes your hearts throb with pride and delight.

But only yesterday morning there rang through our Synagogues the immortal words of the ancient prophet: "The heavens are my throne and the earth is my footstool, what manner of house will you build unto me and what place shall be my rest?" Behold, the whole Universe cannot embrace His glory, and how can mortals hope to confine His presence within the narrow walls of a house of prayer? It is, indeed, almost superfluous to point out to a modern Congregation the simple fact, that the Synagogue is not built for God, to benefit Him, but is principally intended to help us to become imbued with those elements that alone enable us to rise ever higher in the performance of our noble mission, and to realize ever more, in our individual and national life, the imperishable doctrines of our Bible.

The four words which we have placed in the most prominent part of the Synagogue, to attract the attention of every worshipper, are charged with a great idea, once conceived and forcibly expressed by one of our Psalmists. They read: "I set the Lord always before me." This does not refer to the mere knowledge of the existence of God. The acknowledgment of an abstract principle cannot influence us to become better men and women. That knowledge must be-

come embodied in our very lives, must be the impulse of our actions, the living breath that inspires us, the guiding motives of our noblest efforts and ambitions.

There is a Rabbinical legend, that Moses when he descended from Mount Sinai carrying the two Tables of the Covenant, noticed that the divine letters of the Ten Commandments at the sight of the idolatrous multitude suddenly vanished, whereupon he flung the stones to the ground and shattered them to atoms. For the blank stones without the writing of God were altogether useless. And, my friends, what purpose can be served by marble walls and the precious ornaments of a magnificent Synagogue, if the place they adorn is void of the spirit of God? It is a grave mistake to think that it is the building, brick and stone, that inspire us with piety and devotion. Not the place hallows the man, but it is for man to hallow his place. The divine spirit rests neither on wood nor on stone. When Moses appeared before the burning bush in the wilderness, a voice for the first time proclaimed that spot as sacred. For the place upon which he, Moses, stood was holy. And this Synagogue will be unto us a sacred shrine, if we will hallow it by our devotion, by the sincerity of our prayers, by our cherishing the ideals which the Synagogue symbolizes. It will be holy if the religious functions performed therein will be more than meaningless ceremonies, if each of us will endeavour not only to receive here some impression, but also to leave the impress of his life upon its annals, so that future generations may be able to say: "Verily, this Temple has been hallowed by the impassioned prayers and the religious life of our forebears, who worshiped therein."

Our thoughts to-day must inevitably revert to the battle-fields of Europe where a disastrous and an almost unparalleled war is raging and destroying the noble achievements of many generations. The moral welfare of great nations has been thrown into the balance and each of us is most anxiously and breathlessly awaiting the final decree of Providence. And nothing could better vindicate the necessity of Temples of Peace, such as we are now consecrating, than the doleful and distressing conditions under which we meet to-day. The first mission of a Synagogue, of a place of worship, is the promotion of peace. Indeed, this is the pre-eminent doctrine of the Jewish religion, the essence of our daily prayers. We repeat it thrice daily: May He who maketh peace in His high places, make peace for us and for all His people." It was the Jewish prophet who nearly 3,000 years ago conceived the loftiest vision of peace, when the

nations would beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks, and would wage war no more. (Micha III, 3-4) When King David resolved to build a Temple unto God, he was denied that privilege because his hands were stained with the blood he had shed in various battles. His son and successor received the name Solomon because he was destined to be a king of Shalom, a Prince of Peace.

But in order to be able to promote peace one must be at peace with one's self, there must be no conflict between one's heart and mind, one's sentiments and intellect, as it is written in the verse of your text: "Thou shalt love and serve the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul." And the Psalmist expresses this idea in the brief verse: "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God."

People now speak of the failure of religion, how else could such a war be possible. But not religion has failed, the people have failed to respond to its call. Politics which have been the cause of all wars and the curse of all times have never been inspired by religious motives. Lust of conquest and ambition for power are not emanations of religion. The prophet says, the "balance of power" is in the hand of God, "whose are the heavens and the heavens of heavens, and the earth and all that is therein." The politician has but a pitiful smile for such a naive belief, he is not perfect with the Lord his God, his political views conflict with his religious doctrines, and he sacrifices the peace of the world to his impious ambitions and adds his crime to the wrongs of the ages.

We Jews no longer seek our salvation in political aggrandizement, in temporal power. We only crave for the recognition of our nation existence and for a place in the sun especially in the land of our fathers, for the privilege to develop our national faculties and to restore to our people the respect and the historical rights they have a right to claim. We have definitely determined to confine all our efforts and ambitions to the domain of peaceful and civilizing work, to the cultivation of the ideals which are embodied in our Bible and for which our ancestors shed their blood in all the countries of religious intolerance.

Scattered as we are throughout the whole world, and forming part of the nations among whom we reside, we confine our purely religious and national activity to the Synagogue, the centre of our religious life. I therefore fervently pray: May this sacred edifice serve that noble task may it be sanctified by our earnest and honest efforts to rear within its walls and under its influence generations worthy of our ancient and glorious traditions.

"Almighty Sovereign of the Universe, All-merciful God of our fathers, we now dedicate this building unto Thy service and Thy glory, and we invoke Thy heavenly blessing upon it. Do Thou cause Thy spirit to dwell within it and to fill all those who will enter it humbly and piously to seek Thy presence and Thy help. Do Thou incline Thy ear unto their supplications and grant their prayer,

Do Thou in Thine infinitive loving kindness spread over us Thy tabernacle of peace, enlighten us and guide us and save us for Thy name's sake. Remove from us every enemy, pestilence and sword, famine and sorrow, and every hostility from before us and from behind us. Guard our going out and coming in unto life and unto peace, for Thou art, our Guardian and our Redeemer. And do Thou with Thy mighty arm protect all those who at present exposed to all the horrors of war, while engaged in the performance of their duties to king and country. Comfort the sorrow-stricken and broken hearted who lament irreparable losses of precious lives. And may the sounds of the Shofar which rang to-day for the first time through this Synagogue herald the advent of peace, the dawn of those glorious days, when love of peace and the knowledge of Thee, will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Amen."

The Prayer for the Royal Family was then recited by the Rabbi, and the rendering by the choir of Psalm 150, followed by the singing of the National Anthem by the congregation terminated the proceedings.

Mr. S. Raphaely (President), Mr. I. Broude, (Vice-President), and Mr. A. S. Goldberg (the Hon. Treasurer), occupied the Wardens box, whilst the members of the Committee present were Messrs. J. Raizker, B. Gordon, Isidore Heymann, A. Isaacs, B. S. Ginsberg, Jacob Frankel, Dr. D. Horwich, V. S. Kark and L. Marks.

The following accepted invitations to the function, most of whom were present:—

Mr. A. M. Abrahams, Sir George Albu, Mr. and Mrs. B. Alexander, Councillor and Mrs. Norman Anstey, (Mayor and Mayoress), Councillor and Mrs. W. R. Boustred, Mr. and Mrs. L. Clarence, Mr. P. Cowen, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Currie, Advocate Davis, Dr. and Mrs. de Azevedo, Councillor P. Deys, Mr. and Mrs. Emrys Evans, Mr. and Mrs. William Fitzgerald, Mr. I. M. Goodman, Dr. H. Goodman, Mr. M. Glennie, Councillor H. Graumann, Mr. and Mrs. W. Hoy, Mr. Julius Jeppe, Mr. G. H. Jones, Mr. W. Kentridge, Mr. Kittle-son, (Norwegian Consul), Dr Krause, Mr. I. Kuper, M.P.C., Mr. Max Linger- man, Mrs. and Mrs. Le Seur, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Lewis, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Mackinlay, Senator S. Marks, Mr. Harry Miller, M.P.C., Mr. and Mrs. Munro, Dr. and Mrs. Manfred Nathan, Mr. Emile Nathan, M.L.A., Mr. H. Neuhaus, Mr. G. M. Pemberton, Mr. and Mrs. S. O. Reincke, Dr. S. A. Rosenberg, Mr. S. Seruya, (Portuguese Consul), Mr. D. Starheld, The Hon. H. S. Theron, (Minister of Lands), Councillor and Mrs. J. W. Treu, Mr. J. L. van der Merwe (Mining Commissioner), Mr. and Mrs. E. J. van Gorkom, Mr. Vorre, (Greek Consul), Councillor Ware, Mr. and Mrs. Whitelaw, Councilor A. E. A. Williamson, Councillor and Mrs. H. A. Young.

A large number of delegates officially appointed by the various congregations and Jewish institutions of the Witwatersrand and other parts were present. The Rev. H. Isaacs attended as the guest of the congregation.

Letters expressing regrets at inability to attend were received from among others, Mr. F. C. Hollander, Adv. Morris Alexander, the Acting Consul General for Belgium, Gen. Smuts, Mr. R. W. Schumacher, Sir Thomas Price, Justice Mason, French Consul General, Mr. and Mrs. N. van den Berg, Mr. Burton (Minister of Railways), Hon. and Mrs. De Wet, Sir Thomas and Lady Watt, Col. and Mrs. Truter, Sir George and Lady Farrar, Sir James Wolfe-Murray, Hon. De Villiers, Judge Bristowe, etc., etc.

**S. A. PARTY CLUB:**—One of the popular ladies' nights will be held on Tuesday evening, when dancing will commence at 8.30 and continue till midnight. To-night the usual Club dinner takes place. The concert arranged for Sunday evening, timed to start at 9 o'clock, should be attended by a large number of members and friends as the programme promises to be a very good one.

Every member of South African Jewry should subscribe to the "S. A. Jewish Chronicle"—the only Jewish weekly paper in South Africa. Subscriptions reduced to ten shillings per annum. Address:—The Manager, P. O. Box 20, Johannesburg, Phone 5519. Offices 86/7, Permanent Buildings, Johannesburg.

The General Store register d Rave n Office, Johannesburg, 25th February, 1914, by Elias Nasser, tall 28, outside Old Market buildings, Johannesburg, will be removed to Stand 221, 122 Main Road, Fordsburg, from 31st August, 1914. Levitt and Co. Party's agents, Box 2621, Phone 3670, Primrose Building, Fraser Street, Johannesburg. 28 4 11

## Johannesburg Hebrew Congregation.

### Holiday Seats in Park Synagogue.

The Seating Committee will be in attendance, in the Committee Room of the Park Synagogue, (Smit Street entrance, between Claim and Quartz Streets) for the purpose of allotting Seats for the ensuing High Festivals, on the following days:—

Sundays, the 30th August, 6th and 13th September, from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Monday, the 14th September from 8 to 10 p.m.

Tuesdays, the 25th August, 8th and 15th September, from 8 to 10 p.m.

Wednesday, the 16th September from 8 to 10 p.m.

Thursdays, the 3rd., 10th and 17th September, from 8 to 10 p.m.

Saturday, the 19th September, from 8 to 10 p.m.; and Sunday, the 20th September, all day.

By Order

HERMAN BARANOV.

Secretary.