

SUBJECT No. 1: BIR'IM

DATE: 29.1.79 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST (ENGLISH A.M. INDEPENDENT) LETTER TO EDITOR

HEADING: "BIR'IM" SIGNED: Harriet G. Goddard, Safed

QUOTE : As a Christian lover of Israel, I beseech Mr. Begin to reconsider the decision not to allow the former inhabitants of Bir'im to return to their village. The goodwill generated by this simple act of justice would outweigh all the risks involved. END LETTER

SUBJECT 2: CHRISTMAS PUBLICITY

DATE: 31.1.79 JOURNAL: "HATSOFE" (HEB. N.R.P. A.M.) NEWS ARTICLE

HEADING: "PROTEST AT PUBLICATION OF ARTICLE ON "CHRISTIANITY IN JANUARY" IN JEWISH AGENCY BYLINE : Jerusalem Correspondent of "Hatsofe" PERIODICAL."

QUOTE : Chairman Amit of the World Centre of the Mizrahi and Poel Hamizrahi, Mr. Isaiah Bik, yesterday sent a letter of protest to the General Director of the World Zionist Organization, Mr. Arye Dulzin, over the publication of an article on "Christianity in January" in the periodical of the Zionist Information Dept. In the letter of protest it is stated, among other things: "What purpose does such an article serve in a clearly Zionist publication issued by the Zionist movement? For which readers is the material aimed at, especially the pictures, which will doubtless pain the faithful believers of Israel. It is my feeling that articles of this kind and pictures of this type must be avoided. Instead, there should be a strong emphasis designed to draw Jews, both youth and adults, to our own roots, to the Zionist idea, to love of the State. If there is a need for such material for the purpose of propaganda in the world, it is the duty of the Government to provide such material, which it indeed does." END ITEM

DATE: 31.1.79 JOURNAL: "HATSOFE" (HEB AM NRP) NEWS FEATURE ("TATSPIT")

QUOTE: (Y.A.) The organ of the Dept of Information of the Jewish Agency in its English-language periodical, "ISRAEL DIGEST", which is distributed among Jewish youth and Jewish congregations in the world, publishes in its January issue an article on "Christmas" in Jerusalem which is spread over two pages, and at its centre there is a picture of a young man carrying a giant cross. The article describes the celebrations of the "Feast of the Nativity" of the Christian communities in Israel, and is accompanied by eight pictures of these celebrations, including the picture of the cross-bearer. Readers have expressed surprise at the "Zionist information" provided for the Diaspora in the form of articles about "the Feast of the Nativity" including pictures with crosses.

The head of the Information Dept in the Jewish Agency, Eli Eyal, in reply to our query, said that he was surprised at the criticism of this material. We are very careful about offending religious feelings, he said, but I have full confidence in the work of the editor who is an observant Jew, and if he found no offence in the matter, one may indeed assume that there was no place to overrule his judgment. I feel that the editor assumed that this article about the Christian "Feast of the Nativity" has an element of encouragement to tourism, and presents Israel as a State in which there is free access to the Holy Places. END ITEM.

SUBJECT 3: PROFESSOR FLUSSER & CHRISTIAN ORIGINS AND FAITH

DATE: 2.2.79 JOURNAL: "MAARIV" (HEB PM IND) BOOK REVIEW

HEADING: "JESUS THE JEW"

QUOTE : DAVID FLUSSER: "Judaism and the Sources of Christianity: Studies &amp; Essays" Publishers: "Sifriyat Poalim" 486 pages.

Professor Flusser has assembled here a portion of his variegated work, after correction, reshaping and at times rewriting. He writes, among other things, about subjects such as: "Christianity in the Eyes of a Jew," "The Literary Relationship among the Three Gospels," "The Testimony of Josephus about Jesus", "The Baptism of John and the Sect of the Judean Desert", "Healing by means of Manual Contact in the Dead Sea Scrolls", "The Last Supper and the Essenes," "Exegesis of the Old Testament (Tanakh) in the New Testament, etc. etc. His writing is anchored in Christian literature, in Rabbinic literature, in historiography, both ancient and modern, in archaeological findings, in biblical exegesis, in the history of religions, in the philosophy of religion, and what not.

Nevertheless, the investigations and essays that are assembled are not written only from an investigative perspective, but also from an ideological approach, which reveals the reflection of Judaism in Christianity, of Christianity in Judaism, and of the two of them in the spirit of an investigator and thinker of our time, who encompasses with his gaze an era of some two thousand years of religious thought. Characteristic of his unconventional approach is the essay which closes the book: "The relationships of Judaism and Christianity in the Past and Present," which is formulated on an almost aphoristic

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scale: 59 brief comments, which determine facts and opinions in this manner: "Jesus was a Jew, who lived within the Jewish faith, and died for it. He was born under the Law (Torah) (Galatians 4:4), and did not want to be a reformer of Judaism...Jesus became a source of division between Jews and Christians quite contrary to his intentions. An emphasis on the true Gospel of Jesus in the hope of Christianity. Jesus the Jew is likely, in this manner, no longer to be a divider between Jews and Christians, but to unite them." END ARTICLE

DATE: 2.2.79 JOURNAL: "YEDIOT AKHRONOT" (JEB PM IND) FEATURE ARTICLE & INTERVIEW  
 HEADING: "WITH THE PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK 'JUDAISM & CHRISTIAN SOURCES':  
 (FIRST ARTICLE) 'AN OBJECTIVE APPROACH AND PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT'  
 BYLINE: Aviv Ekroni (David Flusser: Judaism & The Sources of Christianity" Essays and Studies, Publishers--Sifriat Poalim, Kibbutz Ha'artzi, Shomer Hatsair, 1979, 486 pages.

For more than twenty years the scholar Professor Flusser has published scholarly works and articles dealing with ancient Christianity, its sources and its influences. In these articles, which were written in Hebrew, English, and in German, and were printed in many periodicals in Israel and in the world, various aspects of Christianity were examined by scientific criteria by means of detailed comparisons with literary texts and historical findings. Various articles (19 in number) were gathered together in the book before us, to which were added new articles hitherto unpublished. The new book includes articles that were written towards the end of the 1950s, such as, "Healing by Manual Contact in the Dead Sea Scrolls." There were also added to these studies made in the 1970s and 1960s. All these have been examined and worked over by the author, and sometimes even rewritten, and brought together under a summary heading which relates to a number of articles which have been joined together.

Anyone looking through this thick volume will discover in it a hidden treasure of direct knowledge and a familiarity with the world of ancient Christianity. In addition, it appears from the very first pages of the book, that in addition to the objective scientific approach, the author does not avoid a personal involvement, taking clear stands not only concerning the details of the scholarship he is engaged in, but even concerning the historiosophic questions in general--questions which are related to the Jewish-Christian relationships in the course of many generations during which these two monotheistic religions existed side by side. In this category belongs the first article of the book, "Preface", which is entitled: "Christianity in the Eyes of a Jew", and parallel to it is the article, "The Relationships of Judaism and Christianity in the Past and Present--" a tractate of comments connected to the birth of Christianity in the midst of Judaism--which closes the book. The remaining articles, it is seen, deal with more defined subjects, arranged within the general framework of the opening and closing articles, whose interest is wide, having inherent a kind of cry for additional discussion, for new thinking, and even fruitful debate.

Inasmuch as the reading of the articles of the book entails a certain amount of difficulty for the general reader who is unfamiliar with the basic material from which the religious literature of early Christianity is constituted, we will note that at the foundation of the faith is the telling of an event, faith in which, as it were, brings salvation to the saved. The essence of this tale is found in the Gospel according to John, in the following words: "FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON IN ORDER THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT PERISH BUT WILL HAVE LIFE ETERNAL." To these words there was lacking the completion concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and this is indeed found in the words of Paul: "FOR IF WITH YOUR MOUTH YOU WILL CONFESS THE LORD JESUS, AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED."

Flusser relates to this telling of the event and to the other stories connected with Jesus, and to its outworking (or his--Jesus' work TR.) in his testing of the substance of Christian faith. It is clear that the narrative is consistent and suitable to the character of this faith, which itself constitutes the way of salvation: "IF YOU BELIEVE THAT THE SON OF GOD SAVES THOSE THAT BELIEVE BY MEANS OF HIS DEATH WHICH ATONES FOR THEIR INQUITIES, AND THAT HE HAS OVERCOME DEATH BY HIS RESURRECTION, THEN YOU ARE A PARTNER TO THAT TELLING OF THE EVENT. YOU HAVE BECOME, AS IT WERE, united with that man and have risen with him from the dead. Your iniquities are atoned for, and you are a new man." (page 23)

Following this initial explanation the author examines the attitude of Christianity to Judaism, and does not withhold from it his critical rod. In his opinion, many of the Christians who claim that the negative attitude to Judaism throughout history was an error which is regrettable do so hypocritically, and are doing this especially in the wake of the Holocaust. On the other hand, many Christians continue in their former manner and conservative thinking, and even if they seek to remove from themselves the weight of antisemitic

inclinations, there nevertheless remains with them a basic negative attitude towards the Torah and its commandments. Flusser is of the opinion--and in my opinion this generalization is not justified--there is no Christianity who recognizes and acknowledges that the tension vis-à-vis Judaism is an integral part of Christianity from the time of Paul, and that it has brought the crimes and horrors of Christianity against the Jews throughout all the ages. With a strong tone of skepticism he continues, saying that if Christianity desires to improve in a substantial manner its attitude towards Judaism and towards Jews, it is incumbent upon it to change its fundamental denominator. This is possible, but most Christians are not prepared for it. "It is more important for them to wash their hands in innocency on t the Jewish question." (p.24) Indeed this accounting which Flusser makes with Christianity throughout its generations until this very day is nothing but the reckoning of a Jewish person who has seen antisemitic terror and the hostile attitude of Christianity to Judaism in every place. This is also the reckoning of a man who is an expert in the ins and outs of Christianity from its beginnings, and knows how far Christianity has departed from its original sources when it developed step by step out of various considerations its negative attitude towards its parent Judaism, one of whose sons was Jesus himself.

The author did well to sum up in his preface, noting that it is desirable to try to understand Christianity, but one must learn the meaning of the Torah of Israel. And while he notes that in both there is an important meaning and great tidings, he passes over to words of extravagant appreciation for the Torah of Israel. "Israel's Torah indeed demands harmony of the psychic ("nafshim") forces in man, and fashions for them a world of sanctity, a world of commandments...in all places, or almost in all places, where man stands with an unprejudiced gaze at reality, the influence of Israel's Torah is recognized in the world. The Jewish man seeks that his heart be pure, not in order that his small private world only be blessed, for an easing by means of private salvation. His prayer is: 'Purify our heart to serve Thee in truth.' And this is truly great grace." (p.27) In this way is the substance of Judaism at its roots emphasized, in contradistinction to the Christian faith, whose principle concern is the salvation of the individual by means of the simple process of faith in that tale cited above.

The opening article, which was first published about three years ago (in the monthly "KESHET B'ANAN", Issue 38, 1976) doubtless reflects the position of Flusser towards Judaism and Christianity, and one may say, that it was precisely that comprehensive dealing with the sources of Christianity in the course of decades which strengthened the Jewish scholar--in a scientific and sober manner--these foundations of cognition and emotion, that were implanted within him from the beginning as a Jew.

Preceding the other articles of the book is the one about the literary relationship among the three Gospels, and it is well that this article is placed at the beginning, inasmuch as there are presented therein the fundamental writings of Christianity, the Synoptic Gospels (According to Matthew, Mark & Luke), and the Gospel according to John, and the literary relationships among them are examined. In the course of this, a position is established concerning the time of the composition, <sup>there is</sup> and emphasized the need to be freed of the concept of the priority of the Gospel according to Mark. Likewise, there is the possibility to recognize the words of Jesus and his doings by comparison with parallel material from the Jewish world.

An interesting topic is the examination of the figure of John the Baptist against the background of the various discoveries of the Scrolls. As is known, John plays an important part in the Christian tradition, on account of the fact that Jesus was a member of the company which surrounded him and ~~was~~ baptized under his inspiration, and also on account of the importance of the ceremony of baptism, which Christianity adapted to itself directly under his influence. Until the discovery of the scrolls it was difficult to know the teaching of John and his position, because of the paucity of sources. Afterwards, however, it became clear that the texts of the scrolls indicate a very great kinship between John and the Judean Desert sect. Flusser analyzes at length this kinship. The fact is stressed that in Christian baptism the aspect of cleansing of the body is voided, and the idea of repentance is weakened. On the other hand, two other principles are stressed, which Christianity inherited from Jewish baptizers--the atonement for sins and the giving of the Holy Spirit (after it had ~~received~~ received a totally different sense). According to John the Baptist and the sect of the Judean Desert, the atonement of sins makes the person baptized in for the purification of his flesh by the waters of baptism, while in Christian baptism the link between baptism for atonement of sins ~~was~~ understood as a link between cause and effect: The baptism leads to atonement for sins, and the person being baptized washes his sins away in the water. The Christian believes that the very fact

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of baptism removes his sins, and thus baptism became a sacrament. (p.108)

In another area of Christianity--the matter of the Last Supper--it appears that by comparison of the system of the Essenes, while Jesus at the outset conducted himself in the manner of the accepted Pharasaic order of preceding the wine to the bread, afterward under the influence of the Essenes, the order was changed, and among those congregations that Paul visited the Essene manner was accepted and established--that is, bread, and afterwards wine. To this, of course, was added the significant layer of the sacramental meal and the assumption that there is in the blood of Jesus the power of atonement, the blood of the covenant, which is realized in the meal when the wine is the blood of Jesus.

In the wake of the book of Justice Hayim Cohen, "The Trial and Death of Jesus the Nazarene," (5728), Flusser analyzes this category and discusses mainly the question of the scientific system of the scholarship relating to this trial. Alongside words of praise, the author does not spare his criticism and determines that "from the point of view of Hayim Cohen there is to be found, therefore, the same weakness that almost inevitably leads to "sensational discoveries." He relies on secondary and uncertain information, which in any case engender logical difficulties, and these secondary difficulties you can resolve only if you ~~remove from~~ the order of the stories in the Gospels, the information which is not historical but which were developed in the course of the literary tradition. In order to overcome these difficulties, which seem to us superfluous, Hayim Cohen indeed accepts most of this secondary information, but inverts their content from end to end. If we read that the meeting of the Council was intended to deliver Jesus to the Romans, or even to sentence him to death, then according to Hayim Cohen the Council meeting was for nothing else than to save him from the hands of the Romans..." (p. 141) And in another place the author determines: "According to Hayim Cohen, Jesus sustained blows because the Council despaired of all hope to save Jesus from the sentence of the Romans, and was disappointed at the failure of its efforts during a long and wearisome night of vigil. Hayim Cohen relies especially on the untrustworthy source of John, but if you read what is said there, you will certainly not find much resemblance between the words of John and the words of Hayim Cohen." (p.142) Flusser is of the opinion that even though Cohen did not intend to write a book of apologetics, nevertheless there is his book something to cause a considerable degree of satisfaction to those Jews whose attitude to this subject is mainly emotional, since according to this book, not only are the Jews innocent of crime, but the lawful authorities (the Sanhedrin and the High Priest and his company) made a tremendous effort to save Jesus. Finally, Flusser presents his own position: "Actually, it seems to me that there is here no one to accuse and nothing to amend." There remains only ancient trials and wounded souls, and we can prevail over them only if we see ourselves as we are, and so we should see the men of the past as well--in all their greatness and in all their weakness.

An analysis of parallels in the literary-philological system is made by the author when he takes one of the well-known excerpts from the teaching of Jesus and compares it to Jewish sources, and especially to the Scroll of Thanksgivings ("megilat hahodiyot"): "BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. BLESSED ARE THE MOURNERS FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED. BLESSED ARE THE MEEK FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH." (Matthew 5:3-5) Flusser presents a passage from the Scroll of Thanksgivings which is not only close in its general ideology to the excerpt of the Sermon on the Mount, but it is possible to find a literary resemblance. This system of the author is revealed more forcefully in the great article, "The Sect of the Judean Desert and Christianity Before Paul." In the introduction to the article the author analyzes the conclusions of the examination he made, according to which--in contradistinction to the Gospel of John, few are the parallels ~~xxxx~~ between the Gospels of the three ancient Gospels and the writings of the Judean Desert sect, and even their importance is relatively small. On the other hand, there is a marked resemblance between the Scrolls and between the epistles of the New Testament and the writings of the Evangelist John. Inasmuch as there is no teaching of any central significance which is near to that of the thinking of the sect (such as the teaching of election, and the dualism) that is restricted to a single book in the New Testament, it may be assumed that there exists a common source of influence--a layer of Christian thought which was especially influenced by the ideas of the sect, and John the Evangelist, Paul, and others absorbed the theological concepts of this layer. (p.315) In continuation, Flusser analyzes a number of basic categories--the dualism of good and evil, original sin, the election of grace, the community of God, the new covenant, baptism, the spirit and the relation of flesh and spirit. In the article, "The Jewish Origin from

"Christianity" (?) ("Metza Hayahadut min Hanatzruth"), it is clearly established that the attempts to find strong Greek influences on the beginning of Christianity is based on hypothetical constructs in the later Hellenic world. On the other hand, most of the phenomena which exist at the beginning of Christianity can be explained fully on the basis of Jewish sources: "The spiritual ferment in the Judaism of the Second Commonwealth, pneumatic phenomena and its mythic thought, is what ... brought forth from its midst Christianity." (p.447)

Indeed it is impossible to describe and analyze all the articles in this book in this brief space--23 articles in all. We will also mention among his topics: "The Testimony of Josephus Concerning Jesus," "The Parables of Jesus and the Parables in the Rabbinic Literature", "Prophecy about Jerusalem in the New Testament," "Malchizedek and the Son of Man," "Exegesis of the Old Testament in the New Testament," "Redemption in the Present and Redemption for the Future," and more.

As noted, the book closes with the article, "The Relationships of Judaism and Christianity in the Past and the Present" (a number of remarks concerning the birth of Christianity from the midst of Judaism). This is not really an article, but a concentration of 59 basic premises, the first of which declares: "Jesus was a Jew, lived within the Jewish faith, and died for it. He was born 'under the Law' (Galatians 4:4), and did not wish to be a reformer of Judaism." (This article appeared originally in English under the title, "Theses on the Emergence of Christianity.") In Remark No. 12 the author explains that the accusation against the Jews that they slew, as it were, Jesus is a change in form, no doubt more efficient, of the true accusation, that the Jews did not become Christians. This accusation (of deicide) probably grew up somewhere at the beginning of Jewish Christianity. It was willingly accepted by many Christians among the Gentiles, whereby they could attack the "wicked" Jews. The existence of Judaism, Flusser says, is a continuing perplexity. Judaism as a tolerated religion serves as a pretext against the right of Judaism to a full existence. Here, too, the words of the prophets become a caricature: This is the ancient caricature which served several portions of the New Testament against the Jews (Remark 54). And finally, "Jesus has become a source of division between Jews and Christians, quite contrary to his intentions. The emphasis on the true Gospel of Jesus is the hope of Christianity. Jesus the Jew is likely in such a manner not to divide between Jews and Christians, but to unite them."

We cannot separate from this important and interesting book, which should be read and reread for the sake of deepening knowledge and understanding, without commenting on two matters which require correction. (The reviewer then provides several "notes" concerning grammatical niceties and spelling--t)

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE) END ARTICLE

(SECOND ARTICLE ON SAME PAGE: "ABOUT JEWS, CHRISTIANS & REPENTANCE FACING THE TV CAMERAS: An Interview with Professor David Flusser.)

BYLINE: Penina Maiselisch (PHOTO INSET: Prof. David Flusser)  
 QUOTE: In recent weeks Prof. David Flusser has published two important books which have come out almost at the very same time: The first volume of the scientific critique of the book of Josephon, which is one of the model books of Jewish historiography in the Middle Ages, and the book "Judaism and the Sources of Christianity." Prof. Flusser is numbered today among the serious scholars of Christianity in the world, and his book "Jesus", published in Germany in 1968, has been translated into six languages.

In Prof. Flusser's biography there is something quite unusual. He is a native of Vienna (1917), a member of an assimilated family. His first encounter with Judaism was when he was a student of classical philology in the University of Prague, where a Protestant minister gave him a Bible in Czech translation. After he emigrated to Israel in the year 1939, he became an observant religious Jew.

Q: WHAT LED YOU, AN OBSERVANT JEW, TO ENGAGE IN RESEARCH OF CHRISTIANITY?

A: In 1939 I emigrated to Eretz Yisrael, but even before that, I had decided to deal with the Second Temple period. I studied Jewish and Greek History at the Hebrew University, and the first work that I did was on Philo of Alexandria, for I did not know very much about the sources in that period which were written in Hebrew. From that time I have never abandoned my dealings with that era. By chance, in the year 1956 there opened up a department for the sciences of religion at the Hebrew University, and Prof. Gershom Scholem approached me to teach here the subject of early Christianity, which I knew as a part of the Second Temple history. I expanded the area of my lessons to other subjects, especially the apocryphal books, and throughout the years I have continued

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also to study rabbinics. This enabled me to understand the primitive Christian sources in a profounder way than usual, since I tried to study the Jewish sources in all their variegations. In addition, I had studied the culture and language of the Greeks in the high school and university of Prague, and therefore I can check the Christian sources from both the Hebrew and Aramaic sources and from the Greek side as well. Thanks to that coincidence I am now in a sort of key position, and therefore both Jews and Christians (out of their various motivations) are interested to study with me. But in the Jewish-Christian dialogue carried out by the State of Israel, I am not invited, for some reason, from the Jewish side, and in this respect it is my Christian colleagues who turn to me. The truth is that I do not deal only in Christianity, but also in Judaism, whether of the period of antiquity or of the Medieval era, but the public here is more interested in Christianity than in Judaism. Out of infantile curiosity they are interested to know what is doing in the neighbour's bedroom and not in their own bedroom.

Q: Does not the fact that you engage in Christian studies cause you personal conflicts inasmuch as you are a religious Jew?

A: In occupying myself with Christianity there are no internal conflicts. The problem is especially with the important Jews who enjoy the fat of the land, and do not want to understand that a scholar is a scholar, and is not a preacher of love or hatred.

Q: Is the revision of Christian attitudes towards Judaism an ideal, or a realistic possibility?

A: We do not know where this development will lead within Judaism or Christianity. It is reasonable to assume that in Christianity there will be a polarization, with certain Christian circles reinforcing the anti-Jewish stereotype, while other circles will view Judaism as "the beloved sister."

Q: Has the establishment of the State of Israel led to a change in the official ideology of the Christian church vis-à-vis Judaism?

A: It has indeed caused a change, in two directions. On the one hand, among certain Christian circles there has developed after the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, a positive attitude towards the State, inasmuch as in their eyes it serves as a verification of the words of the prophets. On the other hand, there are other Christian circles, under the influence of secularist groups hostile to us, in whose eyes the State of Israel represents a not so positive factor, because in their opinion it indicates the obstinacy of the Jews who are not prepared to be integrated into the "universalistic" approach of theirs.

Q: There is increasing note among us of a return to religion and faith. How do you regard this phenomenon?

A: In recent years there exists the possibility of the flourishing of all religions inasmuch as they fill the vacuum left by ideologies that have disappointed. This is not exactly what I would wish for modern religions, since it is not the humane element which will prevail here, but the emotions of hatred. Religion is liable to enable irrational approaches in the negative sense of this term, and then it will give vent to the drive for aggressive emotions, which the existing ideologies are no longer able to provide in so simplistic a manner. On the other hand, insofar as it touches the Jews, it is after all ~~desirable~~ <sup>desirable</sup> that they recognize the importance of Judaism as a religion, something which many among the Gentiles recognize, but among us it is somewhat belittled.

Q: What about the vision of a "Halachic State" which has been cultivated by certain circles in religious Judaism even before the establishment of the State, in contrast with the separation of religion and state, according to the ideal of Prof. Isaiah Leibowitz? (NB: "HALACHA" "HALACHIC": Refers to Jewish religious law. TRANS)

A: The problem of the State of Israel and "halacha" does not stem only from the inflexibility of the halacha. The main problem is that the decisive majority of the people of Israel is not prepared to take upon itself the authority of the halacha, and does not even know what the meaning of this concept is. I don't know how it is possible to prevail in this crisis, the sense of which is not in a general way "liberation" from the darkness of the past, but the loss of Jewish identity, and even the loss of minimal knowledge of Judaism. From this aspect, a great part of the population of the State of Israel continues in the way which began with the Emancipation. This sociological fact is very interesting, and should be a subject for research. If it were possible for a decisive majority of the <sup>Jewish</sup> citizens of the State of Israel to take upon themselves on principle the authority of the halacha, then the halacha would certainly adjust itself to

the prevailing mood of the citizens of the State of Israel. The fact that it is more than a century since the halacha's authority is accepted by only a minority is the cause of the halacha developing today in a sectarian way.

Q: And I in my innocence thought that the tendency of the halacha to be today more and more sectarian is the very cause of most of the people's alienation from it.

A: In my opinion, <sup>no</sup> The rabbis have become extremists, whether in the matters of halacha or in matters of beliefs and opinions, and sometimes they shut themselves out from intelligent thinking, inasmuch as their flocks are so restricted with negative symptoms.

Q: Has not religious Judaism sinned in that, with the establishment of the State of Israel it did not fashion a religious legislative framework wherein every observant Jew could be integrated into all sectors of the life of the State, including those which by their nature involve violation of the Sabbath and Holy Days?

A: Again it should be said that religious Judaism in general distinguishes between religious Jews and non-religious Jews, and accepts this as an ideological fact in the present situation as a natural situation. Among many of the members of religious Judaism there is a lack of love for Israel (the people), and they often forget that there is such a concept as "klal yisrael" (the generality of Israel, or "all Israel"). Thus, the halacha becomes something distorted. For the sake of peace in a city religious Judaism is willing to permit travel on the Sabbath on such and such a street, but prohibits travel on some other street, in order "not to offend the feelings of religious Jews," who happen to live on the same street. I have not heard to now that the concept of "feelings" is a halachic concept. But again it must be stressed that this distortion was not created because of the character of the Jewish religion, but because of the existing crisis in the area of halacha. One must state that the root of granting exemption to <sup>certain</sup> religious Jews from military service derives from the transfer of Christian concepts of distinguishing between the secular arm and the religious arm (of ~~the~~ <sup>Society</sup> ~~the~~ which began with us even before the establishment of the State in the matter of enlistment into the British Army during World War II. Of course, one must be thankful that among those who do not go into military service for religious reasons, as a result of this situation, there has developed an ideology, according to which, the Jewish people are divided into those who study for the sake of the people and those who serve in the military for the sake of the people. Sometimes, approaches of this kind, which derive from an error, still have something elevated about them.

Q: If the idea of a State of Halacha is no longer a realistic possibility today, would it not be better for us to accept the principle of the separation of religion from State, at least in order to prevent distortion of concepts, and social wrongs which are caused by the present situation?

A: The separation of religion from the State stands in contradiction to the original plan of the Torah of Israel, which may have been given in the desert, but whose intention was to set up in the Land of Israel a State whose laws would be the laws of the Torah. According to the Torah, there is no split between religion and peoplehood. In addition, most of the Jewish population in Israel, even if they want to travel on the Sabbath, etc., recoils for personal reasons from the separation of religion and State. The percentage of persons who desire mixed-marriages is certainly small to this day. I know that even in secular kibbutzim they do not always view with favour mixed marriages, because they are apprehensive, and justly, of the loss of the last remnant of their Jewish identity. What now exists is a sloppy approach from all sides. And again, this approach stems from the crisis in Judaism. The idea of separation of religion and State originates in Protestant thinking in Europe and America, and it is in complete contradiction to the Torah of Israel and the ideology of Judaism. This concept fits in well with the views of Prof. Leibowitz since he regards history as unsanctified, and <sup>is</sup> having no tie to religion.

Q: In your opinion, is there any place in Judaism for the Reform & Conservative movements?

A: So far as Progressive Judaism is concerned, my opinion is that if it were possible to bring at least a portion of these rabbis closer to activity within the accepted framework, I would not object to their being accepted as rabbis. But the question is not really related to the purely religious side of the matter, but what exactly is the extent of good will; or to the contrary, among certain representatives of these movements, who have actually nothing to do with religious aspects at all.

Q: What is your opinion about the "penitents" in the State of Israel of our days?

A: There exists a positive development in the last twenty years, and that is—the recoiling from Israel's Torah in the secularist camp is weakened, and there is apparent a sense of respect for those who are "religious". I am only afraid that parallel with the development among other religions, the penitents ~~will constitute~~ will constitute a post-Jewish Judaism, even as there exists today a post-Christian Christianity. At the time that I accepted for myself the yoke of Torah and the commandments when I came to the Land of Israel, I was ashamed that formerly I had not observed the commandments, and therefore there was certainly no exhibitionistic basis for my new way of life which I had taken upon myself. Only in the innermost chambers was I wont to ask those who were closest to me what one prays and how one keeps the commandments. Today this process, which is at heart an intimate process, is done to the loud sound of trumpets and before television cameras.

END INTERVIEW.

END TRANSCRIPT 10.2.79/mb

POSTSCRIPT:

DATE: 8.2.79 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST LETTER TO EDITOR

HEADING: "WOMAN OF THE YEAR"

QUOTE : Your recent article about 22 women who were awarded Women of the Year title is certainly well taken. I suppose that if all the deserving women were listed, a special edition of THE POST would be necessary.

However, how could the most internationally famous member of the Knesset have been missed? Shulamit Aloni is widely and fondly hailed by women of the global community. Can it be true that she is a prophet undiscovered in her own land?

Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler,  
School Sister of Notre Dame,  
Director of the Institute of Women Today.

Chicago, Illinois.

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