

authors, or at least their heroes, should consider Exodus to Israel. Yet the only American writing (pseudo) Jewish literature to bring his hero to Israel was Philip Roth. Here Portnoy discovered that his "membership" in the Jewish people withered on the vine when he confronted two Israeli girls, an army officer and a daughter of a Kibbutz. Portnoy ended up screaming on psychiatrist Spielvogel's couch. He remains screaming there ten years later, reincarnated in the person of Peter Tarnapol in *My Life as a Man*.

Bashevis Pulls His Punches

The only major American Jewish author who does not write in New Yiddish is Isaac Bashevis Singer. And that is because he writes unqualified, unhyphenated Yiddish. One wonders if it was he that Ozick caught so trenchantly in her short story "Envy, or Yiddish in America." In one of his novels, *The Slave*, Bashevis had recourse to the very same technique employed by Malamud and Bellow, playing counterpoint to a recognized master. In this novel, however, the antagonist was Nobel prize winning Shmuel Agnon and not a non-Jew. The work whose conclusions Bashevis wished to debate was *T'Mol Shilshom*. There, Agnon's hero, Yitzhak Kummer, is dispatched by a rabid dog called Balak. Hydrophobia alone did not do it; at core he died for his inability to decide between the robust "shikse-like" Sonia and the devout ghettoized Shifra. In *The Slave* the hero is saved by a dog called Bilaam whose owner

is a genuine "shikse," but one who converts. Whatever the merits of the work it is probably the most realistic of Bashevis' stories. But the language again. This insight of Bashevis in a polemic with Agnon is only available in the Yiddish original whereas the English translation (in which Bashevis was an active partner) erases the tell-tale signposts. Does Bashevis pull his punches when translating his own classic Yiddish to Cynthia Ozick's New Yiddish? Bashevis' original thesis in Yiddish, if indeed it was a polemic with Agnon, seems to say inter-marriage isn't only not bad for the Jews, it's good. Did he censor himself when writing in English translation for his American Jewish readers?

If the New Yiddish is to have a chance at success its readers will have to adjust, to learn to read it as a new perception. It will be a language that is constantly winnowing and refining obsessions by their transmutation through the Jewish experience. Arthur Cohen writes of Cynthia Ozick that she is a Jewish visionary and warns that a writer has to mind the language when obsessions are at stake. "It isn't enough to record the experience because the experience is not given. It is wrestled free from the encumbrance of normal perception and wrenched apart, examined like the entrails of a haruspex, and sewn up again differently. For this work all of the literature, philosophical, moral, mythological, and all of the language, its unfamiliar words and its delicious words, have to be used." Cynthia Ozick does this, would that others of her generation would continue "in the tradition."

Agnon and Celestial Jerusalem*

Joseph Dan

The Story "Within the Wall" was selected by Mrs. Emunah Yaron, Agnon's daughter, as the title piece and the opening tale in a collection published after his death. It is a key story for gaining insights into three different elements of Agnon's writings: (a) the author's attitude toward the story's contemporary history, that is, toward Israeli life in the 1960s; (b) his attitude toward Jewish mystical sources and his employment of those sources in constructing his stories; and (c) his self-image and his view of his own personal relationship with reality as a whole. This review will be concerned principally with the first two elements. The third will be touched upon only briefly, because a detailed analysis of the last would require a much broader framework than can be provided by any single story.

The key to the structure of the story and to its ideational framework lies in an extended dialogue (an uncharacteristically long dialogue for Agnon) between the narrator and Leah, who are taking an

imaginary walk together in Jerusalem, within the Wall. This same dialogue also serves to make Leah's identity clear, although the main topic of conversation is Jerusalem and its status:

"On our walk we reached a place fairer than all the others. Words cannot describe it, and there was more to the place than the eye could see, but I will say this much: never in my life have I seen a fairer place than this. Leah stood for quite a while and looked at it, and I saw tears well up in her eyes. The sight of her tears touched me deeply, and moved me to tears as well. There are four hard trials: a tempest in the heart of the sea, a sandstorm in the desert, a whirlwind on snow-covered mountains, and a slashing wind on a day of battle—but a young lady's tears is harder still.

"We stood still, and kept looking at the hill and the House on it. Afterward, Leah wiped a tear away and said, 'Here stood our House.'

"I grew bolder and having found words phrased them myself as a person asking a question whose answer he already knows, saying that I wondered at her father's having left as nice a place as this.

"Leah remained silent, making no reply.

"It was only in stating my question that I realized I was actually asking a question. Again I said that I wondered at her father's having left a place like this for some other. For the matter would have been less perplexing if he had found contentment in some other place, but now having heard that he had not found contentment where

* Here in the title, as well as throughout the critique, the "Wall" is the "*Homma*," the wall around the Old City of Jerusalem, and not the *Kotel*, the Western Wall.

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he currently resided, the matter was bewildering indeed. And if he had been compelled to leave this place why did he not return at some later time?

"Leah remained silent."

(page 38)

= 42-43

It becomes clear, from the above, that Leah is none other than the *Shekhina* (Divine Presence) since she calls her father, who had lived in the House and had left, "Abba," and elsewhere it is stated that Leah was an only daughter to her father. From this it may be concluded that the narrator's words at the end of the story, "I was in the company of my soul," (page 49) which are intended, at least on the manifest level, to unravel the mystery of Leah's identity are not to be accepted at face value. It is hardly likely that Agnon would have depicted his soul as the Almighty's only daughter. These facts, which are clear to the reader from the beginning of the tale (see further) impart an imaginary, other-worldly quality to the story, a sense of extraordinary spiritual elevation, and it is these qualities that enable the narrator to walk with the Divine Presence in Jerusalem, and Har-Ha-Bayit (the Temple Mount) were under Jordanian rule and a walk in the Old City could be no more than a dream. Indeed the entire story is laden with the narrator's passionate yearning for a place that was closed off to him. Even as he envisioned this spiritual excursion inside the Wall with the Divine Presence he was intimidated by the menacing shadow of an enemy which had caused him to flee from the city within the Wall ("I saw we were in a divine place, and perhaps the house we were in was located in enemy territory," page 46.)

This element of yearning for the Old City is the foundation and the essence upon which the story is built. But this is only its beginning. An intricate network of

additional layers and levels delicately intertwined rises up from this foundation to make this one of Agnon's most complex literary pieces.

Indeed at the start of the dialogue above, the yearning for the Old City is linked to the ancient Messianic question: "Why doesn't he return?"—the same question that the Ba'al Shem Tov asked the Messiah in the noted letter to the Ba'al Shem Tov's brother-in-law, published in the book *Ben-Porath Yoseph*: "When will the master come?" The narrator, therefore, creates a recognizably traditional encounter-situation between man and a Divine Presence—in this case the *Shekhina* in a uniquely sublime place (in the case of the Ba'al Shem Tov at the gate of the Messiah's palace, and here in front of the Temple Mount), where the obvious question can only be "why doesn't He return"—why doesn't the Lord return to His holy sanctuary and re-establish His city. Such a situation carries a powerful emotional charge since the present and future existence of the Jewish people is at stake, and neither the narrator nor the author can afford to be trivial in his treatment of the issue. Consequently, there is a tension growing constantly toward the dialogue's end as the narrator relentlessly asks:

"Why did your Father remove his abode from them?"

"Leah said, 'They angered him with their vain foolishness.' I said to her, 'Leah, you are using Biblical language.' She replies, 'I don't know if it is a Biblical verse, but each and every truth that man utters has already been written down in the *Pentateuch* or *Prophets* or *Chronicles* or is a Facsimile.'

"I said to Leah, 'Neither do I know if it is a Biblical verse, but *they angered him with their vain foolishness* sounded to me like a direct quote from the text.'

"We began to talk about the potency of the Holy Scriptures, which contain every-

thing there ever was or will be—yet that the world knew not how to read the text. We mentioned several verses which people found unfathomable for generations and sought to correct. But then certain things occurred which, as everyone saw, gave meaning to the verses.

"I saw that we were straying from the topic. I brought myself back to the main point, and repeated, 'When will your Father return here?'"

"Leah kept silent, making no reply.

"I changed my question and asked, 'Doesn't Father want to return here?'"

"Leah paused for a moment and then said, 'What did you ask?'"

"I repeated my question, 'Doesn't your Father wish to return?'"

"Leah replied, 'Any time.'

"Any time what?'"

"He is ready to return at any time."

(pp. 39-40)

The narrator's stubbornness and his adherence to the question, which Leah is unwilling to answer substantively, create a mounting tension. When the narrator alters his question from "Why doesn't He return?" to "When will your Father return here?" he is adopting the classical formulation. The beginning of this paragraph shows that God's withdrawal was dependent on man's actions, and its end also places the responsibility for God's return on man, since God Himself is ready to return at any time. The moment the narrator transposes the question from the plane of reckoning the days until the coming of the Messiah to that of pondering the reasons for Exile and the reasons for Redemption, he adds a very practical element, and the continuation of the dialogue carries us further in this direction:

"And who is delaying him?" Leah looked at me as if my question had been redundant. But I persisted in asking: 'Who is delaying him?'"

"Leah said: 'Who is delaying him? They are.'

"I said to Leah, 'They have foolish hearts who do not strongly feel what they have been lacking since the day our Father moved away.'

"Leah laughed gently and said, 'You call them fools? On the contrary, they see themselves as wise. And as for your question, whether or not they feel what they are lacking—some do, and some do not.'

"And who is more satisfied than whom?'"

"Leah said, 'At any rate, those who feel (the lack) do nothing about.'

"I said, 'And what must they do? But let me ask you, if Father does not return for their sakes, why doesn't he return for your sake?'"

"Leah stood transfixed. 'For my sake?'"

"I repeated, 'Yes, Leah. Father should have returned for your sake.'

"I grew sadhearted for her and said no more.

"After a pause Leah said to me, 'You ask why Father doesn't return for my sake. And what does Father say to me? 'You have habituated yourself too well in the New City'" (p.40).

The climax of this dialogue is composed of dramatically poignant elements. Responsibility for the Exile had been placed on man's past actions. The narrator's questions shift the inquiry from the past to the present: Why don't people feel the lack of the Temple, the lack of God—and Leah's answers channel the discussion to the plane of Messianic activity: "Those who feel do nothing about it." What results is that the narrator inevitably asks, "What must they do?" In other words the discussion reaches a point where it should be possible to determine what God demands that men do in order to hasten the Redemption, the restoration of the Temple, and the return of the Divine Presence to Its place. But it is precisely here that Agnon cuts the dialogue short, and thus prevents it from turning into a Messianic prescription or a

guide for expediting the Redemption. Rather, he transposes the question to something that is altogether different, at least on the surface: If His return is delayed because the people of Israel have not yet fulfilled their obligations, why doesn't God return to His home for the sake of the Divine Presence? Implied in the statement "Father should have returned for your sake, for the sake of the Divine Presence—and for His own sake" is an attempt to place the responsibility for the prolongation of the Exile on the Divine Forces themselves. This twist in the dialectic would be strange had it not been a continuation of a previous strand: if the cut-off which occurred when human responsibility was mentioned had been genuinely a termination of the topic. Yet Leah's response to the narrator's pointed question unites the two planes, rooted as it is in the story's background and coming where it does in the story, and enables one to view the sentence as the ideological focus: "You have habituated yourself too well in the New City." This means that the Divine Presence now hovers over the New City (something Leah admits when she later apologizes and says, "Even if so, even if I adapted myself too well to the New City, it is to this place that the essence of my existence is drawn") and had cut itself off from the City within the Wall. Also because of some unworthiness in the Divine Presence there is insufficient justification for the Father's return to the Old City, for God's return to his abode.

But while the argument is directed toward the Divine Presence, it also contains an implicit answer to the narrator's earlier question, "What must they do?" The Jews living in Jerusalem in the early sixties were undoubtedly subject to the self-same criticism—that they had adapted themselves too well in the New City and cut

themselves off from their origins on the Temple Mount. What the Divine Presence is required to do—and what the people may likewise infer that they must do—is to adapt themselves to the Old City. Thus God's reproving reply to the *Shekhina* unites the two questions—why God does not return for the people's sakes, and why He does not return for the Divine Presence's sake. The answer is that God's attitude toward the Jewish people and toward the *Shekhina* is determined in accordance with the attitude of the Jewish people toward the walled city of Jerusalem.

The reproof imparts a new significance to the story as a whole for the narrator himself is vulnerable to the charge since during the years when the story was written, he was prevented from habituating to the Old City. The entire story is a multilevel description of the narrator's attitude to the City within the Wall. The most prominent levels among many are the return to the Old City, the nostalgic vision of settling inside the wall and walking among the towers and turrets, the houses, and the houses of worship. One gets the impression that by writing the story, or by undergoing the emotional experience which inspired the story, the narrator attempted to atone for his sin (in which he is not alone for both the People of Israel and the Divine Presence are guilty of this same sin) of too readily settling in and settling for the New City—i.e., to the State of Israel—and detaching himself from the Temple Mount, which the Divine Presence calls "the essence of my existence." The reproof attributed to God becomes, then, a sort of self-reproof for the author's having found succor outside the Walled City and in consequence having kept away—both in body and in mind—from the Walled Old City, albeit in enemy hands. The writing of the story is itself an act of remorse and repentance, an effort to return to the City

within the Wall—even if only in the form of a mystical vision, in the company of Leah—who is the *Shekhina*.

The reproof, then, is threefold, incorporating self-chastisement, rebuke of the Divine Forces, and castigation of the reader. The story is a petition for forgiveness and an attempt to right a painful wrong. The fact that the return to the Old City is linked to the traditional dilemmas of reckoning the Coming of the Messiah and of striving for Redemption allows the dialogue to take on mythical dimensions, transcend the boundaries of time and place, and touch upon fundamental national and religious issues. But at the same time the dialogue maintains its deeply personal tone: the narrator's personal experience and the totality of the author's work.

The agonization—the author's spiritual elevation coupled with his agony of a settling of accounts with himself—of the story is anchored in its structure and literary strategy. Whereas Leah stands at the center of the story, the walk with her inside the wall is not the only excursion which is described, nor is she the only girl with whom the narrator strolls. Two other walks, each with another girl, play a serious role in the story: a walk in New Jerusalem with Tamar (pp. 20-27) and a walk in Jaffa with Alexandra (pp. 14-19). There are rather close parallels among the three stories but the one with Leah is clearly central because it is to her that the narrator recounts the outcome of the other two walks.

The dialogue between the narrator and Leah referred to above represents the narrator's spiritual audit of his relations to the Old City of Jerusalem. However, the two other stories are also somewhat like spiritual accounts, although the narrator does not itemize every detail in the total. Things are particularly bitter and penetrat-

ing in everything that relates to the walk with Tamar in the New City. When the narrator introduces Tamar, he says: "There was only one young woman in Jerusalem, and her name was Tamar, to whom all the boys were attracted, for she was a charming and modest girl....The more the boys courted her, the more she secluded herself in her room. In her room filled with a multitude of flowers that she had picked in the valley behind Bezalel (the Jerusalem art academy), she sat in solitude plucking at her piano" (p. 20). The narrator, for his part, does not court Tamar, but "one day during the intermediate days of Passover she came and knocked on my window, took me outside and invited me to walk with her" (*ibid*). In other words, the introverted Tamar, who repulses the advances of others takes the initiative in inviting the narrator for a walk in New Jerusalem. Near the end of the walk: "Tamar saw the place and said, 'Here is where I would like to sit for the rest of my life.' I pretended I hadn't heard, and said 'Let's go.'" Soon afterward we find: "I descended with her from the mountains into the valley. Tamar said, 'Here in this place. . . but before she had a chance to add 'I would like to sit for the rest of my life,' I said, 'Let's go'" (pp. 26-27). This situation recurs as the story progresses. It is clear that Tamar wishes to establish her home in the Valley of Cedars by the New City—but the narrator refuses to aid her and pretends that he doesn't hear. Even so, he does not conceal from the reader what happened to the girl in the end:

"I spoke about many weighty things, and about the countless mysteries which I discovered in those days in the surroundings of Jerusalem. If Tamar is still alive, she certainly has forgotten these things; if she was burned in the Auschwitz crematorium, it is possible that when the cursed, defiled men put her into the oven she recalled the day

we walked around Jerusalem, and if may be that the memory of that day and that hour lightened her suffering at her death" (p.26).

It is not stated explicitly, but it is possible that the narrator's refusal to heed Tamar's plea to establish her home in the Valley of Cedars is the reason for her no longer being in Jerusalem, and possibly what brought her to the crematorium at Auschwitz. Agnon does not often mention the Holocaust in his writings; therefore, the seemingly passing reference to Auschwitz in a story like this is no accident. Tamar's story is one of soulsearching, in which the narrator's conscience plagues him for having ostensibly had it in his power to extend a hand to her, thereby saving a young woman from the crematorium, yet having pretended to turn a deaf ear to her plea. It is as though we hear the narrator's moral stock-taking for not having done all in his power to save some of the residents of New Jerusalem in the face of approaching devastation.

If this episode is not very lucid, the account of the walk with Alexandra in Jaffa is even more obscure. The essence of the story is an affair involving six keys and six rooms in the narrator's possession. He uses the rooms in order to show off for Alexandra. One thing is clear: Alexandra is not an independent character, but rather part of a broad spectrum, she is the quintessence of all his Jaffa stories:

"I told Leah, 'The girl I mentioned was Alexandra. Alexandra gave the coat to her girlfriend, who was supposed to return it to me, and this friend gave it to another, and that woman to another, and between the three or four women, the coat got lost.' Leah said, 'Only three and not six?' 'Six? Why, of all numbers, six?' Leah said, 'Because Shoshana is not included.' 'Shoshana, Shoshana? Who is this

Shoshana you mentioned?' Leah said, 'Shoshana Ehrlich, Mr. Gotthold Ehrlich's daughter, the woman you told me about in connection with Rechnitz, Yaacov Rechnitz'" (pp. 18-19).

It is evident, then, that in the eyes of Leah (the Divine Presence), the Alexandra incident that the narrator recounts on their walk in the Old City is just one chapter in a broader narrative that includes Shoshana Ehrlich and Yaacov Rechnitz—i.e., the story "The Vow of Loyalty." Numerous commentaries have attempted to interpret this story, and it makes sense to accept what Leah-Divine Presence says in this story, i.e., that we include the story of Alexandra and the six rooms with that Jaffa story, which was one of Agnon's first. The unification of the two tales can probably serve to clarify many obscure points, but this is not the place to expand on the topic. At any rate, it is clear that for Agnon the Alexandra incident represents an experiential-literary sphere in which Jaffa and the young girls are the center, just as Tamar represents an experiential-literary sphere in which New Jerusalem and its young women are at the center (and there are grounds to believe that Agnon wrote "Within the Wall" at some point during the long time he was involved in writing "Shira"—the story that most emphatically uses New Jerusalem as its central theme).

The three spheres, then, stand before us: Jaffa and Alexandra, New Jerusalem and Tamar, Old Jerusalem and Leah. These three cycles are well-known to readers of Agnon, and are especially noticeable in *T'mol Shilshom* (*Only Yesterday*), where each of the cycles holds an independent status, within the broader framework of the novel, and these cycles are concentric. There are some outstanding differences, however, in the emphases and the strategies of Agnon's work as a whole and

their employment in this story. In *Only Yesterday* Sonia represents both Jaffa and the New City of Jerusalem. In that novel instead of the Old City, one finds Mea She'arim as a stand-in and Shifra as its personification. Nonetheless, the triangular picture of Jaffa, Old City, and New City is Agnon's picture of Eretz Israel. Consequently, the reproof "You have adapted yourself too well to the New City" may be viewed as self-reproach aimed as well at his literary work in its totality, as if Agnon was criticizing the lack of balance in it between the Old and the New Cities. It is these feelings of guilt and remorse which accompany him when he recounts the affair of Tamar in the Old City as well perhaps as the affairs relating to Shoshana—Sonia in Jaffa.

It is because of this that "Within the Walls" ought to be read as a retrospective work. Here is a story in which a late part of Agnon's work evaluates and criticizes itself and at the same time remonstrates against both the people of Israel and the very Heavens.

Since there is an admission of guilt in the three walk cycles described in the story, we may suppose that the story was written to atone for this guilt or at least to suggest a possible road for atonement. Paramount in the atonement process is a demand to return to the city too long neglected both in the framework of Jewish life and in Agnon's writings—and the question that remains is how to return. How can the author, when reflecting upon his actions and his writings in Jaffa and the New City, rise above his feelings of guilt? The answer to the question is to be found in the character and structure of the story, in the two layers which unite in it. The first level is visionary, the vision of returning to the Old City accompanied by the *Shekhina*. It is hard to assume that in this story Agnon prophesized the liberation of the Old

City of Jerusalem, which in fact occurred only a few years after it was written. Therefore, categorizing it as simply a "vision" does not adequately answer the question of how to return, either as a literary device or a practical solution. The vision requires supports which can be found in the materials Agnon employed as he envisioned the walk with Leah. For these materials can tell us something about the spiritual atmosphere which the story seeks to evoke.

Agnon's attitude toward Jewish mystical thought was quite complex, and he undoubtedly was not among those adherents who genuflected before *Kabbala* and *Chassidut* (Jewish mysticism and pietism). It seems as if the opposite is true, for Agnon's depictions of the practices of *Kabbala* and *Chassidut* are frequently lined with pointed irony and biting sarcasm. It is precisely because of this that the wealth of materials drawn from the vocabulary of Hassidic symbolism and the language of mysticism in the story holds particular interest. In the light of Agnon's meticulous care with language and because of the rigor of his style one cannot assume any random occurrence here. When Agnon selected the linguistic-depictive spring from which he drew most of the materials which compose this story, he undoubtedly did not sever these materials from their context and selected them with an eye to the connection between these sources and the significance and aim of his tale.

Both at the story's beginning and its end Agnon repeats an imagery well-known in Jewish mysticism: "We entered the City within the Wall and went up the stairs people descend, and since every going to the City within the Wall is called an ascent, therefore I say we ascended the stairs" (p. 5); "we left the house and descended the

stairs one goes up to David street because every exit from the City is called a descent, therefore, I say, we went down" (p. 47). At the entrance to the Old City, one goes down stairs, but it is called an ascent (*aliya*); when leaving the City one climbs stairs, but it is called a descent (*yerida*). This paradoxical formula has been employed in Jewish mystic writings since the days of *Yordei Hamerkava* ("The Descenders to the Holy Chariot), which dates back to the Talmudic period. It is clear that the *Merkava* hovers above, but to reach it one must descend, according to the language of the mystics. When Agnon chose to begin and end his story with this image he hinted that the walk inside the Walled City in the presence of the *Shekhina* is a kind of descent to the *Merkava*, a kind of mystic experience. In order to forestall any mistake as to his intent, early on in the story the author makes reference to this very thing from yet another source related to the subject and the time of the previous reference: "But our erudition and our familiarity (with the sources) served us well and just as we entered in peace so did we go out in safety with no obstacle or injury" (p. 5). This is a clear allusion to the four Sages who entered into esoteric speculations, the *Pardess of Kabbala*. Leah and the narrator are like Rabbi Akiba entering and leaving safely and not likened to those who looked in and were harmed thereby. It is by these means that the author sets a multi-generational atmosphere and imparts a flavor of ancient mystic experience, an additional link in the long chain of those who descend to the *Merkava* and enter into the *Pardess*.

In the description of Leah many concepts common to mystic literature appear: "Leah's face was worthy of further description, and I will not hide the fact that on many occasions I bent over to get a look, but I didn't succeed. At the sight of the glory and honor of her face, an

impenetrable barrier descends, frustrating a close look" (pp. 6-7). The detailed descriptions of Leah, then, in the following sections of the story, are not "outward reality" since her face was "hidden from the eye"; Leah is perceived spiritually and inwardly, not physically, for that view is frustrated by her "visage of glory."

The numerous phrases such as "the light of the heavens is growing furrowed," pp. 8, 9; "seven Sabbatical years ago," p. 8; "the light which no mind can conceive," p. 19; the description of the songs of the heavens and the earth which resemble the "Song chapter," pp. 17, 25, 26; and dozens of other examples all testify to the fact that the author intentionally delved into the rich store of mystical language when seeking to convey the experiences of spiritual elevation in this story.

Images from mystical sources are also woven into the fabric of the plot. For example, in the story of Alexandra in Jaffa the narrator leads the girl around from room to room, in the house whose keys have been placed in his charge, six rooms in all. In light of the numerous phrases drawn from the literature of *Yordei Hamerkava* it is hard to overlook these allusions to "rooms" to many descriptions of "the chambers of the chariot" as well as to the detailed description found in *Heichalot Rabatti* (*The Greater Book of Divine Palaces*), which relates Rabbi Ishamael's ascent from the first *Heichal* (Divine Palace) through the second all the way up to the sixth. This is an ascent that brings Rabbi Ishamael just short of the *Shekhina*, who as is known resides in the seventh one. In our story the narrator says: "I am unworthy; for not all the keys are in my hand, but six keys only" (p. 18), and one may conclude that in Jaffa he can get into only six rooms. The seventh room, or the seventh palace, is Jerusalem within the Wall, Leah's story is the story of the seventh and most exalted stage.

Among the Jerusalem tales interspersed in our story, one stands out in particular—that of the "Beth El" congregation, Eidat "Hamechavanim" (mystical contemplators [in prayer]), who are the current guardians of the ember of study and prayer in the Kabbalistic tradition in Jerusalem. The narrator tells the story with great empathy. The author's identification with this group can also be detected in autobiographic vignettes describing the study of mysticism—such as the incident involving the mystic "who used to explain to me parts of the 'Zohar' that I had found difficult at the time I worked on translating the sections on 'Rosh Hashana' (New Year) and 'Yom Hakippurim' (Day of Atonement)" (p. 32)—meaning the sections he worked on while preparing his book *Yamim Noraim* (*Days of Awe*). One can discern a personal note—partially figurative and partially visionary—in the narrator's self-description as one who studied in the academy of Shem and Ever (p. 25); Jewish mysticism ascribes the secrets of creativity and of the Creation of the universe to this same house of study. In a related matter, the narrator says that he was given "new intelligence"—a phrase that appears often in mystic literature and refers to self-renewal in the upper worlds.

These are only a few examples of the many depictions that derive from the language and symbolism of mysticism. Of course these expressions do not have the same significance in Agnon's writings as they do in mystic literature. Agnon uses them merely because they are building blocks for the construction of his story. Still, this material cannot be isolated from the overall import of the story. When Agnon describes experiences of spiritual elevation associated with Jerusalem within the Wall, in the company of the *Shekhina*, he finds it necessary to turn to the literary-linguistic vocabulary of mysticism; and

does so without a trace of the usual irony and satire which are the hallmarks of all his other works in this area.

Agnon's attitude toward Jerusalem and the rationale for this story are found in a concentrated measure in the following section: "I did not mention all the places we saw, nor did I tell all that there is to tell. I have much to say about each and every house, courtyard and site in Jerusalem, about the places which remain in their desolation. *In the past these things were not important to me; now that those people loyal to Jerusalem have passed away and I remain alone, my heart counsels me thus: tell everything you have seen and heard in the fifty-two years that you have immersed yourself as a speck of dust in Jerusalem's soil*" (my emphasis, J.D.) (p. 37). What is implied is that while Jerusalem stood open to Agnon (before 1948) these things were not important to him; but later when of all Jerusalem's devotees Agnon alone remained alive, it became a duty to tell the story of Jerusalem. The same nostalgia which people ascribe to Agnon—the yearning for the Shtetl of his birth and for the Eastern European Jewry which no longer existed—is exhibited here as well for Jerusalem, especially for the City within the Wall. The story, therefore, is partial fulfillment of a mission assigned to him by fate—a fate encompassing his entire generation and the fate of the city of Jerusalem.

It would appear that the vision that is at the core of this story is explained by the author's sense of mission. Were it not for the combination of a sense of mission and a sense of isolation, it is doubtful whether Agnon could have produced the magnificent portrayal of the tight bond between him and the Divine Presence. This bond is given its most concrete expression at the conclusion of the story when the narrator kisses the sleeping figure of the *Shekhina* on

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the lips. In this kiss are mingled adoration, love, and deep pity for Leah, who, immediately afterward, is expelled from the Old City. The narrator himself is involved in this expulsion. Agnon usually refrained from such daring images and only a sense of mission could explain his employment of them in this story. It seems as if the sketch reflects a latent area of Agnon's self-consciousness, an area suppressed and disguised in most of his writings. But because of the special dramatic situation and the literary-linguistic material in which the story is steeped, this suppressed emotion comes, at least partially, to the surface.

To some extent, one may pinpoint the true identity of Jerusalem in this story by recourse to the approach we have just mentioned. On a number of occasions it seems as if the focus of the story is not worldly Jerusalem of stone and earth, but rather celestial, eternal, divine Jerusalem. Indeed, in Agnon's other Jerusalem stories (such as "Tehilah") the mundane, even cruel aspects of life in the Old City are bluntly revealed to the reader, but in this story Jerusalem is idealized. A brilliant light radiates over the entire city, hiding its defects—except for the devastation of its synagogues and study centers, which Agnon laments several times. "Within the Wall" contains elements characteristic of celestial Jerusalem, and the sketches drawing life from Jewish mysticism complement these elements in creating the general atmosphere.

Still, it may be understood that the terrestrial Old City of Jerusalem became transposed into celestial Jerusalem but this only from the time that the Old City was detached from the rest of Jerusalem, closed off to the narrator and all other Jews, its Jewish community destroyed. Having become inaccessible through this destruction, the Old City becomes as intangible as celestial Jerusalem had been previously. It is this process which unites the two aspects

of Jerusalem in the author's vision. As Agnon stared out of his home in Talpiot (a southern neighborhood in New Jerusalem) at the Temple Mount, the distinction between the two Jerusalems blurred. As long as Agnon was able to walk around in the streets of the Old City, it was impossible not to differentiate between the idealized, elevated Jerusalem and the material one, which incorporated both good and bad. Paradoxically, it is in the very destruction of Jerusalem that its unification and integrity can take place, in his eyes.

The vision in the story ties human Jerusalem and divine Jerusalem together, and the expression of this unity is the narrator's mystical kiss to the Divine Presence. The kiss creates a bond between terrestrial reality and the divine powers. Once Agnon began looking at Jerusalem in a nostalgic way the celestial and earthly levels of the city merged into a vibrant, poignant inner experience for him. The author felt entrusted with the preservation of this unity and its story. "Within the Wall" is partial fulfillment of this duty.

This story contributes to an understanding of the internal balance and proportions of the elements in Agnon's work. Much has been said and written about Agnon's relationship to Buczacz, the town of his birth and the spiritual environment in which he grew up, and Agnon's complex relationship with this world does indeed occupy a central place in his works. But Agnon's relationship to Jerusalem, where he lived for the better part of a period spanning more than fifty years, is equally powerful and profound. This emotional tie is not given as frequent literary expression as is the tie to Buczacz, and "Within the Wall" provides a new perspective regarding the sensitivities that went into Agnon's Israeli writings and, more specifically, his Jerusalem writings.

A Sentimental Journey —

Early Zionist Activities in The South —
The Diary of Jacob de Haas' Trip in 1904

David Geffen

"My trip through the south is for the purpose of stirring up further interest in the Zionist work which has made rapid strides in this section in the last few years....You might call it a world stirring tour. In the last few years great progress has been made in the south, but to further interest people in the work, I have come off my New York shelf and am visiting the principal cities of the south."

This description by Jacob de Haas, reported in the *Atlanta Journal*, defined the purpose of his month-long trip, the first ever made into the heartland of southern Jewry in the United States. From November 28, 1904 until January 2, 1905 de Haas, as Secretary of the Federation of American Zionists, made his "world stirring trip" through fifteen cities in seven states. His efforts resulted in the formation of new groups, the enrollment of new members, and the beginning of a better understanding of Zionism by Southern Jews and Christians.

Jacob de Haas was born in London in 1872 of Dutch parentage. Quite early he ap-

peared destined for a literary career. In fact in his twenties he established his journalistic credentials and became editor of the *Jewish World* in London. When Theodor Herzl visited England in 1896 to secure the aid of British Jewry in the founding of the Zionist movement, de Haas was quite moved by him and became the major advocate of Herzlian Zionism in Great Britain. De Haas served as Herzl's unofficial English secretary, and in 1900 he was in charge of the Fourth Zionist Congress held in London. In 1902 de Haas came to the United States to serve as the editor of *The Maccabean*, journal of the Federation of American Zionists, and upon his arrival in America he was also chosen as the secretary of the Federation. After leaving the Federation in 1905, he moved to Boston where he served as editor of the *Jewish Advocate*. His explication of Zionism to Brandeis was one of the factors that helped bring the Justice into active Zionist work. Jacob de Haas served the Zionist cause throughout his lifetime and died in Boston in 1937.

When he began his work with the Federation in 1902, de Haas discovered that the participation in the Zionist cause in the states south of Baltimore was quite minimal. In fact there were only eight affiliated Zionist groups in the South. They had a total enrollment of about one

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