

Five Gates

Casual Notes for an Autobiography

JACOB SONDERLING

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

What happens to a sensitive, highly cultured man who comes to America to be a rabbi — particularly when, like Jacob Sonderling, that man combines in himself the diverse traditions of German scholarship and Jewish pietism? The question finds an answer in the autobiographical ruminations which appear below.

Born on October 19, 1878, at Lipine, Silesia, to Wilhelm and Johanna Lebowitsch Sonderling, our autobiographer comes of a family of Hungarian and Galician Hasidim. Johanna Lebowitsch's family had produced Yismach Mosheh, the founder of Hungarian Hasidism; Wilhelm Sonderling had been ordained by the Sanzer Rebbe. That heritage has never been far from their son, Jacob, but it has maintained itself in him side by side with the Wissenschaft des Judenthums that flowered during the 1800's in German-speaking Central Europe.

After studying at the Universities of Vienna and Breslau as well as at seminaries in Vienna, Breslau, and Berlin, Jacob Sonderling received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Tübingen in 1904 and was ordained by Dr. Baruch Jacob Placzeck, Landesrabbiner of Moravia and Chief Rabbi of Brünn. That same year, at Breslau, he married Emma Klemann, who would bear him three sons — Egmont, Fred, and Paul. Four years later, Dr. Sonderling became the rabbi of Hamburg's celebrated Israelitischer Tempel Verein, the cradle of Reform Judaism. He held that pulpit until his emigration to America in 1923, although his tenure in Hamburg had been interrupted during the First World War, when he served as a German Army chaplain on Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg's staff.

The German Army's Drang nach Osten brought Dr. Sonderling into close contact with Jewish life in Lithuania — an experience which

inspired in him feelings rather akin to those called up in another German serviceman on duty in Eastern Europe — Franz Rosenzweig. In later years, Dr. Sonderling would write: "If I am ever reborn, I would like to be born a Litvack."

In 1935, the Sonderlings took up residence in Los Angeles, where Dr. Sonderling founded the Society for Jewish Culture, known today as Fairfax Temple. He has served that congregation as its rabbi for nearly thirty years.

A REPLICA OF THE WANDERING JEW

In 1923, a new life opened to me — America. The *Manchuria* left Antwerp — the last city in Europe I had seen — and went out on the high seas towards an unknown tomorrow. Standing at the rail, a passenger who had crossed the ocean many times showed me a little light, gleaming through the darkness. "Watch it," he said. "This is the last sign of life you will see. For five days and nights, we will see nothing but water."

The travelers, to me, were a nondescript crowd — chatting, promenading, playing. The only one of their languages that I understood was Yiddish, spoken by quite a number. The only person I knew by reputation was Bruno Walter, the famous conductor, who was going to America for his first concert. On the third day he asked me: "What about cigars?" "I'm almost finished — let us inquire the price of a cigar." We learned that it cost twenty-five cents. Twenty-five cents in German currency amounted, in 1923, to 12,500 marks. Who could afford to pay that? But a man has to smoke.

I had with me two bottles of cognac. The *Manchuria*, an American boat, suffered from prohibition, but there were a number of people on that boat who loved a drink; so, the rabbi turned into a bartender — one cigar, one small glass of cognac — and we managed beautifully until we arrived in New York.

One afternoon, there was that picture, so strange for European eyes — skyscrapers next to little houses, and at the pier the Statue of Liberty. One Jewish woman told me that the inscription on that statue was made by Emma Lazarus, a Jewess.

From the Hotel Commodore, I rushed early in the morning over to Forty-third Street and Fifth Avenue to see Temple Emanu-El — which some years before had cost me, or rather the Hamburg Temple, one million marks. When the Hamburg Temple set out to raise funds for a new building, Mr. Henry Budge, a very rich New York banker who had returned to Europe and lived in Hamburg, had been my first target for a contribution. My president had sent me to him, and I had told him about our plan to build a new temple in Hamburg. Budge had asked me how much it was going to cost. We had figured one million marks. I expected him to give us 5,000 or 10,000 marks. “You can have the million,” he said, “under one condition. I would like to have a service like Temple Emanu-El in New York — men and women sitting together, men without hats and without *talesim* (prayer shawls).”

“I have to refuse your generous offer, Herr Budge — we are building a Temple for Hamburg Jewry, not for you.”

Returning to my board, I had offered my resignation as their rabbi. Having refused so generous a gift, I could not, I felt, hold on to my pulpit. My board, however, agreed with me, and in the Hamburg Temple, the cradle of Reform, men and women remained separated up to the last moment.

It took me years to accustom myself to seeing men and women sitting together.

The same afternoon, my first in New York, I strolled down Fifth Avenue, admiring the famous boulevard. A thought struck me; I had been here almost twenty-four hours, without meeting an acquaintance — that was strange. At that moment, a man stopped me. He spoke English, and I could not understand one word, but he continued in German and said: “I was born here in New York, and last year, for the first time, I went to Europe, stayed in Hamburg and watched you every morning, watering your flowers in your garden. Won’t you have lunch with me?”

I shall never forget those first days in New York. Here I was — lost in the colossus of houses, streets, faces, a babel of languages — a replica of the Wandering Jew. How often I stood, looking at Hebrew letters like *Bosor Kosher* (kosher meat), which gave me a feeling of nostalgia!

GOULASH, HERRING, AND SAUERKRAUT

Julian Obermann, later professor at Yale University, was my only acquaintance. He helped me to get a room at Broadway and One Hundred Thirteenth Street. The first Friday evening I went to a synagogue and at eight o'clock in the evening came to a Jewish restaurant on Broadway. The place was dark. I tried the door — it opened; the man was about to leave.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"*Shabbos* (the Sabbath)," he said.

"Can you let a Kosher Jew starve?"

"No, I'll give you something to eat," and he was about to go to the kitchen.

I stopped him.

"Wait, it's *Shabbos*. I have no money." (I had money.)

"It doesn't matter," he said. He brought me a full dinner, waited on me, and I left the place without paying. I simply could not understand it. Two days later I returned there for lunch. The man was behind the counter — I took my check, with a five dollar bill — the man did not deduct for my Friday night dinner.

"Don't you remember that I was here Friday night?"

"Yes, I do remember."

"Suppose I didn't come back?"

The man got angry: "Are you going to prevent me from doing a *mitzvah* (a good deed)?"

Outside I stood, very much bewildered. I saw a little bit of a place, the restaurant — a man working perhaps twelve hours a day to make a living, resenting my not giving him a chance for a *mitzvah*. For the first time, I realized the beauty of the expression that "to show hospitality is more precious than to see God."

A few weeks later, something similar happened. I had taken a train to Chicago. As I tried to enter the dining car, I found the door closed, and an employee told me that the diner would be open again at six o'clock.

"What did you want?" he asked.

"Oh, just a cup of coffee and a piece of cake."

"I'll give it to you."

Having finished my repast, I took out a bill, but the manager [steward] said: "You see, sir, the kitchen is closed, and so are the books — consider yourself our guest."

Can you imagine how much all those little things meant to me — coming as I did from a country where strict correctness was the aim of life? How often I stopped at a newstand, taking a paper and putting two cents in the box, without anybody watching.

Dr. Obermann introduced me to Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, of blessed memory. Sitting in his study, I glanced at the shelves filled with books.

"Dr. Wise, I know that book over there — it is the handbook of my teacher, Marcus Brann, in Breslau."

"Yes," he said. "I bought his library."

"Brann's book in New York! — I am at home in America."

An old friend of mine, Shmarya Levin, met me at 111 Fifth Avenue, the Zionist headquarters.

"What are you doing here?" he cried. "Go back to Europe — this is no place for you."

It was not very encouraging to hear that from so clever a man. There, too, I met Louis Lipsky, the leader of American Zionism, Maurice Samuel, and others, who took me to a Zionist meeting. Called upon, I spoke in German. The next morning I received a telegram from the Zionist Organization of America, offering me an engagement for a series of talks on Zionism throughout the country, and I began to bring the message of Theodor Herzl to American Jewry. One of the first communities I visited was Chicago. Everything was new to me. I was what was called a "greenhorn." Reporters came; I had never met one before, and I took their questions seriously. One of them asked me: "What do you think about American culture?" In all innocence I said: "America is a young country, and culture doesn't travel by express." The papers carried a story about it. So I became nervous. Two days later, five men came to see me.

"I don't want to see reporters."

"We are not reporters," they answered. "We are officers of a congregation, and listening to you last night, we decided that you have to become our rabbi."

"But I cannot speak English!"

"You will learn."

"What kind of congregation are you?"

"We are Orthodox."

"I'm not Orthodox."

"We are semi-Orthodox."

I didn't know what it meant. They did not argue — they just took out a contract and asked me to sign it. With the help of a dictionary, I found out that they had offered me a decent salary and obligated themselves to bring my family over from Europe and to furnish me with an apartment. I signed. They left, and here I was sitting in my hotel room, believing that I had dreamed it. So, four weeks after my arrival in a new continent, I had a congregation. Another four weeks passed by, and they asked me whether I would agree that they amalgamate with another congregation. That was new to me.

"How do you do that?"

"Oh, we sell our synagogue."

"Whom do you sell it to?"

"In our neighborhood there is a Negro congregation — they want to buy the building."

I was bedeviled and bewildered. The next Saturday I went to my pulpit and said: "I have found a new interpretation for a Bible text. First came the Irish, who built the church; they left and sold the sanctuary to the Italians; then came the Jews, and now the Jews have sold it to the Negroes — now I understand what the Bible says: 'My house shall be a house of prayer for all peoples (Isaiah 56:7).'"

The two congregations married — mine was Hungarian; the other Lithuanian. The honeymoon lasted four weeks. The fifth week started, and there was trouble: on one side the Hungarians, and on the other the Litvaks. Finally I suggested: "Gentlemen, goulash, herring, and sauerkraut do not mix."

Something else happened. A member of my congregation's board brought me the newest list of our membership and asked me to sign it.

"What do you need my signature for?"

In all innocence he explained: "Every synagogue member, according to American law, is entitled to five gallons of sacramental wine. The congregation is buying that wine from the Government at a cheap price, selling it afterwards at a very high price to all the people, and doing great business."

Of course, I refused to do that, and my congregation was upset, believing that its rabbi was queer. My friend Levin, whom I mentioned before, said once that Orthodox rabbis, doing big business in those days in sacramental wine, had changed the *Tilim* (Psalms); Psalm 121 says, "From whence (*me-ayin*) does my help come?" Levin suggested: "Instead of *me-ayin* ('from whence'), read *miyayin* ('from wine')!"

BACK TO NEW YORK

I became homesick for New York. It had attracted me from the very beginning. The fantastic figure of two million Jews in one city never failed to impress me. I loved to exaggerate: New York is a Jewish city where we permit a few *goyim* (non-Jews) to exist — try not to be Jewish in Brooklyn or the Bronx! So I went back and found a congregation on the outskirts of Brooklyn — Manhattan Beach. Sitting together on a porch with the board which gave me the once-over, I heard a man whispering to the president: "If you take that rabbi, I shall increase my membership [dues] to \$3,000.00." I became curious afterwards. Eighteen years earlier that man had come from Russia, penniless. When I met him, he was estimated as having \$16,000,000. He could hardly read English, but he had an uncanny nose for the future value of a corner in Manhattan.

One day I asked him: "Do you need publicity?"

"Of course."

"What about having your picture on the second page of the *Herald-Tribune*?"

"How much?" he asked.

"Fifteen thousand dollars for the *Keren Hayesod* (the Jewish National Fund)."

"Can you make it for ten?"

"No, but if you give me a check for \$12,000, to be dated one day after your picture appears, you can have it."

I approached Rabbi Stephen S. Wise and asked him to come out to Manhattan Beach. There, in my admirer's home, Dr. Wise and his host would be photographed together, and then I would give Dr. Wise the \$12,000. It was done, and the picture was published. A few days later, my friend asked me: "Rabbi, what is the *Keren Hayesod*?"

There were two congregations in Manhattan Beach. One day two boys were talking to each other in a room next to my study. Both raved about the rabbis. The boy from the other congregation asked our boy: "What's the difference between your rabbi and our rabbi?"

The answer came: "It is between a Ford and a Cadillac."

Another two years passed by, and I moved from Manhattan Beach to Washington Heights. Members of the new congregation approached me with a request: "The butchers in Washington Heights are selling *treffa* (non-kosher) meat — something has to be done!" I refused. I told them that I was not Orthodox and that the Vaad Hakashruth (the representative board overseeing Kashruth matters) of Greater New York was in charge. People came again and again. Finally, they approached Dr. Louis Ginzberg, of the Jewish Theological Seminary, who lived opposite me in Washington Heights, to induce me to do something.

Let me digress a little bit. Before coming to America, I had asked rabbis about Dr. Ginzberg, of whom I had known through various publications appearing in scientific magazines. I myself and many others admired his extraordinary knowledge and brilliance.

"What has he written here in America?" I asked.

"Legends of the Jews."¹

I was disappointed. "Why does he waste his time?"

Wilhelm Bacher had left us with six volumes of Jewish legends,² and Bialik had written others.³ For months I did not come near

¹ *Legends of the Jews* (1909-1928), 7 vols.

² *Die Agada der Tannaiten* (1884-1890), 2 vols.; *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer* (1892-1899), 3 vols.; and *Die Agada der babylonischen Amoräer* (1878), 1 vol.

³ Hayyim Nahman Bialik and Joshua H. Rawnitzki, compilers, *Sefer Ha-Agadah* (1907-1909), 3 vols.

Ginzberg, until, working on a lecture one blessed day, I needed a *Midrash* (homiletical collection) and saw on the shelves his *Legends of the Jews*. Hesitatingly, I took one of the volumes and found a footnote in Volume V. That was the beginning of an adventure, which is still with me up to this very day. There is nothing Ginzberg would not deal with in his footnotes — and not just matters of Jewish learning. The knowledge of that man, to me, borders on the miraculous.

Once I asked him: “How did you get the material?”

He answered: “Mostly by memory.”

I worshipped him. When it was raining on *Shabbos*, he would not go to the Seminary synagogue, but, together with his wife, he would come to my synagogue in Washington Heights. They were sitting together, when one day I asked him: “Mr. Ginzberg, how can you?” And here is his answer: “When you live long enough in America, you will realize that the status of womanhood has changed so much that separating women from men has become obsolete.” That convinced me, and today, in my synagogue, our men and women sit together — with one exception, which I regret: My wife protests at being seated on the platform!

So, to pick up my story, Professor Ginzberg approached me and urged me to take over the supervision of Kashruth. I called eighteen butchers together and told them that — only out of respect for Professor Ginzberg — I would be willing to supervise Kashruth under two conditions. First, the *mashgiach* (inspector) and I myself had to have the right to inspect their places twenty-four hours a day. That was accepted. Second, if I found it necessary to take back a butcher’s certificate of Kashruth, that butcher should have no recourse to the law. About that they argued — I remained adamant. There was still another condition. The *mashgiach* could neither be hired nor fired by the butchers. His salary was to be paid by the butchers into a special fund.

So we started. The *mashgiach* would report to me every day. Once he came and told me that one of the butchers had a chicken market elsewhere and kept it open on the Sabbath. When I called the offender in, he told me that his partner was not Jewish and gave me a talmudical analysis that, in this case, his place could be

open. I refused to follow his thought. "You make your living selling kosher meat to people who believe in Kashruth. I have lost my confidence in you — give me back my certificate." I finally got it. A month later, another certificate appeared in his window, signed by an Orthodox rabbi on the Lower East Side; the butcher had gotten it for \$50. I was finished with the supervision of Kashruth.

Something else happened in the congregation. One Friday morning I found out that Mayor [James J.] Walker would occupy my pulpit the same night. Nobody had bothered to ask me. That finished my work in *that* synagogue.

WHERE IS THE LORD?

A congregation in Providence, Rhode Island, had repeatedly invited me to lecture. One day I said to them: "Look, you cannot let the same rabbi speak to you all the time — you need some variety."

"Would you come out to Providence and be our permanent rabbi?" they asked.

"What shall I do in Providence?"

They came again and again. Finally, a committee traveled to New York and pleaded with me to come out for a conference. I met with them in a hotel room and told them that I was not fit for life in a small community.

"Couldn't a decent salary satisfy you?"

"It is not a question of money," I said. "Men don't get younger — to provide something for the future might be necessary."

"How much do you want?"

"I'm not a businessman, and remember this: when I mention a sum, I *mean* it." Then, bearing in mind what I had said about providing something for the future, I mentioned a substantial sum.

One of the men said: "Rabbi, can't we discuss this?"

I interrupted him. "Gentlemen, it is now five o'clock, and there's a concert downstairs — may I invite you to be my guests for tea?"

"Does that mean our conversation is closed?"

"Yes, it is closed."

Within five minutes, I had my contract. A few months later I

surprised my congregation, one Friday night, with an organ. After services, a few men came out of a classroom, all excited.

“What happened?” I asked.

“Oh, nothing.”

“Something must have happened.”

One of the men said: “But, rabbi, you know, playing an organ on *Shabbes* is against the law.”

I opened his vest.

“You are looking for my *tallis katon* (scapular prayer garment), rabbi? I forgot it today.”

“*Gazlon* (thief), you never had one — don’t tell me you are religious.”

My Sisterhood came with the request: “Boys after bar mitzvah and girls after confirmation need more instruction — what would you suggest doing?” I told them, “Let me think.” Finally, I called together the boys and girls, about thirty-five in all, and suggested something.

“If you want it, build an organization without bylaws, without officers — just a name, a meeting place, and a time. The name: ‘The Rabbi’s Bodyguard’; the place: the synagogue; the time: every Sunday morning at eight o’clock. Boys appear with their weapons — *tallis* (prayer shawl) and *tefillin* (phylacteries).”

And so it was. We came together for a service in English and in Hebrew; the girls came in afterwards, and we all went together into our social hall. Here we had a breakfast prepared by the mothers. After grace had been said, one of the “bodyguards” would thank the mothers for their hospitality, and we would go to Sunday school.

A few weeks later, a seven-year-old boy came.

“What are you doing here?”

“Rabbi, I want to pray.”

“Look, you want to have breakfast — you are invited.”

Fathers appeared, telling me that they had had some job finding *tefillin*, but the sons had urged them to come. Sometimes, I heard a rumor that the mothers grumbled — too much work for breakfast. I would tell them: “Don’t worry. Mrs. Sonderling will be glad to do it.” She never had to.

One day I called in one of my boys.

“Jerry, I have to leave for three weeks for Europe, and there is a rumor in the city that you fellows come regularly on Sunday because of the whip I use. I shall be absent for three Sundays. I make you responsible for a good attendance. Remember, my reputation is in your hands.”

On my return, Jerry reported that they had broken all the attendance records. A few years later, after I had left Providence, one of my Sunday school teachers visited me in New York.

“How are things, Celia?”

“Bad, rabbi. Everything you organized has gone. The board does not permit the boys to pray in the synagogue on Sunday morning; so the boys pray in one corner of the kitchen, while the girls prepare breakfast in another corner. That’s all that’s left.”

One Sunday morning, as I sat in my study and the fathers waited outside for the children to come from Sunday school, a poor man came in to ask for a *nedove* (charitable contribution). The richest man in town said to him with a booming voice: “Go in to the rabbi! *He* has a good heart.” That man claimed to enjoy my sermons on “Love thy neighbor as thyself”!

That moment, I must confess, was the turning point in my spiritual career. It made me feel that I was a failure, and I had to find out. I went back to New York and, looking from the distance at Columbia University, I began to ponder: What is Jewishness? A theology? A number of abstract definitions? A psychological analysis? An ethical guide? I remembered Jeremiah’s indictment of religious leaders: “The priests said not: ‘Where is the Lord?’ And they that handle the law knew Me not” (2:8). I felt I had no purpose.

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

At various German universities, I had studied philosophy, art, history, and esthetics; one of my professors had written two volumes on the theory of illusion. Imagine; you are sitting in front of a desk. You have occupied the same chair for years. You know exactly the form of the desk in front of you. One day, for some reason, your chair has been moved to the other side, and the desk you look at is a different desk; the perspective is different. That thought

bothered me. All the time I had looked upon matters Jewish from one viewpoint — the viewpoint of the pulpit. I determined literally to change my viewpoint, to look upon Judaism from the viewpoint of the pew, from a different perspective. The thought intrigued me. This is what I would do.

I had a friend, a Wall Street banker, and I told him: "Look, for one year I'm not going to occupy a position. Here are \$5,000 I have saved — I don't know what to do with it. Will you take it?"

"Leave me the money," he said. "I'm going to invest it. If the stocks rise, you win; if they fall, I lose."

And a new adventure started. I went from one Jewish place to the other — watching, looking, listening, all with a non-partisan spirit. I went to an Orthodox *shul*, to a Conservative synagogue, to a Reform temple, and saw what I had never seen before. For instance, in a very beautiful Reform temple, there were two pulpits, one occupied by a rabbi and one by a cantor. The two alternated, and when the cantor began, for a moment's moment something happened to the face of the rabbi — for a fleeting second, a look of impatience: "Why doesn't he stop, so that I can start again?" The rabbi was a highly respected theologian, highly regarded, but the illusion was gone. In another place, another rabbi spoke on charity, on the beauty of giving. Behind me sat two men, and one spoke to the other: "Listen to him! He never gave a cent!" Which was not true.

A thought came to me: What is religion? A kind of human experience about which I, only a rabbi, know nothing. But there might be another experience, one perhaps known to me: love. Love is the coordination of all our senses, and if the religious experience is similar, the rabbis have become the most successful killers of four senses for the benefit of one, because the only sense through which we try to gain the experience of religion is the ear: "Hear, O Israel." If one could only investigate the four other senses, one of them might open and point out a channel leading to the experience of religion.

Here I stopped. It sounded correct, but I hungered for an authority to support my theory. For three months I lived in the libraries of New York; I went from shelf to shelf, but found nothing.

I did not give up. There is that Jewish stubbornness which forced me to continue. Passing a shelf one blessed day, I picked up a book at random — Rabbi Moses Isserles' *Torat Ha-Olah*, a philosophical explanation of the sacrifices in the ancient Temple. I got angry with myself — what did sacrifices have to do with my theory? I was about to close that book, when my eyes fell upon a sentence in which the author said: "The Temple in Jerusalem was surrounded by a wall, and that wall had five gates, according to the five senses." Here was my theory!

BEHIND THE NOISE, MUSIC

About twenty-five years ago, after wandering through Jewish life in America, I came to Los Angeles on a two-day visit. I was urged to stay, and I have never regretted it. After so many years of spiritual struggle, I still bear a question mark — what am I?

Scientifically speaking, I am a Liberal. Emotionally, I could not be without tradition. If I were to define myself, I would say that I am Orthodox among the Reformers and a Reformer among the Orthodox. I look forward to the day when extreme Orthodoxy and Classical Reform will disappear, while "left-wing" Conservatives and "right-wing" Reformers — "Neo-Reformers," as some might put it — will regain their strength.

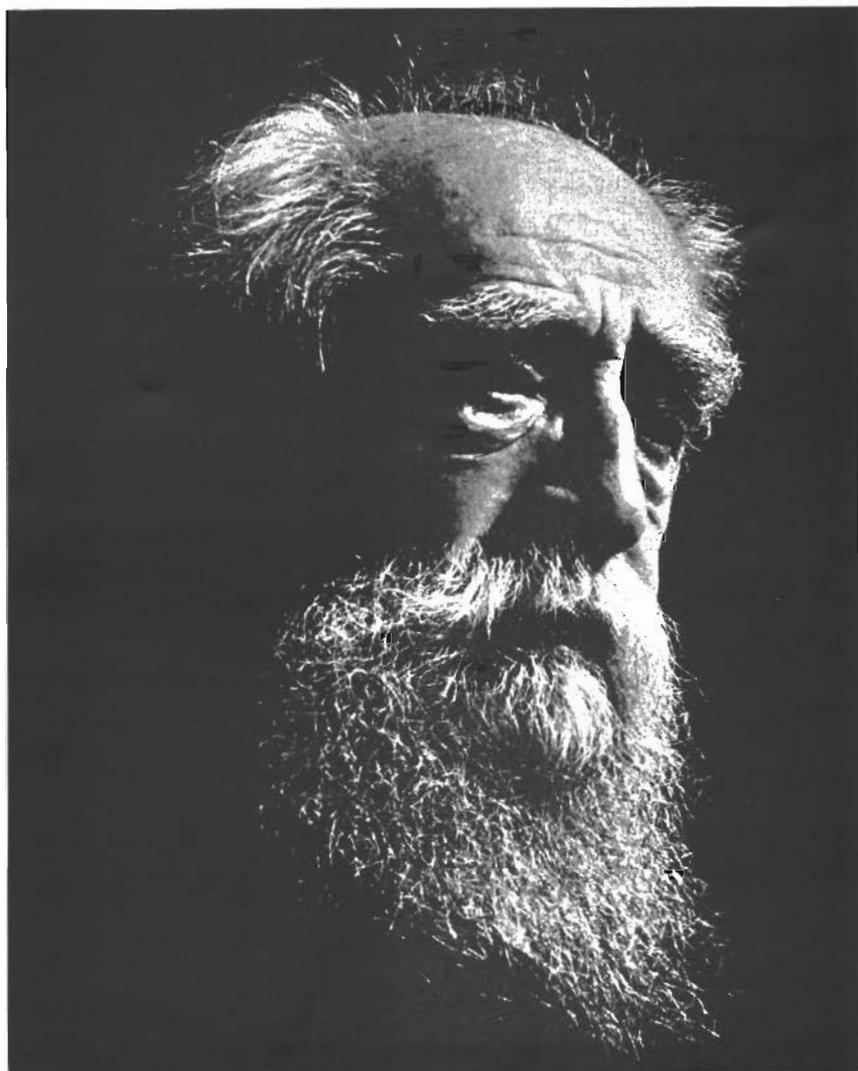
Two great American Jews have given me an assuring answer. One was Solomon Schechter, who says in one of his essays: "The greatest virtue in life is consistency. The Jew has been a genius in that respect. He was consistent in his inconsistency." The other is the saintly Kaufmann Kohler. When I came to New York in 1923, I followed an old tradition about paying respect to a famous scholar and visited him. Dr. Kohler received my visiting card and came out all excited.

"What do you think of American Reform?"

Taken unawares, I said: "Professor Kohler, do you want a compliment? Have it. Do you want to discuss it?"

And we went into his library.

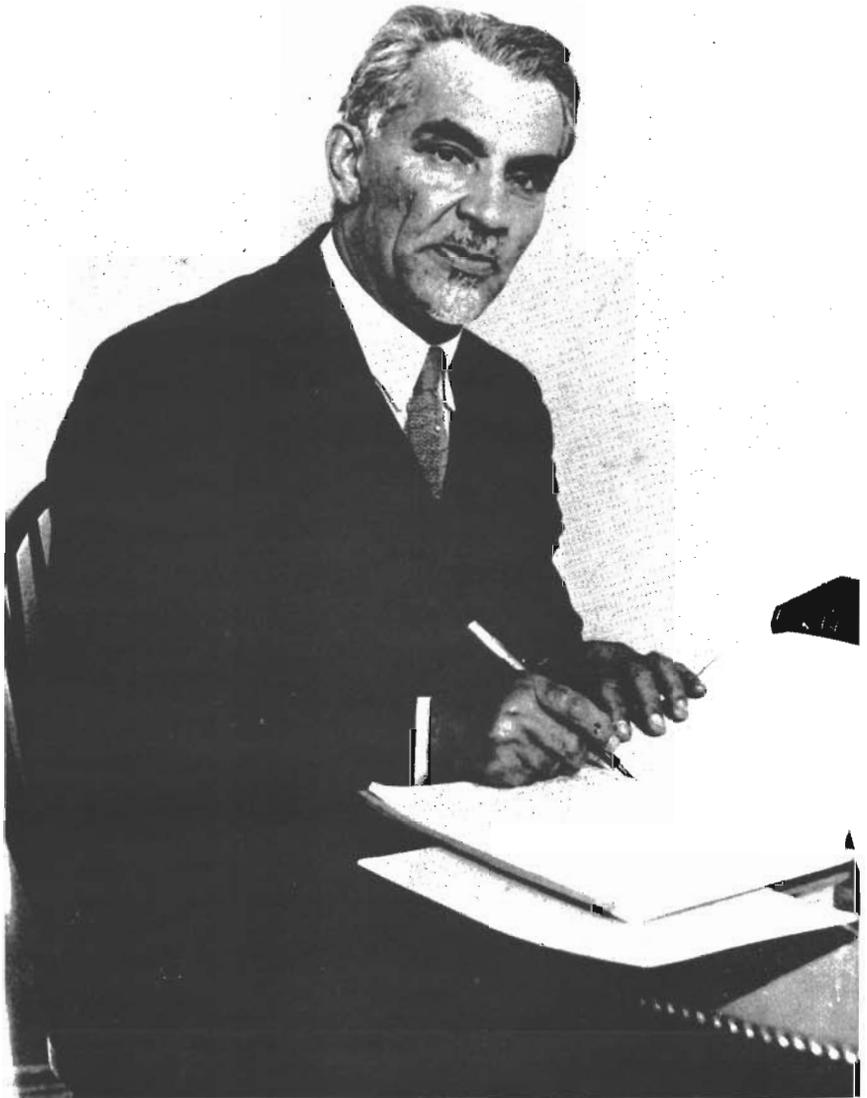
In 1918, I said, the Hamburg Temple had celebrated its centenary, and I had published an article in Hermann Cohen's monthly *Neue*



Hans Brady, Photographer, San Francisco, Calif.

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Sonderling

(see pp. 107-20, 123)



Courtesy, Zionist Archives and Library, New York

Shmarya Levin
"Go back to Europe"

(see p. 111)

Jüdische Monatshefte, reviewing a hundred years of Reform Judaism.⁴ In 1818, a hundred men gathered in Hamburg to find a solution for the problem of diminishing interest in religion. They came to the conclusion that a traditional prayer book did not satisfy the modern mind, that were youth to be given a modern prayer book, they would find their way back to their inherited religion. "A hundred years have passed," I had said. "Let us compare the first with the third generation. Not one of the grandsons remained Jewish, so the prayer book was no remedy. Assimilation did not help." Professor Kohler disagreed heatedly.

Three weeks later, the Board of Jewish Ministers in New York invited me to speak, and I chose as my topic, "The Trend Towards the Irrational." One man spoke in the discussion — Kaufmann Kohler. This is what he said: "Listening to our speaker, I feel like a man who has received a verdict of death. For me, the pupil of Abraham Geiger, to hear that the time of rationalism has passed, is hard to take." But he continued: "I remember that when Richard Wagner conducted his first opera in Paris, the critics cried, 'That is not music, that is noise.' But one of them added, 'It is noise, but behind that noise there is music.'" "Mr. Chairman," Kohler concluded, "I suggest that the lecture of our colleague from Germany should be printed."

Permit *me* now to conclude with one thought. Years ago I said to my young colleagues in Palm Springs: "Friends, if your ancestors in the Reform rabbinate saw you today, they would turn in their graves. The first Reformers were Germans. Judaism is *this*, they said, or it is nothing at all. Today we have in Reform the grandchildren of people who came from Poland, from Russia, from Lithuania. We have grown beyond those days in which it was possible for us to give a clear-cut definition of what we are. We are a living people, and I hope, in a few more years, to live together with a young generation of daring and believing rabbis."

⁴ "Die neueren Bestrebungen des Hamburger Tempels," *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte: Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Literatur in Ost und West*, III (no. I: Oct., 1918) 12-18.