

A Poem of Bondage

Nothing of My Own

By SAUL TCHERNIKHOVSKY
September 18, 1937

I'VE nothing — not even a table — of my own! And when at times a pale, weak moment comes, spreading its web, at fearful evening or silent midnight, over my brooding spirit, then my heart, so weary of mob lies, prays softly — no word said — to a hand's tender touch, a heart that silent waits, that's dumb with you, hurt with your pain, in all your afflictions afflicted, sharing your dreams of any hopes beyond the petty sphere;

within four walls of a room that isn't yours, which sides of stranger bodies soiled, blurring its colors with their looks and touch, polishing the latch, rubbing the handle smooth, over the miserable doorway, in the dust of their dregs, telling of others' wants and alien tastes, hang harsh and foul, the cobweb shapes; and the room has nothing in it which your eyes might seek with love, no happy souvenir, to soothe you with its sign with hints of light or sound.

This too I know: that never shall I build me a house, nor shall my eyes rejoice when the eager shovel strikes rock, and the earth is opened up to make a deep foundation; nor shall I bless the bricks as they rise, nor shall my heart sing when the ceiling is finished, — it shall not be granted to me to fulfill the commandment of building my land. Perhaps now it wouldn't be worth it: tho my hand is still outstretched and my lamp still burns with a bright, clear, and joyous light; yet who, ah who, can tell if the oil in it would suffice?

No vineyard shall I plant and clear the stones, cutting a canal for fructifying water, for I would not plant a shoot, nor ache at its thirst, in a tiny garden not my own; that is not my own inheritance; there I could not plant as my mother planted, with love and song (that happy woman, whose vigorous beauty ripened and prospered with the sons she bore) those same modest flowers, the first of all the crowd of the world's flowers I have glorified, worshipped by day, enchanting me in dreams.

If but I had a table! that tiny corner in which a man is used to unite with the light of all his worlds, with those sparks of life now blurred in Infinity, thought of comrades gone, visions of heroes, that parchment, stone can't capture;

or those blessed hours when poetry comes freely, bursting forth like a stream from that mute song which, cutting in the heart, must grind its way out.

with all its power, for the hand to record, flaming with joy, on pieces of paper.

I have wandered all my days, perhaps I'll wander still . . .

Property in the land is not for the wandered, not for me. Since this table's not my own, then let there be placed on it a thing completely mine, that's with me where I wander, to pour for me dream wine of its owner's garden, or cover me with shade of a hall my hands have built.

that will stare at me — from its pedestal — dead and dumb, but filled with love, its gaze a soft caress, — just one thing I do want: on my table, a single stature, carved of stone or wood.

Let the statue be made of solid basalt, of a lump that is the blackest of the black and eaten with the flames of Genesis

Expressing here the hopelessness that did once characterize our people, Saul Tchernikovsky has written a sensitive, moving, yet simple poem of bondage. And during Passover, the Festival of Freedom, may we so be reminded that we did once have "Nothing of Our Own." Written in Hebrew, translated into English by Shalom J. Kahn. — The Editor.



like the craftsmanship of Egypt and Assyria — a memorial down the generations; and let the face of the man to be carved in it seem cast in eternity, cast in iron and flame, as if the man, too were — a thing of iron and flame, lawgiver of all the distant worlds to come, who knew God surely face to face, giant among earth's seers, dream of my innocent youth, prophet of Paran's desert, of Sinai-Moses.

Let the statue be made of ancient copper such as Myton milded, and the Greek musicians trumpeted in the island's honor to Apollo, honor to his chief son, the first among his singers, who peopled Olympos with crowds of pleasant gods, blind, yet with a vision of a world so beautiful no other eye has seen one like it since, the man who poured out words like the melody of silver singing, now crowned with laurel leaves that never will fade, that man called Homer.

Let the statue be made of Pentelicos' marble, holy, pregnant with the Greek gods that Phidias' hand captured — perhaps that stone will be clear and lovely enough to fully express him who dwells with silver clouds and touches the mouth of the deep,

reaching the truth of glory, grasping the glory of truth, a well of wisdom and light to distant generations, probing the human heart and all the kingdoms of man — brow of a peaceful god, all-seeing eye of a prince of thought, the head of Plat.

Let the statue be made of Odenwald oak and carve a Goethe for me with strong and gentle hand, most splendid of men, with beauty of spirit and body. Cut for him eyes taking in the universe entire, that reveal an understanding heart which prophesies of dying and rising generations, embracing the world and its strength, loving the riddles of suns, interpreting thoughts of waves, telling the wonder of trees, burdened with all life's mysteries and speaking with the stones, seeking the secrets of ages where they are essentially carved, a great well of song, to past and future wakeful.

Let the statue be made of iron, dross and dull, yet stirring at one's touch, answering with echo's (Continued on page 17)

Youthful Agony

A Tale of Lupu and Jacob

By J. METZKER
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Mr. Metzker is one of the outstanding Yiddish novelists and short-story writers. This touching tale is the story of youthful agony caused by the brutal conduct of grown-ups, the story of a child whose world crashed about him even before he knew the meaning of life, and of an animal, a dog, that sensed human injustice and the degradation of the human spirit. — The Editor.

THE little schoolhouse of the German village of Waldheim stands on a hillock behind a forest. It has bright green walls and a red roof. The tower of the roof is inhabited by pigeons, gold-green as the woods during the summer sunsets and rosy as the blossoms of the Waldheim apple trees. Above the tower hangs the school bell and until recently a long rope tied to the bell dangled to the ground. The school also had a watch dog, a red wolf hound called Lupu. Lupu not only watched the school but also pulled the rope of the bell every morning, calling the children to school with a joyous ringing.

In the year 1933 the school of the little village had sixteen pupils. The oldest was nine years old. The older children studied in the neighboring

town. Lupu knew all the children by their names as well as by their nicknames. He knew "Elephant," Franz Werner, with his two long buck teeth; "Squirrel," Lizil Shroeder, the best tree climber; "Tomcat," Kurt Schultz, with his feline grey eyes; "Little Songbird," Jacob Ashkenazy, who could imitate the singing of all birds; "White Dove," Mitzi with her beautiful flaxen hair; "Lion Hans," the tallest and strongest of all the pupils, etc., etc.

"Good morning, Lupu!" "Good morning friend." The children would greet the dog every morning. Lupu would acknowledge the greeting by a twinkle of his clever eyes, swinging the bell more forcefully and looking around to see if all the children had arrived. Only when all the pupils and the teacher were at the school door, would he drop the rope and stop ringing. If, however, one of the children failed to show up, the faithful dog would hold on to the rope and continue to ring and ring.

"Lupu, drop the rope. Stop ringing, Lupu, our pupil must be ill." "We'll go to see him right after school." Teacher would come out of school and talk to the dog as though he were a human being. Only then would Lupu drop the rope. (Continued on page 18)

The Jewish Museum:

Yesterday Inspires Today In Assembling Jewish Lore

By B. KLINGMAN
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ON New York City's upper Fifth Avenue, the Jewish Museum is currently preparing to mark the opening of its third year as the first museum of Jewish art in America. Its collection of art and sacred objects is housed in a spacious, seven-story Gothic structure, which was formerly the mansion of the late Felix M. Warburg. The paintings, sculpture, tapestries and ceremonial objects stand as timeless examples of the Jewish will to express the beauty of daily living.

The museum building which was completed in 1907 was presented to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America by Mrs. Warburg in memory of her husband, her father Jacob H. Schiff, and her brother Mortimer Schiff. The Seminary opened the museum to the public early in 1947.

Dedicated to the promotion of the visual values in the Jewish tradition, the Jewish Museum exists as a living museum; a place where not only artists and academicians but the general public as well, can feel at home. Since it was conceived with the conviction that people of all faiths are concerned with the well-springs of the Jewish spirit, the museum represents a significant stride toward the brotherhood of all men. Emphasizing as it does, the common interest which all faiths share in Judaism, the sense of oneness which the museum evokes among all people is a strong weapon against prejudice and misunderstanding.

An insight into the place the museum has carved for itself in Jewish communal life could best be gained during the recent Chanukah celebration. In the course of the holiday week, more than 10,000 children, students at Hebrew schools and Jewish centers from the entire Eastern Seaboard area, visited the museum to take part in the impressive candle-lighting ceremonies and the other Chanukah festivities which had been prepared especially for them.

One of the chief attractions is unquestionably the magnificent display of Torah art which is part of the museum's permanent collection of religious and ceremonial objects. According to Dr. Stephen S. Kayser, curator of the museum, "Talmudic comments indicate that the Torah should be wrapped in fine and beautiful fabrics. More and more was added to the initial embellishment of the sacred scroll until the majesty of the Torah dressed in an embroidered mantle and crowned like a queen, became the most striking feature in Jewish ritual art."

As one views the Torah art exhibit, one sees an awe-inspiring array of Holy Arks, Torah mantles, curtains, breastplates, pointers, crowns and menorahs. These objects with their lavish embroidery and delicate sculpture in wood and silver, reflect both the Sephardic and Ashkenasic trends in Torah decoration. These examples emanate from every Eastern European country and date back as far as the thirteenth century.

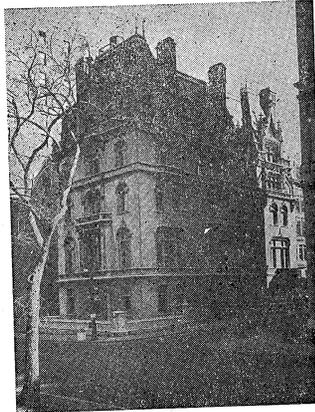
At the same time, the works of living Jewish artists are constantly being sought and placed before the public.

Among the artists whose works have been shown at the museum are such Titans of contemporary American and Palestinian art as Max Weber, Ben-Zion, Marc Chagall, Jacques Lipschitz, Ilya Schor, William Zorach — and, more recently, M. Ardon-Bronstein, Jo Davidson, Elias Newman and Isidor Kaufmann.

One of the focal points in any tour of the Jewish Museum is the Junior Gallery, conducted under the auspices of the museum and the Jewish Education Committee. Here is a sparkling, cleverly planned, fusion of entertainment and education for the children, presented in such a way that the child may not only see the models on display but may touch them as well. It is hardly necessary to say that the juvenile audience appreciates the removal of such barriers as glass cases and out-of-reach frames. They appreciate even more the opportunity afforded by the Museum to play with the objects themselves. Their vote of thanks in this instance, belongs to Temina Gezari, art director for the Committee, whose genius is so happily reflected in the Junior Gallery displays.

At the present time, the museum is offering an exhibit organized under the direction of Mrs. Gezari, based on "The March of Jewish History" from the Bible to the present. The work on display was contributed by students from nearly 100 Hebrew schools and Jewish centers throughout the country, with an international note added by guest exhibits from Israel, France, England, Ireland and Hungary.

One of the most timely exhibits at the



The Home of the Jewish Museum

museum presents a novel display of contemporary ideas in Synagogue architecture. The introduction of modern form into Synagogue style, adapted to the particular needs of various American communities, was demonstrated in architectural models and drawings. A recent survey shows that no less than two thousand new Synagogues have been planned for American communities. The museum models show how these structures become the artistic synthesis of the creative talents not only of architects but of painters and sculptors as well.

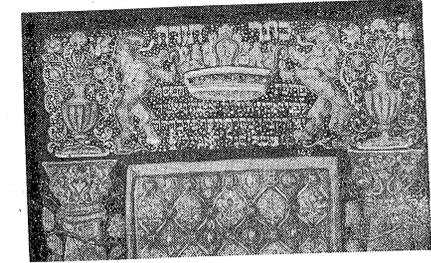
The theme of Jewish art in every-day life is explored at the Jewish Museum where one can see how every phase of the individual's existence can be expressed in beautiful visual form. An entire room at the museum is devoted to Jewish music. Until recently it was given over to the life and works of Ernest Bloch, one of Jewry's most distinguished contemporary composers. At the moment, the Music Room offers a study of liturgical music and Hazanut. Early printed scores, identified with the cantorial artists, are now being displayed. Recordings of some of the finest voices in Jewish music may also be heard in this room.

The museum's Sabbath Room recreates for us the spirit of the Day of Rest in the Jewish home and, in an adjacent room one may view a display of Jewish Festival objects through which it is almost possible to trace the history of the Jew. Here are displayed many examples of the Chanukah Lamp, the Megillah and objects identified with the setting of the Passover Seder Table.

The richness of the entire museum collection has given Jewry a new appreciation of its own heritage and a new source of pride in its contemporary achievements in the arts. Yesterday inspires today.



Seder Plate, faience, Italy, 1614. Passover Hagadah, hand-written, German, XVII Century. The Jewish Museum, New York.



Detail from a Parohet (Veil for the Holy Ark) from the collection of the Jewish Museum. It is a German piece, probably from Frankfurt-on-Main, dated 1713. Measuring eight feet four inches by five feet one, it is made of red velvet embroidered in gold and silver, with semi-precious stones. In this detail, two lions of Judah hold up the crown.



18th Century Chanukah Lamp from the Museum collection.