

generally held the psycho-physical peculiarities of trances, when it looked upon them as directly valuable, or even as prophetic of the soul's ultimate condition. The exaltation of the contemplative above the active life was an inheritance which the Christian Church received from Plato and Aristotle. It was a corruptible inheritance. Life is complete and perfect only when it embraces both elements, each at its fullest, and the two in a perfect interaction. And in the world to come, when earthly power doth then show likest God's, the highest life must be the life of him who takes a direct and detailed interest in the world as God does, and cares for every sparrow that falls to the ground.

The last of Baron von Hügel's perplexities is whether there will be any pain in Heaven. He thinks there will be. He cannot think that it would be Heaven without it.

For what is the highest and best thing that we know upon earth? It is devoted suffering, heroic self-oblivion, patient persistence in lonely willing. Will there be no equivalent in Heaven? It would certainly be a gain, says Baron von Hügel, could we discover it. For a pure glut of happiness, an unbroken state of sheer enjoyment, cannot be made attractive to our most spiritual requirements.

Some Problems suggested by the Recent Discoveries of Aramaic Papyri at Syene (Assouan).¹

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THE recent discoveries of Aramaic papyri near Assouan (Aswân) have thrown a welcome light over an obscure period of Jewish life, viz. 470-407 B.C. Our Old Testament sources for information respecting this period are: (1) Certain undated prophecies, viz. those ascribed to a writer designated as Malachi, and those which have been collectively termed during the last fifteen years 'Trito-Isaiah.' Critical investigations of the contents have led nearly all scholars to ascribe the first (the oracles of Malachi), and the majority of recent scholars to ascribe the second (the Trito-Isaiah chapters 56-66), to the earlier part of this period of sixty or more years. It should be observed, however, that this view has recently been challenged by Rothstein in his essay on *Jews and Samaritans*. I say nothing at present about the prophecies of Joel.

(2) Belonging to the second rank of evidence we have the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which were compiled about two centuries after the events to which they refer took place. Here we are in the midst of controversy as to the actual historic value

of the documents. The most that we are warranted in affirming (though the followers of Kosters would demur to this statement) is that the researches of Ed. Meyer go far to vindicate the historic value of certain portions of Ezra and Nehemiah as based on contemporary official records and as on other grounds inherently probable.

We welcome, therefore, the appearance of these papyri, and congratulate those who have edited them, as they present to us a bright and clear spot of light in the prevailing obscurity—that long period of deepening historic uncertainty that shrouds Jewish history from 500 B.C. till 170 B.C., the eve of the Maccabean revolt. Fortunately there is no scope for endless argumentations about the date of these documents, viz. the three papyri from the stronghold of Yeb, with its temple to Yahu, edited by Sachau, and the collection of business documents, edited by Cowley and Sayce, belonging to a somewhat earlier time. For most of these documents are dated. It is true that they belong to an outlying region, and not to Palestine or even Babylonia. Yet they are, nevertheless, of great value. For the three papyri edited by Sachau, to which I shall mainly refer, are copies of a letter addressed from the Jewish settlement at the

¹ Read before the Third International Congress for the History of Religions held at Oxford, Semitic Section (September 16, 1908).

stronghold Yeb to the viceroy or *pēkah* (Assyr.-Aram. *pākāth*) of Judah in the seventeenth year of Darius Nothus, i.e. 407 B.C.

This paper may be described as an attempt to use these documents as a lamp in the midst of historic gloom. It will be an endeavour to see how far the light it affords will carry us into the contemporary and earlier history of Israel. It must therefore be largely tentative. It will raise more problems than it can possibly solve.

I. The Aramaic in which these documents are written is essentially the Biblical Aramaic. It clearly shows, in combination with many other indications, that at that time the Canaanite Hebrew was rapidly becoming obsolete as a spoken language by Jews. It confirms the truth of the rendering of the disputed word *mephōrāsh* in Neh 8⁸ given in the margin of the R.V., 'And they read in the book, in the law of God, with an interpretation; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.' Aramaic had become at that time the ordinary spoken language of at least the majority of the Jewish exiles, and the ancient Hebrew tongue was unfamiliar.

This Aramaic language was obviously well understood in official quarters in Palestine at the time when the letter from Yeb was composed. And it was also well understood by the educated and official class in Jerusalem three centuries earlier in the days of Hezekiah, as the appeal by the rulers to Rabsha'ekh in 2 K. 18²⁶ (the earlier Isaiah narrative) clearly indicates: 'Speak to thy servants in Aramaic; for we understand it.' As far back as the eighth century Aramaic had become the *lingua franca* of Western Asia.¹ Archaeological evidence brings this fact home to us in ever-increasing volume. Thus the legal and commercial documents, in the newly published volume by Albert Clay, of cuneiform texts from Nippur belonging to a period that extends from the seventh to the fifth centuries, frequently consist of tablets with endorsements in Aramaic. The Aramaic power to the north of Palestine reduced both northern and southern Israel to vassalage in the latter part of the ninth century, and since that time, in fact long after the political power of Aram had been broken, its language spread far and wide. Questions affect-

¹ So also Cowley in the Introduction to *Aramaic Papyri*, p. 20, 'Aramaic before the Persian period was the language of trade, and we find it in the dockets of Assyrian and Babylonian deeds from the eighth century downwards.'

ing the literary criticism of the O.T. now present themselves. About a quarter of a century ago our great Oxford *altmeister* Professor Cheyne asked the pertinent question: 'Does it follow that every Aramaism in Isaiah is a corruption?'² I would put the question in another form: How far, in the light of present knowledge, are we to allow the appearance of sporadic Aramaisms to determine the lateness of a passage?³

II. The letter from the sanctuary at Yeb throws some light upon the date of Joel. Here archaeology appears to confirm critical conclusions. Nowack, Cornill, and Marti argue from internal indications that Joel's prophecies were composed about 400 B.C. Now at the close of these oracles we read (4¹⁹) that Egypt is to become a desolation on account of the outrages perpetrated on the Jews. These outrages may surely be connected with the destruction of the temple at Yeb by the Egyptian priests of the God Ḥnūb, to which the letter addressed to Bagohi bears witness. This wanton act of destruction probably formed part of a wholesale persecution of the Jews settled in Egypt, which took place about the year 409 B.C. It is not at all necessary to assume that the outrages committed by Edom, to which the same Joel passage makes reference, belonged to this year or generally to the same time.

III. There is clear proof that the Jewish temple at Yeb existed in the early post-exilian period. We read in lines 13 f. of Sachau's *Papyrus I.*:

'When Cambyses invaded Egypt he found that shrine (i.e. the temple of Yahweh at Yeb)⁴ built,

² *Commentary on Isaiah*,³ 1884, vol. ii. p. 138.

³ This applies to the elaborate and skilful argument, based upon diction as well as other grounds, set forth by Professor Kennett, whereby he endeavours to refer the Messianic prophecy Is 9¹⁻⁷ to Simon the Maccabee (*Journ. of Theol. Studies*, April 1906). Doubtless a portion of its text has become corrupted. Apart from this, the presence of Aramaisms in a Messianic oracle by Isaiah, which obtained a wide circulation in extra-Palestinian, Israelite, or even non-Israelite settlements, should surely, in the light of the facts already adduced, not surprise us. It can hardly be denied that our knowledge of the Hebrew actually spoken and written in the days of Isaiah, since that knowledge is based on our many times redacted Old Testament, is severely limited and somewhat conventional. And, in addition to this, it must be remembered that a prophecy by Isaiah of such a character would have wide currency in the growing Hebrew diaspora of the seventh century, and would be likely to be subject to the influences of the Aramaic-speaking Israelite communities living beyond the Palestinian border.

⁴ Yeb was identified by Clermont Ganneau with Elephan-

but the shrines of the gods of Egypt they destroyed every one, while in that shrine no one injured anything whatever.'

This invasion of Egypt by Cambyses took place in 525 B.C., or about twelve years after Cyrus had overthrown Babylon. Now the special favour shown by Cambyses to the Jews in Egypt in sparing their temple was evidently a continuation of his father's policy. The tolerance and favour shown by Cyrus to the religion of other peoples, and especially to the religion of Babylonia, is clearly shown in the clay cylinder of Cyrus. Now the theory propounded by Kosters about fifteen years ago, as is well known, denies *in toto* the story of the proclamation of Cyrus for the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem contained in Ezra 1 and in 3⁷, on the ground that no allusion is made to such a restoration in the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, and that there is no return of any considerable body of exiles from Babylonia soon after 538 B.C. presupposed in the oracles of these two prophets. It is impossible to discuss this question now. It is sufficient to say that this policy of protection to the Jewish temple at Yeb pursued by Cambyses does cast a glimmering ray of light on the tradition of a restoration of the Jerusalem temple under the warrant of an edict by Cyrus. It certainly enhances the probability of the tradition. So much, at least, we may say without affirming the historic accuracy of every detail in the first chapter of Ezra.¹

IV. The papyri edited by Cowley and Sayce reveal the existence of a large and prosperous Jewish settlement at Syene. Now there is a very problematic passage in Is 49¹², 'Lo, these shall come from far; and these from the land of Sînîm.' The passage is an interesting parallel to Is 11^{11f}. This land Sînîm has been in early times associated with the east, e.g. in the LXX, where it is identified with Persia. This probably arose from the previous mention of the north and west. The Targum and Vulgate only conjecture that the *south* was meant. The attempt to identify the name with China, which was attempted by tiné. 'Both Syene and Elephantiné were the twin fortresses which protected Egypt on the south from the incursions of the Soudanese tribes' (*Aramaic Papyri*, ed. Cowley and Sayce, note p. 37 on Papyrus B, line 3).

¹ These words were written before I had seen Rothstein's essay, *Juden und Samaritaner*, where the same argument is developed.

scholars like Victor von Strauss-Torney in his excursus to Delitzsch's commentary, has had a natural fascination for friends of the great missionary cause. But quite apart from the difficulty occasioned by the initial sibilant, China appears to have been quite unknown to the Jew, as well as to the Babylonian, of the sixth century. No reference to it is to be found in the Table of Races in Genesis. It was evidently beyond the field of vision of the Jews of that day.

But by the very slight emendation of a single character, the change of the first ס into a סִנְיָם gives us סִנְיָם in place of סִנְיָם. Everything then becomes clear. Syene or סִנְיָם is mentioned by Ezekiel in his oracles on Egypt (29¹⁰ 30⁶). That a large mercantile Jewish population existed at Assouân at that time may be regarded as certain, i.e. about 150 years before the Aramaic letter from Yeb was written.

V. But as we pass further back in time, our path becomes beset with shadows.

The temple was standing in the days of Cambyses, i.e. 120 years before these papyri were written. It was, as the document shows, a spacious and imposing edifice. It had seven gateways of hewn stone (line 10), and a roof of cedar (line 11), and sacrificial bowls of gold and silver (line 12). The Jews in Syene were evidently as prosperous as some of those became who followed the advice of Jeremiah and settled in Babylonia (29⁴⁻⁷). Moreover, the offerings of the temple, burnt offerings, meal offerings, and incense (line 21, cf. 25), and also the custom of fasting in times of sorrow (line 20), exhibit no suggestion of illegitimate forms of worship. There is no mention of an *ashērah* or of anything that indicated the traditions of a Canaanite high place such as *kedēshim* or *kedēshōth* with which the prophets Hosea and Amos and the Books of Kings make us familiar. Yāhu or Yahweh was the only deity worshipped. The priests of other deities are called by the Aramaic plural equivalent of the Heb. *kemārīm* of the O.T. (line 5). Professor Sayce in his Introduction (p. 10) notes that the Jewish 'proper names are compounded with that of Yahweh as much as the names of the orthodox Jews who returned to Palestine from the Captivity.' They are therefore very different from the Jews of Pathros 180 years earlier, whom Jeremiah rebuked for burning incense to the queen of heaven.

(44¹⁵). It is well-nigh certain that these last were emigrants of the days of Jehoiakim, while the Jews of Syene were the descendants of a still earlier migration.¹

The inference which I would tentatively draw is that the origins of this purer worship at Syene go back to the days of Hezekiah, whose reforms in worship are reported to us not only in 2 K 18⁴, but also in 21³, and also in 18²², which belongs to a distinct source (the earlier Isaiah biography). These were the influences which, in the first instance, probably affected the settlement at Syene, and *not those* of the reformation in the days of Josiah, when centralization of worship was a ruling principle, and when, moreover, the relations of Judah to Egypt were the reverse of friendly.

With respect to the origin of the temple-building at Yeb, the language of the Papyrus is vague. The writer is able to go back 120 years, to the days of Cambyses, but he is conscious that it had a greater antiquity, and can only vaguely say (line 13) that 'already in the days of the kings of Egypt our fathers erected that temple in the fortress Yeb.' This points to a time anterior to the Persian domination. But the temple itself was probably preceded in earlier days by another and simpler structure.

We are inevitably led to consider another question closely bound up with the preceding, namely, What was the most probable period when any considerable Diaspora of Jews began to exist in Egypt? A diaspora might indeed have begun as far back as the latter part of the ninth century B.C., when the Syrian wars reduced both Israel and Judah to the abject condition of vassal states. But it is more probable that we have to go to a period just one century later, when the Assyrian invasions must have driven multitudes of Hebrew emigrants to seek an asylum in Egypt. Of this we have clear indication in Hos 9³⁻⁶, and as this passage raises some important questions, I shall quote it in full. 'They shall not dwell in Yahweh's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and in Assyria they shall eat what is unclean.

¹ A careful examination of Jer 42-44 seems clearly to show that the Jews settled in Migdol, Tahpanhes, and Memphis (Noph) had recently migrated thither, and the fresh emigrants under Johanan ben Kareah were joining their kinsmen in Pathros and elsewhere. The language used by the inhabitants to Jeremiah (44^{18f.}) refers to their untoward experiences in Palestine and not in Egypt (cf. 42¹⁴).

They shall offer no libations of wine in Yahweh's honour, nor set in order² (עֲרָבָה) for Him their slaughtered offerings. As food of mourners shall be their food. All who eat thereof shall be rendered unclean. For their food shall be for their appetite, it shall not come into Yahweh's house. What shall ye do at the feast-day or when Yahweh's festival takes place?' What follows obviously requires a slight emendation, and we may render: 'Behold they make their way to Assyria.³ Egypt shall gather them, Memphis bury them.' Evidently a considerable stream of Israelite refugees from the Assyrian invasions had begun to flow towards Egypt.

When we pass to the last decade of the eighth century we find a close connexion subsisting between Hezekiah and Egypt. Hezekiah did not rule over a large realm, yet he held a strategically important position on the highway from north to south and from east to west, in that mountainous region south of Samaria, flanked by the Dead Sea, and also exercised control over the Philistine towns. That interesting and misdated little oracle on Philistia (Is 14²⁸⁻³²) probably belongs to this last decade of the eighth century. V.³² clearly shows that the Philistine towns looked to Hezekiah for support against the Assyrian invaders. The political significance of Hezekiah, as suzerain and protector of these towns, is clearly seen in the Prism inscription of Sennacherib. That he held a fairly strong position seems to be indicated by the facts narrated in one of Sargon's inscriptions, which charges him with forming a coalition against the Assyrian power with Moab and other states, and yet no actual attack upon his territory is recorded. When we turn to the Prism inscription of Sennacherib, his importance is shown by the considerable space devoted to him in columns 2 and 3.

Therefore in Egypt, where by this time a considerable settlement of Israelites must have lived, he would be naturally regarded as Israel's sole remaining champion against the Assyrian power, while the Egyptians themselves, who were only beginning under the twenty-fifth dynasty to emerge from weakness and disunion, had every reason to pray that Hezekiah's kingdom might endure and his influence be maintained over the

² For עֲרָבָה of the traditional Heb. text.

³ For they 'make their way to Assyria,' the traditional Heb. text has 'have gone from destruction' (נִזְבֵּן).

frontier fortresses that barred the approach of an Assyrian army. Even Ethiopia in its hour of apprehension, as the oracle in Is 18 shows, sent its messengers in papyrus boats down the Nile to Jerusalem.

My justification for referring to these points is that they have an important bearing upon the historic conditions involved in a very interesting and problematic passage in Is 19, upon which the recent discoveries throw, as it appears to me, an unexpected light. This nineteenth chapter, as all Old Testament scholars know, is a patchwork of detached fragments referring to Egypt, chiefly non-Isaianic, each separate oracle beginning with the formula so common in Isaiah, 'In that day.' One passage only do I hold to be of Isaianic origin, viz. vv.¹⁹⁻²². It is certainly pre-Deuteronomic; otherwise it would not have found a place in a Judæan canonized prophecy; but having had a definite and assured position among Isaiah's oracles prior to 620 B.C., it was eventually relegated to an isolated position among other oracles relating to Egypt. The passage runs (vv.¹⁹⁻²²) thus: 'In that day there shall be an altar to Yahweh in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar beside its border unto Yahweh. And it shall serve as a sign and witness unto Yahweh of hosts in the land of Egypt whenever they cry unto Yahweh by reason of oppressors, so that he may send them a helper and contend and deliver them. So Yahweh shall be known unto the Egyptians, and the Egyptians shall know Yahweh in that day; and shall serve him with slaughtered offering and meal offering [LXX have only 'with offering'], and they shall vow vows unto Yahweh, and pay them. And Yahweh shall smite the Egyptians, smiting and healing; and they shall be converted to Yahweh, and he shall be intreated by them, and shall heal them.' This oracle prophesies future trouble and disciplinary chastisement to the Egyptians. Evidently Assyria, 'the rod of God's anger' (Is 10^b), is meant, and we know that this 'smiting' did take place in the days of Esarhaddon and Ašurbanipal. In the earlier part of the oracle the expression, 'they cry unto Yahweh by reason of oppressors,' is doubtful as to its reference. To me it looks like a reflexion of Old Israelite history. The reference is to Israelites oppressed by Egyptians as in old times rather than to Egyptians oppressed by a foreign foe.

This is the section to which, as Josephus tells us (*Wars of the Jews*, VII. x. 2), Onias, son of

Simon, appealed when, under Ptolemy's friendly protection, he erected a temple at Heliopolis. I premise that no such passage as this could possibly have been inserted in the Jewish copies of the prophetic writings after the Exile period. *Such a passage as this*, which deliberately legitimizes the erection of an altar in the midst of Egypt, could hardly have found a place in Jewish writings of recognized validity after the temple of Zerubbabel was built, unless it had, like the documents J and E, the prestige of ancient authority.

Now the phrase which occurs in the Hebrew text of this oracle, *zebhah uminhah*, 'slaughtered offering and meal offering,' is a difficult one in a pre-Deuteronomic passage, since the exclusive signification 'meal offering,' for *minhah*, which it presupposes, is *post*-Deuteronomic. Nevertheless, it is found in Am 5²⁵, 'Did ye offer me slaughtered and meal offerings in the wilderness forty years?' which has all the appearance of being genuine. Here the LXX render σφάγια καὶ θυσίας. Marti, however, may be right in regarding the addition 'and meal offerings' to be a later gloss inserted in the Amos text, for all O.T. scholars are aware that such later glosses are not infrequent. But when we turn to this *Isaiah* passage, our scruples vanish. We are constrained to cancel at least one of the terms (in this case *zebhah*) out of the text, for the LXX have καὶ ποιήσονται θυσίας (there is no σφάγια). This difficulty therefore vanishes.

I would suggest that the 'border of Egypt' in this text might naturally refer to Assouân, and that a primitive sanctuary was erected in that place, already a settlement of Jewish and Israelite refugees. Such a distant part of Egypt might well be designated by a Palestinian inhabitant by the really appropriate term 'a boundary.'¹ We might suppose that the *massetbah* (forbidden in the Deuteronomic legislation Dt 16²²) was first set up at Syene in the first decade of the seventh century B.C.

If this view be accepted, we are in the presence of what appear to be distinct conceptions existing at the same period respecting Yahweh's domain and sovereignty. The one seems to be reflected in the passage already quoted from Hosea, which regards the land to which Israel migrates outside Yahweh's land (which is Palestine) as an *unclean* land. This was no doubt the old popular tradition which we find reflected in various passages in the

¹ See footnote ⁴, pp. 201-202, which shows that Elephantine (Yeb) was in reality a boundary fortress.

Books of Samuel and elsewhere, which I need not quote. One point, however, might be noted, that the Hosea passage lays more definite stress on the uncleanness of Assyria than of Egypt.

On the other hand, the *Isaiah* passage reflects very clearly the logical result of the teaching of Amos respecting Yahweh's universal sovereignty, which Isaiah had certainly learned. The point which I wish now to suggest is that the application of the doctrine was more easy to Egypt, which was *then*, moreover, a friendly country. Hosea speaks of Israel as 'returning' to Egypt, for out of Egypt Yahweh 'called his Son.' Despite the protests called forth in various quarters against Würckler's theory of the land Muṣr, we ought surely to accept it to *this* extent, that such a land did actually exist south of Judæa, as definitely proved on more than one line of evidence. It took its name, analogously to the name Syria (abbreviated from Assyria), from the old extension by conquest of the Egyptian frontier eastwards over the Sinaitic peninsula and the region to the north of it. In this region, let it be remembered, stood Yahweh's ancient sanctuary Horeb, to which Elijah fled in his days of persecution. So it was not difficult to regard Yahweh's sway as extending to Egypt.¹ Even in the Deutero-Isaiah Egypt is especially God's own. He gives it to Cyrus as his ransom for Jewish freedom (43³), just as Ezekiel before him announces that Yahweh gives Egypt to Nebuchadrezzar as hire for his service in besieging Tyre (*Ezk* 29¹⁸⁻²⁰).

VI. There is yet another passage on which the Aramaic papyri appear to throw a special light. I refer to the mysterious verses in Malachi (1^{10f.}), which express a universalism which has been variously interpreted, 'I have no pleasure in you, saith Yahweh of hosts, and offering from your hand I refuse to accept. For from east to west my name is great among the nations; and in every spot incense is offered to my name, and a pure sacrifice: for great is my name among the nations, saith Yahweh of hosts.' Are we to regard this passage, as some recent expositors have taken it, as

a general recognition by Malachi of a prevalent monotheism among heathen nations and the worship of the Highest, perhaps with special reference to the Persian adoration of Ahura Mazda; or shall we recur to the interpretation of Ewald, who saw here a reference to the purer and nobler worship rendered in the Jewish diaspora? The recent discoveries would seem to indicate that this latter is the more probable view. But if this be a valid conclusion, the Malachi passage carries with it a yet wider inference. 'The setting of the sun' or west would point to such a sanctuary as that of Yeb. But there were also other sanctuaries in the '*rising of the sun*' Is it possible that the relics of these may yet be unearthed by the explorer?

This last passage is full of interest. It shows the persistence, even about the year 458 B.C., in the degenerate days of Judæan life that preceded Nehemiah's advent, of those broader conceptions respecting Yahweh's sphere of influence and the Yahweh religion and cultus to which Amos and Isaiah first gave the impulse. The attentive study of these papyri and the illuminating preface of Professor Sayce heighten the impression that the true home of this broader, nobler conception of religion was in the Diaspora. The stimulating work of Dr. Moritz Friedländer, *Die religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judentums*, which I trust many Englishmen will read, makes this very clear. The request for help to restore the sanctuary at Yeb was ignored by the priesthood of Jerusalem.² And these larger conceptions had to fight hard for centuries against that spirit of exclusiveness which had its centre at Jerusalem. This latter spirit was subsequently reinforced by the forces of Pharisaic nationalism kindled to white heat by the Maccabæan struggle. And yet we can see in Jewish literature, especially in that of the Diaspora, such as the writings of Philo-Judæus, that the larger conceptions still survived. But they had to wait through weary centuries until there arose the potent voice of the last and greatest of the Hebrew prophets, who said to an inhabitant of Samaria: 'The hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth' (*Jn* 4²¹⁻²⁴).

¹ We might note in this connexion the somewhat exceptional position of privilege assigned to the Edomite and the Egyptian in the Deuteronomic legislation, *Dt* 23^{7f.} [^{8f.} *Heb.*], as contrasted with the Ammonite and Moabite. Also we may take note of the union between Abraham and Hagar the Egyptian (Muṣrite).

² Comp. lines 17-19 in Sachau, Pap. I.