

The Jewish Problem Re-Stated

by a Gentile

[Aleister Crowley]

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A distinguished article entitled "The Cry of the Modern Pharisee," by the Rev. Joel Blau, of Temple Peniel, New York City, which recently appeared in The Atlantic Monthly, posed the Jewish problem in new dimensions. In America, where this problem is growing acute, wide interest was aroused. I quote a few passages which are characteristic.

"It is depressing to see the Jewish problem discussed, even by Jews, from without and not from within, as if its inner aspect did not matter; at all events, as if this were something in which the world at large need take no interest, it being the concern of a few Jewish zealots only. Over against this mistaken position these very Jewish zealots, who are far from obsolete, claim that the only way to solve the Jewish problem is from within. Find the right solution for the internal problem of the Jew, and the external problem, created by the persistence of anti-Semitism, will solve itself."

". . . he [the Pharisee] would rather lose the whole world than lose aught of the riches of his soul.

". . . As for pride, he admits it, yet holds himself guiltless. For pride is no sin, except when one will not live up to it.

"It [pride] is compounded of a clear knowledge of one's place, a consciousness of both powers and limitations, and a desire to participate wholeheartedly in the passionate business of living. This pride is the child of reverence, the last summing-up of the sanctities of Individuality.

"Its presence is the distinguishing sign of divinely stubborn men, 'terribly meek,' who inherit the earth--and heaven, too.

"Of peoples too, even as of persons, the same holds true; modesty is a sin in any people. The chief duty that a people owes both itself and the world is reverence for its own soul, the mystic centre of its being.

...

"Personality spells the mystery of mysteries--the last word of life for which all the worlds and all the ages are in ceaseless travail."

"The Jew must be led back to the Discovery of the Jewish Soul."

Despite these utterances, we find elsewhere in the essay that the only practical solution in view is repatriation. A physical Zion is contemplated, and this proposal implies the very materialism which the learned Rabbi deplores as the mark of the modern Sadducee. Now the division between Jew and Gentile dates only from Abraham. The children of uncircumcision no less than those of the Covenant are of the seed of Adam, of mankind. It was by means of the secret tradition of the Hebrews that the leader of the hosts of the new Law obtained "the knowledge and conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel," whose words constitute the whole Law. This Law is the master-key to the Future of Mankind, and the learned Rabbi, being a master in Israel, is able to interpret the Zeitgeist intuitively. Accordingly, he exhibits a profound comprehension of this Law; indeed, he actually expresses some of its corollaries in various phrases. What then is the one weakness of his admirable essay? What is it that compels him to a sceptical conclusion, despite the sublimity of courage, pride, and sadness which informs his thought, and the magistral grasp of the situation? These qualities demand consummate respect; and yet their owner hesitates to articulate an "Everlasting Yea." The difficulty arises from the interference of the learned Rabbi's intellectual perception of the conditions of his environment with the truth of his soul. He must hold fast to this truth if it is to make him free. The Relative must not be applied as a measure of the Absolute, of which it is but one of the infinitely numerous symbolic representations. It is, then, here that the Rev. Joel Blau is tempted to lose touch with the essential truth. He has still to pass through the ordeal of being attacked by phenomena which threaten or allure, seeking to turn him from his spiritual integrity. It is the task of the initiate to learn to ignore these seeming facts, to recognise that these are vapours of the void. Let me say at once that the Jewish spirit cannot be destroyed any more than a grain of sand or an ohm of electrical resistance. The problem is perennial. If every Jew were instantaneously abolished, the Jewish problem¹ would remain unaltered.

The Rev. Joel Blau had himself demonstrated, with admirable clearness, that the "extraversion" of modern Sadducees has merely defiled their honour, and that reliance upon outworn formalism has failed to protect the integrity of the Pharisees.

When Moses gave His new Law, His was the Word which expressed the spiritual truth fit for that age and that folk. Other Masters have appeared from time to time with other words. Thus the Buddha, proclaiming the absence of Atman, emancipated the East from its time-rotted conditions. Mohammed, with His Word Allah, proclaimed a new aeon in which the diversity of phenomena should be referred to a single ultimate source.

The solution of the Jewish Question has baffled society completely since the earliest records. It is quite evident that before the Exodus Pharaoh was confronted by precisely the same dilemma as the Tsar of yesterday in Russia and the President of today in America. It is the problem of an endothermic chemical compound. The instability of chloride of nitrogen does not lead us to "blame" either the nitrogen or the chlorine; the elements tend to fly apart with destructive violence because neither of them is satisfying its own true nature to the full. Each has joined the other without enthusiasm because it could find no more suitable element union with which would fulfil to the uttermost its need of a complement. Nitrogen chloride is not formed if the chlorine passes over moist sodium before reaching the ammonia, or if that ammonia has been mixed with nitric acid.

Jew and Gentile have been forced into contact under innumerable varieties of social condition. Friction has been at a minimum when the Jew has been in contact either with Arabic civilisation or English jurisprudence. These two environments have a common factor: non-interference. English indifference and Moslem self-respect are agreed on the ethical principle: "Mind your own business." This is one of the moral postulates of true Law.

The incompatibility between Jew and Gentile has been based, superficially indeed, upon prejudice, ignorance, and instinctive antipathy; but this seems hardly more than a disguise for the real motive, which may more probably be the fear of alien aggression. The Jews are charged with many crimes, from ritual murder and usury to lack of patriotism. But all these charges are merely diverse expressions of the feeling that there is an irreconcilable antagonism between two spirits whose juxtaposition is an offence to nature.

Is it presumptuous to feel sure that so far one may count upon the assent of the learned Rabbi to this analysis? No? Then why not be bold enough to proceed to synthesis? Let us pursue the chemical analogy. In a mixture of sodium chloride and sodium nitrate the atoms of nitrogen and chlorine are intimately mingled; but there is no tendency to explosion. The reason is that both elements have already--in the main matter--fulfilled their own natures. Neither is unsatisfied; neither is under stress.

Is there no hint here to guide us to a practical proposal? It is useless to tinker with the environment of chloride of nitrogen; the more we meddle with the explosive, the more likely we are to provoke a crisis. We must prevent the formation of the substance altogether; and so long as either element is unsatisfied, so long is there a risk of conditions occurring in which they will combine disastrously with each other. Just as most human beings contract unsuitable marriages, or experiment with unconsecrated unions, rather than suffer the physiological agony of abstention; just as the only secure social system rests on a basis of sexually satisfied individuals; so countries inhabited by heterogeneous races invite civil collision if the inherited instincts of any race are starved or suppressed.

Now it is the historical fact that from the time of Abraham's discontented departure from his father's pastures, and the dream-drawn journey of Joseph, to the desperate adventure of Moses in search of a "promised land," and the continual craving for a Messiah, the Spirit of the Jew, behind all its expressions, is stamped with the stigma of soul-starvation. The patriotic passion of the Chroniclers, the plaintive cries of the Psalmists, the relentless rage of the Prophets, the acrid agony of Ecclesiastes, each in its own way expresses the fact that the Jew has always wanted Something desperately, has never known precisely what it was, has never fooled himself for very long into fancying that he has found it. When national degradation and religious mummification had reduced the ragged remnant of repatriated refugees to despair, Paul proclaimed his Freudian Phantasm as the Messiah. But in vain did he try to conciliate his people, in vain did he prove that Christ fulfilled the prophecies, in vain did he seek to reconcile circumcision and crucifixion. Israel preferred to die in the dark rather than stumble by the light of corpse-candles into the ditch of self-deception.

The same spirit stamps the Jew to this day. He has endured every possible persecution; without faith, hope, or love to help him. He has not found himself in wealth, power, or anything else. Neither Spinoza in philosophy, Heine in poetry, nor Einstein in science have found any way of escape from the fiend appointed to scourge Israel. From the most sublime complaints of the musician to the grossest grumblings of the Schnorrer, the same phrase recurs: it is the cry from the Abyss, the shriek of the lost soul. The glories of Solomon did not prevent him from seeing the vanity of all things; nor would repatriation in Palestine delude one single Jew into supposing that his soul could be satisfied by so romantically narcotic a remedy.

The solution of the Jewish problem is simply this: "Shiloh shall come." The Messiah must arise, and His name shall be called Anti-Christ. And this shall be the sign of the Messiah, Anti-Christ, He who shall lead at last His people Israel into the Holy Mountain, the True Zion: He shall come to understand the Magical Formula of Israel; He shall interpret the history of Israel; He shall declare unto Israel the nature of the spirit of the people; He shall express the true purpose of His people; He shall demonstrate to them the direction of their destiny; He shall formulate their function in the physiology of mankind.

It may indeed be that this function is such that even its free fulfillment would not satisfy it. He, the Messiah, Anti-Christ, shall know, as others do not, whether it be so. In our own bodies there are principles which never cease to urge us. The secret of the Soul of Israel may be that it is a ferment; the history of humanity shows us this spirit constantly consuming every civilisation with which it has been in contact. Israel has corrupted the world, whether by conquest, by conversion, or by conspiracy. The Jew has eaten his way into everything. The caricature of Semitic thought, Christianity, rotted Roman virtue through introducing the moral subterfuge of vicarious atonement. The Eagles of Caesar degenerated to the draggled buzzards of Constantine. Soon they were no more than hens, dispersed and devoured by the fierce hawks of Mohammed and the savage ravens of the North. Jewish commercial cleverness has created cosmopolitanism. Jewish sympathy with suffering has made the cliffs of caste to crumble. Jewish ethical exclusiveness has created a tyranny of conventional formalities to replace the righteousness of self-respect. The Jew, living so long on sufferance, by subterfuge, servility, and self-effacement, has taught his tricks to the whole world. Civilisation is an organised system of craft, concealment, cunning, camouflage, of cringing cowardice and craven callousness. The world is one great Ghetto. The Jew has failed to realise himself; and, as the learned Rabbi so brilliantly breaks out at the end of the third paragraph of his article, it is in infamy that Gentile and Jew are reconciled at last. Gentile and Jew bend on the same bench of the galley; the same whip drips with blood from the bare backs of the two brothers in bondage. We share the same suffering and shame; we eat the same bitter bread of exile.

Neither of us has known who he is, dared to be himself, or willed to do his Will. Neither has kept the Silence which alone preserved his soul from profanation. It was far better when ignorance and prejudice prevailed; we had at least faith in our own fetiches. It is better to have something that one is willing to die for, though it be but a lie; to have something to live for, though it be but a dream. Today, Jew and Gentile alike are pursuing despicable objects by dishonourable devices; and, having attained them, there is disillusion, disgust, and despair. We have swept away the superstitions which sustained our self-respect. We have discovered that the sun is only one star of many; and, perceiving our infinitesimal importance, we have lost our own respective stars--our self-esteem.

We have still to complete analysis by synthesis. Instead of interpreting Democracy as confusion in a common degradation, we must understand that, although each individual is equally an element of existence with every other, each is sublimely itself. Mankind is a republic of aristocrats; our equality is that of the essential organs of the body. The honour of each is to secure the harmony of all. It is the most fatal error of modern thought to interpret the dependence of each of us upon the rest as confounding us all in a common vileness.

One may appeal to the learned Rabbi then, out of his own mouth, to accept the Law of Thelema² as the foundation of the future of Israel. One may ask him to agree that the salvation of Israel depends upon understanding the spirit of that people in the light of history, ethnology, and psychology. Having understood its function, and formulated its will in a fixed phrase, it is only necessary to keep its unswerving course, each Jew as his own soul shows him for himself, and for the race, as the soul of the race is shown him, by the spirit of Anti-Christ, the Messiah, who shall arise in Israel for this purpose.

One word in reconciliation of an apparent antinomy. One must not think of Anti-Christ as opposed to Christ, any more than one thinks of the pleura as opposed to the lungs which it bounds. Woman is not the opposite of man--the difference between them is necessary to their co-operation. Without it, neither could reproduce their common elements in either component. Every star is necessarily different from every other star. The annihilation of one would disturb the equilibrium of all, and destroy the universe. The Jewish spirit is an essential element of humanity. The pitiable tragedies of the past have been the result of failing to understand, to insist upon, to execute, the eternal office of each existing individual idea. The arising of Anti-Christ will make possible the coming of Christ. If Christ came, he was balked, as He himself is supposed to have said, because no one was ready to receive Him.

As the first paragraph of "The Cry of the Modern Pharisee" points out, non-resistance defies power. Mechanics presumes opposition. Structuralisation depends upon the co-operation of diverse unities, each of which is stubbornly itself. Evolution is aristocratic. To aim at homogeneity is to revert to nullity. There is then no reason to fear that Anti-Christ, in establishing Israel, will injure Christianity. He will, on the contrary, assist the Christian spirit to cleanse itself from the confused acquiescence in anarchical amiability which it calls "charity," and is really cowardice, really the slave's shame of his own condition, the sense of guilt which he soothes by minimising all misdemeanours.

Let Anti-Christ arise, let Him announce to Israel its integrity. Let Him make clear the past, purged of all tribal jargon; let Him prove plainly how inevitably event came after event. Let Him gather the past to a point; let Him assign its proper position to the present by showing its relation with the axes of Space and Time. Let Him then calculate what forces are focussed at that point, so that its proper course may be thereby determined. Then let Him speak the Word of Israel's Will, so that all Israel with united energy, disciplined and directed, may move as one man irresistibly to fulfil its Destiny.

Such action will induce a complementary current in every other racial and religious section of humanity. The Chinaman who has given up politeness, filial reverence, and philosophy for European ideas; the Russian who has bartered mystic melancholy for Marxism; the Mohammedan who has been taught to despise the faith, virtue, virility, and valour of his forebears, and to appreciate cocktails, cocottes, pork,

and profanity; all these are hybrids, all these are self-mutilated cowards, garbage of self-surrender. They are monsters bred of the shame of being different to other people. The modern Italian has discarded the noble and beautiful toga for shoddy city clothes. The Mongol's sweeping silken robes are gone; dignified in them, he prefers to look ridiculous in the frock-coat and stove-pipe hat of a Bermondsey bank clerk. The Hindoo, once clean and comfortable in cotton cloths, sweats and stinks in starched shirts and shabby suits in the hope of looking like a Sahib. Mongrels and monsters, all these! Diverse as they are, they are born of one mother, Conventionality, by one father, Shame.

Let the Jew lead the way! Let the Jew find himself and be sure of himself; let him assert himself without fear of others, or reference to their ideals and standards. They will be forced to respect him. In self-defence, each one will find for himself the formula of his own function. From that moment the friction between the various parts of the human machine will begin to diminish.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." The social and economical crises of today are not due to over-population, to lack of supplies, or to inefficiency. They are due to the suppression of individuality. Instead of each person and each race doing its own will, the whole of humanity is being thrown into a melting-pot; the only ambition is to get to the top. The earth affords infinite scope for each soul, as the sky affords scope for each star. But instead of each soul seeking the satisfaction proper to itself, it is persuaded by the popular Press, by the pressure of public opinion, and by the contagious delusion of Democracy, that nothing is worth having save wealth in its grossest interpretation, "modern conveniences" in the crudest sense of the term, and social success in its silliest and shallowest shape. Pleasure itself is prescribed, like the diet of a diabetic. Respect is inseparable from envy, since the superiority of one is incompatible with the equivalent superiority of others. Formerly, Virgil and Horace could admire each other's qualities. Today, they must be measured by the balances at their banks. There are not enough automobiles and diamonds to go round, any more than there were in the time of Buddha or Villon. But the ascetic Prince and the starving scholar could each be unique and supreme without struggling for shekels.

The Jew has no claim to consideration on account of his success in money-getting. Every race in the world can produce rivals in that art. The True Spirit of Israel shines in the splendour of its literature, and in such moral qualities as that rigorous sense of Reality which made him the torch-bearer of Science through the Dark Ages, in the persistent patience which preserved his racial peculiarities through proscription and persecution, in the fidelity to tradition which kept him true to himself until he was assimilated in the American ant-heap, where no animal can live except the aimlessly active insects that swarm in its mould.

To recapitulate, Israel has not evolved a true consciousness of racial destiny through the ages, for "The word of Sin is Restriction," and the sin of Israel is this, that it has never known itself, or done its will.

Love is the law, love under will.