

Wales. A panel of speakers was organised to address many religious and lay bodies on Jewish topics.

A minute of the Public Relations Committee of September 8th, 1948, expresses regret at the fact that the Council of Christians and Jews was inactive. Almost a year later the Public Relations minutes refer to a memorandum submitted by Rabbi Porush regarding the state of affairs of the Council. It was considered "advisable" by the P.R.C. to revitalise the Council, but no determined effort was made to do so, firstly because the Public Relations Committee was doing most of the required work, and secondly because the Council could not function satisfactorily without the necessary funds. Whilst the Jewish Community was prepared to contribute its share and more, the other constituents were unable to make worthwhile contributions, and it was thought inadvisable that the Jewish Community should carry the whole burden.

So the N.S.W. Council of Christians and Jews died without a formal dissolution. But during the five years of its existence it performed a worthy and essential task with praiseworthy sincerity and dedication.

RABBI JACOB LEVI SAPHIR AND HIS VOYAGE TO AUSTRALIA

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The wandering Jew is a well-known character in history and literature. At times his wanderings have been involuntary: at times he has travelled for a deliberate purpose. Elkan Adler, in the Introduction to his *Jewish Travellers*¹, describes in this way the various reasons that have motivated the historic wandering Jew: "He has travelled as nomad and settler, as fugitive and conqueror, as exile and colonist, as merchant and scholar, as mendicant and pilgrim, as collector and as ambassador." His international travels were frequently of far-reaching importance both to Jewish history and to geographical discovery in general. By the seventeenth century, however, Adler suggests, the whole world had become familiar to most people, and now the experiences of the Jewish traveller "could hardly be of general interest or importance. The wandering Jew becomes less the diplomatist or scientist and more of the bagman and beggar".² Some

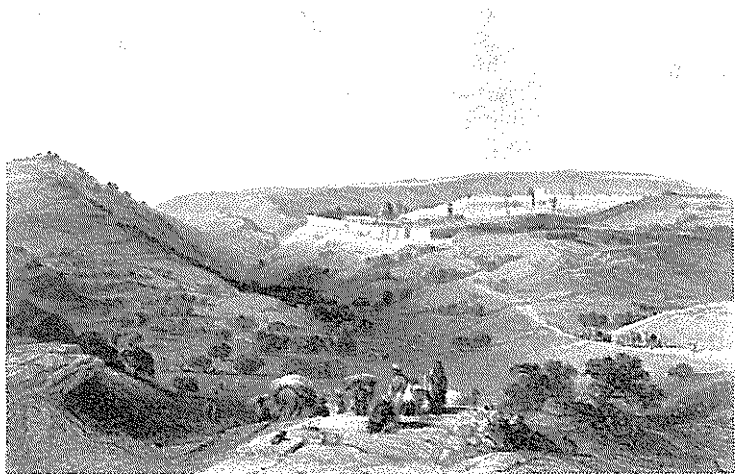
would object that this is far too sweeping a statement, and certainly if Adler had included Jacob Levi Saphir in his roll of great travellers he might well have had to modify his remark about "the bagman and beggar". A bagman Saphir certainly was not, and as a beggar he was not much of a success, but in other directions he has an importance, albeit not of the same first rank as Benjamin of Tudela and Petahiah of Ratisbon. (It is only fair to Elkan Adler to point out that neither he nor J. D. Eisenstein, on whose *Otzar Massaoth*³ he based himself, pursued the tale of Jewish travellers beyond 1839, and that is why nothing of Saphir is to be found in their books).

Saphir is briefly dealt with in some of the standard histories of Jewish literature⁴ and in the main Jewish encyclopaedias⁵, though the article on him in the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* is erroneous in several respects. Some parts of Saphir's itinerary, called *Eben Saphir*, have been reprinted in Hebrew or Yiddish⁶ and selections from the chapters dealing with Australia and New Zealand were translated into English by the late Rabbi L. A. Falk of Sydney.⁷ There has been only one systematic attempt at a study of Saphir's life and importance, namely, an article in two parts by Professor Joseph Joel Rivlin in the Hebrew literary periodical *Moznayim*.⁸ Saphir himself gives a summary of his childhood at the beginning of the first volume of *Eben Saphir*, but he does not describe the course of his life between the ages of 14 and 36—a silence which, as we shall see, is intriguing.

He was born in Oshmiany, near Vilna, in 1822, the son of Rabbi Nathan Levi Saphir, a *shohet*, and his wife, Toba. In 1832 the family went to live in Palestine, arriving on *Hoshana Rabba* of that year. They settled in Safed, one of the four "holy cities" of Palestine (the others were Jerusalem, Hebron and Tiberias). At this time Safed had the largest Jewish population of any part of Palestine and was not only a centre of the mystics but also a centre of the disciples of the Gaon of Vilna. A group of seventy of the Gaon's disciples had established themselves there in 1808, and other Jews from Vilna had followed them in fulfilment of a lifelong dream of the Gaon. Their leader was Rabbi Israel of Shklov.⁹ Within months of the Saphir family joining them, Nathan Levi Saphir died (on 13th Marheshvan, 1833) and soon afterwards (on 10th Kislev, 1834) his wife also died. Responsibility for their son was assumed by the rabbinic authorities of the city, though who took charge of the boy's only sister I have not been able to discover. On the day after *Shavuoth*, 1835, the

peace of Safed was rudely disturbed. The local Arab inhabitants fomented an uprising against Mohammed Ali, Pasha of Egypt, who ruled Palestine from 1832 until 1840, when it reverted to the Turks. In the course of the riots Jewish lives were lost, property was damaged and the maintenance of the Jewish settlement in Safed became precarious. The young Saphir and others found refuge for a short period in neighbouring villages, but eventually they made their way to Jerusalem, arriving there on *Rosh Hodesh* Ellul, 1836, when Saphir was fourteen years old. This in fact was one of several emigrations of Jews from Safed, and because of repeated disasters, which included an epidemic and an earthquake, the city lost its pre-eminence. By 1839, for example, there were 5,500 Jews in Jerusalem, which was now the largest Jewish centre, and only 1,500 in Safed¹⁰ (though other estimates give smaller figures all round, these proportions seem correct). Until this period the dominant section in the community in Jerusalem had been the Sephardim, but with the influx from Safed and other places the Ashkenazim assumed greater importance, and in due course Saphir became a leading figure in the new Ashkenazi community.

Soon after his arrival in Jerusalem Saphir married Feige Leah, the daughter of Rabbi Zalman Cohen and his wife, Elka.¹¹ Feige Leah must have been a remarkable woman. She is referred to as wise and pious.¹² She must



JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

Engraving from "Walks about Jerusalem" by W. H. Bartlett (cir. 1850)

also have been long-suffering considering the long periods when her husband was away on his travels, and the poverty in which she brought up her family of two sons and three daughters, all of whom became personalities in their own right.¹³ Having brought his *Eben Saphir* to the point at which he was married, Saphir now suspended the story of his life for a period of nearly 22 years. He simply states, "I cannot recount the things that happened to me from that day to this" and hints at trials and tribulations. What did actually happen to him in those 22 years that elapsed before he set off on his journeys? If we had to go on his book alone we would miss a fascinating chapter in the history of the old *yishuv*. We would also possibly never know that Saphir had another side to him apart from that of being a renowned traveller. Fortunately, we can piece the story together reasonably well from a variety of contemporary sources.¹⁴ We learn that at the age of sixteen he gained the rabbinical diploma, and became a teacher in a *Talmud Torah* of the Ashkenazi community, but his education was not just in rabbinic subjects alone. Living among disciples of the Vilna Gaon, he was introduced to the Gaon's method of combining traditional learning with secular studies; the Gaon himself had written on algebra, trigonometry, astronomy and grammar, though he regarded secular disciplines not as ends in themselves but as aids to understanding the Torah. It was in the literary and linguistic field that Saphir showed ability. He eventually became reasonably fluent in quite a number of languages: an Australian newspaper described him as "a man of considerable attainments as a linguist, speaking fluently not only Hebrew, but German, Spanish, Italian and Arabic, besides being sufficiently acquainted with English to make himself understood".¹⁵ It goes without saying that he spoke Yiddish, and he probably knew Russian, too. In contrast to some rabbinic figures, he took Jewish history and Hebrew grammar seriously, though he cannot be regarded as a competent scholar in the fields with which the *Jüdische Wissenschaft* was concerned.¹⁶ Yet his insatiable curiosity led him to investigate everything, and when he was away on his travels he would send home to his children a variety of literature, including secularist *haskalah* material.¹⁷

He began to become known in the Ashkenazi community of Jerusalem as a *sopher*. By *sopher* it is likely that "secretary" is meant, and it must be in this capacity that he served the Ashkenazi *hevra kadisha*.¹⁸ The largest group of Ashkenazim were known as the Perushim, who were non-

hassidic, and according to a visitor to Jerusalem Saphir was communal secretary of the Perushim. This visitor was Ludwig August Frankl, an Austrian poet and writer, who went to Jerusalem in 1856 to establish a school in the name of Frau Elise von Herz Lämél. In his book *Nach Jerusalem*¹⁹ he describes some colourful visitors who came to meet him. One of them was Jacob Saphir, whom he describes not only as the communal secretary but also as a poet. I quote his account of his meeting with Saphir at length, because it is one of the most revealing contemporary descriptions of Saphir:

"I had no idea that my first visitor would be an associate of the immortals, a descendant of the Prophetic singers, a companion of the royal harpist . . . a poet.

"A small, pale, sickly-looking man with bloodshot eyes came in to me. From both sides of his torn, filthy cap hung down the long locks of his *peyoth*, for which any comb would have been alien. His silk mantle, the smartness of which had long since vanished, was unmentionable; his shoes, which he took off on entering, seemed to be carrying on their riddled surface all the dust of the valley of Jehoshaphat from time immemorial.

"Thus the man, whose name was Jacob Saphir from Vilna, silently held out his hand to me and spoke without any preamble: 'Here everything is dust. Since the Destruction things have flowered and blossomed out of the midst of the ruins, and have gone back to their original vigour, everywhere on earth; except that here no greenness has returned and nothing at all grows. Yet with all this a bitter-tasting fruit does sprout and flourish here—pain at the desolation of Jerusalem. It is useless for you to expect any joy here, either from the people or from the hills!'

"I am glad to make your acquaintance. While I was still in Vienna I had heard about you, that you wander among the ruins of the holy city, bringing light to the darkness of destruction with your songs.'

"Call them shadows, shadows! But I am surprised that in the far-off city of Vienna they should talk of a poor Jewish poet in Jerusalem—surely the days of miracles are past!'

"Have you collected your poems together?

"Does one collect old, withered leaves? Sometimes when I have completed a new poem, I present it to my friends, and so it flies into the distance, or I burn it, and so many are destroyed. Who or what may survive when Jerusalem is perished?

"Bring me one of your poems!

"If God will inspire me to compose one.'

"Compose a song of lamentation for Zion, like a disciple of the great poet Judah Halevi.'

"Can anyone who follows King David be called great?

"This man Saphir came as a ten-year-old boy from Russia to Jerusalem, and has been here for twenty-five years. He is secretary of the community of Perushim, with an annual salary of 1000 piastres (about 100 silver florins). After a few days he brought me a poem, which I have attached to these pages."²⁰

It seems that Saphir must have been developing a reputation as the poet of Jerusalem. To him the community must have turned for a suitable ode to mark all

State occasions. And what would be more of a State occasion to inspire Saphir's lyrical talent than the arrival of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore on one of their many visits to the Holy Land? Whenever the Montefiores approached Jerusalem they were ceremoniously welcomed²¹ and Saphir produced several long poems in their honour. They include *Kenaph Renanim* (undated), *Shemesh Tzedakah* (1849) and *Gei Hizayon* (1855).²² He also composed a poem to mark the visit of Frederick Wilhelm of Prussia in 1870²³ and poems from his pen also appeared in the Hebrew periodical, *Ha-Lebanon*, and in pamphlet form. Like most of the Jerusalem Jews, Saphir found life a struggle and in his *Kenaph Renanim* he appealed to Montefiore for assistance: not, he added, that he wanted charity, but he asked for employment in one of the institutions which Montefiore was setting up. In an indirect way, the activities of the Montefiores in Jerusalem did lead to a turning-point in Saphir's life. There was a hallowed site in the Holy City on which the great Nahmanides had established a Synagogue in 1268. A succession of tribulations had befallen this Synagogue in the intervening centuries and it was closed down several times. In 1690, a group of *hasidim* led by Rabbi Judah He-Hasid (the Pious) from Shidlitz, near Grodno, arrived in Jerusalem and settled in the area around the Nahmanides Synagogue. The area became known in due course as the *Hurvah* (Ruin) of Rabbi Judah He-Hasid²⁴ and by the 1830's there developed a movement to rebuild the *Hurvah* Synagogue. For a time there was a split within the movement when some members used a donation from an Amsterdam Jew to erect an independent *beth-ha-midrash* but the supporters of the *Hurvah* succeeded in enlisting influential figures in their cause. In 1855 when the Montefiores again visited Palestine, Sir Moses (according to the Montefiore diaries edited by Dr. Louis Loewe)²⁵ showed James Finn, the British Consul in Jerusalem, 'the firman he had obtained, by the intercession of Lord Napier, for the rebuilding of an ancient synagogue belonging to the German Hebrew congregation.' In her book of reminiscences Mrs. Finn, the consul's wife, wrote: "The Ashkenazim had no synagogue of their own, but by 1854 they were a sufficiently large congregation to want one. So they applied to Mr. Finn for permission to repair a building which had probably been the synagogue of Rabbi Judah Halevi, the Khorbah Synagogue. Our ambassador furthered this scheme and the synagogue eventually became the biggest and finest in Jerusalem".²⁶ (Mrs. Finn erred in

identifying the Synagogue with Judah Ha-Levi, but so do others in regarding the Judah He-Hasid after whom it was named as the author of the *Sepher Hasidim*, who died in 1217). It seems that the *Hurvah* Synagogue was rebuilt in or about 1856, but additional funds were needed to complete the project. So a common method was resorted to. It was decided to send a *meshullah* or emissary abroad to raise money, both for the *Hurvah* scheme and also for the general support of the Jews of Jerusalem. The man who was chosen as the *meshullah* was Jacob Levi Saphir. He was supplied with letters of recommendation from leading rabbis of all sections of the community in Jerusalem, both of the Ashkenazim and of the Sephardim and even of the Karaites, and he set off on 13th Tammuz, 1858, on a journey that was to last altogether four years and nine months.

He did not direct his steps along the well-worn paths of the European Jewish communities but, perhaps in imitation of Benjamin of Tudela, towards the lands of the East.²⁷ Within the first few weeks he had lost his luggage and been taken in by a confidence trickster in Egypt. The result was that now, for lack of money, he could not proceed directly to India as he had planned. Instead he turned to the Yemen, and in fact became in due course an authority on the history and customs of the Yemenites. His complete itinerary covered Egypt, North Africa, and the Yemen (described in the first part of *Eben Saphir*) and then Aden, India, Malabar, Cochin, Colombo, Singapore, Java, Batavia, Australia and New Zealand. In each place he spent a lengthy period, but for the purposes of this paper I shall confine myself to his activities in Australia and New Zealand, where he spent sixteen months between September, 1861 and January, 1863.

He must have raised some money there, though his comment on this aspect of the journey was that "the toil and labour exceeded the reward".²⁸ His *schnorrbuch*, formerly owned by Mr. Jacob Sarna,²⁹ might indicate the extent of his financial success, but it is now in the central archives of the World Zionist Organisation in Jerusalem and I have not yet had an opportunity to peruse it. Saphir informed the board of management of the York Street Synagogue, Sydney, that his method was to retain for himself one-third of what he collected³⁰ but by the time he came to Melbourne he did not even have enough for his fare home and the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation had to come to his rescue.³¹ Wherever he went he studied avidly the history, social life and religious traditions of the Jews,

אוסטרליע ונוי זיילאנד

בחלק הארץ החדשה הזאת, אף כי חדשה היא וגם ישבתי ועברתי בה המשה עשר ימים, אין לי לחדש בה דברים רבים ולתכונות בספורים, כי אין מסרתי לספר חדשות רק לגלות עתיקות וישנות וביתוד מאחינו בני ישראל וסאלה אשר למצער נודעו בארצות אירופה, אבל באלה אשר פת, אין כל חדש, כי אך מקרוב באו הנה, וידועים הם לנו ולבנינו ומעט התועלת אשר יגיע להקוראים בהרבות דברים, ולכן רק בדרך קצרה אעבור על הארץ הזאת ודרך הלוכי אנני בקצה עמי במטע הארץ ויושבות, ומעט מהעובדות עלי במשך ימי היותי פה.

מוז.

עיר סידני ויושבות, היהודים ומעשיהם.

העיר סידני עומדת על החוף בלשון ים פארם יאקססאן, ובה מושב הנובערנער לכל הנוף נוי זיד וואלעש, וזה רק בשבעים שנה אשר היתה לארץ נישבת — כי בערך 1790 נאחזו בה הבריטאנים, ועשו אותה לעיר מקלט ומושב כלא לאנשי און פושעים ועושי רשעה אשר נהרין משפטם לשלחם אל ארץ גזרה ונשלחו לפה לשאת את עונם ולהכין קאלאניע, ויהי כי ראו את הישוב כי טוב ואת הארץ כי נעמה ויטו שכםם לסבול את עבודת אדמתה והארץ נעתרה להם ונתנה את יכולה ותבואתה ופריה ויכוננו להם ערים לשבת, ואחרים שלחו גם במסחר ידיהם, וכולם גדלו והצליחו, והיו להם העונש והמסור לעושר ואישר, ותחובתה והאספן לטובה ולששון, כי ישנם באלה ורבים הם אשר נשלחו הנה ביד פשעם ונשאו את עונם ועתה הםה חורי הארץ אציליה ושוועיה, ואחריו אשר נודעה טוב הארץ באו אליה מאירפא וביהוד מענגלאנד ואירלאנד גם רבים בני חורים, לעבוד את האדמה ועדרי צאן ובקר עושי בסחור וקנין, וכאשר פצתה האדמה את פיה וגלתה את סתוריה וצפונותיה וסגולות החוב הטוב הנאצר בבטנה קרוב לעיר באמטורסט בשנת 1850 עד היום נהרו אליה המונים מכל אפסי ארץ וימלאו שקיהם זהב, ולתשוקת בת מי זהב ועול המדהבה נכספו גם אחינו היהודים — אשר לשמה ולזכרה האות כל נפש — ויבאו לעשות בזהב, וגם המסחר פרץ בארץ, כי כל אלה היו צריכים לחם ושמלה ובתים לשבת, והכסף אינו נחשב, וחובם בהוצאות השליכו, והיהודים על פי הרוב לא הפזו בארץ להוציא את הזהב מבטנה, רק הם היו מספקים כל צרכי החופרים למחייתם, וגם קנו את הזהב מיד החופרים, ותהי שכרם רב משכר החופרים, ולכן היהודים כרובם יושבים הנה רק בחפרים הגדולות אשר שם פרץ המסחר, וגם הם גדלו והעשירו, ודרך כלל כל הבאים אוסטרליעה לא הביאו אתם כסף וזהב, ופה מהם

and was also a shrewd observer of the way of life of the general population. Thus, for example, he writes about the Australian aborigines and describes the way the European settlers treated them;³² the Maoris of New Zealand also intrigued him and he suggested that they had originally come from India (though it is now accepted that they are a Polynesian people originally from the islands of the Pacific).³³ His impressions of Jewish life in other countries have considerable value, though Geiger criticised him for dealing in an amateurish way with questions which scholars had already investigated thoroughly.³⁴ When it comes to his Australian activities, however, he has a unique importance because he is the first contemporary observer to write at length about the emergent communities of the Australian continent. There had been other rabbinic visitors, such as Rabbi Aaron Levy of the London Beth Din³⁵ and other emissaries from Palestine³⁶, but they left no extensive written record of their impressions. From his book, we get a further picture of Saphir the man. He was a man of determination: he arrived at Dunedin, New Zealand, on a Wednesday, discovered that the congregation had no *megillah*, and by Friday he had one written out in time for the festival of *Purim* on the Saturday night.³⁷ His curiosity led him to become involved in local controversies time after time. In Melbourne, for instance, the Rev. Moses Rintel accused him of interference and reported his actions to Chief Rabbi Nathan Marcus Adler in London; Saphir responded with a long, learned reply defending himself.³⁸ In both Melbourne and Sydney he had violent arguments with congregational boards of management, and in Melbourne he was ordered out of the committee room.³⁹

Before examining the historical information about Australian and New Zealand Jewry which his book preserves, we should first briefly trace the beginnings of Jewish life in Australia. The continent had been settled in 1788 with the arrival of the First Fleet of convicts who included some Jews. Up to 1817 there is no reference to any organised community, but in that year a *hevra kadisha* was set up by the twenty Jews in Sydney. For a decade the only times they came together were the four or five occasions when a death occurred. But by 1830 the small community had grown to a total of 345. Some were emancipated convicts, following occupations such as those of dealers, merchants, artisans, innkeepers and auctioneers; a number had come as free immigrants.⁴⁰ The 1845 report of the Synagogue in Sydney states that "The influx of respectable merchants during those years coupled with

אבן ספיר

ספר שני

ימנל

בית ערן, חורו כאמכיי, בני ישראל, מאלבאר, קונן
הלבנים והשחורים, כלכרה, אפא-פענו, סינאפור,
יאוע באטאווע, אוספראליע, סידני, מנלבורנע,
נו-וילאנד, ציילאן, שיבת ירושלם.

וטקף על כל אלה

דערנח רבות, רבני חפין, העתק סטפר הללי, ובמחברת העלואן מחיטין.

מנל

עזר הלוי יעקב ספיר איש ירושלם

במראה אבן ספיר הראשון אשר האיר זה שנתה שנים והיה לאבן דין
לכל חכמי לב ומבני מדע, בן אחיו השני הנודל בסנה ימלל רבני
באסת ואסונה.

מנל

ברפוסו ועל ידי יחואל בריל
המן סנה סמנה וויל, הלמון
סנה ברוך אחת לפי

other circumstances had raised the Hebrews in the estimation of their fellow colonists, and it was then thought advisable meetings for prayers should be held regularly".⁴¹ Thereafter services were held at a private house in Sydney, and the establishment of the community on a formal basis came with the visit in 1830 of Rabbi Aaron Levy. Rabbi Levy was sent to finalise a divorce between a woman in England and her husband in Australia, which took him only a short while to do, but under his influence Jewish life took on new vigour. In Tasmania, also originally a convict settlement, emancipated Jewish convicts established congregations in Hobart and Launceston in the 1840's. The foundation of South Australia, however, was not associated with the convicts, and instead it arose out of a scheme for systematic colonisation by free settlers. A Synagogue was founded there in the 1840's. In Victoria the first white settlement was set up in the 1830's by farmers from Tasmania. The first Jewish services there took place in 1841. Now there came the 1850's: a decade known in Australian history as the "Golden Fifties". They were the years that brought Australia's first real wave of immigrants, all in search of the gold that had been discovered in 1851. The gold-rushes were centred in Victoria, which advanced within a very short time from a small pastoral settlement to a prosperous, self-governing colony. Victoria's population multiplied again and again. The Jewish population jumped from 56 in 1841 to 364 in 1851 and to 2,903 in 1861. Where did the Jewish immigrants come from? What did they do on the mining settlements? How did their gentile fellows react to them? What were their religious and social problems? It is in answers to questions such as these that Saphir's contemporary observations begin to be of value. He left Batavia on 3rd Ellul, 1861, as the only passenger on a small two-masted Scottish cargo boat bound for Sydney. On 28th Tishri the ship arrived there after a difficult voyage. Saphir soon learnt what manner of land this was in which he found himself. He equipped himself with the main facts of Australian history, though he tends to over-romanticise the convict period and says that the convicts were so pleasantly surprised by the land that their chastisement was hardly a burden any more.⁴² He does, however, add correctly that many of the former convicts had now become the most prominent and respected citizens, though he does not state that this applied to some of his fellow-Jews, too. He says that the majority of the Jews had come from England, though some had come from Poland but had lived in England for some time.⁴³

This seems to accord with the theory that whereas the earlier immigrants had been of Anglo-Dutch-German stock, now with the discovery of gold there was a sizeable minority of Eastern European elements. Saphir's view that the Eastern European Jews had mostly not arrived directly from their countries of origin, but had come via England, may well be correct and derives some support from studies of Australian naturalisation records carried out by Dr. Charles A. Price of the Australian National University.⁴⁴

These studies suggest that the proportion of immigrants who were born in countries of continental Europe was about 5% in the 1830's, about 37.5% in the 1840's, and as high as 70% in the 1850's. Dr. Price's figures do not reveal how many emigrated via England at this early period, but between 1881 and 1920 the figures were: 38% emigrated directly to Australia, 33% emigrated via England, and in the earlier period, which we are discussing, I would estimate that the majority of the immigrants had come via England, as Saphir in fact suggested.

Saphir gave an estimate of the Jewish population in each place that he visited though he had no means of checking his figures. We have the advantage of possessing the data supplied by the census of 1861,⁴⁵ which obviously is a more reliable source of information. The estimates of Saphir and the census figures compare as follows:—

Sydney: Saphir 500 Jews—census 1072 (609 males, 463 females)

Melbourne: Saphir 1000—census 1796 (1074 males, 722 females)

Ballarat: Saphir 300—census 241 (163 males, 78 females)

Bendigo: Saphir says "fewer than Ballarat"—census 228 (140 males, 88 females)

Adelaide: Saphir 300—census 420 (estimated, since no religious census was taken in 1861. In 1871 there were 379 Jews).

In addition the census records that there were 867 Jews actually on the goldfields in 1861—608 males and 259 females.

What did the Jews do on the goldfields? Saphir informs us that few actually dug for gold: most started as pedlars, an essential economic activity on the mining settlements. "On the whole," he states,⁴⁶ "the Jews did not dig in the earth to extract the gold from its bowels, but they supplied all that was necessary for the sustenance of the miners and they also bought the gold from the miners.

Their profit was greater than that of the miners." By 1861, when Saphir arrived, the gold was petering out but many Jews had established themselves so well in commerce that strong communities remained in goldfields towns like Ballarat and Bendigo for many years. The prosperity that gold brought in its wake, Saphir observed, attracted many immigrants. The *Emigrants' Guide*⁴⁷ stated that "Emigration rages as a national epidemic. The great commercial fleet of Britain is not sufficient for the needs of thousands." In London the Spanish and Portuguese Board of Guardians⁴⁸ and also the Jewish Emigration Loan Society⁴⁹ encouraged poorer Jews to emigrate. A number of middle-class English Jews also came and many made fortunes and subsequently returned to England. Saphir refers to the vast immigration: "They continue to come month by month and all who come settle down because it is better for them here than there. Among these Jews are rich and honoured merchants. Some of them are pedlars who go out with their packs on their shoulders or in carts, going round the towns and villages to sell their merchandise, in the same way as the settlers who come to England and America, but here they amass greater wealth because instead of silver they get gold. Some of them have become wealthy and rich."⁵⁰

Jews were from the outset on terms of equality with their neighbours. Saphir states: "Freedom and equality prevail here in every way . . . The Jews live in safety and have a share in all the benefits of the land and in government posts and political administration".⁵¹ But due mainly to two factors the incidence of mixed marriage was high. One factor was this very freedom of association; the other, common to all pioneering societies, was the predominance of males over females. We have already seen in the 1861 census statistics how in every case the males considerably outnumbered the females, and Saphir also draws attention to the fact.⁵² In fact an Australian Jew had written to the "*Jewish Chronicle*" in 1852⁵³: "Our leading men would be doing a great service to the Jewish young men here by sending out a few respectable single girls, for it would save many a young man from marrying a Christian." One attempt was made to send out a party of Jewish young women in the care of Caroline Chisholm, but the experiment was never repeated and the problem remained.⁵⁴ Many Christian wives offered to enter Judaism and to rear their children as Jews. This gave rise time after time to controversies over the admission of proselytes and the circumcision of the sons of gentile mothers. Saphir com-

plains that "many acts were done in this connection which were not in accordance with the law of the holy *Torah*".⁵⁵ In Bendigo, a goldfields town in Victoria, he was implored to help personally with a case of this kind. A Jew living there had married a gentile woman who had originally entered his house as a domestic servant. She had borne him two sons, who had been circumcised and given Hebrew names. In Melbourne she could have been converted—Saphir says that the Rev. Moses Rintel of Melbourne derived a livelihood from this source—but the Jew of Bendigo was a pedlar who could not afford the expense of travelling to Melbourne. After considerable deliberation Saphir agreed to admit the woman and her children into Judaism. He set up an *ad hoc Beth Din* which, apart from himself, comprised the *hazan-shohet* of the town, an old man named Gedaliah Isaac Friedman,⁵⁶ who had studied in *yeshivoth* in Hungary in his youth, and another learned and pious Jew from Liadi in Poland. The traditional ritual of conversion was carried out, and Saphir is at pains to stress that he took no fee for the ceremony apart from a donation from the congregation towards his cause in Jerusalem.⁵⁷ On his return to Melbourne he informed Moses Rintel of what he had done and was accused of interfering with the latter's livelihood and of acting contrary to the *din*. Rintel wrote to Nathan Marcus Adler complaining about Saphir. Adler replied that Saphir's actions were null and void and that any converts he purported to make could not be considered as Jews. Saphir replied to Adler at length, going into the classical rabbinic authorities to show that he had acted lawfully. This reply is printed in full in an appendix to the second part of the *Eben Saphir*.⁵⁸

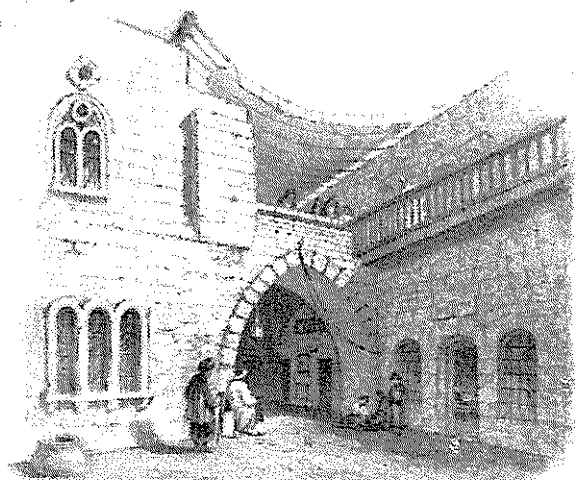
It was not only in matters of proselytisation, however, that Saphir criticised the religious situation he found in Australia. He remarks bitterly that wherever he went religious observance was lax. Many of the early settlers had broken the dietary laws because no religious facilities were available, but they had continued to do so even after such facilities had been established. In Melbourne there were Jews who attended Synagogue morning and evening but bought meat from gentile butchers, though some of them soaked and salted it according to Jewish custom.⁵⁹ This and similar instances had their origin, he stated, in the lack of an ordained rabbi. If there were such a man "they would all listen to his words and observe the law of Moses and Israel completely". He blamed the British Chief Rabbi, whose jurisdiction was accepted in Australia, for

allowing this state of affairs. In other places where there was no *shohet* he remonstrated with the communities in no uncertain terms. In Adelaide he had a meeting with the board of management about which he wrote: "I rebuked them for not having a *shohet* and for eating forbidden foods, and they apologised as usual. But one of them who was wise in his own eyes answered arrogantly, 'In the Ten Commandments there is no reference to having a *shohet*!' This is the result when a community has no teacher and guide, and every man goes his own way and does what is right in his own eyes".⁶⁰

Throughout Saphir's chapters on Australia and New Zealand (as elsewhere) he records the names of the leading figures in each congregation, though on the whole this information is not known to us. In some cases, it is interesting to note, it was a renewal of acquaintance made in other countries. An example is his meeting in Ballarat with Newman Frederick (Naham Friedel) Spielvogel, whom he had known in India. Spielvogel, who was born in Austria, lived in Ballarat for many years and was president of the congregation. His son, Nathan F. Spielvogel, was the historian of Ballarat and a short-story writer on Jewish themes. Saphir had been asked by the rabbinic authorities of Jerusalem to perform several missions on his travels, mostly in order to find husbands who had deserted their wives and to persuade them to permit the wives to remarry by means of granting them *get*, and in at least one case Saphir was successful, finding in Melbourne under an assumed name a man who had left his wife in Russia about eight years previously.⁶¹

On 15th Teveth, 1863, Saphir left Melbourne on a large British steamer, with his passage paid to Aden. His account of the return voyage is entertaining in itself⁶² but for reasons of time I cannot go into it at this moment. On the minor festival of *Pesah Sheni*, 14th Iyyar, 1863, Saphir arrived back in Palestine. He composed a poem in the style of the *Zionides* read on the fast of Av, expressing his joy as he approached closer and closer to the Holy City.⁶³ He does not tell us what kind of reception he got from his family but immediately says that he began sorting the material and reminiscences he had gathered on his travels. His son, Benjamin Ze'ev Saphir, assisted him in perusing various manuscripts such as those yielding variant readings of Biblical texts, but it was a slow job and Saphir complains that it overtaxed his health and his eyesight.⁶⁴ His first publication was the *Sepher Ha-Goraloth* of Hayyim Vital (1543-1620), printed in Jerusalem in 1863 from a

manuscript he had acquired in Yemen.⁶⁵ Nine months after his return home he was off on his journeys again, this time making his first trip to Europe, to find a publisher for his *Eben Saphir*.⁶⁶ At last in 1866 the first part of the book appeared in Lyck under the imprint of the Society of *Mekitzei Nirdamin*, which had been established in 1864 for the publication and dissemination of works of Hebrew literature. The Society mostly issued classical works but some newer writers such as Saphir were also published. Many of the reviews of Saphir's book were complimentary: some, such as Geiger,⁶⁷ criticising him on points of scholarship but admitting that the book was a contribution to Jewish travel literature. Strangely, strong criticism came from the Hebrew periodical *Ha-Maggid*, produced by Eliezer Lipman Silbermann, who was also the editor of the *Mekitzei Nirdamin* publications.⁶⁸ The fact that Saphir's own publisher turned against him may have been due to disagreements over financial matters and over Saphir's complaints about typographical errors in the printed book.⁶⁹ The inevitable result was that for the second volume, which was written at about the same time as the first, he had to find a different publisher. He must have hawked it from publisher to publisher until in 1874 it



JEWISH HOSPITAL, JERUSALEM.

[Steel engraving from "Jerusalem Revisited" by W. H. Bartlett, London, 1862].

eventually appeared in Mainz under the imprint of Yehiel Brill, his son-in-law.⁷⁰ This volume includes an appendix giving extracts from some of the manuscripts he had acquired, and he repeatedly appeals to his well-wishers to assist him with funds to print more of this material, presumably in a third volume, but this never appeared.⁷¹ Nor did his proposed English and German translations of the first two volumes.⁷² For financial reasons he sold some of his manuscripts: one went to the Empress Eugenie, wife of Napoleon IV of France⁷³ and another to Baron Naphtali Herz (Horace) Günzburg of St. Petersburg.⁷⁴

He went to Europe in Ellul, 1865, as an emissary on behalf of the *Bikkur-Holim* hospital in Jerusalem, and was away more than two years. He visited France, Germany and Russia, sending impressions of each place to Brill's periodical *Ha-Lebanon*. He went to Russia once more in 1873, again on behalf of the hospital.

He produced no other major writings though one can find references to smaller works, which include:—

Iggereth Teman Ha-Shenith (Vilna, 1868), on the appearance in Yemen of a pseudo-Messiah, Judah ben Shalman;

Iggereth Ha-Peridah, addressed to the rabbis of Italy;
Eldad U-Medad

Mayim Hayyim

Eduth Bih'yoseph, a responsum.

He and his sons were frequent contributors to *Ha-Lebanon*, which Yehiel Brill had established in Jerusalem in 1863 and which was subsequently transferred to Paris and then to Mainz. If Saphir was a wandering Jew, his son-in-law's periodical was a wandering Jewish journal. Brill's son, Moshe, was later a well-known Yiddish writer, translator and printer in the East End of London.⁷⁵

Saphir spent the rest of his days in Jerusalem. He would certainly have had many reminiscences with which to regale his associates in the *Hurvah*. He died on 10th Tammuz, 1885, at the age of 63, and his wife died three years later. They left five children. The elder son, Zalman Nathan Saphir, ran by day the first coffee-grindery in Jerusalem and by night studied and wrote for *Ha-Lebanon*. He died before his parents. The second son, Benjamin Zeev Saphir, was an acknowledged scholar and for a time taught in a *Talmud-Torah* before going into the woven-goods business. I understand, though I have not yet been able to confirm, that he was later the first manager of the Anglo-Palestine Bank. His son Eliyahu Saphir was the proprietor of the Israeli newspaper *Ha-Aretz*. Jacob

Saphir's three daughters all married distinguished husbands. One was Yehiel Brill, whom we have mentioned; the second, Eliyahu Godel, was active in communal and agricultural administration; the third, Samuel Baruch, was a rabbi from an old Sephardic family in Jerusalem.⁷⁶

My last comment is to say how surprised I have been that Saphir and his family have remained so little known and that so little has so far been written about them. In a small way I hope this paper will begin to fill the gap.

NOTES

1. London, Routledge, 1930, p. xi; reprinted by Hermion Press, N.Y., 1966. Cf. Israel Abrahams, *Chapters in Jewish Literature*, Phila., 1899, ch. XX; "Travellers' Tales".
2. Adler, *loc. cit.*, p. xxiv.
3. N.Y., 1926.
4. e.g. Meyer Waxman, *A History of Jewish Literature*, N.Y., 1945, vol. 3, pp. 632-6; Meyer Waxman, "Modern Hebrew Literature", in *The Jewish People, Past and Present*, vol. 3, p. 122.
5. e.g. *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, vol. XI, p. 51; *Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*, vol. IX, p. 365; *Otzar Yisrael*, ed. J. D. Eisenstein, vol. VII, p. 243.
6. *Kol Kitve R. Yaakov Saphir Halevi beShir uProza*, ed. P. Grayevsky, Jerusalem, 1934; *Sepher Massa Teman al yede Yaakov Saphir*, Jerusalem, 1945; *Yaakov Saphir un seine Nesios*, ed. Hirsch Munz (with photostats of some pages of the Hebrew original), Melbourne, Y.I.V.O. (n.d.).
7. *Journal and Proceedings of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, vol. I, pp. 19, 43, 86, 116, 153, 192. See also the brief extracts translated by L. M. Goldman, *Australian Jewish Herald*, 18th March, 1949.
8. vol. II, pp. 74-81, 385-399 (Tel Aviv, 1940).
9. M. M. Yoshor, "Eliyahu of Vilna", in *Jewish Leaders* (1750-1940), ed. Leo Jung, N.Y., 1953, pp. 27-50, esp. pp. 48-9.
10. Report by W. T. Young, first British consul in Jerusalem, to Viscount Palmerston, on 25th May, 1839; in *The British Consulate in Jerusalem in relation to the Jews of Palestine*, ed. A. M. Hyamson, London, 1939: part II (1838-1861), pp. 4-7. This report gives a comprehensive, colourful picture of the conditions of the Jews in Palestine at the time. See also James Parkes, *A History of Palestine from 135 A.D. to Modern Times*, London, 1949, and the standard works on the history of Palestine and Zionism.
11. Details of Saphir's family connections are given by Rivlin, *loc. cit.*, pp. 75-7.
12. Eben Saphir, part I, chapter 1.
13. See Rivlin, *loc. cit.*, and the final paragraphs of this paper.
14. *J.E.*, vol. VII, s.v. "Jerusalem"; Norman Bentwich, "Anglo-Jewish Travellers to Palestine in the Nineteenth Century". *Miscellanies of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, part IV (1942), p. 9; *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, London, 1929; works on the Montefiores such as Paul Goodman, *Moses Montefiore*, Phila., 1925 (esp. "Bibliography of Montefioriana", on pp. 231-250); *Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore*, ed.

- Louis Loewe, 2 vols., London, 1890; (Lady Montefiore), *Notes from a Private Journal*, London, 1885; Lucien Wolf, *Sir Moses Montefiore: a Centennial Biography*, London, 1884.
15. *South Australian Register*, 23rd June, 1862 (cited by M. Z. Forbes, "Palestine Appeals in the Fifties and Sixties", *A.J.H.S. Journal*, vol. III, p. 326); L. M. Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century*, Melbourne, 1954, p. 157 etc.; same author, *The History of the Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958, p. 94 etc. From *Eben Saphir*, part II, ch. 52, we get an impression of Saphir as a conversationalist in English.
16. A. Geiger in *Judische Zeitschrift*, vol. XI, pp. 263-70, in a review of part II of *Eben Saphir*.
17. Rivlin, *loc. cit.*, pp. 76, 79.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
19. 2 vols., Leipzig, 1858; vol. II, "Palästina". The Perushim are described on pp. 48-49. Translations into other languages were also published, e.g. *Yerushalayma*!, trans. into Hebrew by Mendel E. Stern, Vienna, 1860.
20. German ed., vol. II, pp. 23-25; Hebrew ed., pp. 161-2.
21. See the descriptions in the works listed in note 14 above.
22. Items 400 and 520 (6) (fol. 37) of mss. in Montefiore Library; see "Bibliography of Montefiorana" in Goodman, *loc. cit.*, pp. 239-40.
23. *Eben Saphir*, part II, p. 235.
24. *J.E.*, vol. VIII, s.v. "Jerusalem". On the *Hurvah* generally: Frankl, *loc. cit.*, vol. II, p. 52; "Koroth Hatzet R. Yehudah He-Hasid", in *Luah Eretz Yisrael*, ed. Lunetz, 5664-1904. Judah He-Hasid's pilgrimage is described in *Shaalv Shelom Yerushalayim*, by Gedaliah Semiatitsch, Berlin, 1716 (see *J.E.*, vol. XI, s.v. "Semiatitsch").
25. at pp. 45-6.
26. *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn*, p. 132; also pp. 134-5, 155-6, 243. On Sir Moses' firm: p. 137.
27. *Eben Saphir*, part I, early chapters.
28. *Ibid.*, part II, p. 144.
29. Mr. Sarna was for many years a renowned book-collector and literary figure in London. He is now living in Israel.
30. *A.J.H.S. Journal*, vol. III, p. 325.
31. Goldman, *Jews in Victoria*, p. 159.
32. *Eben Saphir*, part II, chs. 47 et seq.
33. *Ibid.*, ch. 51; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. XIV, s.v. "Maoris".
34. *Judische Zeitschrift*, vol. XI, pp. 263-70.
35. *A.J.H.S. Journal*, vol. II, p. 475 etc.; vol. III, pp. 1-5 etc.
36. M. Z. Forbes, *loc. cit.*, pp. 313-333; Goldman, *Jews in Victoria*, *passim*.
37. *Eben Saphir*, part II, p. 141.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
39. Goldman, *Jews in Victoria*, p. 159.
40. See references to the early Jewish settlers in Sydney in *A.J.H.S. Journal*, *passim*.
41. The 1845 Report was reprinted by the *A.J.H.S.* in 1944.
42. *Eben Saphir*, part II, p. 131.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 132, 135 etc.
44. "Jewish Settlers in Australia" in *A.J.H.S. Journal*, vol. V, pp. 357-412, and statistical appendices.
45. *Ibid.*, Saphir's figures are derived from *Eben Saphir*, part II, chapters on the towns concerned.

46. *Eben Saphir*, part II, p. 131.
47. by D. Mackenzie, London, 1852.
48. A. M. Hyamson, *The Sephardim of England*, London, 1951, pp. 251, 322.
49. Goldman, *Jews in Victoria*, pp. 124-5.
50. *Eben Saphir*, part II, p. 132.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 136, et. seq.
53. *Jewish Chronicle*, 26th November, 1852. The writer was H. L. Ansell of Geelong, Victoria, who wrote in the first instance to his brother, Moss Ansell, asking him to urge "Mr. Mitchell, the proprietor, etc., of the only Jewish journal in England . . . to impress on our Jewish brethren the great field for emigration there is open for our poor brethren for these parts." As well as referring to the need for "respectable single girls", Ansell also describes economic conditions in Australia: "Carpenters, shoemakers, cabinet-makers, and all such mechanics are getting here from 15s. to 25s. per day, whereas in England if they get one-third that sum they consider themselves well off . . . Let not everyone, however, fill themselves with false hopes; for instance, cigar-makers would not get a livelihood here, as it is only mechanics who would make wealth."
54. Goldman, *Jews in Victoria*, p. 125; the standard biography of Caroline Chisholm, by Margaret Kiddle, states that when the ship "Caroline Chisholm" left England in September, 1853, "an interesting little group" amongst her passengers was made up by "at least twelve Jewish girls, put in Mrs. Chisholm's care by the Jewish Ladies' Benevolent Loan and Visiting Society. This committee was anxious to assist Jewish families to emigrate to Australia and America, and had the utmost confidence in Caroline Chisholm's care of the young girls placed in her charge. Many of the leaders of Jewish society of London were among her ardent supporters." (p. 160).
55. *Eben Saphir*, part II, p. 136.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 139; Goldman, *Jews in Victoria*, pp. 166-7.
57. *Eben Saphir*, part II, p. 140.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 144. On Nathan F. Spielvogel: *A.J.H.S. Journal*, vol. I, p. 120; vol. IV, pp. 279-80; and *Selected Short Stories of Nathan Spielvogel*, ed. L. E. Fredman, Melbourne, 1956.
62. *Eben Saphir*, part II, ch. 52.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
65. Though this fact is stated by the *J.E.*, vol. VII, p. 155 (in a section dealing with typography in Jerusalem), no book of this name is ascribed to Hayyim Vital in the standard bibliographical works.
66. *Eben Saphir*, part II, p. 174.
67. A. Geiger, *Judische Zeitschrift*, vol. XI, pp. 263-70. Other reviews are summarised by Rivlin, *loc. cit.*, pp. 392-3.
68. Waxman, *loc. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 335-7; *J.E.*, vol. XI, s.v. "Silbermann".
69. Rivlin, *loc. cit.*, p. 393.
70. Waxman, *loc. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 343-5.

71. Rivlin suggests that it was in fact written but was lost after Saphir's death; *loc. cit.*, notes 176-7.
72. *Eben Saphir*, part II, last page.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 199. The Empress placed the manuscript in the Hebrew section of the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, according to Saphir.
74. *Ibid.*
75. On Moshe Brill: "Printer's Ink in their Veins", by Ben-Zion Abrahams, *Jewish Chronicle*, 22nd November, 1963.
76. On Saphir's family connections see Rivlin, *loc. cit.*, pp. 76-7. A brief obituary of Saphir appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 31st July, 1885.

"RIGHTEOUS PATH SOCIETY" and "HEBREW MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETY" TWO EARLY JEWISH BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES IN SYDNEY

by

GEORGE F. J. BERGMAN, D.Ec., LL.B. (Munich)

Colonel Godfrey Charles Mundy who arrived in Sydney in June, 1846, as Deputy-Adjutant-General of the military forces in Australia, after he had left the colony in 1851 for a position in the War Office, wrote a book entitled "Our Antipodes: or, Residence and Rambles in the Australasian Colonies, with a glimpse of the Goldfields". It was published in London, in 1852, went into four editions, and was translated into German and Swedish. Mundy was a keen observer of Sydney's every-day life.

Messrs. Russel Ward and Ken Macnab in their biography of Mundy in the "Dictionary of Australian Biography"¹ wrote of Mundy:—

"Aristocratic by birth and conventional in temper, he showed in his books a discerning eye, a lively pen, a keen sense of humour and a marked streak of sturdy common-sense. 'Our Antipodes' still makes entertaining reading and is an invaluable source of information for the Australian social historian."

Going through his book, I found that among other observations, he described vividly the procedure of auctioneering by which many Jewish merchants of the time made their living. In this connection he related also—without mentioning the name of the person, but clearly identified by the historian—the life story of Samuel Lyons, one of the colony's highly successful auctioneers and one of the most respected Jewish emancipists. This narrative was, however, made more sensational by the addition of fanciful, hearsay stories about Lyons' pitiful and adventurous convict past. A full biography of Samuel Lyons by the writer is awaiting publication.²