

# **BITZARON**

**QUARTERLY REVIEW OF HEBREW LETTERS**

**WINTER-SPRING, 1983**

# BITZARON

A Quarterly of Hebrew Letters, published by the Hebrew Literary Foundation and co-sponsored by the Institute of Hebrew Culture & Education, School of Education, New York University.

Editor: **Mayim Leaf**  
Associate Editors: **Rivka Friedman**  
**Gabriel Preil**  
Chairman, Editorial Board **Nathan H. Winter**  
Editorial Assistant: **Nelly Segal**

BITZARON, P.O. Box 623, Cooper Station, N.Y. 10008. Tel. (212) 598-3987

**BITZARON** WINTER-SPRING, 1983 VOL. V, 17-18

Vol. V (New Series) Nisan, 5743 — April 1983 No. 17-18 (348-349)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topics.....	H.L.	3
Arab "Peace" Policy—Appearance and Reality.....	Gil Carl Alroy	5
Song of the Haluzah.....	Shmuel Halkin	15
Shmuel Halkin—The Man and the Poet.....	Simon Halkin	16
Far More Precious than Rubies (Story).....	Moshe Shamir	58
On Moshe Shamir's Novel <i>From Another Courtyard</i> .....	Gila Ramras-Rauch	66
Image of the Sabra As a Jew.....	Hillel Weiss	72
Three Poems.....	Sh. Shalom	77
Two Poems.....	Gabriel Preil	78
Jewish Reaction to Christian Borrowing.....	Cyrus H. Gordon	79
Yitzhak Eisig from Zidatchov (Poem).....	Eisig Silberschlag	81
Reflections on Three Poems by Longfellow, T. Carmi, Sh. Shalom.....	Yitzhak Akavyahu	83
Legend (Poem).....	R. Ben-Yosef	91
Two Poems.....	T. Carmi	93
Prospects of Future Relations Between American and Israeli Jewries.....	Aviv Ekroni	94
Sinai Diary.....	Yosef Nedava	98
Family History of Y. Shenhar (Part VIII).....	R. Rochel-Shenberg	106
The Real Agnon (On "Studies in the Works of S.Y. Agnon and H. Hazaz" by Rena Lee).....	Shmuel Schneider	115
Profiles of Two Jerusalemite Novelists: Yehuda Yaari and Shraga Kadari.....	Aryeh Lifschitz	123
<b>Book Reviews and Evaluations:</b>		
Spinoza in Hebrew Literature.....	E. Shmueli	128
The Nazi Crimes and the "Civilized World" (On Walter Laqueur's book "The Terrible Secret").....	Y. Granach	130
A Yemenite Midrashic Tractate (Edited by M. Havazelet).....	Jacob K. Miklitzanski	134
<b>Notes and Comments:</b>		
The Bible and its Place in Contemporary Culture.....	M. Roshwald	135
"The Fathers of Modern Hebrew Literature" As seen by Z. Schneour.....	P. Wollman-Tsamir	137
100 Years Since the "First Aliyah".....	A.B. Rivlin	141
New Books.....		145
News and Events.....		147
English Abstracts.....		159

## SELECTED ABSTRACTS

### ARAB "PEACE" POLICY - APPEARANCE AND REALITY

Gil Carl Alroy

Hunter College and Graduate

Center of the City University of New York

Their losses in the wars of 1948 and 1956 did not much alter the Arabs' conviction that Israel was but a fluke, to be crushed in one fell swoop in the near future. But in the aftermath of their disastrous defeat in June 1967, there grew a set of different perceptions. Israel was now regarded as truly powerful and entrenched, yet no more legitimate than before. Quick armed conquest would have to give way to a protracted process of politics and persuasion.

Above all, diplomacy must reduce Israel to its narrow dimensions, so as to make it less defensible and, even more importantly, to break its vital spirit. If necessary, the ejection of Israel from all conquered territories would be worth formal recognition and even peace treaties.

This so called approach has been gaining steadily throughout the Arab world, but has not been fully realized in Egypt. The Egyptian leadership itself has not disguised the fact that it continues to reject the permanence of Jewish statehood, even in encounters with the Israelis. Egyptian and other Arab moderates are in fact preoccupied with the processes and forms through which an Israel, reduced to its "dwarf" shape, would then be decomposed, finally leaving a religious Jewish community living under Arab rule in all of Palestine.

In the all-Arab debate on this subject, there is consensus on total Israeli withdrawal and establishment of a Palestinian national base in "liberated" territory. Arabs would flow into these areas in great numbers, while demoralized Israelis would be more inclined to migrate abroad.

While the nature of Arab moderation is obvious to anyone truly familiar with the Arab world, it is unknown to the American media essentially because of unfamiliarity and reliance on guidance by government officialdom. To the degree that the latter are familiar with this reality, they tend to ignore or rationalize it in some fashion.

### SHMUEL HALKIN - THE MAN AND THE POET (PART I)

Simon Halkin

Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Shmuel Halkin, one of the foremost Yiddish poets in Soviet Russia from the 1920's to the 1970's, was born into a prominent Hasidic family whose spiritual and moral values were reflected in his poetry.

Fully aware of the constraints of the regime under which he lived and created, Shmuel Halkin subjected himself to its rigorous, ideological line. He disguised his commitment to his people and its rich heritage by celebrating the Bolshevik Revolution as the coming of a new dawn.

A characteristic stanza bespeaks his ideological quandary: "We write what we please, we write what is permitted."

In secret, Shmuel Halkin continued to write in Hebrew and to weave the themes in which individualistic strains fused with social aspirations.

Essentially a lyrical poet, his sensibility remains divided between an ecstatic, joyful life-

loving nature, and the perception of tragic existence. Many have written on the "philosophical" quality of Halkin's poetry. The poet contemplates the enigma of experience not in search of solutions, but with the knowledge that none can be found. Its elusiveness is the contemplator's source of redress. The presence of this enigma is the only certainty in the universal, human experience. And it is this certainty that plays a game of hide-and-seek with the one sensing it.

Not desiring to overemphasize the influence of Hasidism, there is no doubt that some of its philosophical tenets influenced Halkin's poetic thought and vision.

## "THE BIG WOMEN OF REALITY" - MOSHE SHAMIR'S NOVEL *FROM ANOTHER COURTYARD*

Gila Ramras-Rauch  
Hebrew College, Boston, Mass.

In Israeli fiction of the 1970's, a prominent theme is the judging of the generation of the founding fathers, people of the second and third *aliyah* (1905-1919 and 1921). Although the pioneers who came to Palestine had to break with tradition in order to create their own self-image, modern Israeli fiction presents these founders as weak figures - as in the narrative of Oz and Yehoshua. At the same time, the diminished presence of the father-image makes way for the emergence of woman as earth-mother. In general, the most important protagonists in modern Hebrew fiction are solitary and tormented people, struggling with their passions as they grapple with political issues, never joining the mainstream of society in creating a family (e.g., the protagonists of Berdichivsky, Gnessin, Brenner and others).

MOSHE Shamir, in *From Another Yard* (1973), the first part of a trilogy, adopts a more realistic stance to the past. The elements of symbolism, irony, satire and allegory, so abundant in Oz and Yehoshua are not to be found in Shamir's work. What he attempts to create is an epic saga around one central fictional figure, Lea Berman, with historical figures and events providing the background for the adventures of his heroine.

Despite the realistic elements, however, Lea Berman shares some of the ironic characteristics of the typical protagonist of modern Hebrew writing. Although she never gave birth, she does in some ways represent the figure of the earth-mother, being powerfully connected to the land in the here-and-now, involved in building rather than in contemplation. Yet her suicide at age 80 reflects her sense of failure - connecting her once again to the typical figure of the ineffectual father-image.

All this has a multi-faceted bearing on the role of the narrator, who acts as witness, chronicler and organizer of research material.

## IMAGE OF THE SABRA AS A JEW IN THE EARLY STORIES by Moshe Shamir

Hillel Weiss  
Bar-Ilan University

The works of Moshe Shamir refute the notion that the literature of the Palmach generation is homogenous and marked only by the total identification with the "collective" submission of

the "I" to the "we."

Conscious of belonging to a people with a tradition and history as well as to an evolving nation, Shamir has created characters and plots that are based on dialectical principles, contradiction and surprise. His language, often referred to by critics as journalistic, is eclectic in nature and expresses the many strata in the newly emerging Israeli society.

Shamir has introduced the part of the "noble" schlemiel in Hebrew literature. His earlier stories were influenced by social naturalism current in European novels; at the same time, they convey a true and authentic portrait of the Jewish reality in the upcoming Jewish state.

## JEWISH REACTIONS TO CHRISTIAN BORROWING

Cyrus H. Gordon  
New York University

Jewish factors, borrowed and emphasized by the Church, were deemphasized, and in some cases given up, by the Synagogue. But aspects of Judaism that were abandoned by the Church could remain cornerstones of traditional Judaism down to modern times.

Among the factors that Christianity embraced and stressed are: (1) Baptism, specifically in the Jordan, which goes back to Naaman and the Prophet Elisha. (2) Monasticism, including the formulation of *Regulae*, continuing the non-normative, yet completely Jewish, institution illustrated by Qumran with its Manual of Discipline. (3) Kneeling in prayer: an Old Testament usage. (4) The representational art in old synagogues was taken over by the Church and developed into fine-art beyond anything that the "mother-synagogue" had produced.

Among the elements that Christianity rejected are: (1) circumcision, (2) *kashrut*, (3) study as a requirement for "first-class salvation", and (4) the strict observance of the Sabbath.

Christianity has accordingly played a role in conditioning Judaism for nearly two millennia, both negatively and positively.