

## HISTORY OF THE JEWS

### HISTORY OF THE JEWS

BY HEINRICH GRAETZ

VOL. II

From the Reign of Hyrcanus (135 B. C. E.) to the Completion of the Babylonian Talmud (500 C. E.)



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## **HISTORY OF THE JEWS.**

### **CHAPTER I. JOHN HYRCANUS.**

The Crowning Point of the Period — War with Antiochus Sidetes — Siege of Jerusalem — Treaty of Peace — The Parthian War — Hyrcanus joins Antiochus — Successful campaigns of Hyrcanus against the Samaritans and Idumæans — The Idumæans forced to embrace Judaism — Destruction of the Samaritan Temple at Gerizim and of the Capital, Samaria — Internal Affairs — The Parties: Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes, their Rise and Constitution — Their Doctrines and their Relations to one another — The Synhedrion — Strained Relations between Hyrcanus and the Pharisees — Death of Hyrcanus.

135–106 B. C. E.

The reign of Hyrcanus is at once the pinnacle and the turning-point of this period. He not only carried on his father's work, but completed it. Under his predecessors Judæa was confined to a narrow space, and even within these bounds there were territories in the possession of foreign foes. Hyrcanus enlarged the boundaries to the north and to the south, and thus released the State from the external pressure that had been restricting its growth. His genius for war was aided by fortunate circumstances in bringing about these happy results.

If the reign of Hyrcanus corresponds in brilliancy to that of Solomon, it resembles it also in another respect: both reigns commenced and ended amid disturbance, sadness and gloom, while the middle of each reign was happy and prosperous.

When Solomon first came to the throne he was opposed by

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Adonijah, the pretender to the crown, whom he had to subdue; and upon Hyrcanus a similar but more difficult task devolved—that of carrying on a struggle with several opponents. One of these opponents was his brother-in-law, Ptolemy ben Habub, the murderer of his father, who had also sought after Hyrcanus's own life. It was only the support of the Syrian army, however, which could make Ptolemy dangerous, the inhabitants of Jerusalem having instantly declared themselves in favor of Hyrcanus as the successor of the murdered Simon. Still, both his safety and his duty called upon him to punish this unscrupulous enemy, and to avenge his father's death. Hyrcanus hastened, therefore, to attack him in his fortress before Antiochus could bring his troops to his relief. There is some uncertainty as to the progress of this siege and its result; according to one account, evidently somewhat embellished, Hyrcanus could not put his whole strength against the fortress, because his mother (by some it is said, together with his brothers) had been placed on the walls by Ptolemy, and was there horribly tortured. Like a true Hasmonæan, the heroic woman is said to have encouraged her son to continue the siege, without heeding her sufferings, and to persevere in his efforts until the murderer of her family

should receive the chastisement due to his crimes. Hyrcanus's heart was torn by conflicting feelings; revenge towards his reckless foe urged him on, whilst tender pity for his mother held him back. The fact is, however, that Hyrcanus withdrew without accomplishing his purpose. It may have been the Sabbatical year which prevented him from proceeding with the siege, or, as is much more likely, his operations may have been interrupted by the approach of the Syrian king, who was advancing with his army to glean some advantage for himself from the troubles and the confusion in Judæa. After the withdrawal of Hyrcanus's troops, it is said that his mother and brothers

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were put to death by Ptolemy, who fled to Philadelphia, the former Ammonite capital (Rabbath Ammon), where he was favorably received by the governor, Zeno Cotylas. The name of Ptolemy is no more mentioned, and he disappears altogether from the page of history.

A far greater danger now threatened Hyrcanus from Antiochus Sidetes, who was eager to avenge the recent defeat sustained by the Syrians (autumn 135). He marched forth with a large army, devastated the country round about, and approached the capital. Hyrcanus, doubtless feeling himself unable to cope with his enemy in the open field, shut himself up behind the strong walls of Jerusalem. Antiochus laid regular siege to the city and encircled it with elaborate preparations for its conquest. Seven camps were stationed around the city; on the north side, where the country is flat, a hundred three-storied towers were erected from which the walls could be stormed. A broad double trench was likewise made to prevent the sallies of the Judæans, who contrived nevertheless to come forth, thus bravely impeding the work of the enemy, and obstructing the progress of the siege. The Syrian army suffered much from the want of water and from sickness, the natural consequence of that deficiency. The besieged were well supplied with water, but food became scarce, and Hyrcanus found himself compelled to commit an act of cruelty. In order to husband the failing provisions, the inhabitants who could not bear arms were sent out of the city. Perhaps the hope was entertained that the enemy would take pity on them. But to the defenseless, foes are seldom generous. They were not allowed to pass the lines of the besieging army, and were thus exposed to death from both sides. In the meantime the summer passed, and still no prospect of storming the walls offered itself to the Syrians, whilst the Judæans, on account of the scarcity

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of provisions and the approaching holidays, were anxious for a truce. Hyrcanus made the first overtures, and asked for a cessation of arms during the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles. Antiochus not only granted that request, but sent him presents of animals with gilded horns for sacrificial purposes, and golden vessels filled with incense. Negotiations for peace followed upon this truce. Antiochus was urged by his advisers to show the greatest severity in his demands upon the Judæans. They reminded him of the policy of Antiochus Epiphanes, who knew no other way of crushing out the hatred of mankind felt by the Judæans than that of obliging them to renounce their peculiar laws. If Antiochus Sidetes had listened to these prejudiced counselors, who saw, according to the biased views of that time,

nothing but cynical exclusiveness in the singular customs of the Judæans, the cruel wars in which the people had fought for their faith would have been repeated. Happily for them, Antiochus had neither the harshness nor the strength to venture upon so dangerous a game. Antiochus contented himself with destroying the battlements of Jerusalem (autumn 134). With that act the dark cloud which had menaced the independence of Judæa passed away.

No great injury had been inflicted upon the State, and even the traces of disaster that had been left were soon obliterated. For Hyrcanus now sent an embassy to Rome consisting of three delegates: Simon, the son of Dositheus, Apollonius, the son of Alexander, and Diodorus, the son of Jason, to entreat the Senate to renew, with the Jewish commonwealth, the friendly treaties, which Rome lavishly accorded to the smallest nations. At the same time they were to complain that Antiochus Sidetes had taken possession of several places in Judæa, and among them the important fortresses of Joppa and Gazara. Rome always sided with the weak against the

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strong, not from a sense of justice but from self-interested calculation. She desired especially to humble the royal house of the Seleucidæ, which had occasionally shown her a defiant, or at least a haughty mien. The Judæan ambassadors were consequently most favorably received, their requests listened to with attention, and a decree issued by which Antiochus was called upon to restore the fortresses he had taken, and to forbid his troops to march through Judæa; nor was he to treat its inhabitants as his subjects (about 133). Antiochus appears to have acquiesced in this decision.

He was, moreover, obliged to assume a friendly demeanor towards Hyrcanus; for at that moment he was meditating an attack against Parthia, which had formerly belonged to, but had since separated itself from the kingdom of his ancestors. His brother, Demetrius Nicator, had likewise undertaken an expedition against the Parthians, but had sustained a defeat, and was kept in imprisonment for nearly ten years. Antiochus believed that he would be more fortunate than his brother. In addition to the army of 80,000 which he had assembled, he requested the aid of Judæan troops and of the forces of other surrounding nations, and Hyrcanus consented to join with his army in the expedition. The Syrian king treated his Judæan allies with the greatest regard. After a victory gained on the banks of the river Zab (Lycus), he ordered, according to the desire of Hyrcanus, that a two days' respite should take place, so that the Judæans might celebrate their Sabbath and the festival of the Feast of Weeks which followed it (129).

Fortune, however, had changed sides since the time of Antiochus the Great, and no longer favored the Seleucidæan dynasty. Antiochus lost his life in this campaign, and his brother Demetrius, who had been set at liberty by the king of Parthia at the time of the invasion of Antiochus, to be opposed to him

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as a rival monarch, now reigned in his brother's stead (from 128–125). Hated by the Syrians on account of his long imprisonment in Parthia, Demetrius was opposed by a rival, Alexander Zabina, whom Ptolemy Physcon had set up against him. Demetrius was obliged to flee before Zabina, and could not even find a refuge in Accho, where his wife Cleopatra resided. Syria fell into a state of still greater confusion under his

successors, when Zabina disputed the throne with the legitimate heir, Antiochus VIII, the latter finding likewise a competitor in his brother on the mother's side, Antiochus IX. The last pages of the history of Syria are stained with crimes caused by the deadly hatred of the various members of the Seleucidæan house against each other, and with the murders they committed. Soon after the death of her husband Demetrius, Cleopatra had one of her sons, Seleucus, killed, and mixed the poisoned cup for the other one, Antiochus Grypus, who forced her to drink it herself. Hyrcanus took advantage of this state of anarchy and weakness in Syria, which lasted several years, to enlarge the boundaries of Judæa, until his country attained its former limits. Soon after the death of Antiochus Sidetes, the last traces of vassalage to which the siege of Jerusalem had reduced Judæa were completely wiped out, and even the bonds of alliance were canceled, whilst Alexander Zabina was grateful to be acknowledged by Hyrcanus as king of Syria. It was at this period (124) that the inhabitants of Jerusalem, particularly those included in the great council, made an appeal to the Egyptian community and to the priest, Judas Aristobulus, teacher to the king, and of priestly lineage, to allow the anniversaries of the consecration of the Temple and of the victory over the sinners to be numbered among the memorial holidays of the nation. To strengthen their request they referred to the unexpected help which God had given His

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people in the evil days of Antiochus, enabling them to restore the sanctuary to its former purity. This appeal from Judæa was at the same time a hint to the Alexandrian community to acknowledge the new conditions that had arisen. John Hyrcanus, who until then had acted only in self-defense, was now, after the fall of Alexander Zabina (123), ready to strike energetically at Syria. Judæa at that time was encompassed on three sides by foreign tribes: on the south by the Idumæans, on the north by the hated Samaritans, and beyond the Jordan by the Greeks, who had never been friendly to the Judæans. Hyrcanus therefore considered it his mission to reconquer all those lands, and either to expel their inhabitants or to incorporate them with the Judæans; for so long as foreign and hostile tribes existed in the very heart of the country, its political independence and religious stability would be in constant danger. Not only were these hostile peoples ever ready to join surrounding nations, and assist them in their greed for conquest, but they also often interfered with the religious worship of the Judæans, thus frequently giving rise to acts of violence and bloodshed. Hyrcanus was consequently impelled by religious as well as by political motives to tear up these hotbeds of constant disturbance and hostility.

To accomplish so great a task Hyrcanus required all the strength he could muster, and, in order not to tax too heavily the military resources of the nation, he employed mercenaries, whom, it is said, he paid out of the treasures he had found in David's sepulcher. The first place he attacked was Medaba, in the Jordan district. That city was taken after a six months' siege. Then the army moved on towards Samega, which, situated on the southern end of the Sea of Tiberias, must have been a place of great importance to the Judæans. Next in turn came the towns of Samaria; its capital, Shechem, as

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well as the temple erected on Mount Gerizim, which had always been a thorn in the side of the Judæans, were destroyed (21 Kislev, about 120). The anniversary of the destruction of this temple (Yom har Gerizim) was to be kept with great rejoicing, as the commemoration of a peculiarly happy event, and no fasting or mourning was ever to mar the brightness of the festival. From this time forth the glory of the Samaritans waned; for, although centuries to come still found them a peculiar people, and, at the present day even, they continue to exist and to offer sacrifice on Mount Gerizim, still, from the want of a central rallying point, they gradually decreased in numbers and prosperity.

After his victory over the Samaritans, Hyrcanus marched against the Idumæans.

This people, although fallen very low during the many vicissitudes of fortune attending the constant changes of the Macedonian and Asiatic dynasties, and forced by the Nabathæans to leave their dwellings, had alone, among all the tribes related by blood to the Judæans, been able to maintain themselves, and had preserved their ancient bitter animosity against them undiminished. Hyrcanus laid siege to their two fortresses, Adora and Marissa, and after having demolished them, gave the Idumæans the choice between acceptance of Judaism and exile. They chose the former alternative, and became, outwardly, followers of that faith. The temples of the Idumæan idols were, of course, destroyed, but the priests secretly adhered to their worship. Thus, after more than a thousand years of enmity, Jacob and Esau were again united—the elder serving the younger brother. For the first time Judaism, in the person of its head, John Hyrcanus, practised intolerance against other faiths, but it soon found out with deep pain how highly injurious it is to allow religious zeal for the preservation of the faith to degenerate into the desire to effect violent conversion of others.

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The enforced union of the sons of Edom with the sons of Jacob was fraught only with disaster to the latter. It was through the Idumæans and the Romans that the Hasmonæan dynasty was overthrown and the Judæan state destroyed.

The first result of the conquest of the Idumæans and of their adoption of Judaism was a new contest with the city of Samaria, now chiefly inhabited by Macedonians and Syrians. A colony of Idumæans had been transplanted from Marissa to the vicinity of Samaria. They were attacked and ill-treated by their neighbors, who were urged on to their acts of aggression by the Syrian kings, Grypus and Cyzicenus. The latter, who resembled Antiochus Epiphanes in his folly and extravagance, manifested in particular a fierce hatred against Hyrcanus. His generals invaded Judæa, took several fortresses near the sea-coast, and placed a garrison in Joppa. Hyrcanus thereupon complained to the Roman Senate, which had guaranteed to Judæa the possession of this seaport, and sent five ambassadors to plead the justice of his cause at Rome. Among these was Apollonius, the son of Alexander, who had appeared before the Senate in a former embassy. Rome replied in fair words to the petition of Hyrcanus, and promulgated a decree forbidding Antiochus Cyzicenus to molest the Judæans, who were the allies of Rome, and commanding him to restore all the fortresses, seaports and territories which he had seized. It was further ordered that the Judæans should be allowed to ship their goods duty free from their ports, a favor not granted to any other allied nation or king, excepting the king of

Egypt, who was regarded as the peculiar friend of Rome, and finally that the Syrian garrison should evacuate Joppa. Whether the sentence pronounced by Rome had any great effect upon Antiochus Cyzicenus or not, the fact that it was not adverse to Hyrcanus was so far a boon that it strengthened his cause. It

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appears to have restrained Cyzicenus within certain bounds.

When, however, Hyrcanus, bent upon punishing Samaria for its enmity to the people of Marissa, besieged that city, causing famine within its walls by closely surrounding it with trenches and ramparts, and thus cutting off every possibility of exit, Cyzicenus came to its assistance. In an engagement with Aristobulus, the eldest son of Hyrcanus, who was conducting the siege conjointly with his younger brother Antigonus, Cyzicenus was defeated and forced to flee to Bethshean (Scythopolis). Too weak to confront the Judæans alone, he called to his help the co-regent of Egypt, Ptolemy VIII (Lathurus), who, inspired by the hatred entertained by the Egyptians against the Judæans, readily complied with that request. His mother Cleopatra, with whom the people had obliged him to share the government, was secretly in league against him, befriending, like her parents, the cause of Judæa. Two sons of Onias IV, Helkias and Ananias, sided with her. It was doubtless on that account that her son took an aversion to the Judæans, and gladly came forth at the call of Cyzicenus to compel Hyrcanus to withdraw from the siege of Samaria. Despite the wishes of his mother, Lathurus sent an army of six thousand men to support Cyzicenus against Judæa. Too weak to venture on meeting the Judæan troops in the open field, the operations were confined to laying waste the country around, in the hope of thus impeding the work of the besiegers. The Judæan princes, however, instead of being forced to abandon the siege, contrived by various manœuvres to compel the king of Syria to leave the scene of action and to withdraw to Tripolis. During one of the battles in which Cyzicenus was beaten, it is said that a voice from the Holy of Holies was heard announcing to Hyrcanus, at the very moment in which it took place, the victory achieved by his sons. He is said to have

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heard the following words pronounced in Aramaic: "The young princes have defeated Antiochus." The two generals, Callimandrus and Epicrates, whom Lathurus had left behind to continue the hostilities, were not more fortunate than himself, for the first lost his life in some engagement, the second succumbed to bribery, and delivered into the hands of the Judæan princes the town of Bethshean, as well as other places in the plain of Jezreel, as far as Mount Carmel, which had been held by the Greeks or the Syrians. The heathen inhabitants were instantly expelled from the newly conquered cities, and the anniversaries of the recovery of Bethshean and of the Plain (Bekaata), 15–16 Sivan (June, 109), were added henceforth to the days of victory. Samaria, no longer able to rely upon foreign help, was obliged to capitulate, and after a year's siege was given up to the conqueror. Actuated either by revenge or prudence, Hyrcanus caused Samaria to be utterly destroyed, and ditches and canals to be dug through the place, so that not a trace should remain of the once flourishing city. The day of its surrender was added to the number of days of thanksgiving (25th Marcheshvan, November, 109).

Thus Hyrcanus had carried out the comprehensive plans of the Hasmonæans and crowned them with success. The independence of Judæa was assured, and the country raised to the level of the neighboring states. The enemies who had menaced it from every side, Syrians, Idumæans, Samaritans, were nearly all conquered, and the land was delivered from the bonds which had hitherto prevented its development. The glorious era of David and Solomon seemed to have returned, foreign tribes were obliged to do homage to the ruler of Judæa, the old hatred between the latter and Idumæa was blotted out, and Jacob and Esau again became twin brothers. Moabitis, the daughter of Arnon, again sent presents to the mountain of the daughter of Zion.

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The banks of the Jordan, the sea-coast, the caravan tracks that passed from Egypt through Syria, were all under the dominion of Judæa. She saw also the humiliation of her enemy, Ptolemy Lathurus. The latter was living in constant discord with his mother, the co-regent, who at last aroused the anger of the people against him to such a degree that he was obliged to flee from Alexandria (108). He took refuge in the island of Cyprus, whither Cleopatra despatched an army in pursuit of him. But the troops sent to destroy him went over to his side. The Judæan soldiers who came from the province of Onion, commanded by the generals Helkias and Ananias, the sons of Onias, alone remained faithful to the Queen, and vigorously attacked Ptolemy to force him to leave the island. In Alexandria as in Judæa, at that time, the Judæans played a leading role, and worked together in a common cause for mutual advantage. They fought against common foes, against Lathurus and his ally, Antiochus Cyzicenus.

After all he had achieved for his country, it was only natural that Hyrcanus should cause Judæan coins to be struck, and should inscribe them in old Hebrew characters, but he abandoned the modest example of his father and allowed his own name to appear on them, "Jochanan, High Priest." Upon some of the coins we find, next his name, the inscription "and the Commonwealth of the Judæans" (Cheber ha-Jehudim), as though he felt it necessary to indicate that it was in the name of the people that he had exercised the right of coinage. Upon other coins, however, we find the following words inscribed: "Jochanan, High Priest, and head of the Commonwealth of the Judæans" (Rosch Cheber ha-Jehudim). Instead of the lily which was graven on his father's coins, he chose an emblem similar to that of the Macedonian conquerors—the horn of plenty. Towards the end of his reign Hyrcanus assumed more

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the character of a worldly potentate, and became more and more ambitious. His constant aim was to enlarge his country and to increase his own power. Hyrcanus appears to have cast a wistful eye upon the widely-extended territory which commanded the route to Damascus. The conquest of Ituræa, a tract of country lying to the east of Mount Hermon, which his successors completed, appears to have been planned by him. But a formidable disturbance in the land, which he was unable to suppress, speedily followed by his own death, prevented him from carrying out this undertaking. And this disturbance, apparently insignificant in its beginning, took so unfortunate a turn that the great Hasmonæan edifice, built up with so much labor

and care, was completely destroyed. For the second time the Judæan State, having reached its highest pinnacle of prosperity, ascertained that it was not to maintain itself in external greatness.

The high tide of political development, which swept over Judæa whilst that country was under the dominion of John Hyrcanus and his predecessors, could not fail to permeate the life of the people, and in particular to stimulate all their spiritual powers. With only short interruptions they had, during half a century, been continually engaged in a warfare in which they were alternately victorious and defeated, and in which, being brought into contact with various nations, now as friends, now as foes, they attained a greater maturity, and their former simple existence rose to a more complex and a higher life. The hard struggles by which they had achieved independence caused them to examine more curiously into their own condition, and to hold fast to their national traits; but it led them also to adopt those foreign views and practices which appeared to blend harmoniously with their own. If the pious Judæans had formerly opposed with all their might everything that bore the Hellenic impress, many of them

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were now convinced that among the customs of Greece there might occasionally be something which they could adopt without prejudice or injury to their own faith. The Hasmonæans had not only learnt from their neighbors the arts of war, how to fashion arms and construct fortresses, but also the peaceful arts of coining money with artistic ornamentation, and the rules of Greek architecture. A magnificent palace, evidently built in the Grecian style, arose in Jerusalem. In front of the Hasmonæan Palace, near the valley-like hollow which divided the higher town from the Temple, there was a wide covered colonnade, called the "Xystum," where the people assembled. A bridge led across from the Xystum to the west gate of the furthest court of the Temple. There was likewise a building erected in the higher town, devoted to judicial meetings, constructed according to Grecian art; with it was combined a Record Office, where important archives were kept. John Hyrcanus also erected, in the Grecian style, a family mausoleum in Modin, the birthplace of the Hasmonæans. It consisted of a lofty building of white polished marble. Around it was a colonnade, and on the columns were beautiful carvings of various weapons and figureheads of ships. Seven pyramids crowned the edifice, in memory of the progenitors of the Hasmonæans and their five heroic sons. The Hasmonæan mausoleum was of so great a height that it was visible from the sea.

The tendency of the Judæans of that period, however, was more especially directed to the maintenance and development of all that belonged peculiarly to themselves than to the acquiring of the arts of foreign civilization. The Hebrew language, which, since the close contact of the people with Asiatic nations, had been almost superseded by the Aramaic, appeared now to be celebrating to a certain extent its renaissance; it was rejuvenated and became, for the second time, though in an altered form,

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the language of the people. It was rendered precious to them through the Holy Scriptural records which they had preserved from destruction, and which had ever been the source of their zeal and enthusiasm. Their coins were, as mentioned before,

stamped in Hebrew, public records were written in Hebrew, and the songs of the people were sung in the same language. Though some prevalent Aramaic names were still retained, and Grecian numbers were adopted, the Hebrew language showed its strong vitality by enriching its vocabulary with new forms of words, and stamping the foreign elements it admitted with its own mark. The form that Hebrew assumed from this time forth is called the "New Hebrew." It was distinguished from the old Hebrew by greater clearness and facility, even though it lacked the depth and poetical fervor of the latter. At the same time Greek was understood by all the leaders and statesmen of the community. It was the language made use of in their intercourse with the Syrian kings, and was likewise spoken by their ambassadors to the Roman Senate. Along with Jewish names, Greek names appeared now more frequently than before. The character of the literature was also marked by the change which took place in the spirit of the people at this period of its revival. The sweet note of song was mute; not a trace of poetical creation has come down to us from this and the next epoch. The nation called no longer for the fiery inspiration which flows through the lyric songs of the Psalms, and it could not furnish matter for mournful elegies. What it required to promote religious sentiment and fervor was already provided by the poetry of the Temple, and in the rich stores of the Scriptures the people found knowledge and instruction. Sober history now took the place of triumphant hymns, and related facts and deeds for the use of posterity. History was the only branch of literature which was cultivated, and the recent past

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and the immediate present furnished the historian's pen with ample subjects. That Hebrew was used in historical writings is shown by the fragments which have come down to us. The so-called first book of the Maccabees, which was written in Hebrew, (but is now extant only in a Greek translation) is a proof of the inherent power of rejuvenescence belonging to the language.

The change in the current of life, caused by political events, showed itself even more in the sphere of religion than in the literature and habits of the people in general. The victory over the Syrians, the expulsion of the Hellenists, the subjection of the Idumæans, the humiliation of the Samaritans, culminating in the destruction of the Temple of Gerizim, were so many triumphs of Judaism over its enemies, and were sanctioned as such by the champions of the religious party. In order to stamp them indelibly on the memory of future generations, their anniversaries were to be kept like the days of the consecration of the Temple. Religion was still the great underlying impulse in all movements, and showed its strength even in the abuse to which it gave rise when it forced Judaism upon the heathens. In the meantime the religious consciousness of the people shone with a clearer light in consequence of the wider field upon which it had entered; the wider view which had been gained into the various relations of life, the advance out of the narrow circle of tradition and inherited customs, produced schism and separation amongst the Judæans themselves. The strict religious party of Assidæans withdrew from the scene of passing events, and, in order to avoid mixing in public life, they sought a secluded retreat where they could give themselves up to undisturbed meditation. In this solitude they formed themselves into a distinct order, with strange customs and

new views, and received the name of Essenes. Their example, however, of giving up all active share in

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the public weal was not followed by all the strictly devout Judæans, the majority of whom, on the contrary, whilst firmly adhering to the precepts of their faith, considered it a religious duty to further the independence of their country. Thus there arose a division among the pious, and a national party separated itself from the Assidæans or Essenes, which did not avoid public life, but, according to its strength and ability, took an active part in public affairs. The members of this numerous sect began at this time to bear the name of Pharisees (Perushim). But this sect, the very center, as it were, of the nation, having above all things at heart the preservation of Judaism in the exact form in which it had been handed down, insisted upon all political undertakings, all public transactions, every national act being tried by the standard of religion. To these demands, however, those who stood at the head of military or diplomatic affairs, and who saw how difficult it was always to deal with political matters according to the strict claims of their faith, would not or could not reconcile themselves. Thus a third party was formed—that of the Sadducees (Zadukim)—the members of which, without forsaking the religion, yet made the interests of the nation their chief care and object. Of these sects—the Assidæan-Essenes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees—only the last two exerted a powerful influence upon the course of events. At what precise period opposition began to show itself among these several parties cannot be determined, as indeed the birth of new spiritual tendencies must ever remain shrouded from view. According to one account, the adverse parties first appeared at the time of Jonathan. The Pharisees (Perushim) can only be called a party figuratively and by way of distinction from the other two, for the mass of the nation was inclined to Phariseeism, and it was only in the national leaders that its peculiarities became marked. The Pharisees

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received their name from the fact of their *explaining* the Scriptures in a peculiar manner, and of deriving new laws from this new interpretation. As expounders of the law the Pharisees formed the learned body of the nation. Their opinions were framed, their actions governed by one cardinal principle—the necessity of preserving Judaism. The individual and the State were to be ruled alike by the laws and customs of their fathers. Every deviation from this principle appeared to the Pharisees as treason to all that was most precious and holy. To their opponents, the Sadducees, who argued that, unless other measures were used for political purposes, weighty national interests would be often wrecked by religious scruples, the Pharisees replied that the fate of the State, like that of the individual, depended not upon man but upon God. It was not human strength, nor human wisdom, nor the warrior's prowess that could determine the weal or the woe of the Judæan people, but Divine Providence alone. Everything happened according to the eternal decrees of the Divine will. Man was responsible only for his moral conduct and the individual path he trod. The results of all human endeavors lay outside the range of human calculation. From this, the Pharisees' view of life, the rival opinion of the Sadducees diverged; whilst the Essenes, on the contrary, exaggerated it. Another

view of the Pharisees was probably directed against the following objection urged by the Sadducees: If the fate of the individual or of the State did not depend upon the actions of the one or the policy of the other, there would be an end to Divine justice; misfortune might then assail the righteous man, whilst the sun of happiness smiled upon the sinner. This reproach the Pharisees set aside by the doctrine, borrowed from another source, which taught that Divine justice would manifest itself not during life but after death. God will rouse the

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dead out of the sleep of the grave; He will reward the righteous according to their works, and punish the wicked for their evil deeds. "Those will rise up to everlasting life, and these to everlasting shame."

These views, however, precisely because they concerned only the inner convictions of men, did not mark the opposition between the parties so clearly as did the third dogma of the Pharisees, establishing the importance and all-embracing influence of religious injunctions. In a nation whose breath of life was religion, many customs whose origin was lost in the dim twilight of the past had taken their place by the side of the written Law. If these customs were not found in the books of the Law they were ascribed to the great teachers (the Sopherim and the great assembly—Keneseth hagedolah), which, at the time of the return of the Captivity, had given form and new vigor to the religious sentiment, and at the head of which stands the illustrious expounder of Scripture, Ezra. Such religious customs were called the legacies of the teachers of the Law (Dibre Sopherim). All these unwritten customs, which lived in the heart of the nation and, as it were, grew with its growth, gained an extraordinary degree of importance from the dangers that Judaism had encountered and the victories that it had achieved. The people had risked, in behalf of these very customs, their property and their life; and the martyrdom that many of the faithful had undergone, and the antagonism they felt towards the renegade and frivolous Hellenists, had much increased the reverence and attachment with which these customs were regarded. The Temple, especially, which had been so ruthlessly defiled and afterwards been reconsecrated in so marvelous a manner, had become doubly precious to the whole people, who were determined to keep it free from the faintest breath of desecration. The Levitical

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rules of purity, so far as they related to the Temple, were therefore observed with peculiar care and rigorous strictness.

But this devotion to outward forms and ceremonies by no means excluded the religion of the heart. The Pharisees were acknowledged to be moral, chaste, temperate and benevolent. In their administration of justice they allowed mercy to prevail, and judged the accused not from the point of view of moral depravity but from that of human weakness. The following maxim was given by Joshua, the son of Perachia, one of the leaders of the sect, who, with his companion, Matthai of Arbela, lived in the time of Hyrcanus: "Take a teacher, win a friend, and judge every man from the presumption of innocence." His high moral temperament is indicated by this maxim. Their rigid adherence to the Law, and their lenient mildness and indulgence in other matters, gained for the Pharisees the deep veneration of the whole people. Of this sect were the pious priests, the teachers of the Law, and, above

all, the magistrates, civil and religious, who at that time often combined both offices in one. The whole inner direction of the State and the Temple was in their hands. But the Pharisees owed their influence chiefly to their knowledge of the Law and to the application they made of it to the affairs of daily life, and they alone were called the interpreters and teachers of the Law. The degrading charge of hypocrisy, which was applied to them by their enemies in later times, they by no means merited, and, indeed, it is altogether preposterous to stigmatize a whole class of men as dissemblers. They were rather, in their origin, the noblest guardians and representatives of Judaism and strict morality. Even their rivals, the Sadducees, could not but bear witness to the fact that "they denied themselves in this world, but would hardly receive a reward in a future world."

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This party of the Sadducees, so sharply opposed to the Pharisees, pursued a national-political policy. It was composed of the Judæan aristocracy, the brave soldiers, the generals and the statesmen who had acquired wealth and authority at home, or who had returned from foreign embassies, all having gained, from closer intercourse with the outer world and other lands, freer thought and more worldly views. They formed the kernel of the Hasmonæan following, which in peace or war faithfully served their leaders. This sect doubtless included also some Hellenists, who, shrinking from the desertion of their faith, had returned to Judaism. The Sadducees probably derived their name from one of their leaders, Zadok. The national interests of the Judæan community were placed by the Sadducees above the Law. Burning patriotism was their ruling sentiment, and piety occupied but the second place in their hearts. As experienced men of the world, they felt that the independence of the State could not be upheld by the strictest observance of the laws of religion alone, nor by mere reliance upon Divine protection. They proceeded from this fundamental principle: man must exert his bodily strength and his spiritual powers; he must not allow himself to be kept back by religious scruples from forming political alliances, or from taking part in wars, although by so doing he must inevitably infringe some of the injunctions of religion. According to the Sadducæan views, it was for that purpose that God bestowed free will upon man so that he himself should work out his own well-being; he is master of his fate, and human concerns are not at all swayed by Divine interposition. Reward and punishment are the natural consequences of our actions, and are therefore quite independent of resurrection. Without exactly denying the immortality of the soul, the Sadducees completely repudiated the idea of judgment *after* death. Oppressed

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by the abundance of religious ordinances, they would not admit their general applicability nor the obligation of keeping them. Pressed to give some standard by which the really important decrees might be recognized, they laid down the following rule: that only the ordinances which appeared clearly expressed in the Pentateuch were binding. Those which rested upon oral tradition, or had sprung up at various times, had a subordinate value and could not claim to be inviolable. Still they could not help occasionally recognizing the value of traditional interpretations. From a number of individual instances in which the Sadducees separated themselves from their rivals, one can mark the extent of their opposition to the



latter. This appeared in their judiciary and penal laws and in the ritual they adopted, their worship in the Temple being in particular a subject of angry controversy. The Sadducees thought that the punishment ordered by the Pentateuch for the infliction of any bodily injury—"an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"—should be literally interpreted and followed out, and obtained in consequence the reputation of being cruel administrators of justice; whilst the Pharisees, appealing to traditional interpretations of the Scriptures, allowed mercy to preponderate, and only required a pecuniary compensation from the offender. The Sadducees, on the other hand, were more lenient in their judgment of those false witnesses whose evidence might have occasioned a judicial murder, as they only inflicted punishment if the execution of the defendant had actually taken place. There were many points relating to the ritual which were warmly disputed by the two parties; for instance, the date of the Feast of Weeks, which, according to the Sadducees, should always fall upon a Sunday, fifty days from the Sabbath after the Passover; so also the pouring of water on the altar and the processions round it

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with willow branches during the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, which the Pharisees advocated and the Sadducees rejected. The latter objected to the providing of the national offerings out of the treasury of the Temple, and insisted that the required sacrifices should be left to the care and zeal of individuals. The manner in which the frankincense should be kindled on the Day of Atonement, whether before or after the entrance of the high priest into the Holy of Holies, was also the cause of bitter strife. On these and other points of dispute the Sadducees invariably followed the exact letter of the Law, which resulted in their occasionally enforcing stricter rules than the Pharisees, who have been so much abused for their rigid austerity. To one Levitical injunction, however, they paid but little attention—that of carefully avoiding the touch of any person or thing considered unclean—and when their rivals purified the vessels of the Temple after they had been subject to any contact of the sort, they ridiculed them, saying, "It wants but little, and the Pharisees will try and cleanse the sun."

In spite of the relief which these less stringent views gave the people, the Sadducees were not popular; the feeling of the time was against laxity and in favor of strict religious observance. Besides, the Sadducees repelled their countrymen by their proud, haughty demeanor and their severe judicial sentences. They never gained the heart of the public, and it was only by force and authority that they were able to make their principles prevail. At that period the religious sentiment was so active that it gave birth to a religious order which far surpassed even the Pharisees in strictness and painful scrupulousness, and which became the basis of a movement that, mixing with new elements, produced a revolution in the history of the world. This order, which, from a small and apparently

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insignificant origin, grew into a mighty power, destined to exert an irresistible influence, was that of the Essenes.

The origin of this remarkable Essene order, which called forth the admiration even of the Greeks and the Romans, can be dated from the period of great religious enthusiasm excited by the tyranny and persecutions of the Syrians. The Essenes had

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