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Clubs Prepare For Annual One-Act Play Contest

Thespians Occupied With Choice of Appropriate Dramatic Vehicles

Club members with dramatic tendencies are now in the spotlight as the various groups are preparing for the Annual One-Act Play Contest, which will be held in the very near future. At the present time, the problem facing the clubs is the choice of the vehicle that will best show their dramatic abilities. Comedy, tragedy, melodrama—each will find its adherents as rehearsals get under way.

The rules under which the contest will be held follow:

1. Each play must be approved by the Department of Center Activities prior to its acceptance for the contest.
2. Every member of a club is eligible to participate.
3. Entry blanks must be received not later than January 1st, 1938.
4. Reservations for the use of the auditorium for rehearsals must be made at least one week in advance.
5. The winning club will be awarded the dramatic plaque, while the two outstanding performers will receive medals.

Arrangements may also be made for the services of a dramatic coach. Further information concerning the use of the auditorium, the services of a coach, and additional details about the tournament may be secured from the Director of Club Activities in the office.

Library Projects

Jewish Literature and Drama Groups Formed

Under the guidance of Mrs. Anna Gropper, Librarian, a series of new projects have been inaugurated by the Library Staff. Under expert leadership, small groups of boys and girls are studying the various types of literature, Bible stories, current events, and novels from the seventeenth century to the present day. After reading the books, they are discussed and essays are written by the children.

For the older boys and girls a course in plays, playwriting and scenery will be begun shortly. The very young children enjoy working on scrap books, especially those containing historic pictures.

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If you desire that the merchandise be called for, write or phone the Institutional Synagogue, 37-43 West 116th Street, UNiversity 4-6729.

The store is open weekdays from 10 A.M. to 8 P.M., and on Saturday evenings, from 7 P.M. to 10 P.M. Members are urged to be salesladies.

'Palestine'--Subject Of Club Debate

Spades Face Co-ops This Sunday Afternoon

The Inter-Club Debating Tournament is now in its final stages, with but four clubs remaining to complete their schedule of debates. The first of these final contests will be held this Sunday afternoon, December 19th, between the Spades and the Co-ops.

A particularly interesting topic of current importance has been selected for this debate. The subject of the discussion will be "Resolved that England has fulfilled the terms of its mandate over Palestine." The Spades will uphold the affirmative of the topic while the Co-ops will present the negative.

Since both of these clubs have excellent records thus far in the tournament, an interesting debate may be predicted for next Sunday afternoon.

Choice Plots Available

The Institutional Synagogue is in possession of choice plots at Mt. Zion Cemetery. Anyone interested in these plots is requested to get in touch with Rabbi Philip Goodman for full information regarding same.

Leaders Hold Dance For Home Camp

Function To Take Place On January 29th

"Swing" will be the motif of the Fifth Annual Dance of the Leaders' Council scheduled to take place at the West Side Institutional Synagogue, 120 West 76th Street, on Saturday evening, January 29th. The services of a popular orchestra have been secured to supply the necessary rhythm.

This function, according to Miss Mollie Gerstein, Chairman of the Dance Committee, will be one that will be long remembered in the annals of the Leaders' Council. Every member of the organization is exerting himself to the utmost to assure a splendid evening of fun and enjoyment.

Tickets for the affair are now available from any member of the Leaders' Council, or in the office, at the reasonable sum of fifty cents. As in the past, the proceeds of the Annual Dance will be turned over to the Home Camp Scholarship Fund.

The last meeting of the Council was held at the home of Rabbi and Mrs. Philip Goodman.

The gathering was preceded by a very short but fruitful meeting at which many important business matters were disposed of. Mr. Abe Roht was elected President of the organization.

Musical Comedy To Be Attraction Of Theatre Party

I.S. Parents' Association Sponsor Annual Event On December 21

The National Theatre, 117 East Houston Street, will be the scene of the Annual Yiddish Theatre Party of the Parents' Association of the Institutional Synagogue this Tuesday evening, December 21st.

The management of the theatre has promised to leave no stone unturned to assure the showing of a popular musical comedy on that evening.

Under the capable leadership of the Theatre Party Committee, consisting of Mrs. P. Vogel, ex-officio, Mrs. Aaron Wartels, Honorary Chairman, Mrs. Ida Bernstein, Chairman, Mrs. Ray Vosberg and Mrs. Rose Levit, the members of the Association have been working steadily to make this affair an outstanding one, from every viewpoint. Although it is the purpose of this function to raise funds for the support of the Talmud Torah, tickets are being sold at box office prices.

Accommodations are available for those who have not as yet made their reservations. A block of choice tickets is on hand at the office. A phone call to UNiversity 4-6729 is all that is necessary to complete plans for an enjoyable evening this Tuesday, December 21st.

On the following Tuesday evening, a special meeting of the Parents' Association will be held to which all members are urged to attend. A complete report of the Theatre Party and the Rummage Sale will then be rendered.

Basketball Tourney

Melrose Club Holds Lead In Heated Contest

The fourth series of a heated inter-club basketball tournament will be played this Sunday, December 19th.

The Melrose Club, with a record of three victories and no defeats, held the lead at the end of the third series last Sunday. Closely behind the leader, the Club Co-Op and the Spade Club were tied for second place with two victories and one defeat.

The tournament will continue during the months of January and February, in the form of a "double round robin."

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Calendar of Services

Friday Evening 4:15 P.M.
Saturday Morning 9 A.M.
Sedrah: Vayechi
Saturday Afternoon 4 P.M.
Weekday Mornings 7:15 A.M.

14 Beautiful Prizes To Be Awarded

Scholarship Standards Set Up For Contests

During the week of January 16th a series of contests will be conducted for each class of the Talmud Torah. The winners of these contests will receive beautiful prizes which have been made available by the receipt of a substantial sum from the prize fund of Rabbi David Miller, of Oakland, California.

The contests will be divided as follows: *Service to School*: To the pupil who has shown a sincere willingness to be of general service to the school. The winner will be decided by the teachers and other members of the staff. *For Class 1 A*: To the pupil with most fluent and complete knowledge of ten blessings, Shema, and Grace After Meals. *For Class 1 B*: To the pupil with the widest knowledge of biblical history. *For Classes 2 A & 2B*: To the pupil who writes the best Hebrew composition on "Talmud Torah." *For Classes 3 A & 3 B*: To the pupil who possesses the most thorough knowledge of Sedrah "Lech-I-cho." *For the Hebrew High School*: To the pupil who possesses the most thorough knowledge of the Five Books of Moses; and to the pupil who writes the best Hebrew composition on a topic of Jewish current interest.

The Splendor of Suffering

by Professor John L. Scammell

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(Continued from last week)

It is just like the sudden clearing up of some problem we have been unable to solve. We gaze at the past—I find I am thinking of algebra once more. And especially of a day when it seemed to me that the teacher, who had kept me after school was doing nothing and saying nothing that was of any use to me, and then, all of a sudden, the problem was clear, it was plain as could be, the solution stared me in the face. And from that time on, I worked with confidence. All the time when the teacher seemed to be saying things that didn't count, and giving me problems I couldn't solve; all that time he had been gradually leading my mind into control of the situation. And the light burst upon me, in the midst of my anxiety. Well, the rest was easy—hard work, of course, but easy, because I knew that my teacher was really helping, he was there, right on the job, and I—why I could do the stuff.

It is something like that experience, though in the far more terrible perplexity of the soul's misery, that the Psalmist describes in that verse which changes so suddenly from lamentation into joyous exultation. Here it is—"Save me from the lion's mouth: why—thou hast heard me from the horn of the unicorn!"

The unicorn was the rhinoceros, a far more dangerous animal than the lion. In many ways the most dangerous of the beasts that those poets knew. So the Psalmist drives home the nature of his deliverance, not from 'the lion's mouth,' a bad enough plight to be in, but from worse still, from a peril of the utmost horror.

Read what St. Augustine has to say of such deliverance, or John Bunyan, or Foxe, or the Wesleys—or, for that matter, turn to St. Paul—and see how vividly the peril and pain of the soul's guilt weighs down on them; and how suddenly the light breaks in upon them.

And—once the light has come, what then? What is to be done? Sit down and fold the hands, and say, "Ah, now I can rest?" Well, hardly! That wasn't the case with my algebra. When the doubt and fear has been taken away, how pleasant it was to see one's mistakes, and to admit them, and to work harder!

The same principle appears in this literature of suffering and deliverance. Turn to the Fifty-first Psalm—"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness:

According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgression: and my sin is ever before me . . . Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me . . . Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

You notice that to this poet, it is with the soul as with the mind, deliverance means ability to do the right thing, and to do it modestly, as a sacrifice, without arrogance, and gladly admitting his own weakness.

There is one other great Psalm dealing with this problem of error and worthlessness, that has come down through the ages as a sublime expression of confidence in the Eternal Wisdom and Mercy. The One Hundred and Thirtieth Psalm—and let us read it, in the translation of Coverdale, which more nearly reproduces the noble rhythms of the Hebrew—

"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.

O let thine ears consider well: the voice of my complaint.

If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme, to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who may abide it?

For there is mercy with thee: Therefore shalt thou be feared.

I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for him: in his word is my trust.

My soul fleeth unto the Lord: before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch.

O, Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy: and with him is plenteous redemption.

And he shall redeem Israel: from all his sins."

There is the statement of a man who has a profound conviction. To him the solution of the problem of evil is religion. He is convinced that there is a Power, unchanging, understanding, good, and therefore helpful, which can be relied on to lift the soul out of its despair.

We are apt to regard such writing as somehow set apart from literature. And yet it is the expression of a grandeur akin to those other forms of grandeur which the poets, especially, have revealed to us in their greatest works.

After all, Homer, to the Greeks, was valued much as the Bible has been valued in more recent times. They read between the lines of the "Iliad" and saw there not only standards of morality, but noble and inspiring visions of spiritual loftiness. To them poetry was an approach to the ultimate Truth of life and of living.

That poetry of theirs is still recognized as sublime. It is spiritual in the finest and deepest sense even when it appears, on the surface, to be dealing with purely human affairs.

But Biblical poetry is likewise sublime and spiritual. We must admit that. And it deals again and again with the actual experience of very human beings,

sinner as well as saints.

These Psalms, which we have been considering, portray beyond any question the genuine feelings of afflicted souls.

The Psalms are literature, in terms of human records and human needs, just as Homer or Shakespeare are. And yet people tend to place all Biblical poetry on a shelf, remote from all other poems. List the twenty-five poems that you regard as most worth preserving. Would you include the Twenty-third Psalm? I hope so. Yet many people would not.

Why? Because religion has slight value to them? Not at all; most likely they would be religious in omitting the Psalm. Would it be because they felt that in spite of the profound truth of the Psalm, it is not quite worthy of a place among the world's great poems? No. They are quite positive when the question is put to them, that the Twenty-third Psalm is great poetry.

In short, religious literature is far too often regarded as a kind of textbook, a treatise or handbook on behavior. Certainly it can serve that purpose, but it also serves a far higher and nobler purpose, that of guiding the soul of man to a more abundant life of Splendor, of noble and exalted ideals and vision.

And in that case the Bible must be ranked foremost among masterpieces of the world's literature. It deals with every aspect of the sufferings of humanity, and it brings understanding and sympathy and exaltation through the genius with which it elevates this suffering into heroic spirituality.

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