

Rabbi Nachum Asz z”l

“For Out of Zion Shall go Forth the Torah”* [Isaiah 2:3]

The heart rejoices, the Jewish heart.

The same heart that hurts and bleeds for Jewish suffering and rejoices for a Jewish happy occasion, that reveres [that which] it [holds] sacred and fills with pride with its history, which is rich in tearful experiences and wonderful miracles. The heart that feels that, besides that which we consider ourselves members of the general human family, we belong specifically to the Jewish tribe, that apart from taking part in all world-affairs in general, we are required to participate in all that concerns us as Jews in particular.

This same heart shall rejoice with the glorious phenomenon that, now, when over the Jewish horizon hover heavy clouds and in many exile-lands our situation becomes steadily worse, the western sun is for us going constantly lower down – in this same period, the rays of the sun that is shining in the east, in the land of our forefathers, are reaching us.

There, on the summit of Mount Scopus in our holy Jerusalem, comes forth today the festive opening of a magnificent building for the revival of our People, a university for higher Jewish learning and general education, whose doors will be open to all who thirst for Torah and wisdom.

There, a great work is being built, which shall bring benefit to the whole of humanity. There, the seed is being sown for the newly-revived ancient Jewish culture. There, the Jew will have an opportunity to create and develop the great spiritual values which, until now in the lands of exile, were not expressed, due to the stones that were laid in his path in order to suppress his skills and energy.

* As we already explained in the article “Częstochowa at the Time of the opening of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem”, the organising-committee for the ceremony issued a one-time publication, dedicated to this historic event.

In that publication, our rabbi, the prodigy Rabbi Nachum Asz z”l, published his article “For Out of Zion Shall go Forth the Torah”, in which he stresses the importance of the event itself, from a national and historical standpoint.

If the thoughts of our great spiritual leader, who served the Częstochowa Jewish community for almost a generation and brought honour to it in the entire Jewish world, must be immortalised in “Sefer Częstochowa”, that immortalises its life and its destruction, this article deserves special attention, due to the following lines:

This same heart shall rejoice with the glorious phenomenon, that now, when over the Jewish horizon hover heavy clouds and in many exile-lands our situation becomes steadily worse, the western sun is for us going constantly lower down – in this same period, the rays of the sun that is shining in the east, in the land of our forefathers, are reaching us.

These words, about *the western sun is for us going constantly lower down*, which our rabbi wrote eight years before the arrival of Hitler, may his name be obliterated, and his bands, seem truly to be a prophecy!

It may be that, had the world-leaders in general and our leaders in particular also seen at the time, that which Rabbi Asz predicted, the Jewish folk would have been saved from their great misfortune or, at least, it would not have reached the destruction of so many holy and pure [ones], including those of our Częstochowian community.

The Editors

But there, a great and wide horizon shall open before him, through his duly developing potential, so that the Jewish energy and enterprising spirit will stun the world.

Already, that, which has been created there, inspires great wonder.

The opening of a Hebrew language university will be an event of unheard-of importance, which will have the potential to return sons to their fathers – to turn children back to their parents, to bring near the brothers who are distanced from us and to strengthen the hearts of those who find themselves on a crossroads; to provide an ideal and a Jewish-worldly education for the youth, which strives and thirsts for it, but finds the doors of other universities locked before them, due to which many of them go on foreign paths.

For the first time in our long exile-history, Jewish youth will thus have the opportunity to find themselves in the bosom of our ancient home, to feel free and independent and not to hang upon the different five or ten percent norms. There, our youth will draw education in our ancient-revived Jewish language, in which our prophets once prophesied. There, they will be able to learn the great Jewish history with which to become proud; there, Jewish students will not be a footstool upon which one treads and is subject to all sorts of pain and humiliation; there, a generation of spiritually wealthy Jews will be produced, who will believe in their People and their People in them, who will love this People and take pride in it; there, our children will find solace from their suffering and the awareness that - our hope is not yet lost*!

This event will give us the moral hope and assurance that this young culture will grant due respect to the age-old – the Torah – will not trespass it, will not violate the religion, but will continue spinning the golden thread of the love of God and the Torah and will help lift up its prestige by building a special institute of Torah in the Land of Israel, as a world-yeshiva for the Jews in the exile-lands, to which shall be pulled all those who yearn for Torah and draw from its plentiful springs.

And from the summit of heights it shall call** - from the tops of the mountains of Zion shall again be heard the voice of God, the voice of the Torah, the Torah that is distant from peoples and racism, whose watchword is love of humanity, honesty and justice towards all, without exception.

And from the streets it shall raise its voice - from the streets of Jerusalem shall again resound the call of the prophets, of our angels of peace, whose voices, in those ancient stormy times, thundered: *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit”* [Zechariah 4:6] – not by the force of a fist, but by spiritual force! The strongest folk are not the ones armed, who tread on all with their feet, but that which is peaceful, who seek truth, freedom and justice.

[For] thousands of years, those voices of our prophets were carried over peoples and lands but, due to the peoples’ battle-lust, we did not harken to them. But now times are arriving, when men are tired of war and sobered by hatred and jealousy, robbing and murder and the better among them already raise up their eyes to the clear heaven and harken to those voices from the high, voices of peace and love, truth and justice.

For out of Zion shall go forth the Torah – from Zion shall materialise the idea, which originated there and begins with the word Torah: *“One Torah [law] and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you”* [Numbers 15:16] – one law and one right shall hold sway for you and for the stranger, **and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem** [there; Isaiah 2:3] – the motto that

* [Translator’s note: in Hebrew in the original, this is a line from Hatikvah.]

** [Translator’s note: in Hebrew in the original, this is not an actual biblical quote but a title in a biblical style. Such is also the case in the following paragraph.]

encouraged the Jews in their long exile-history shall also come true; **Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit sayeth the Lord** – not through fist and not through force, but through spirit, God has said.

These same words of God will again ring down from the mountains of Jerusalem to the ears of all peoples and lands!



Painting by Prof Wolenberg, for the opening of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and a greeting card signed by the public figures of the Zionist movement in Częstochowa

We, in whose hands the education of the young generation was placed and whose main desire is to train the youth for a natural, healthy and full life in the land of our forefathers, welcome with a blessing the opening of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, which will become the new forge for the soul of the redeemed people and the temple for Torah and knowledge for our pupils, for whose training we toil and labour with all our might.

Blessed are we, who have seen the day we have yearned for, on which one of the wishes our people has carried in its bosom for thousands of years has been fulfilled.

Częstochowa (Poland), in the month of spring [Nisan] 5685 [April 1925]

Members of the council of the association for the foundation of Hebrew secondary schools:

Szmul Goldsztajn (Chairman), Abraham Luzor Szajnfeld (Vice-Chairman), Szaja son of Naftali Librowicz, Natan Gerichter, Uszer Win, Zvi Wernik, Izrail Wojdystawski, Dawid Szlojme Zandberg, Ze'ev Zeryker, Mojsze son of Izrail HaLevi Landau, Mojsze Dawid Szlezinger, Józef Szlezinger, Juda son of Ze'ev Kopinski

From the high school for boys and girls:

Directors: Jakob Blatt, Dr Abraham Krancberg

Panel of teachers: Perec Wolenberg, Saul Wajcberg HaLevi, Izrail Liberaber, Dawid Isachar son of my master, my father Mordka Juda Janowski, Simche Rubinsztajn, Juda Cuker, Dr Gerszon Szefer, Sz. B. L., Dr Menasze Frydler, G. Brokman, Dr Boruch Elias Gincburg, R. Kac