## "THE PASCHAL LAMB AND THE SACRED BULL"

"Disgust at duplicity," and important scholar recently said, "is the deepest running tide anywhere at this moment."

Although I do not identify with the extravagant charge of "hypocrisy" so lightly and self-righteously hurled by the young at the older generation -- it is often a sign of simple-mindedness and insensitivity to the complexities of life -- yet, at bottom, I feel that it is unquestionably true. We are riven by deceit, riddled with duplicity, and infected with hypocrisy. This is especially true of the so-called "Establishment", of government and society's leadership.

This theme is relevant to Passover because the Exodus story is, in a sense, a record of the exposure of such national hypocrisy sanctified as a policy of state and government.

The following analysis of the Passover narrative as an exercise in debunking official hypocrisy, is based on an insight by a cousin of mine whom I unfortunately never knew. I am told that had he survived, he would have been one of the great Jewish leaders of our generation. He published his ideas in Poland on the eve of World War II, shortly before he was to be murdered by the Nazis together with his wife and daughters, when he was in his early twenties. His name Rabbi Yehoshua Baumol, I's. May these words serve to be production of the passover narrative as an exercise in debunking official hypocrisy, is based on an insight by a cousin of mine whom I unfortunately never knew. I am told that had he survived, he would have been one of the great Jewish leaders of our generation. He published his ideas in Poland on the eve of World War II, shortly before he was to be murdered by the Nazis together with his wife and daughters, when he was in his early twenties. His name Rabbi Yehoshua Baumol, I's blessed memory.

We Jews know of sanctified hypocrisy because we have been its victim throughout so much of our history. Anti-Semitism could hardly have existed without official duplicity. And anti-Semitism begins in Egypt. The sign of blood on Jewish homes in Egypt was a fateful symbol of that which was to follow us throughout the ages.

Consider Pharoah's problem: he could not simply announce genocide. That would not do, because it would be bad for his public-relations image. Egypt was, after all, the greatest center of culture in antiquity, and for an empire of such might and such pretentions to wipe out an entire people by murdering its children, was unthinkable. So he developed the following strategy: official innocence, and leaving the dirty work to underlings.

Note that at first Pharoah did not send his police and soldiers to kill Jewish children. He did not publicly announce any "final solution" of the Jewish problem in Egypt. Instead, he whispered his plans to the people he expected to carry them out:

Pharoah "speaks to the midwives", he "calls for the midwives", and asks them to kill all male children. No one knows about it but these few women. If it gets out, he can blame the entire policy on a few backward and overzealous and primitively anti-Semitic midwives. But he is guiltless.

This became a historic precedent. Kishinev or the <u>Krystalnacht</u> or Auschwitz -- depending who was in the witness box -- or Biafra or My Lai or Bangla-Desh -- all were the work of "irresponsible underlings" while the authorities remained innocent of any wrongdoing.

"And Pharoah commanded his entire people saying, 'every male child that is born you shall cast in the river.' Murder has now become state policy.

But notice again how even now Pharoah hedges and leaves himself an escape hatch. He does not say that they should kill every <u>Jewish</u> child. Just 190, "every male child" of every nationality, religion, or race. In all probability, Pharoah maintained that murdering of children was now to become a national-religious act of sacrifice, of appeasing the Nile who was an Egyptian god. It was not simple murder or genocide; it was political, and it was not discriminatory against Jews alone. It was simply part of the national cult. Indeed, the Jews would have been unpatriotic to have refused to volunteer for their sacred civic duty. But of course, Pharoah can rely on his people to take a hint and to realize that Jewish children somehow make the best victims for the hungry river god.

But the Torah will not let the politicians get away with it.
Observe how in the whole story of the Exodus from Egypt, the major blame is placed in the Torah on Pharoah and his advisers, rarely on the ordinary Egyptians. Not that they could get away with an Eichmann type of defense -- that they were only following orders; but the real culprits, those who ordained and made possible the bloodbath, it is they who must be charged with the major guilt for genocide and, as well, for adopting hypocrisy as a political instrument of the state. That is why the Bible is concerned more with politicians than with the fellahin, the Egyptian peasants. Even the sight of Egyptian corpses on the shores of the Red Sea is described not as the Egyptians, Fig. 3 %, but as

it is official Egypt that is the target of the Torah's wrath.

In this manner we may understand a problem that has puzzled students of the Bible for a long time. The Torah ordains that for Passover a special sacrifice be offered, the Paschal lamb. The lamb, the Torah implies, is an Egyptian deity. The whole point of the sacrifice is to kill the god of Egypt; otherwise, the ceremony concerning the lamb does not make too much sense.

And yet, historians and anthropologists and archeologists are puzzled because there is no record of a lamb amongst the many theriomorphic deities (animal gods) of Egypt. The Egyptian Pantheon was a veritable zoo; it contained every conceivable animal, from frogs to snakes, from baboons to cats and crocodiles -- but no lambs! Most important in the pantheon were bulls and rams, and among these the most preeminent was Apis, the sacred black bull.

How do we reconcile the Torah's story of the Paschal Lamb with

history's record of the Sacred Bull?

The answer that my cousin suggests is that Egyptian officialdom was two-faced. To the outside world they showed the innocence of the lamb -- pity and compassion and gentleness. They acted as if their god and inspiration was the lamb. But in actual fact, their effective guide and real symbol was the bull, Apis, with its implied brutality and savagery and pitilessness, with its naked power and heartless truculence.

So what the Torah is doing is ripping the hypocritical mask off the face of Pharoah in Egypt. The Israelites, the Torah says, will now kill your paschal lamb, because it is a fake symbol. They will reveal its meaninglessness in your lives and show that it has no relevance to your conduct. It will reveal that the true Egyptian god is Apis, the black bull, the apotheosis of evil, the theory that might makes right.

The lamb was sacrificed by the Israelites as nod | ? ) the Passover sacrifice, and Egypt stands exposed as the devotee of Apis, the sacred black evil bull.

This form of hypocrisy against which the Torah in protested was not peculiar to ancient Egypt. It is, as much, a malady of the modern world. "Le plus ga change, le plus c'est la même chose." Accontemporary German novelist, Gunter Grass, has written, "we had to create a new German word after the war -- Schreibtischtöter -- a murder at the desk. We did not have any laws against them. Only the men who were really at the concentration camps and did the dirty work for somebody else in the Auschwitz trials."

Indeed, the sacred bulls tried to pass themselves off as paschal lambs.

But there is one major difference between Egyptian hypocrisy and the contemporary variety, and that is that Pharoah failed whereas the sacred bulls of the modern world have by and large succeeded. Only a few weeks ago we read in the press that the very man who designed all of Auschwitz was exonerated at his trial in Austria on the grounds that he, the very architect and designer of the greatest death camp in history, did not know what it was to be used for!

And this took place at approximately the same time that the U.N. accepted the protestation of innocence of Lebanon and other Arab countries in their charge against Isreal for raiding the southern portion of Lebanon from where murderous attacks have been made on innocent Israelis. The Lebanese and the Arabs and their friends pleaded the innocence of lambs being victimized by the wolf Israel, and the UN went along and condemned Israel for defending itself -- by cleaning up that very territory which Lebanon publicly had named "Fatahland," the area from which they had allowed the so-called guerillas to operate against Israel!

And this took place only slightly before the UN Human Rights Commission accused Israel of "war crimes and affront to humanity!" How ironic that this took place just before peaceful elections in the occupied territories; and, even greater irony, that this commission

included such members as Egypt, which had used gas in South Yemen, and Pakistan, whose hands were still dripping with the blood of the massacres of the Bangladesh!

So, unfortunately, the lessons of the paschal lamb and the death of the first-born are all too relevant. In a world of Biafra and My Lai and, yes, the UN, and, on a lesser level, the hypocrisies of big business and national government, as well as the personal hypocrisies of social leaders and individuals on lower levels, duplicity remains a prime corruption. Pharoah is dead but his spirit lives on.

Therefore, the political-moral message of Passover is as important today as it ever was before. In reading of the nod propagate and symbolizing it at the Seder, we are re-enacting and dramatizing the historical Passover of Egypt, in which an oppressed people not only overthrew its persecutors, but also exposed and unmasked the self-serving duplicity of a sanctimonious and self-righteous Pharoah who was not the lamb but the black bull.

## ect Ell IEIC Une alea pullor ala gent calist ell 181 MECIA

In every generation, every man must envision himself as if he himself had personally gone out of Egypt. The contempt of the Torah for Egyptian public hypocrisy must always be fresh in our minds as if we were there. Only thus shall we ourselves be saved from such moral corruption.

It is good to remember the words of the Rabbi of Kotzk: it may not be in every man's power to find the truth. But it is certainly within his power to reject lies, cheating, and hypocrisy.