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Rachel B. Heimovics, *Managing Editor*

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Christian Science, Jewish Science, and Alfred Geiger Moses

by

Ellen M. Umansky

In March 1911, a headline in the weekly Jewish newspaper the *American Hebrew* declared, "International Order of B'nai B'rith Excludes Christian Scientists." Reporting on B'nai B'rith's annual convention in San Francisco, the *American Hebrew* described in detail the attention paid to the growing number of American Jews attracted to Christian Science. These Jews diligently studied Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, first published in 1875, regularly attended Christian Science services, availed themselves of Christian Science practitioners, and eventually joined the Christian Science church. By an overwhelming majority, members of B'nai B'rith voted to exclude such Jews from their fraternal order on the grounds that it was impossible for one to be both a Jew and a Christian Scientist. Believing that Christian Science had already made serious inroads into the American Jewish community, it insisted that the American rabbinates "do more constructive work," beginning with a recognition of the reasons why so many Jews had been "led astray" by Christian Science teachings.

Jewish Attraction to Christian Science

Like most non-Jews who joined Christian Science, Jews often found themselves initially drawn to the religion because of its promise of health, peace, and comfort. In an age of rapid urbanization, and the anxiety and tension that observers maintained went with it, many American city dwellers found

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themselves suffering from such ideational or functional illnesses as neurasthenia (nervous exhaustion) and hysteria. Hysteria was especially widespread among urban middle and upper-middle class women between the ages of fifteen and forty, with symptoms that included nervousness, depression, fatigue, headaches, pain, seizures, and even paralysis.¹ Whether hysteria was a disease that had some identifiable cause or was simply a functional illness frequently used by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women as a way of consciously or unconsciously expressing dissatisfaction with their lives, hysteria became one of the classic diseases of the era and one for which many women sought relief through practitioners of such mind-cure faiths as Christian Science. Given the fact that most American Jews were both middle class and city dwellers, it should come as no surprise that Jews were said to be especially prone or, as one contemporary observer put it, were “notorious sufferers” of nervous or functional disorders.²

The argument that one simultaneously could be a Jew and a Christian Scientist was repeatedly used both by Christian Scientist missionary activists and by Jews attracted to Eddy’s teachings. In fact, however, as Rabbi Max Heller, spiritual leader of Temple Sinai in New Orleans and president of the Reform movement’s Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) from 1909 to 1911, noted, one could not justifiably claim to be a Jew and a Christian Scientist since membership in the church required that one formally abjure membership from any denomination or religious group to which he or she previously had belonged. Jews had to produce a certificate of dismissal from their former rabbis before they could join Christian Science.³ Yet many Jews continued to perpetuate this argument perhaps in order to justify their actions to themselves and to their families. While undoubtedly the initial attraction of hundreds if not thousands of Jews to Christian Science was physical, what Christian Science offered was spiritual sustenance, only part of which was relief from apparent physical pain. Many Jews who first went to Christian Science in order to be healed stayed in it long after the symptoms of the illness from which they had been suffering had disappeared. Their reason for

initially going to Christian Science may have been physical, but their reasons for actually joining the church were spiritual in nature.⁴

The Growth of Christian Science in the South

Although Christian Science began in the North, Christian Science groups were created in the South only seven years after the establishment of the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, in 1879. According to Carolyn Cobb, in 1886 Julia Bartlett, a follower of Mary Baker Eddy, moved from Boston to Atlanta and began a class in the teachings of Christian Science. Among those to whom she offered spiritual aid was Sue Harper Mims, who soon after organized a regular Christian Science meeting in her home. Wealthy, sophisticated, and cultured, Mims and her husband, Major Livingston Mims (who, in 1901, was elected the city's mayor) numbered among Atlanta's leading citizens. Sue Mims later became known throughout the South, and eventually throughout the United States as a Christian Science teacher, practitioner, lecturer, and founder of Atlanta's First Church of Christ, Scientist. In fall 1898, ground was broken for the establishment of a church that soon attracted two hundred members and claimed the interest of many more. Construction of a larger building was completed in 1914.⁵

According to a lengthy article in its local newspaper, the *Times-Picayune*, New Orleans was the first city in Louisiana to establish a Church of Christ, Scientist. Gaining its charter in 1895, the church included as members those who had begun to meet in informal groups or clusters as early as 1887, the year in which a copy of Eddy's *Science and Health* apparently was first brought to New Orleans. Members of the group both studied Eddy's work and practiced its teaching. By 1930, numerous Christian Science churches and societies had come into existence throughout Louisiana, with small but active membership lists of men and women.⁶ Newspaper articles, diaries, and references in the *Christian Science Journal* indicate that churches were also established in various cities in North Carolina, South Carolina, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Alabama. Here, as elsewhere, one was able to learn

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about Christian Science by attending services or lectures, talking to a local practitioner, and reading *Science and Health*.

Rabbinic Responses

Jewish reaction to the increasing numbers of Jews who were attracted to Christian Science ranged from indifference to hostility. For the most part, Orthodox rabbis met the defection of Jews to Christian Science with silence, perhaps reasoning that this was no worse than the “defection” of Orthodox Jews to secularism and/or Reform. While Conservative leaders maintained a similar stance, some, like Mordecai Kaplan, voiced concern over the implications of this defection.⁷ Reactions from Reform rabbis were both more sustained and more vociferous. By the end of the nineteenth century, leading Reform rabbis like Isaac Mayer Wise had begun to denounce Christian Science as charlatanry. “It is almost incredible,” he wrote, “that Jews who regard themselves as of more than average intelligence should have recourse to Christian Science,” a religion of “pure quackery” that is “rapidly assuming the proportions of an epidemic delusion.”⁸ References to Christian Science by other Reform rabbis were similarly hostile. While acknowledging that Christian Science seemed to be meeting a spiritual need that some Jews felt they could not find in Judaism, many shared Max Heller’s feelings of pity and scorn for those Jews who had taken up Christian Science “with avidity, out of love for the bluish-gray haze of unintelligible twaddle which [their] female savior has managed to spin around the simplest utterances.”⁹ Though Heller’s contempt may well have been genuine, it was in all probability motivated by the fact that Heller, like other early twentieth-century Reform rabbis, perceived Christian Science as a threat not only to the American Jewish community in general but also, and more directly, to the Reform movement itself.

There were several reasons for this latter fear. First, many believed that while Orthodoxy was primarily losing adherents to Reform, Reform was losing adherents either to agnosticism or Christian Science. Thus, Jewish attraction to Christian Science directly threatened Reform Judaism, robbing it of real or potential

members. Second, since Reform prided itself on being the Judaism of the future, many Reform rabbis, if not the CCAR as a whole, came to believe that it was the responsibility of the Reform movement to meet the challenge posed by Christian Science. Indeed, many felt that only Reform could provide a solution since it alone was capable of revitalizing American Jewry's spiritual life. And last, many in the Reform movement recognized that Jewish defection to Christian Science gave credence to a charge leveled at Reform throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, namely, that Reform Judaism was in trouble, beset by difficulties, shortcomings, and disintegrating influences that it could not overcome. The defection to Christian Science could be and was seen as a visible sign of Reform's spiritual stagnation.

By 1912, the CCAR passed a resolution maintaining that "Jewish adherence to Christian Science implies abjuration of Judaism." Any Jew subscribing to Christian Science teachings, it continued, would henceforth be regarded "as a non-Jew in faith."¹⁰ Six years later the CCAR's Responsa Committee, chaired by Kaufmann Kohler, declared that "no rabbi ought to officiate" at funerals of Jews who had become Christian Scientists and who were to be buried in Christian cemeteries. Henceforth, a number of Reform rabbis searched for ways in which more concrete action might be taken. One idea supported by the majority of CCAR members was to revitalize Reform Judaism by reemphasizing its notion of the Jewish mission, a concept embedded in the ideology of nineteenth-century Classical Reform. This mission, as understood by Reform Judaism, was to bear witness to the reality of God and to spread God's moral teachings to all of humanity. It was the belief of many that if this concept could be communicated to American Jews, and its importance underscored, Christian Science would seem less attractive because Jews would discover within Judaism itself the opportunity to develop their spiritual nature and realize that personal happiness, health, and peace of mind were not in and of themselves sufficient.¹¹

Although many Reform rabbis viewed the promulgation of the Jewish mission idea as a means of successfully combating the inroads that Christian Science had made within the American

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Jewish community, a handful proposed a more far reaching solution. It was their belief that the influence of Christian Science could best be checked both by promulgating the idea of a Jewish mission and by creating a new counter-vision of happiness and health set within a specifically Jewish context. The first to advocate this solution was a southern rabbi named Alfred Geiger Moses (1878–1956.) To underscore both the Jewish and scientific nature of his vision and to gain the attention of those attracted to the ideas of Mary Baker Eddy, he identified his teachings as Jewish Science.

Spiritual leader of a Reform temple in Mobile, Alabama, Alfred Moses first articulated his views in a slim volume published in 1916, titled *Jewish Science: Divine Healing in Judaism*. Its aim, he stated, was to create a spiritual renaissance within the American Jewish community by restoring to the modern Jew “the art of genuine prayer.”¹² He believed that such a renaissance would serve the dual purposes of awakening religiously apathetic Jews to Judaism’s spiritual possibilities and help stem the growing tide of Jews who claimed adherence to the teachings of Christian Science. Before turning to his ideas, the background will be established.

*Mobile’s Congregation Sha’arai Shomayim,
Alfred Moses, and the Promulgation of Jewish Science*

Jews settled in Mobile as early as 1724, although it wasn’t until 1841 that the newly established Sha’arai Shomayim U-Maskil El Dol [Congregation of the Gates of Heaven and Society of the Friends of the Needy] purchased its first burial ground. Three years later, Sha’arai Shomayim formally incorporated as a congregation. By the mid 1840s, membership had grown sufficiently to warrant hiring a rabbi and holding services in the Turner Verein Hall on St. Emanuel Street, which was formally dedicated as a synagogue in December, 1846.¹³ Several years later, the growing and prosperous congregation dedicated its new synagogue on Jackson Street, where it remained for over fifty years.¹⁴ During Alfred Geiger Moses’ tenure as rabbi (1901–1940), the congregation erected a larger, architecturally impressive synagogue on

*Rabbi Alfred Geiger Moses.
He began serving Sha'arai Shomayim in 1901,
the year he was ordained by the Hebrew Union College.
(Courtesy, Sha'arai Shomayim Archives, Mobile, Alabama.)*

Government Street, where it remained through the early 1950s. Subsequently, a temple was built on the more suburban Spring Hill Avenue, where the congregation worships today.

By 1855, there were approximately 250 Jews in Mobile.¹⁵ According to temple records, just over one hundred belonged to Sha'arai Shomayim, while a significantly smaller number belonged to a second congregation formed as a result of inner dissension among Sha'arai Shomayim members.¹⁶ By 1905, Sha'arai Shomayim, still Mobile's largest Jewish congregation, boasted a membership of six hundred. Yet, out of a general population of approximately fifty thousand, the Jewish community remained relatively small.¹⁷

Alfred Geiger Moses was born on September 23, 1878, to Rabbi Adolph and Emma Isaacs Moses. Adolph Moses (1840-1902) came from a rabbinical family in Poland and received a yeshiva education before attending the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau, headed by Rabbi Zacharias Frankel, a proponent of moderate religious reform. In Germany he subsequently came under the influence of the more religiously liberal Rabbi Abraham Geiger, the major philosophical spokesperson of the Reform movement, and the man after whom he later named his son. Adolph Moses arrived in the United States in 1870 and briefly served a congregation in Montgomery, Alabama, before becoming rabbi of Sha'arai Shomayim in Mobile (1871-1881). After his sojourn in Alabama, he completed his career at Congregation Adath Israel in Louisville, Kentucky (1882-1902). Identifying with the more radical wing of American Reform Judaism, he placed great emphasis on the universal nature of Judaism and, more generally, of all true religion. In fall 1885, he was one of the fifteen rabbis who met in Pittsburgh to deliberate and adopt the platform that became the ideological foundation of Reform Judaism for the next fifty years. In fact, it was he who enthusiastically moved for the adoption of this "able and wonderfully liberal document"¹⁸ that would later have a deep influence on the religious thought of many Reform rabbis including his son.

Alfred Geiger Moses received his early education in Louisville. He then attended the University of Cincinnati, earning a

Bachelor of Arts in 1900, and Hebrew Union College, from which he received rabbinic ordination in 1901. That same year he moved to Mobile, serving as rabbi of Sha'arai Shomayim until 1940, and as rabbi emeritus from 1940 to 1946. In June 1915, he married Birdie Feld of Vicksburg, Mississippi. The couple had one child, Shirley. A noted teacher, orator, scholar, and writer, Alfred Geiger published several historical monographs including a history of the Jews of Mobile in addition to his two books on Jewish Science. According to temple records, he also spoke at "hundreds of service club and other meetings, and gave many Jewish Chautauqua-sponsored lectures throughout the area."¹⁹

It is conceivable, but unlikely, that Alfred Moses' interest in the formulation of Jewish Science stemmed from the drift of Jews to Christian Science within his own community. While a Christian Science group apparently was formed in Mobile as early as 1897, becoming incorporated in July 1902, its membership remained small.²⁰ Several Jews eventually joined despite Moses' claim that not a single Jew in his community had done so. However, there is no indication either in the *Mobile Register* or in the congregational records of Sha'arai Shomayim that Christian Science ever posed a threat to the Mobile Jewish community.²¹ Although the reasons remain unclear, Christian Science seems to have had relatively limited appeal among the Jewish and non-Jewish population of Mobile. Jews looking for social advancement through church affiliation, for example, were more likely to join the local Methodist, Episcopal, or Baptist churches than to become affiliated with Christian Science. Moreover, most Mobile Jews probably recognized that such social conversions were unnecessary. In the early twentieth century, the Jews of Mobile enjoyed extremely cordial relations with their non-Jewish neighbors. For the most part, they were socially accepted even by the local elite and their religious differences viewed with tolerance if not respect. Leon Schwarz, president of Sha'arai Shomayim from 1932 to 1934 and at one time county sheriff and mayor of Mobile, maintained that most Jews living in Mobile during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries felt, as did his father, that they had come to live among their gentile neighbors and to be one with

them, sharing all of their troubles and differing in religious faith alone.²²

Some Jews apparently did join Christian Science for physical and/or spiritual reasons. Yet the vast majority of Mobile Jewry either identified as Reform, affiliating with Sha'arai Shomayim, or saw themselves as religiously indifferent. Indeed, minutes of meetings of Sha'arai Shomayim's board of trustees during this period reveal great concern over the number of Jews who remained religiously unaffiliated, a number reaching as high as two thirds of the local Jewish population. Sermons delivered by Alfred Moses during the first two decades of the twentieth century repeatedly stressed the importance of "spiritual Judaism" freed of ceremonial laws yet existing "for the glorification of God in acts of humanity, kindness, charity and intellectual growth."²³ Explicitly invoking the concept of religious mission, Moses urged his congregants to bear witness to the living faith of their ancestors and to transform that faith into action, making their congregation the "pride of every Jew of Mobile," one which might encourage both the affiliated and the unaffiliated Jew to consecrate themselves to God.

Although Alfred Moses' desire to create a Jewish spiritual renaissance may have been stimulated in part by the religious apathy that he observed in Mobile, his formulation of Jewish Science as a direct counterattack against Christian Science should be seen within a broader context. As a Reform rabbi and a member of the CCAR, Moses was well aware of the Reform rabbinate's increasing concern over the growing number of Jews who were joining Christian Science. Explicitly referring to the CCAR's recent consideration of this problem, Moses maintained in the 1916 edition of *Jewish Science* that his work was intended to be a spiritual weapon by which Christian Science might be fought by the Reform rabbinate as a whole. Like Reform rabbis Morris Lichtenstein and Clifton Harby Levy, who, in the early 1920s, helped organize and assumed leadership of Jewish Science groups in New York,²⁴ Alfred Geiger Moses viewed Jewish Science as both a critique of American Reform Judaism and as a solution to that which he perceived to be Reform's own limitations.

In the 1916 edition of his work, Moses made this critique of Reform clear. Referring to the “considerable heart-searching” of members of the Reform rabbinate and others in attempting to find ways of combating the influence of Christian Science within the Jewish community, Moses asserted that the only solution was “to educate the growing generation in the true Jewish doctrine, and to teach not only the abstract, but the *practical* [italics in original] value of faith.” To him, Jewish Science met both of these demands and, as such, offered the spiritual means “by which Christian Science [might] be fought from the Jewish standpoint.”²⁵ The “true Jewish doctrine,” as Moses understood it, rested on the teachings of Classical Reform as embodied in the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. Equating Judaism with ethical monotheism, Moses, like the platform’s authors, viewed Judaism as a religion based on faith in God and on the efficacy of prayer. Denying that modern Jews were members of a separate Jewish nation, he maintained that the quintessence of Judaism could be found in the Ten Commandments whose teachings, combined with those of the prophets, underscored universal truths that could be apprehended by all people.

Like many other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Reformers, Moses spoke of the “God-idea” rather than of a supernatural, transcendent deity. Indeed, the God-idea was central to his understanding of Jewish Science as a science or wisdom that was Jewish in origin and that revealed the reality of divine healing as unfolded throughout the history and literature of the Jewish people. For him the Jewish scriptures, embodying the “supreme expression of the God-idea,” contained the first and original message or principle of divine healing. This principle, reiterated in liturgy and in other Jewish writings, rested on the power of faith to cure sickness and to assist the individual in achieving perfect health. Recognizing that faith in a benevolent God was in many ways a projection of the believer, Moses equated faith with the power of autosuggestion. Although to the mind of the believer, it is God alone who is the source of all healing; in fact, healing occurs because the human mind “has the unique or peculiar function of being able to suggest to itself ideas which work

themselves out in the sub-conscious self." Without denying the benefits of medical science, Moses staunchly maintained that

all strong suggestions help in the healing process. The good physician realizes this truth, and it is a trite saying that "Confidence in the physician is half the battle of the patient." The sick man who has faith in his doctor already helps himself. At some stage of his treatment, the invalid must receive in addition to drugs or surgical relief powerful suggestions that intensify and strengthen his hope of recovery.²⁶

For Moses, the power of faith lay in its emotional and driving force based on the absolute conviction of the individual that his or her beliefs were true. Divine healing, in other words, did not depend on the truth of the individual's beliefs (although they indeed might be true) but on the intensity with which they were held. For Moses, then, the ultimate value of the God-idea rested on its "moral motive-power" which, as a power of goodness, was a source of health, exerting great influence over mind and body.

Moses incorporated his understanding of the God-idea and its moral motive-power into his broader understanding of the Jewish mission. To bear witness to God, he maintained, was to rely on divine providence, to have faith in the reality of God and of God's healing power. Thus, he concluded, Jews, as God's chosen people constantly proclaiming their divine mission, "should be the last to discourage the use of those spiritual agencies that help the body as well as the mind and heart."²⁷ His implicit criticism here may well have been against those Reform rabbis who stressed the importance of the Jewish mission without emphasizing its practical implications. Indeed, in 1919 he made this criticism more explicit in his response to Kaufmann Kohler's CCAR address on the mission of Israel. While acknowledging that he shared Kohler's belief in the centrality of the mission idea, he criticized Kohler for omitting any pragmatic suggestions as to how this idea might best be implemented. Opening his remarks with a reference to his father, Rabbi Adolph Moses, he stated:

My father, who stood with Isaac M. Wise in the working out of his life's dream, detached the messianic idea from the historic side and followed it as a pragmatic question. He believed the

Adolph Moses (1840–1902)
preceded his son as rabbi of Sha'arai Shomayim in Mobile.
(Courtesy, the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the
American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

philosophy of Judaism based upon its past was capable [of being] and should be unfolded to the gentile world. He died disillusioned. But I believe the methods of the churches are worthy of copy and emulation. Let us not waste our efforts on discussion only. Let us try to do something definite, something that will stimulate thought—something that will bring results.²⁸

Evidently, Alfred Moses envisioned Jewish Science as a pragmatic means of implementing the Jewish mission as he and many of his contemporary Reform rabbis understood it. Emphasizing that his intent was not to start a new religious movement but simply to demonstrate that the teachings of Jewish Science were identical to those of Reform Judaism itself, he conjectured that Reform had previously de-emphasized or ignored divine healing because it had exalted reason and logic, while minimizing emotion and sentiment. Without these, modern Jews had lost their “prayerful sense.” Thus they were ignorant of prayer’s efficacy and power. His intent was to restore the art of prayer and its influence on every day life by emphasizing the importance of emotion in stimulating divine worship. In so doing, he hoped to make Judaism “a living reality and an ever-present help” by filling its synagogues once again with genuine believers.

It is no coincidence that in responding to Kaufmann Kohler’s CCAR address on the Jewish mission, Alfred Moses invoked the memory and life’s work of his father. Equating Judaism with ethical monotheism, Adolph Moses continually emphasized Israel’s mission of bearing witness to God’s reality and of spreading God’s moral teachings to the rest of the world. In order to underscore his conviction that Judaism was a universal faith and not a tribal or national religion, he adopted the term Yahvism in place of Judaism. It was his hope that this term, by emphasizing faith in the biblical God as the universal creator, king, lawgiver, and savior, would attract non-Jews and, at the same time, lead to the departure from the religion of those Jews who were Jews in name only. Consequently, he believed Yahvism would succeed where Reform Judaism had failed. Although Reform spoke of a universal messianic age of brotherhood and peace in which all would acknowledge the reality of the one true God, its retention of such

“tribal” concepts as that of the chosen people, and its tacit acceptance of nonreligious men and women as Reform Jews limited Reform’s effectiveness in bringing this messianic age to fruition. In contrast, Judaism as Yahvism would represent a new “Church of Humanity,” grounded in the universal vision of the biblical prophets and based on the mutual respect, union, and universal love of those who had formerly identified themselves either as Christians or Jews.²⁹

Although his own future vision of Judaism was less universal than his father’s, Alfred Moses, too, was committed to seeking a way in which the Jewish mission, as understood by Reform Judaism, might best be fulfilled. His hope was that Jewish Science, by bringing about a Jewish spiritual rebirth, would result in greater dedication to the Jewish mission and, more broadly, to a greater belief in the efficacy of prayer. As Rabbi Emil Leipziger later noted, being the son of Adolph Moses, “one of the *Gedolim* of the unfolding history of Reform Judaism,” greatly affected Alfred Moses throughout his career and served as a “constant challenge to his own abilities and ideals.”³⁰ Alfred Moses’ concern for the spiritual vitality of Judaism and his efforts to preserve this vitality may have been one that he not only shared with his father but learned from him. Thus, Jewish Science, as originally presented in 1916 and revised in 1920, may have reflected Alfred Moses’ desire to continue the spiritual work that his father had initiated.

Alfred Moses’ focus on God as healer and Judaism as a source of happiness and health also possibly stemmed from physical and mental health problems that plagued him for much of his adulthood. As early as March 1903, less than a year and a half after assuming the pulpit of Sha’arai Shomayim, Moses (then twenty-five years of age) asked the board of trustees to be temporarily relieved of his duties and granted an extended vacation for health reasons. Acting on the recommendation of Moses’ physician that such a vacation be granted, the board approved the request. Although it is unclear how long this vacation lasted, it was not until March 1904 that the board recommended to the congregation that Moses be given a three-year contract. This suggests that Alfred Moses’ vacation may have been as long as a year in

duration.³¹ While the board records make no further mention of his health, there apparently were intervals when his mental life "became clouded by emotional confusion,"³² and by 1940 he resigned as rabbi of Sha'arai Shomayim. According to Sam Brown, a past president of Sha'arai Shomayim who later visited Alfred Moses in the state mental institution where he died in 1956, Moses' mental illness progressed slowly, extending over a number of years, and eventually led to total mental incompetence. It may well have been, then, that Alfred Moses' interest in spiritual healing was primarily personal in nature, stemming from his earlier physical problems and perhaps, although this is not documented, from the fear that he was beginning to suffer, or was prone to suffer, from mental illness.³³

Moses maintained that he first became interested in divine healing in 1914. A couple in Mobile whose one-year-old daughter had become very ill called him and asked him to perform a change of name ceremony for their child. Never having heard of this ceremony, Moses was told by them that it was a Jewish ritual that invoked God's help as healer. The person performing the ritual was to pray to God as the restorer of health and then to change the name of the individual in need of divine assistance. While skeptical, Moses agreed to perform the ritual and, much to his surprise, the child improved almost immediately, even though the child's physicians maintained that recovery was hopeless. Although Moses subsequently learned of other instances in which the same ritual was performed resulting in both success and failure, the recoveries that did occur conclusively proved to him that Jewish Science, or the wisdom of divine healing, "had its effect" and therefore, he concluded, should "recommend itself to all zealous Jews."³⁴

Moses devoted a major part of his work to refuting the claims of Christian Science, contrasting them to those of Jewish Science and revealing the anti-Jewish bias of Mary Baker Eddy's work. As friends and critics later pointed out, it was this latter aspect of his book that was most valuable both to those Jews who were attracted to Christian Science but uncomfortable about joining the church and to those searching for specific Jewish arguments

against Eddy's teachings. Moses discussed at length Eddy's explicitly Christian understanding of faith. Among that which he discussed was her belief in Jesus as the messiah, her exaltation of Christian Science's pure and spiritual understanding of the Godhead versus Judaism's more materialistic conception, and her celebration of Jesus' life as proving that God is love, in contrast to Jewish theology which gives "no hint of the unchanging love of God." Citing specific pages from *Science and Health*, he attempted to prove that Eddy's anti-Jewish bias was so great that no "self-respecting Jew" could possibly accept a religion containing so many "false and unfounded statements regarding Judaism."³⁵ Moreover, Alfred Moses was convinced that Jews did not have to become Christian Scientists in order to discover the healing power of prayer because Christian Science offered "nothing new to the Jewish Mind. It is simply Judaism, veneered with Christology or the belief in the divinity of Jesus."³⁶ To prove this thesis he sought to reveal the biblical basis of Eddy's belief in God as healer, citing passages from every part of the Hebrew scriptures that attest to God's healing power. Unlike Morris Lichtenstein and Clifton Harby Levy, Alfred Moses did not focus on Psalms and Proverbs, although he cited several. Rather, by also quoting from the first five books of the Bible, I and II Kings, Samuel, and numerous books of the prophets, he attempted to underscore the pervasiveness of this theme throughout Scripture and, by quoting from the daily prayer book, throughout later Jewish literature as well.

He also described specific historical expressions of this belief in God. Focusing most fully, although selectively, on eighteenth-century Hasidism, he maintained that Hasidism as envisioned by its founder, the Baal Shem Tov, was an early expression of Jewish Science, "inspired by a sincere and genuine effort to afford a living faith, and to improve the individual in conduct and character." Recognizing that true religion did not lie in Talmudic learning but in the love of God, Hasidism, he continued, aimed to change the believer rather than the ceremonies and dogmas of traditional Jewish life. Thus, "by suggestion, it created a new type of religious man, who placed emotion above ritual, and religious excitement above knowledge."³⁷ Moses omitted mention of

Hasidism in the second edition of his work after Rabbi Max Heller, whom he greatly respected, convinced him that his characterization of Hasidism as an historical expression of Jewish Science was unfounded. As Heller pointed out, Hasidism was not a protest against legalism, as Moses had claimed. Nor could one equate the Hasidic reliance on divine providence with simple faith healing.³⁸

There are no extant records attesting to the financial success or failure of Moses' work or to how many copies were printed. By 1919, however, in responding to men and women interested in purchasing the book and to rabbis congratulating him on the important task that he had undertaken, Alfred Moses maintained that all printed copies of *Jewish Science* had been sold. He planned to publish a second edition, yet decided to substantially revise his work before doing so, in part, in response to such critics as Heller. However, his decision to substantially change the content of his work also reflected his newfound interest in applied psychology and in the broadly-based Protestant alliance known as New Thought, thanks to readers of *Jewish Science* who brought both to his attention. Consequently, the greatly expanded and largely rewritten second edition, published in 1920, devoted less attention to the broader historical and religious Jewish context out of which Jewish Science emerged. It instead attempted to create an "applied psychology of Judaism," equating that which Moses previously identified as divine healing with the power of autosuggestion.

Unlike the earlier edition, in which he argued that Jews need not abandon Judaism for Christian Science because its major teachings were Jewish in origin, he now argued that Christian Science's fundamental beliefs were in fact antithetical to what Jews and, for that matter, most Christians believed. Revealing a better understanding of Christian Science than he had in the 1916 edition, in which he simply equated Christian Science with belief in God as healer, Moses now focused on Eddy's denial of matter, including her denial of the body's organs and functions. Asserting that the body was real, just as sickness was real to the sufferer, he maintained that the sufferer "may dissolve the abnormal state by suggestion and spiritual realization, but must recognize the

temporary reality of his or her malady, in order to understand and deal with it.”³⁹ Insisting that Christian Science was a false conception, unsupported by reasoning, logic, “or any modern system of idealistic thought,” he faulted Mary Baker Eddy for not recognizing that healing and, indeed, all mental ends could be attained without denying either the body or the reality of nature. Thus, he concluded, Jews must reject Eddy’s teachings, for “all philosophies that minimize or deny the sensuous are rejected by the practical genius of Israel,” whose scriptures in no way share the “strange, mystical claim of Christian Science that ‘mind being all, matter is nothing.’”⁴⁰

In voicing these beliefs, Moses revealed the growing influence on him of the so-called “new psychology.” He did not identify specific psychologists or schools of thought to whom he was indebted. Yet, as he understood it, the

central feature of the new and applied Psychology is the rediscovery of the truth that man has in himself the power to create health, happiness and success, by direction of the Sub-conscious mind and by conscious relation with the Super-mind of God.⁴¹

Affirming the reality of the material world, Moses maintained that Jewish Science, unlike Christian Science, recognized the “psychological truth” that individuals possess the mental power to modify and mold the material elements of creation. Viewing the body as an extension of the mind, Moses labeled disease, a dis-ease, i.e., a “lack of ease or harmony” that can be overcome by directing the conscious, reasoning self to the sub-conscious mind, the agency that converts thought into action. Thus to him the subconscious mind directs the breathing, blood circulation, “the creation of lymph, secretions, depositions, in fact, every iota of bodily functions.” While medicine may prove beneficial, its efficacy depends on the extent to which it succeeds in assisting the subconscious mind by “removing certain obstructions that impede its free flow.” Yet, Moses continued, it is ultimately neither the conscious nor the subconscious mind but the super-conscious mind or God that is responsible for healing. It is this force, he argued, that impels the conscious self to direct the subconscious mind into developing those habits,

methods, and “moral ways” that insure creativity and accomplishment.⁴²

Between 1917 and 1920, Moses corresponded with several Jews who regularly attended New Thought lectures and were inspired by the messages they contained. Enthusiastic about the possibility of harmonizing Jewish and New Thought teachings, they encouraged him to learn more about New Thought and possibly to consider forming a group of his own.⁴³ During the summer of 1919, while in New York City, Moses studied both the methods and the teachings of New Thought and Christian Science. Among the New Thought leaders to whom he was particularly drawn were Harry Gaze, minister of the First Church of Life and Joy, and Eugene Del Mar, a founder and leader of New York’s League of the Higher Life. Moses attended their lectures and classes, met with them privately, and discussed with them at length his own desire to religiously revitalize the American Jewish community. Later, Moses thanked Gaze, Del Mar, and other New Thought leaders whom he had met for helping broaden his concept of Jewish Science from that which dealt with negative states of being such as sin, sickness, and poverty to that which also included the positive act “of assisting in the creation of the normal and God-given states of consciousness, as strengthen character, holiness, power, poise etc. by means of the understanding and application of certain Jewish standards.”⁴⁴

By 1920, Alfred Moses began to speak of God or, as he more frequently wrote, of the God-consciousness as a divine mind existing within the soul. In content, this description of God did not substantially differ from the non-supernatural concept of divinity, Classical Reform’s God-idea that he wrote about in 1916. However, the terminology that he now used, as well as his recommended healing techniques, revealed the influence of New Thought. Like Mary Baker Eddy, New Thought preachers advocated religious psychotherapy. Yet not all believed that matter was not real. Perhaps following the lead of the late nineteenth-century healer, popular writer, and New Thought pioneer, Warren Felt Evans (1817-1889), many viewed medical science to be “an auxiliary to the mental system of cure”⁴⁵ and thus did not

refuse, and, indeed at times, welcomed medical treatment. Like Eddy, however, they emphasized the power of the mind, employing techniques such as silence, affirmation, visualization, and denial to bring about divine healing.

Acknowledging their indebtedness to Ralph Waldo Emerson and other nineteenth-century Transcendentalists who spoke of the world as the product of a mind that is active everywhere, practitioners of New Thought placed special emphasis on ways in which one could become receptive and responsive to the activity of the divine mind within each person. Like Emerson, they believed in beginning with a posture of silence, because, as Emerson wrote, "real power is in silent moments." It is then that we become most aware of our own internal power. Leaders of New Thought, again like Emerson, maintained that self-perfection, which Emerson identified as self-reliance, was similarly attainable through silence. Echoing Emerson's sense of optimism, they insisted that self-perfection was not a privilege but an absolute duty, attainable once we recognize "through the channel of our minds" that the "Infinite Divine life force" and our own life force are one and the same. Many within New Thought, including the prolific popular writer Ralph Waldo Trine, identified this divine force as Christ. Consequently, each maintained, as Trine often did, quoting Emerson, that he or she believed in the "'still, small voice, and that voice is the Christ within me.'"⁴⁶

Sharing this belief in the importance of silence was Ernest Shurtleff Holmes (1887–1960), who began publishing books on what he called Mental Science in 1919, and later founded and led what became the Church of Religious Science.⁴⁷ In his writings, Holmes frequently pointed to the biblical proverb "'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,'" a proverb which, according to Alfred Moses, crystallized Jewish Science.⁴⁸ This verse, Holmes later maintained, reveals the truth that what we are and what we become depends on what we are thinking. This is so, he continued, because the infinite mind that surrounds us reacts to our thoughts and to our mental state, rather than to our words. Mind, in other words, reacts to mind, and thus, according to Holmes and others more closely identified with New Thought, it is through

contemplative silence that one is best able to stir the divine mind within us into action.⁴⁹

Without explicitly acknowledging his indebtedness to New Thought, although elsewhere in the book he quoted Emerson, Moses devoted an entire chapter of his revised *Jewish Science* to that which he identified as “the Silence.” “Silence,” he wrote,

is the divine manner of manifestation. God reveals Himself to the listening ear of faith in complete stillness. In Silence, we find God and commune with the Spirit of all flesh. Be still and in the holy awe know that God exists. To know God means to cast off the coils of sensuous life and to enter the realm of spiritual thought. Casting off the bonds of mortal mind, we enter the Silence of the inner soul and dwell on the thought of the Infinite and Eternal.⁵⁰

To Moses, the power of silence lay in its ability to strip away all distractions, leading people to focus their thoughts on God. He therefore advised his readers to school themselves in the practice of silence so that they could enter into “the Silence at any time or place,” finding moments within one’s everyday life to enter into the state of spiritual quietude.

Although his description of silence as both a spiritual state and a mental technique may have been borrowed from New Thought, Moses’ understanding of why such a state was important unmistakably bore the imprint of Classical Reform Judaism. When Moses discussed the importance of recognizing the God-consciousness within, his emphasis was not on the realization of one’s own internal power, as it was for members of New Thought. Rather, his emphasis was on the importance of becoming aware of God’s presence, or, echoing Reform’s concept of mission, on bearing witness to the reality of God. The identification of the divine with one’s conscience, the “still, small voice” within us, was a belief that Alfred Moses shared with many Reform rabbis of his day. Moreover, Moses’ insistence that communion with the divine led one to seek righteousness and truth, since God is not just the source but the law of morality, reflected Moses’ concept of Judaism as ethical monotheism, the heart and soul of Classical Reform.

In describing the power of silence, Moses applied the teachings of Reform Judaism as he understood them to everyday life. In so doing, he found himself indebted to the insights of applied psychology. By controlling the conscious mind through silence, the subconscious self, he maintained, is able to respond to the mental suggestions or demands of the super-conscious mind, or God. Thus, through solitude, one can invigorate one's spiritual powers, establishing "a direct communion with Divinity" that makes possible the realization of one's higher aims, particularly the carrying out of God's moral law. Combining the teachings of Reform Judaism with those of New Thought, Moses included as part of this law the law of self-perfection. Through silence, he asserted, one discovers the God-consciousness within, a belief shared by Reform Jews and advocates of New Thought. This discovery, he continued, brought about by inaction, i.e., meditative silence, leads one to action; that is, to the pursuit of justice and the attainment of happiness and health. Without denying the centrality of God's moral teachings, Moses thus sought to incorporate within Reform's ideological understanding of ethical monotheism the more personal goals of health, joy, and inner peace that were espoused by leaders of New Thought and Christian Science.

To achieve these aims, he offered practical suggestions, all of which had already been articulated by New Thought practitioners. First, he proposed finding a quiet place where one could relax completely. He next recommended breathing deeply, letting "the body be in repose so as to render the mind receptive." Shutting out all external stimuli and suggestions, the individual should then concentrate intensely on an appropriate biblical verse, to be selected from among those offered by Alfred Moses in chapter fourteen, or on thoughts of petition, affirmation, or denial, taken from chapter fifteen of Moses' book or from any text in which one found a theme of particular spiritual meaning. Moses advised his readers to read this text repeatedly until their minds were filled with its central thought. Photograph that thought, he continued, and try to recall it continuously until you have mastered the art of concentration. Only having done so could one

begin to affirm his or her own beliefs and desires, thanking and praising God for their fulfillment.

Personal affirmation, Moses maintained, was an important method of Jewish Science. Like petition and denial, it might be practiced either through words or through silence. Distinguishing between the great affirmation that God is one (Judaism's *Shema*) and the lesser affirmations that stress conditions like health, joy, strength, and courage, Moses believed that such affirmations were important in bringing "absolute conviction to the Sub-conscious mind . . . command[ing] it to exercise its imperial power." He advised his readers to enter the silence with a particular affirmation in mind. One might focus, for example, on a particular biblical verse that expressed in a positive manner an ideal which one desired, be it courage, joy, success, justice, kindness, love, or faith. Thus, if one sought the power to better deal with life's difficulties, one might enter the silence with the pervading idea, taken from Psalms, that one should "be strong and of good courage." Hold this idea in your mind, Moses wrote, and say it repeatedly, letting it "flood your being and fill your soul with its dynamic message." Once the subconscious mind has absorbed the message, retain it as a mental image that one can revitalize, or, in New Thought terminology, visualize, at any time. Think of this message constantly, when awakening, during the day, and before retiring at night. If you do so, he asserted,

by the exact law of God, written in the human spirit, you will find that you have actually incarnated "courage" into your being. You will feel a new interest in your life-tasks, a new enthusiasm for work and ambition. Fear and sensitiveness will be dissolved. You will actually demonstrate power, fearlessness, directness, determination. You will lose your self-consciousness and feel at one with [yourself and with] God.⁵¹

To Alfred Moses, the biblical text that best conveyed the reality of human-divine kinship, an idea that both members of New Thought, as Christians, and Reform Jews, as Jews, shared, was the revelation of God's name to Moses at Sinai as "I AM THAT I AM." Moses encouraged his readers to say this text repeatedly, dwelling on its all-embracing concept of the Almighty.

As one repeats these words, either out loud or in silence, he or she must remember, Moses wrote, that God, as immanent, is within us and that we, therefore, share in His nature. Thus say to oneself that I am the child of God and therefore "I am well. I am strong. I am happy. I am serene and joyful." Affirm, in other words, one's spiritual nature, the realization that ultimately we are one, or, taking the Jewish concept of atonement as at-one-ment, we are at one with God.

For Moses, as for those in New Thought, and, for that matter, in Christian Science, denial was another effective method through which one could affirm his or her true spiritual nature. By denying the reality of fear, worry, anger, and other negative emotions, one was able to free oneself of negative states of being (the disease or dis-ease to which we are prone) and to affirm instead his or her essential oneness with God. "To deny," Moses wrote, "means first to recognize the wrong reality or condition in order to remove it from the mind," or, in psychological terms, "to inhibit or dissolve the abnormal state that has been built up by conscious or unconscious cause. It means that we direct the Sub-conscious mind to destroy the undesirable condition."⁵²

Like leaders of New Thought and Mary Baker Eddy, Alfred Moses paradoxically viewed denial as a positive method of healing. By denying the reality of sin, sickness, and sorrow, one is best able, he maintained, to affirm health, joy, and well-being. Once one reveals that evil thoughts are only illusions, the product of imagination or of an unnatural obsession, one is able to dissolve them, replacing them with thoughts that are wholesome and healthy. Moses claimed that to do so through the method of denial is to affirm that God as the source of good, a central focus of both New Thought and Christian Science teachings, is with the individual, because it is this affirmation, Moses insisted, that gives one the strength and courage to overcome those negative ideas that continue to plague one's temperament or body.

In emphasizing the power of both denial and affirmation in removing that which he identified as abnormal states of being, Moses, like most of those involved in New Thought, did not mean to claim, as Mary Baker Eddy did, that physical suffering was an

illusion. Rather his point, again, like most advocates of New Thought, was that *mental* suffering is an illusion and that all suffering is abnormal. In discussing the nature of evil, however, Moses seemed to vacillate between New Thought's denial of its reality and the more Jewish belief that evil exists but one should deny oneself or refrain from doing evil actions. In order to overcome what even Moses recognized as an apparent contradiction in his thinking, he maintained that although God is good, God is also the source of both good and evil. Similarly, while human beings possess good and evil impulses, their inherent goodness enables them to resist evil by denying or shutting out thoughts that lack ethical judgment. Combining New Thought's understanding of evil as illusion with Reform Jewish emphasis on morality, Moses acknowledged the presence of evil in the world but, at the same time, insisted that such moral evils as violence, sin, and injustice could indeed be overcome through human effort. Harmonizing Jewish Science's essential vision with that of Classical Reform, New Thought, and Christian Science, Moses thus maintained that

Jewish Science sounds the note of optimism—the principle that, by conscious realization, we can make to-day better than yesterday and each day watch for the rising sun of a grander tomorrow. Optimism is not a sentimental mood but a definite state of mind, arising only from thought and achievement.⁵³

Finally, although he did not discuss it at length, Moses advocated seeking God through the use of petition. A method revealing greater indebtedness to Judaism than to New Thought, Moses continued to maintain that traditional prayers asking God for strength, courage, health, and so on, often were effective means of vitalizing one's spiritual power. By turning the mind towards God, both private and public devotions could stimulate faith and thus lead one to trust in God (from the Hebrew, *emunah*) as the source of healing and inspiration. Although he placed greatest emphasis on silence and affirmation, Moses encouraged the use of any method that helped to keep one's mind on God.

In describing Jewish Science, Moses often maintained that Jewish Science was simply applied Judaism; that is, the application of Jewish teachings to every day life. Although Moses

*Sha'arai Shomayim, circa 1910,
southeast corner of Government Street and Warren Street.
(Courtesy, Sha'arai Shomayim Archives, Mobile, Alabama.)*

explicitly identified applied Judaism with applied psychology, his understanding of Judaism did not significantly differ from that of most contemporary Jewish Reformers. Indeed, many within the Reform movement in America and England shared Moses' belief that only by revealing the practical application of its teachings could Judaism hope to remain a living religion. Viewing the spiritual revitalization of contemporary Jewry as part of their religious mission, many leaders of Classical Reform, including Moses, sought ways in which religiously apathetic Jews could begin to take seriously the concept of bearing witness.⁵⁴ What Alfred Moses also attempted to do, primarily through his writings, was

to underscore the belief that bearing witness was a Jewish concept and that therefore one need not turn to other religious faiths in search of the one true God.

In sum, Alfred Moses attempted to harmonize the teachings of Reform Judaism with New Thought and applied psychology, and to some extent, Christian Science, by maintaining that: a) it was the responsibility of every Jew to bear witness to the reality of God and to spread God's moral teachings throughout the world (Reform's idea of religious mission), and b) included in these moral teachings were the imperatives to be happy and healthy. Citing the Israelites' promise at Sinai to hear and do God's commandments, Moses maintained that the aim of Jewish Science similarly was to hear God's message of truth and to bring that truth to others. Faith, he contended, was pragmatic, and thus, brought concrete results such as greater joy, life, and harmony, which made faith possible. Put succinctly, Moses both claimed that faith brought one peace of mind and that peace of mind was a precondition of faith. One could only keep one's mind on God if one were calm, happy, and cheerful, while keeping one's mind on God helped create these positive mental states. "Faith," he wrote, "leads to life more abundant, and life, rightly understood, leads to ever-increasing faith."⁵⁵

For Moses, one could not understand life correctly if one did not acknowledge the importance of mental and physical health. First of all, one could not love God with all of one's heart, soul, and might, as Deuteronomy enjoins one to do, unless one were healthy, and, in turn, health was in and of itself a visible sign of God's immanent power. Moses asserted that suffering was rooted in a disregard for God's laws, leaving one open to weakness and disorder. On the other hand, he claimed, health "is God's gift to those who recognize and realize His laws of Being."⁵⁶ As in the 1916 edition of his book, Moses drew on numerous Jewish sources to underscore his belief in God as healer. If God is one, he maintained, he must indeed be "the Power that makes for life and well-being." Faith healing, then, is possible because it recognizes and utilizes this power. In psychological terms, through mental suggestion (i.e., belief in God as healer) the subconscious acts on the

super-conscious to direct the conscious mind towards greater health and perfection, which Moses, in religious terms, identified as the salvation of mind and body. Thus, he insisted, Jewish Science does not deny the benefits of modern medicine, but, like Judaism, maintains that the surgeon himself does not heal. All healing is from God, who acts "through the soul of man." Identifying God with mind, Moses concluded that mind or thought is more important in the healing process than people imagine. Medicine alone cannot make one well; it is the attitude that one has and the thoughts that he or she thinks, that have greatest affect on one's mental and physical condition.⁵⁷

The Influence of Moses' Work

Moses' attempt to create an applied psychology of Judaism was to some extent successful. The 1920 edition of his work, more so than the 1916 edition, is difficult to read, due largely to its lack of clear organization and endless repetition of ideas. Yet, the major thesis that Moses presented—that peace of mind leads to faith and vice versa, set within a context that was, at least by the standards of Classical Reform, explicitly Jewish—appealed to at least several hundred, and more probably thousands, of Jewish men and women.⁵⁸ While the letters of praise found among Moses' papers, written by fellow rabbis and members of the laity, are insufficient in number to determine the true extent of positive interest in his work, there are several indications that Moses' concept of Jewish Science received serious attention.

Between 1917 and 1922, Moses received many letters from both traditional and Reform rabbis who praised his work and promised to share his ideas with others. For example, Moses Gaster, chief rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of Great Britain, maintained that he would not fail to bring Moses' "excellent little book" to the attention of a wider circle of friends,⁵⁹ while Reform rabbi Emil Leipziger, leader of the Touro Synagogue in New Orleans, wrote that he hoped to organize a group of congregants who would meet with him on a regular basis to discuss the subject of religious psychology in general. "If I succeed," he

stated, "I shall be glad to have you come over to address them."⁶⁰ In 1917, Martin A. Meyer, rabbi of Temple Emanuel in San Francisco, asserted that he hoped to get together a group that would discuss the 1916 edition of Moses' book page by page, and Rabbi Louis Mann of Congregation Mishkan Israel in New Haven, Connecticut, notified Moses that the study circle of the local Council of Jewish Women was to discuss his book at its next meeting.⁶¹ Among the most enthusiastic letters that Moses received were those written by Jews who were attracted to the ideas of New Thought. Many thanked him for offering within a Jewish context that which they previously believed Judaism was unable to offer. They described his book as a "revelation," satisfying a deep, spiritual hunger.⁶²

During the 1920s, Moses traveled and lectured extensively, sharing his religious ideas in synagogues and auditoriums throughout the United States. Occasionally he participated in conferences that focused on spiritual healing. In addition, he lectured to New Thought groups, emphasizing both the similarities and differences between the teachings of New Thought and Jewish Science. Christians who heard Moses lecture often expressed their appreciation of the work he was trying to accomplish, suggesting books that Moses might find useful in developing his ideas further.⁶³ Of the Jewish men and women who heard Alfred Moses lecture, many were already familiar with his work and came wanting to know more about the ways in which one might incorporate the teachings of Jewish Science into everyday life. Some conceived of ways in which groups might be formed to study and attempt to live by Jewish Science teachings.

Marcel Krauss, for example, after listening to Alfred Moses' lecture at the Atheneum in New Orleans in early 1920, suggested that Moses form Jewish Science groups in Mobile and New Orleans, adding a promise to provide the necessary finances.⁶⁴ Della H. Bloomstein, a Nashville woman who wrote to Moses on several occasions and apparently was the author of numerous papers on Jewish spiritual healing, expressed the hope that when Moses next came to Nashville she might be able to talk to him about the "possibility of spreading the belief in Jewish Science."⁶⁵

It is unclear whether Krauss, Bloomstein, or most of the others who expressed interest in forming local Jewish Science groups ever did so. Moses himself apparently decided against forming such groups himself. At least one group, however, was formed as a result of Moses' work. This group, which formally identified itself as the First Society of Jewish New Thought, was founded in 1920 in New York City by two Jews, Lucia Nola Levy and Bertha Strauss. They had long attended New Thought lectures, read *Jewish Science*, maintained a lengthy correspondence with Moses, met with him in New York, and unsuccessfully tried to convince him to leave Mobile and form a Jewish New Thought group in New York City. When he declined their invitation, they created and led their own group, naming him "Honorary President." It was a title that he maintained until December 1921, when Reform Rabbi Morris Lichtenstein left a pulpit in Athens, Georgia, to become the society's permanent leader.⁶⁶

Although Moses apparently retained a great interest in Jewish Science, participating in both Jewish and New Thought circles in discussions concerning Jewish Science teachings and the benefits of spiritual healing in general, it seems that he never attended any meetings of the society once Lichtenstein became its leader. Indeed, throughout the 1920s, as Jewish "defection" to Christian Science continued, Moses took few concrete steps towards bringing these Jews back to Judaism. Although Jews still read and were inspired by his earlier writings on Jewish Science, Moses himself focused on his daily responsibilities as rabbi of Sha'arai Shomayim.⁶⁷ At the same time, he continued to fight, what by the 1940s had become a losing battle, against his slowly deteriorating mental health. Ironically, despite his belief that mental illness was an illusion, Moses spent the last years of his life in a mental institution. For over twenty years the teachings of Jewish Science may have helped him cope with his mental problems, but, in the end, struggling to retain his sanity, he found that optimism could not defeat the mental "illusions" from which he suffered.

Despite the interest that Moses' work generated within the American Jewish community, his disinterest in creating a Jewish Science group, even within his own congregation, limited his

influence on both Reform Judaism and American Jewry as a whole. Yet, the term Jewish Science, which he created, succeeded in attracting the attention of Jews already interested in Christian Science. Believing that it was his duty as a Reform rabbi and a Jew to bring others to an awareness of God's presence, and unafraid to use the techniques and aims of Christian Science, applied psychology, and New Thought in order to do so, Moses encouraged his readers, as well as those like rabbis Morris Lichtenstein and Clifton Harby Levy, who later developed Jewish Science further, to incorporate within Reform's ideological understanding of ethical monotheism the more personal goals of health, success, and happiness.

NOTES

¹ For a fuller discussion, see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in Nineteenth Century America," reprinted in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, ed., *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*, (New York, 1985), 197-208.

² Maurice Fishberg, "Health Problems of the Jewish Poor," paper read at Jewish Chautauqua Assembly, July 27, 1903, reprinted in *American Hebrew*, 73, July 31, 1903, 11: 335-336.

³ Max Heller, "A Jewish Apologist for Christian Science," *American Israelite* 58, May 16, 1912, 44: 4. For insight into Heller's views, see Bobbie Malone, *Rabbi Max Heller: Reformer, Zionist, Southerner, 1860-1929* (Tuscaloosa, AL 1997).

⁴ Evidence for this can be found in letters and testimonials by Jews published during early decades of the twentieth century in the *Christian Science Journal*, *Christian Science Sentinel*, and *Jewish Science Interpreter*, articles in *American Israelite* that appeared during this same period, and books such as Samuel Deinard's *Jews and Christian Science* (Minneapolis, 1919), Henry Frank's *Why Is Christian Science Luring the Jew Away from Judaism?* (San Francisco, 1919), and Paul Cowan's *An Orphan in History* (Toronto, 1982).

⁵ For a fuller discussion, see Carolyn Cobb, "Sue Harper Mims, C.S.B.," *Atlanta Historical Bulletin* 4, January 1939, 16: 77-89.

⁶ Wesley Jackson, "Christian Scientists in State Once Subject to Persecution," [New Orleans] *Times-Picayune*, May 12, 1974.

⁷ Mordecai M. Kaplan, "A Program for the Reconstruction of Judaism," *Menorah Journal* 6, August 1920, 4: 193. Although the number of Jews attracted to Christian Science is a matter of conjecture, for this discussion the actual number is not as important as the perception. For estimates of the number of Jews who joined Christian Science between 1906 and 1926, the years of the church's greatest growth, see Ellen M. Umansky, *From Christian*

Science to Jewish Science: Spiritual Healing and American Jews (New York and London, forthcoming).

⁸ Isaac Mayer Wise, *American Israelite* 46, March 22, 1900, 38.

⁹ Rabbi Max Heller, *American Israelite* 58, October 12, 1911, 4.

¹⁰ *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook* (hereafter cited as CCARY) 22, (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1912), 148.

¹¹ Kaufmann Kohler, "Rabbis Officiating at Christian Scientist's Funerals," (1918) cited in Walter Jacob, ed., *American Reform Responsa: Collected Responsa of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1889-1983* (New York, 1983), 315. Among those who most clearly made this argument were Reform rabbis Kaufmann Kohler, Stephen Wise, Samuel Schulman, Julian Morgenstern, Edward Calisch, and Harry Ettelson. For a detailed discussion of their ideas, see Umansky, *From Christian Science to Jewish Science*.

¹² Alfred Geiger Moses, *Jewish Science: Divine Healing in Judaism* (Mobile, AL, 1916), 11.

¹³ Alfred G. Moses, *A History of the Jews of Mobile* (reprinted from the *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 12 (Baltimore, MD, 1904), 8ff.

¹⁴ Robert J. Zietz, *The Gates of Heaven: Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim, The First 150 Years* (Mobile, AL, 1994), 27.

¹⁵ Alfred G. Moses, "Synopsis of Congregational History" in 'A Congregation in the Name of God,' 1. Sha'arai Shomayim Archives.

¹⁶ For a fuller discussion, see Zietz, *Gates of Heaven*, 27 ff.

¹⁷ Alfred G. Moses, "Our Present Condition as a Jewish Community," sermon delivered in celebration of Sha'arai Shomayim's Sixtieth Anniversary, in 'A Congregation in the Name of God,' 10. Sha'arai Shomayim Archives.

¹⁸ Adolph Moses cited in W. Gunther Plaut, *The Growth of Reform Judaism: American and European Sources to 1948* (New York, 1965), 35.

¹⁹ Zietz, *Gates of Heaven*, 100.

²⁰ This information was provided to me by Phyllis Feibelman, chair, archives committee, Spring Hill Avenue Temple [Sha'arai Shomayim], Mobile, Alabama. She received this information from a Christian Science practitioner in Mobile who based his information on a brief article focusing on Christian Science in Mobile by Frances Beverly, published in 1938.

²¹ Moses, *Jewish Science* (1916), 48.

²² Leon Schwarz, "Reminiscences," Mobile, Alabama, 1872-1919, written in 1936, box 1938, American Jewish Archives (hereafter cited as AJA), Cincinnati, Ohio.

²³ See, for example, Moses, 'A Congregation in the Name of God,' 8. In 1894 Congregation Ahavas Chesed was established by German and eastern European Jews who favored tradition. Zietz, *Gates of Heaven*, 90.

²⁴ Among Levy's ancestors were prominent Jews who first settled in Charleston, South Carolina, around 1740. Later, several members of his family helped found the Reform Society of Israelites, the first organized Reform Jewish congregation in America. Among them was the well-known journalist, playwright, drama critic and educator, Isaac Harby. For a detailed study of Harby's life, see Gary Philip Zola, *Isaac Harby of Charleston, 1788-1828: Jewish Reformer and Intellectual* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1994). For an in-depth discussion of Morris Lichtenstein, Clifton Harby Levy, and the groups that they led, see Umansky, *From Christian Science to Jewish Science*.

²⁵ Moses, *Jewish Science* (1916), 50.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁸ Alfred Geiger Moses, *CCARY* 29 (1919), 302.

²⁹ Adolph Moses, "Yahvism," in Hyman G. Enelow, ed., *Yahvism and Other Discourses*, (Louisville, KY, 1903), 10 ff.

³⁰ Emil W. Leipziger, "Alfred G. Moses," *CCARY* 66 (New York City, 1957), 178.

³¹ Minutes, Board of Trustees, Board of Trustees file, Sha'arai Shomayim Archives.

³² Leipziger, "Memorial Tribute," 179.

³³ Other early proponents of mind cure including Mary Baker Eddy and many New Thought leaders also developed an interest in healing through their own personal problems with mental health.

³⁴ Moses, *Jewish Science* (1916), 40.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 57, 69.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁸ Heller to Moses, January 5, 1917, Moses Papers, AJA.

³⁹ Alfred Geiger Moses, *Jewish Science: Psychology of Health, Joy and Success or the Applied Psychology of Judaism* (New Orleans, 1920), 95.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 97–98.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 242. For a greater understanding of applied psychology, see A. L. Hollingworth and A. T. Poffenberger's textbook, *Applied Psychology* (New York, 1917). Revised editions of this volume appeared in 1920 and 1923. See also Bernard C. Ewer, *Applied Psychology* (New York, 1923).

⁴² Moses, *Jewish Science* (1920), 65.

⁴³ Correspondents included New Orleans manufacturer Marcel Krauss, Della Bloomstein, a Nashville woman who wrote to Moses on several occasions, and Bertha Strauss who later approached Moses about leading a Jewish Science group in New York.

⁴⁴ Alfred Geiger Moses, Letter to the Editor, [New Orleans] *Times-Picayune*, March 10, 1920.

⁴⁵ Warren Felt Evans, *Mental Medicine* (1872) cited in Charles S. Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion: The Rise and Development of New Thought* (Dallas, 1963), 116.

⁴⁶ Ralph Waldo Trine, *My Philosophy and My Religion* (New York, 1921), 25–26, 30. Although Emerson's identification of the "still, small voice" with the "Christ within me" is explicitly Christian in nature, the concept of God as an inner "still small voice" can be traced to the Hebrew prophets, and more specifically, to the biblical book of Isaiah.

⁴⁷ According to Charles Braden, during the 1920s and 1930s, the early years of the church's growth, members of the Church of Religious Thought, later known as the Church of Religious Science, did not consider themselves part of New Thought (see Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion*, 285). Yet Holmes studied with Emma Curtis Hopkins in New York in 1924, two years before publishing his most important work, *Science of Mind*, and Holmes was an active member of the International New Thought Alliance, speaking frequently at INTA congresses, serving as an officer or chair of several important committees and as editor of one of its few publications.

⁴⁸ Moses, *Jewish Science* (1920), 65.

⁴⁹ Ernest Shurtleff Holmes, *The Science of Mind*, (New York, rev. and enl., 1938; 1st. ed., 1926) 137 ff.

⁵⁰ Moses, *Jewish Science: Psychology of Health*, 1920, 135.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 150.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁴ Among those who argued this most forcefully at annual meetings of the CCAR were rabbis Julian Morgenstern, Leo Franklin, Harry Ettelson, Edward Calisch, and Abram Simon.

⁵⁵ *Jewish Science* (1920), 23.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵⁷ Although Moses focused on mental ailments, he did discuss some physical ailments, including stomach troubles and constipation (which doctors today would agree can be caused by anxiety and worry) as well as diabetes and Bright's disease, which Moses assumed, in opposition to the leading medical opinion of his day and ours, were often caused by a "dark and despairing attitude that . . . poison the secretions of certain organs and promote the diseases, mentioned above." *Ibid.*, 92.

⁵⁸ For a fuller discussion of the appeal of Jewish Science, see Umansky, *From Christian Science to Jewish Science*.

⁵⁹ Moses Gaster to Moses, July 10, 1919, Moses Papers, AJA.

⁶⁰ Leipziger to Moses, October 14, 1919, Moses Papers, AJA.

⁶¹ Martin A. Meyer to Moses, May 25, 1917, Temple Emanuel, San Francisco, and Louis Mann, announcement sent to Moses, n.d., Moses Papers, AJA.

⁶² See, for example, letters written by Nettie Samuelson, Bertha Strauss, Lucia Nola Levy, and Rose Wise of New York City and letters by Marcel Krauss of New Orleans, Moses Papers, AJA.

⁶³ See, for example, a letter written to Moses by Rolla W. Callaway of New York City in August 1919, suggesting that he read *Primary Lessons in Christian Living and Healing* by New Thought author and lecturer Annie Rix Militz. She enclosed Militz's address, suggesting that he send a copy of *Jewish Science* to her, Moses Papers, AJA.

⁶⁴ Marcel Krauss to Moses, March 11, 1920, Moses Papers, AJA.

⁶⁵ Della H. Bloomstein to Moses, July 2, 1922, Moses Papers, AJA.

⁶⁶ For a detailed discussion of the relationship between Moses, Lichtenstein, and Clifton Harby Levy, see Umansky, *From Christian Science to Jewish Science*.

⁶⁷ He did, however, give several talks, including a major address on the ideals of Jewish Science, in August 1925, at a week-long conference organized by Clifton Harby Levy under the auspices of Temple Beth El in Rockaway Park, Long Island.