

only with the German-Polish Jews when they became acquainted with the practical Cabala of the school of Luria. The payyetau Benjamin b. Zerah is indeed called "Ba'al Shem," which, however, only indicates that in his piyyutim he frequently alludes to the various mystical names of God. The first one who is known to have borne this name, Elijah of Chelm, flourished about 1500, at the period when the study of the Cabala was wide-spread in Poland. The Ba'al Shem, which first was undoubtedly applied only as a special distinction to particular men who were considered great saints and in whose miraculous powers the people believed, had two centuries later developed into a profession. These "Ba'ale Shem" represented a mixture of quack doctor, physician, and cabalist. They wrote amulets, prescribed empiric medicines, with which they were well acquainted, and engaged also in casting out or summoning spirits. Their profession was such that they incurred the hostility of physicians, with whom they often entered into serious competition. The following prayer, composed by a Ba'al Shem for himself and his compeers, is indicative of the attitude toward the physicians: "Preserve me from enmity and quarrels; and may envy between me and others disappear. Let, on the contrary, friendship, peace, and harmony prevail between me and the physicians, . . . that I may be respected in their opinion, that they may not speak evil of me or of my actions" ("Toledot Adam," Zolkiev, 1720). Solomon Maimon speaks, in his autobiography (i. 217), of a Ba'al Shem who possessed medical knowledge and sufficient astuteness to make him a formidable competitor of the physicians.

Following is an approximately complete alphabetical list of persons known to have been Ba'ale Shem:

- (1) Elhanan, rabbi in Vienna, seventeenth century (Dembitzer, "Kelilat Yofi," 78b); (2) Elijah, rabbi at Chelm (government of Lublin), a progenitor of Zebi Ashkenazi, flourished about 1500 (Responsa of Zebi Ashkenazi, No. 93; Emden, "Megillat Sefer," 4); (3) Elijah b. Moses Loans (1555-1636); (4) Falk, Hayyim Samuel, 1708-1782; (5) Gedaliah of Worms, an eminent Talmudist, died between 1622 and 1624 (Kaufmann, "Ya'ir Hayyim," Bacharach, p. 20, note 2); (6) Israel b. Eliezer (1700-1760), commonly known as BA'AL SHEM-TOB (see article); (7) Joel b. Isaac Heilprin, middle of the seventeenth century; (8) Joel b. Uri Heilprin, beginning of the eighteenth century; (9) Selig of Lublin, beginning of the eighteenth century (Kahana in the passage cited below, p. 63); (10) Wolf, who, like most of the Ba'ale Shem, lived in Poland in the beginning of the eighteenth century (Kahana *l.c.*); (11) Sekl Loeb Wormser (1768-1846), the Michaelstadter Ba'al Shem, still known in Germany under that name.

See HASIDIM; FOLK MEDICINE.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Kahana, *R. Yisrael Ba'al Shem-Tob*, 1900, pp. 59-64; Dembitzer, *l.c.*

K.

L. G.

**BAAL SHEM, ELIJAH.** See LOANS, ELIA.

**BAAL SHEM, JOEL.** See HEILPRIN, JOEL B. ISAAC, and HEILPRIN, JOEL B. URI.

**BA'AL SHEM-TOB, ISRAEL B. ELIEZER** (commonly known by the initial letters of his name, **בְּשֵׁם**, BESH-T): Founder of the sect of Hasidim; born about 1700; died at Miedzyboz (Medzhibozh), May 22, 1760. The little biographical information concerning him that exists is so interwoven with legends and miracles that in many cases it is

hard to arrive at the historical facts. He is said to have been born at Akuf (אקוף), a border-city between Poland and Wallachia; but no such place is known. From the numerous legends connected with his birth it appears that his parents were poor, upright, and pious, and that when left an orphan he was taken care of by the community in which he lived. At the "heder" he distinguished himself only by his frequent disappearances, being always found in the lonely woods surrounding the place, rapturously enjoying the beauties of nature.

His benefactors gave up the hope of his ever becoming a rabbi, and made him a "helper," who took the children to and from school and rehearsed short benedictions and prayers with them.

**Early Life.** His tender, sentimental nature, to which his later success was in great measure due, now stood him in good stead; for he could win children and attach them to him by explanations suited to their understanding. Later he became "shammash" in the same community, and at about eighteen he married. When his young wife died he left the place, and after serving for a long time as helper in various small communities of Galicia, he settled as a teacher at Flust near Brody.

On account of his recognized honesty and his knowledge of human nature he was chosen to act as arbitrator and mediator for people conducting suits against each other; and his services were brought into frequent requisition owing to the fact that the Jews had their own civil courts in Poland. In this avocation Besht succeeded in making so deep an impression upon the rich and learned Ephraim of Kutzy that the latter promised Besht his daughter Anna in marriage. The man died, however, without telling his daughter of her betrothal; but when she heard of his wish, she did not hesitate to comply. Besht's wooing was characteristic. In the shabby clothes of a peasant he presented himself at Brody before Abraham Gerson Kutower, brother of the girl, and a recognized authority in the Cabala and the Talmud. Kutower was about to give him alms, when Besht produced a letter from his pocket, showing that he was the designated bridegroom. Kutower tried in vain to dissuade his sister Anna from shaming the family by marrying this "am ha-arez"; but she regarded her father's will alone as authoritative.

After his marriage Besht did not long remain with this aristocratic brother-in-law, who was ashamed of him (for he kept up the pretense of being an ignorant fellow); and he went to a village in the Carpathians between Kutzy and Kassowa. His worldly property consisted of a horse given him by his brother-in-law. Every week his wife took a wagon-load of lime to the surrounding villages; and from this they derived their entire support. But the magnificent scenery in this, the finest region of the Carpathians, and the possibility of enjoying it without the interruptions of city life, compensated him for his great privations. Besht's condition was bettered when he took a position as shohet in Kshilowice, near Iaslowice. This position he soon gave up in order to conduct a village tavern which his brother-in-law bought for him. During the many years that he lived in the woods and came into

contact with the peasants, Besht learned how to use plants for healing purposes and to effect wonderful cures. In fact, his first appearance in public was that of an ordinary BA'AL SHEM. He wrote amulets and prescribed cures. To his credit be it said that he was far from practising the quackery of his fellows in the craft. In treating, for instance, those who suffered from melancholy, or the insane, he sought to influence their minds.

After many trips in Podolia and Volhynia as a Ba'al Shem, Besht, considering his following large enough and his authority established, decided (about 1740) to expound his teachings. He

**Appearance of Zaddik.** chose for the place of his activity the little city of Miedzyboz; and the people, mostly from the lower classes, came to listen to him. His following gradually increased, and with it the dislike, not to say hostility, of the Talmudists. Nevertheless, Besht was supported at the beginning of his career by two prominent Talmudists, the brothers Meir and Isaac Dob Margalioth. Later he won to his side Baer of Meseritz, to whose great authority as a Talmudist it was chiefly due that Besht's doctrines (though in an essentially altered form) were introduced into learned circles. The antagonism between Talmudism and Hasidism was apparent to the representatives of each at Besht's first appearance; but the open breach did not come about until later. In fact, Besht took sides with the Talmudists in the Frankist disputes, and was even one of the three delegates of the Talmudists to a disputation between the two parties held at Lemberg in 1759. It was only in keeping with Besht's character that he felt keenly upon the acceptance of baptism by the Frankists, for it is related that he said: "As long as a diseased limb is connected with the body, there is hope that it may be saved; but, once amputated, it is gone, and there is no hope." The excitement consequent upon the Frankist movement undermined his health, and he died shortly after the conversion of many Frankists to Christianity.

Besht left no books; for the cabalistic commentary on Ps. cvii., ascribed to him (Jitomir, 1804), "Sefer mi-Rabbi Yisrael Ba'al Shem-Tob," is hardly genuine. In order to get at his teachings, it is therefore necessary to turn to his utterances as given in the works of the old Hasidim. But since Hasidism, immediately after the death of its founder, was divided into various parties, each claiming for itself the authority of Besht, the utmost of caution is necessary in judging as to the authenticity of utterances ascribed to Besht.

The foundation-stone of Hasidism as laid by Besht is a strongly marked pantheistic conception of God. He declared the whole universe, mind and matter, to be a manifestation of the Divine Being; that this manifestation is not an emanation from God, as is the conception of the Cabala, for nothing can be separated from God: all things are rather forms in which He reveals Himself. When man speaks, said Besht, he should remember that his speech is an element of life, and that life itself is a manifestation of God. Even evil exists in God. This seeming contradiction is explained on the ground that evil is not bad in itself, but only in its relation to man. It is wrong

to look with desire upon a woman; but it is divine to admire her beauty: it is wrong only in so far as man does not regard beauty as a manifestation of God, but misconceives it, and thinks of it in reference to himself. Nevertheless, sin is nothing positive, but is identical with the imper-

**Elements of Besht's Doctrines.** fections of human deeds and thought. Whoever does not believe that God resides in all things, but separates Him and them in his thoughts, has not the right conception of God. It is equally fallacious to think of a creation in time: creation, that is, God's activity, has no end. God is ever active in the changes of nature: in fact, it is in these changes that God's continuous creativeness consists.

This pantheism of Besht, of the consequences of which he was not at all conscious, would have shared the fate of many other speculative systems which have passed over the masses without affecting them, had it not been for the fact that Besht was a man of the people, who knew how to give his metaphysical conception of God an eminently practical significance.

The first result of his principles was a remarkable optimism. Since God is immanent in all things, all things must possess something good in which God manifests Himself as the source of good. For this reason, Besht taught, every man must be considered good, and his sins must be explained, not condemned. One of his favorite sayings was that no man has sunk too low to be able to raise himself to God. Naturally, then, it was his chief endeavor to convince sinners that God stood as near to them as to the righteous, and that their misdeeds were chiefly the consequences of their folly.

Another important result of his doctrines, which was of great practical importance, was his denial that asceticism is pleasing to God. "Whoever maintains that this life (הַיָּוֶהוּת) is worthless is in error: it is worth a great deal; only one must know how to use it properly." From the very beginning Besht fought against that contempt for the world which, through the influence of Luria's Cabala, had almost become a dogma among the Jews. He considered care of the body as necessary as care of the soul; since matter is also a manifestation of God, and must not be considered as hostile or opposed to Him.

In connection with his struggle against asceticism, it is natural that he should have fought also against the strictness and the sanctimoniousness that had gradually developed from the strict Talmudic standpoint. Not that Besht required the abrogation of any religious ceremonies or of a single observance. His target was the great importance which the Talmudic view attached to the fulfilment of a law, while almost entirely disregarding sentiment or the growth of man's inner life. While the rabbis of his day considered the study of the Talmud as the most important religious activity, Besht laid all the stress on prayer. "All that I have achieved," he once remarked, "I have achieved not through study, but through prayer." Prayer, however, is not petitioning God to grant a request, though that is one end of prayer, but רִבְיוּת ("cleaving")—the feeling of oneness with God, the state of the soul when man gives up the consciousness of his separate existence,

and joins himself to the eternal being of God. Such a state produces a species of indescribable joy (*שמחה*), which is a necessary ingredient of the true worship of God.

It is remarkable that Besht, whose starting-point was the same as that of Luria's Cabala, arrived at exactly opposite results. His conception of God was pantheistic; while the school of Luria laid the greatest stress upon the principle of

**Opposition to Luria's** emanation. Besht's fight against asceticism was directed more against

**Cabala.** the school from which it sprang than against pure Talmudism. His teach-

ings concerning *שמחה* ("joy") were especially opposed to asceticism. The followers of Luria considered weeping an indispensable accompaniment to prayer; while Besht considered weeping and feelings of sorrow to be wholly objectionable. The sinner who repents of his sin should not sorrow over the past, but should rejoice over the Heavenly Voice, over the Divine Power, working within him and enabling him to recognize the true in admitting his sin. The function of joy in prayer is paralleled by glowing enthusiasm and ecstasy (*התלהבות*) = "to become inflamed" in every act of worship. Fear of God is only an initiatory step to real worship, which must spring from a love of God and a surrender of self to Him. In his enthusiasm man will not think either of this life (*עולם הזה*) or of the next: the feeling of union with God is in itself a means and an end. Enthusiasm, however, demands progress, not the mere fulfilment of the Law's precepts in a daily routine which becomes deadening: true religion consists in an ever-growing recognition of God.

The later developments of Hasidism are unintelligible without consideration of Besht's opinion concerning man's proper relation with the universe. True worship of God, as above explained, consists in *רביקות*, the cleaving to, and the unification with, God. To use his own words, "the ideal of man is to be a revelation himself, clearly to recognize himself as a manifestation of God." Mysticism, he said, is not the Cabala, which every one may learn; but that sense of true oneness, which is usually as strange, unintelligible, and incomprehensible to mankind as dancing is to a dove. The man, however, who is capable of this feeling is endowed with a genuine intuition; and it is the perception of such a man which is called prophecy, or "bat kol," according to the degree of his insight. From this

**Idea of the** it results, in the first place, that the **Zaddik.** "zaddik," the ideal man, may lay claim to authority equal, in a certain sense, to the authority of the Prophets. A second and more important result of the doctrine is that the zaddik, through his oneness with God, forms a connecting-link between the Creator and creation. Thus, slightly modifying the Bible verse, Hab. ii. 4, Besht said: "The righteous can vivify by his faith." Besht's followers enlarged upon this idea, and consistently deduced from it that the zaddik is the source of divine mercy, of blessings, of life; and that therefore, if one love him, one may partake of God's mercy.

Though Besht may not be held responsible for the later conception of the zaddik, there is no doubt

that his self-reliance was an important factor in winning adherents. It may, in fact, be said of Hasidism that, with the exception of Jesus and the Judæo-Christians, there is no other Jewish sect in which the founder is as important as his doctrines. Besht himself is still the real center for the Hasidim; his teachings have almost sunk in oblivion. As Schechter ("Studies in Judaism," p. 4) finely observes: "To the Hasidim, Ba'al-Shem [Besht] . . . was the incarnation of a theory, and his whole life the revelation of a system."

Besht did not combat the practise of rabbinical Judaism; this seemed harmless to him; it was the spirit of the practise which he opposed. His teaching being the result not of speculation,

**Char-** but of a deep, religious temperament,  
**acteristics.** he laid stress upon a religious spirit, and not upon the forms of religion.

Though he considered the Law to be holy and inviolable, he held that one's entire life should be a service of God, and that this would constitute true worship of Him. Since every act in life is a manifestation of God, and must perforce be divine, it is man's duty so to live that the things called "earthly" may also become noble and pure, that is, divine. Besht tried to realize his ideal in his own career. His life provided the best example for his disciples; and his intercourse with the innkeepers, a class of people who nearly corresponded to the publicans of the time of Jesus (a number of whom he raised to a higher level), furnished a silent but effective protest against the practise of the rabbis, who, in their inexorable sense of strict righteousness, would have no dealings with people fallen morally. The Hasidim tell of a woman whom her relatives sought to kill on account of her shameful life, but who was saved in body and soul by Besht. The story may be a myth; but it is characteristic of Besht's activity in healing those in greatest need of relief. More important to him than prayer was friendly intercourse with sinners; though the former constituted an essential factor in the religious life. The story of Besht's career affords many examples of unselfishness and high-minded benevolence. And while these qualities equally characterize a number of the rabbis of his day, his distinguishing traits were a merciful judgment of others, fearlessness combined with dislike of strife, and a boundless joy in life.

Moreover, Besht's methods of teaching differed essentially from those of his opponents, and contributed not a little to his success. He was certainly not a scholar; that is, his knowledge of rabbinical literature, especially of the Talmud and the Midrashim, was only that of an average "lamdan." He was still less gifted as a speaker. But the lack of scholarship and oratory was supplied by fine satire and inventiveness in telling parables. There are many satirical remarks directed against his opponents, an especially characteristic one being his designation of the typical Talmudist of his day as "a man who through sheer study of the Law has no time to think about God." Besht illustrated his views of asceticism by the following parable:

"A thief once tried to break into a house, the owner of which, crying out, frightened the thief away. The same thief soon afterward broke into the house of a very strong man, who, on

seeing him enter, kept quite still. When the thief had come near enough, the man caught him and put him in prison, thus depriving him of all opportunity to do further harm."

Not by fleeing from earthly enjoyments through fear is the soul's power assured, but by holding the passions under control.

Much of Besht's success was also due to his firm conviction that God had entrusted him with a special mission to spread his doctrines. In his enthusiasm and ecstasy he believed that he often had heavenly visions revealing his mission to him. In fact, for him every intuition was a divine revelation; and divine messages were daily occurrences. Accustomed, through the influence of the Cabala, to use mystic language, Besht frequently said with emphasis that his teacher was Ahijah of Shiloh, the prophet who at God's bidding undertook to bring about the breach between Judah and Israel. Besht was fully aware of the opposition between himself and rabbinical Judaism. And just as Ahijah's struggle with Judah ended in the victory of the golden calves, so Besht's endeavors for reform ended in the later Hasidism, a degeneration far worse than the Talmudic-rabbinic Judaism against which he had contended.

Besht is quite naturally one of the most interesting figures in modern Jewish legend. As a man of the people and for the people, it is not strange that he should have been honored and glorified in story and in tradition. Of the many narratives that cluster about him, the following are given as the most characteristic:

About his parentage, legend tells that his father, Eliezer, whose wife was still living, was seized during an attack (by the Tatars?), carried from his home in Wallachia, and sold as a slave to a prince. On account of his wisdom he found favor with the prince, who gave him to the king to be his minister. During an expedition undertaken by the king, when other counsel failed, and all were dishcartened, Eliezer's advice was accepted; and the result was a successful battle of decisive importance. Eliezer was made a general and afterward prime minister, and the king gave him the daughter of the vice-king (משנה למלך) in marriage. But, being mindful of his duty as a Jew and as the husband of a Jewess in Wallachia, he married the princess only in name. After being questioned for a long time as to his strange conduct, he confessed his race to the princess, who loaded him with costly presents and aided him to escape to his own country. On the way, the prophet Elijah appeared to Eliezer and said: "On account of thy piety and steadfastness, thou wilt have a son who will lighten the eyes of all Israel; and Israel shall be his name, because in him shall be fulfilled the verse (Isa. xlix. 3): 'Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'" Eliezer and his wife, however, reached old age childless and had given up all hope of ever having a child. But when they were nearly a hundred years old, the promised son (Besht) was born.

Besht's parents died soon after his birth; bequeathing to him only the death-bed exhortation of Eliezer, "Always believe that God is with thee, and fear nothing." Besht ever remained true to this injunction.

Thus, on one occasion, when he was escorting school-children to synagogue, a wolf was seen, to the terror of old and young, so that the children were kept at home. But Besht, faithful to the bequest of his father, knew no fear; and, on the second appearance of the wolf, he assailed it so vigorously as to cause it to turn and flee. Now, says the legend, this wolf was Satan. Satan had been very much perturbed when he saw that the prayers of the children reached God, who took more delight in the childish songs from their pure hearts than in the hymns of the Levites in the Temple; and it was for this reason that Satan tried to put a stop to Besht's training the children in prayers and taking them to synagogue. From this time on, successful struggles with Satan, demons, and all manner of evil spirits were daily occurrences with Besht.

At this time, too, he learned how to work miracles with the name of God. The following is an instance: In Constantinople, where Besht stopped on his intended journey to Palestine, he was received with unusual hospitality by a worthy couple

**His** who were childless. In return for  
**Miracles.** their kindness Besht, when departing, promised them that they should be

blessed with a son, and rendered this possible by the utterance of the Sacred Name. Now, to do this was a great sin; and scarcely had the words of the incantation passed Besht's lips when he heard a voice in heaven declaring that he had forfeited thereby his share in the future life. Instead of feeling unhappy over such a fate, Besht called out joyfully: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, for Thy mercy! Now indeed can I serve Thee out of pure love, since I may not expect reward in the future world!" This proof of his true love for God won pardon for his sin, though at the expense of severe punishment.

Besht's miraculous power was so great that he did not fear even the brigands who lived in the mountains, but dwelt care-free in their vicinity. Once, when wandering about, deeply immersed in thought, he climbed a steep mountain and, without noticing where he was going, reached a very dangerous spot. Besht thought that his end had come, for he felt himself slipping toward a deep precipice; but suddenly the opposite cliff approached and closed up the gap. The robbers, who were looking on at a distance, doubted no longer that he was a man endowed with divine power.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** The chief source for Besht's biography is Baer (Dob) b. Samuel's *Shitthe ha-Besht*, Kopys, 1814, and frequently republished. For Besht's methods of teaching, the following works are especially valuable: Jacob Joseph ha-Kohen, *Toledot Ya'akov Yosef*; *Likkutim* [*Likkute*] *Ye-karim*, a collection of Hasidic doctrines; the works of BAER OF MESERITZ. Critical works on the subject are: Dubnow, *Yevreiskaya Istoria*, ii. 426-431; *idem*, in *Voskhod*, viii. Nos. 5-10; Grätz, *Gesch. der Juden*, 2d ed., xi. 94-98, 546-554; Jost, *Gesch. des Judenthums und seiner Sekten*, iii. 185 *et seq.*; A. Kahana, *Rabbi Yisrael Ba'al Shem*, Jitomir, 1900; D. Kohan, in *Ha-Shahar*, v. 500-504, 553-554; Rodkinson, *Toledot Ba'ale Shem-Tob*, Königsberg, 1876; Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, pp. 1-45; Zweifel, *Shalom 'al Yisrael*, i.-iii.; Zederbaum, *Keter Kehunah*, pp. 80-103; Frumkin, *Adat Zaddikim*, Lemberg, 1860, 1865 (?); Zangwill, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, pp. 221-238 (fiction).

K. L. G.

**BAAL-TAMAR:** A place near Gibeah, mentioned in the account of the battle between the Benjamites and the other Israelites (Judges xx. 33). Eusebius ("Onomastica Sacra," 238, § 75) knew Baal-

tamar under the name of "Beth-thamar"; but at the present day it can not be located.

J. JR.

F. BU.

**BA'AL TOKEA** (בעל תוקע), literally "the master of blowing"): Term applied to the person who blows the SHOFAR.

A.

F. L. C.

**BAAL-ZEBUB.**—**Biblical Data:** Name of a god of the Philistine city of Ekron, mentioned only in connection with the illness of Ahaziah, king of Israel, in 842 B.C. (II Kings i. 2, 3, 6, 16), when the sick monarch sent messengers to Ekron to consult him on the prospects of his recovery. There has been much speculation as to the character of the god. As the word stands, it means "Baal of flies." This is usually explained as the god who expels or destroys flies; though it may also mean the patron or controller of flies. The two explanations may be combined in one, or rather the second may include the first; for the god who has power to drive away any plague has also power to send it. A Ζεύς Ἀρόμυιος was worshiped at Elis in Greece as a disperser of flies, and further analogies drawn from the occurrence of "fly gods" among other nations (see Frazer's note to his ed. of Pausanias, v. 14) warrant us in retaining the common explanation until decisive proof to the contrary is forthcoming. It has been suggested that the second element of the name has been modified from an original "Zebul," or rather "beth Zebul," so that the name would mean "lord of the high-house" (compare I Kings viii. 13). The dropping of "Beth" is not without example (see BAAL-PHOR); but the warrant for assuming textual corruption is not sufficient. It was not unusual to call a god by the name of things that were particularly troublesome, and which he was asked to destroy (Nowack, "Hebr. Arch." p. 304; compare Apollo Smintheus as the destroyer of mice among the Greeks). The New Testament form "Beelzebub" (Matt. x. 25, etc.) is probably not based upon any Old Testament reading, but is due to phonetic dissimilation. See BEELZEBUB.

J. JR.

J. F. McC.

**BAAL-ZEBUB IN RABBINICAL LITERATURE.** See BAAL-BERITH IN RABBINICAL LITERATURE.

**BAAL-ZEPHON.**—**Biblical Data:** An Egyptian locality in the neighborhood of the Red Sea. In spite of all attempted combinations (Dillmann-Ryssell on Ex. xiv. 2) its situation is still unknown. An Egyptian god, B'irati Dapuna—that is, Ba'alat Zaphon—is mentioned by the Egyptians themselves (W. Max Müller, "Asien und Europa," p. 315). The name calls to mind the Phœnician בעל צפון, which designates both a god and a place. It particularly signifies a city on Mount Lebanon, which, in the opinion of H. Winckler, occurs also in the Old Testament; for he interprets Jer. xv. 12 ("Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen," p. 179), as "iron of Baalzephon." However, it is not certain whether the Egyptian city and the Egyptian god Ba'alat Zaphon are directly connected with the Phœnician name of a god.

J. JR.

F. BU.

—**In Rabbinical Literature:** The idol at Baalzephon was the only one that remained unharmed

when God sent the tenth plague upon Egypt, which not only brought death to men and animals, but also destroyed the idols. When Pharaoh overtook Israel at the sea, near Baal-zephon (Ex. xiv. 9), he said, "This idol is indeed mighty, and the God of Israel is powerless over him." But God intentionally spared Baal-zephon in order to strengthen the infatuation of the wicked Pharaoh (Mek., Beshallah, 2; Bo, 13).

J. SR.

L. G.

**BAALAH:** 1. A border town of Judah (Josh. xv. 9, 10; I Chron. xiii. 6) called elsewhere KIRJATH-JEARIM.

2. A mount on the border of Judah (Josh. xv. 11).

3. A city in the south of Judah (Josh. xv. 29), held by the Simeonites (Josh. xix. 3, where it is called Balah, while in the corresponding list of I Chron. iv. 29, it is called Bilhah).

J. JR.

G. B. L.

**BAALATH:** 1. A Danite city (Josh. xix. 44).

2. A city built by Solomon mentioned in connection with Tadmor (I Kings ix. 18; II Chron. viii. 6). Its site has not been determined.

J. JR.

G. B. L.

**BAALATH BEER:** A city in the possession of Simeon (Josh. xix. 8); but in the corresponding list of I Chron. iv. 33 called "Baal."

J. JR.

G. B. L.

**BAALBEK:** A city situated at the base of the western slope of the Anti-Lebanon, in a fertile region. It is the Heliopolis of the Greek and Roman writers, and is famous for the magnificent ruins of several temples—a large one with a vast courtyard; a smaller one (the Temple of the Sun); and a still smaller one, elegantly built in rococo style. The last two buildings, distinguished not only for their large proportions, but also for fine detail work, were probably constructed in the second century; and information from the seventh century indicates that the large temple was erected by Antoninus Pius. In classic literature the first mention of Heliopolis is in the third century; but coins found in the city show that it existed in the first century, when it was a Roman colony.

Its origin, however, belongs to a still earlier period, for it was the principal center of the Syrian sun-worship. This is corroborated by the fact that the name "Baalbek" is found among the Syrians and the Arabians. The meaning of the second part of the name is inexplicable; but the first part suggests the old Semitic "Baal." It is doubtful whether this city is mentioned in the Old Testament. Some identify it with Baal-gad; but Baal-gad could not have lain so far north. Others think that it is Aven (Amos i. 5), because the Greek translation renders "Aven" by "On"—the usual designation of "Heliopolis." The word "On," however, borrowed from the Egyptians, can not with justification be applied to a Syrian city; and the place mentioned by Amos is undoubtedly in the neighborhood of Damascus. Baalbek is mentioned several times in Talmud and Midrash; compare Neubauer, "G. T." p. 286; compare also SOLOMON IN RABBINICAL LITERATURE.

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J. JR.

F. BU.