

One responsum written by Mirels is found in the collection "Eben ha-Shoham." See also *JEW. ENCYC.* i. 474, *s.v.* ALTONA.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Jacob Emden, *Megillat Sefer*, ed. Kahana, pp. 10, 13, Warsaw, 1888; Dembitzer, *Kcilitat Yofn*, i. 1, 8a, 91b, 92a, Cracow, 1888; Fuenn, *Keneset Yisrael*, p. 328.

D. S. MAN.

**MIRELS, ZEBI HIRSCH BEN AARON:** German Talmudist; rabbi of Schwerin in the middle of the eighteenth century. He received his early education in London. After studying at various yeshivot he became rabbi at Wreschen, Poland, and shortly after was appointed rabbi to the congregation at Schwerin. He was the author of "Mispar Zeba'am" (Berlin, 1787), a pilpulistic treatise on the Talmud, in two parts—"Pinnot Zeba'aw" and "Erez Zebi."

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Fuenn, *Keneset Yisrael*, i. 285; Walden, *Shem ha-Gedolim he-Hadash*, i. 39; Steinschneider, *Cat. Bodl.* col. 275; Fürst, *Bibl. Jud.* ii. 380.

E. C. S. J. L.

**MIRÈS, JULES ISAAC:** French financier; born at Bordeaux Dec. 9, 1809; died at Marseilles in 1871. A broker in 1848, he became, after the February Revolution of that year, director of the gas company of Arles. Subsequently he bought the "Journal des Chemins de Fer" and founded the "Conseiller du Peuple," which became quite popular through Lamartine's contributions. Together with Millaud, Mirès organized the "Caisse des Chemins de Fer," of which he became sole director in 1853. In 1851 he bought "Le Pays" and "Le Constitutionnel." He undertook colossal works at Marseilles, including the construction of a harbor and of a new quarter of the city, and the installation of a system of illumination by gas. In 1860 he obtained the concession for the construction of the Roman railroads and for the negotiation of the Turkish loan. On July 11, 1861, he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and to the payment of a fine of 3,000 francs, but he succeeded in getting this verdict set aside on April 21, 1862, and was rehabilitated by the court of Douai. Toward the end of 1869 Mirès was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined 3,000 francs on account of his pamphlet "Un Crime Judiciaire," attacking the expert Monginot and the judges who had tried his suit against the firm of Pereire.

He contributed several financial articles to "Le Constitutionnel" and "La Presse," and published a number of pamphlets, including "Aperçus Financiers" (1868) and "Mémoires Judiciaires" (in his own defense).

He was decorated by Napoleon III. with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor in 1860. His daughter married a French nobleman.

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S. J. KA.

**MIRIAM.**—**Biblical Data:** Prophetess; daughter of Amram and sister of Moses and Aaron (I Chron. vi. 3; Ex. xv. 20; Num. xxvi. 59). When Moses was left at the river Miriam watched from a distance until Pharaoh's daughter took him up, whereupon she proposed to the princess to find a Hebrew nurse; the princess assenting to this, Miriam returned with her mother (Ex. ii. 4-7). After the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea Miriam sang a song of triumph, in which all the women joined (Ex. xv. 20-21). Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses on account of the Cushite woman whom he had married, whereupon God summoned Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to the tabernacle of the congregation, reproved her, and punished her with leprosy. She was healed through the prayers of Moses, but was obliged to remain without the camp of the

Israelites for seven days, although the people did not proceed until she had returned (Num. xii.). Miriam died in the desert at Kadesh, where she was buried (Num. xx. 1). In Micah vi. 4 she is mentioned, with Moses and Aaron, as a leader of the people.

S. J. Z. L.

—**In Rabbinical Literature:** Miriam was born at the time when the Egyptians began to embitter the lives of the Israelites by imposing arduous

tasks upon them (comp. Ex. i. 14), and for this reason she was called "Miriam," since the consonants in the word "Miriam" (מִרְיָם) may also read "marim" (= "bitter"; Cant. R. ii. 11). She was called also "Puah," and was, like her mother, a midwife (comp. Ex. i. 15). When only five years of age she was skilful enough to help her mother (Ex. R. i. 17; see JOCHEBED). She had the courage to tell Pharaoh that he would be punished by God for his cruelty to Israel, and almost lost her life in consequence (ib.). When her father, Amram, had divorced her mother as a result of the cruel edict referring to the exposure of the children, she induced him to take her mother back (ib.; Soṭah 12a), and she sang and danced on the day of the remarriage of her parents (Ex. R. i. 23; B. B. 120a). She predicted to her father that a son would be born to him who would liberate Israel from the Egyptian yoke. When Moses was born her father kissed her and said, "Your prophecy, my daughter, is fulfilled." But when subsequently the child had to be cast away



Miriam.

(From the Sarajevo Haggadah of the fourteenth century.)

her parents upbraided her and asked what would now be the outcome of her prophecy. Miriam therefore went to the river (Ex. ii. 4) to see how her prophecy would be fulfilled (Ex. R. i. 26; *Soṭah* 12b-13a).

Miriam is said to have had also the following names: Ephrath, Helah, Naarah, Azubah, Jerioth, Zohar, Zereth, Ethan, and Aharhel (comp. I Chron. ii. 18, iv. 5-8), which were given to her on special occasions (Ex. R. i. 21; *Soṭah* 11b-12a). She was married to Caleb b. Jephunneh, or b. Hezron, to whom she bore Hur (comp. I Chron. ii. 18-21). Then she fell ill (hence her name "Helah") and was thereupon left by her husband (hence the name "Azubah"). Subsequently she regained her health, became again like a young woman (hence the name "Naarah"), and was taken back by her husband (Ex. R. l.c.). Miriam was the ancestress of King David, and of Bezaleel, who made the Tabernacle and its vessels. Bezaleel's wisdom (comp. Ex. xxxi. 3) is said to have been due to his grandmother Miriam (Ex. R. xlviii. 6). To have so illustrious a descendant was Miriam's reward for not obeying Pharaoh (comp. Ex. i. 21; Ex. R. l.c.). When Miriam talked against Moses (comp. Num. xii.) she did not intend to slander him; she wished him to live with his wife and raise children (Deut. R. vi. 6). But when she was punished with leprosy, and had to remain without the camp, God honored her by officiating as priest Himself (Zeb. 102a). The Israelites waited for her seven days (Num. xii. 15; *Soṭah* 9b), for she had once waited for Moses by the river (Ex. ii. 4).

Miriam is regarded as the savior of Israel (Ex. R. xxvi. 1). For her sake a marvelous well accompanied the Israelites, a rock from which water flowed. This well disappeared after Miriam's death (*Ta'an*. 9a). It was subsequently shown in the sea (*Shab.* 35a). Miriam, like Moses and Aaron, died by a kiss from God (M. K. 28a), for the angel of death could not take her; and worms did not touch her body (B. B. 17a). Another legend says that Miriam, like Moses and Aaron, died on account of the water of strife ("me meribah"; comp. Num. xx. 7-13). This seems inconsistent, for, according to the Bible as well as the legends, water became scarce only after Miriam's death, with the disappearance of the well (Lev. R. xxxi. 5 and commentaries *ad loc.*).

s. J. Z. L.

**MIRKES, SOLOMON ZALMAN BEN JUDAH LÖB:** Lithuanian Talmudist of the eighteenth century; a native of Mir, government of Minsk. He published at Königsberg in 1769 his "*Derush*," a funeral oration on the death of R. Abraham, chief rabbi of Frankfort-on-the-Main. In 1771 he was rabbi of Frankfort-on-the-Oder, where he published in that year his two works: "*Sharsheret ha-'Abotot*," containing novellæ, decisions, and discussions upon Talmudic matters, and "*Shulḥan Shelomoh*," a compendium of the *Shulḥan 'Aruḥ*, Oraḥ Ḥayyim, according to the Aḥaronim.

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**MIRROR:** An object having a nearly perfect reflecting surface. In ancient times mirrors were invariably made of metal; in Egypt, of polished brass. It is no doubt this kind of mirror to which reference is made in Ex. xxxviii. 8 and in Job xxxvii. 18. Reflections might also be seen in still water (Prov. xxvii. 19). In the enumeration of women's ornaments in Isa. iii. 23, hand-mirrors seem to be included; but this is somewhat doubtful. References to mirrors occur in the Apocrypha (Ecclus. [Sirach] xxii. 11) and in the New Testament (I Cor. xxxiii. 12).

The Rabbis were acquainted with the use of mirrors, sometimes employing metal (*Kelim* xxx. 2). On the Sabbath it was not allowable to look into a mirror unless it was fixed on a wall (*Shab.* 149a). It would appear that later there was a tendency to forbid men to view themselves in mirrors, as this was regarded as effeminate (see Levy, "*Neuhebr. Wörterb.*" i. 236). Nevertheless, the members of Rabbi's family were allowed to do so (Yer. *Shab.* vi. 7) because they were "close to the government."

The modern Jews of eastern Europe have a number of superstitions in regard to mirrors the exact origin of which it is difficult to trace. Mirrors are covered when a person dies. The angel of death will be seen if one looks into a mirror at such a time. If a mirror is broken, seven years of poverty will result; this is a general superstition, and not confined to Jews. In Galicia it is supposed that if one puts a mirror in front of a sleeping man with a candle between them, the sleeper will follow a person whither the latter wills. If the sleeper strikes one under these circumstances, the person stricken will not live more than a year. J.

**MI-SHEBERAK.** See SACRIFICE.

**MISHLE SINDABAR.** See SINDABAR.

**MISHNAH** (construct state, *Mishnat*): A noun formed from the verb "*shanah*," which has the same meaning as the Aramaic "*matnita*," derived from "*teni*" or "*tēna*." The verb "*shanah*," which originally meant "to repeat," acquired in post-Biblical Hebrew the special force of "to teach" and "to learn" that which was not transmitted in writing but only orally; the development of connotation being due to the fact that the retention of teachings handed down by word of mouth was possible only by frequent recitation.

"*Mishnah*," the derivative of the verb "*shanah*," means therefore: (1) "instruction," the teaching and learning of the tradition, the word being used in this sense in Ab. iii. 7, 8; and (2) in a concrete sense, the content of that instruction, the traditional doctrine as it was developed down to the beginning of the third century of the common era. "*Mishnah*" is frequently used, therefore, to designate the law which was transmitted orally, in contrast to "*Mikra*," the law which is written and read (e.g., B. M. 33a; Ber. 5a; Hag. 14a; 'Er. 54b; Kīd. 30a; Yer. Hor. iii. 48c; Pes. iv. 130d; Num. R. xiii.; and many other passages); and the term includes also the halakic midrashim, as well as the *Tosefta* or explanatory additions to the *Mishnah* (Kīd. 49b; see *BARAITA*). In this wider sense the word was known to the Church Fathers, who, however, regarded it as