

**MALACHI, BOOK OF.**—**Biblical Data:** The Book of Malachi is the last in the canon of the Old Testament Prophets. It has three chapters in the Masoretic text, while in the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Peshitta it has four. The King James Version also, following the latter versions, has four chapters. As in the books of Isaiah, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes, the last verse in the Masoretic text is a repetition of the last verse but one. The style of the book is more prosaic than that of any of the other prophetic books; the parallelism met with in the others is here less pronounced, and the imagery often lacks force and beauty. The method of treatment is rather novel; it approaches the teaching method of the schools; Cornill speaks of it as "easutic-dialectic." Thus the prophet first states his proposition; then he follows with remonstrances that might be raised by those he addresses; finally he reasserts his original thesis (comp. i. 2 *et seq.*, 6 *et seq.*; ii. 13 *et seq.*, 17; iii. 8, 13 *et seq.*). This form adds vividness to the argument. The book may be divided into three sections—(1) i. 1–ii. 9; (2) ii. 10–17; (3) iii. (A. V. iii. and iv.), the divisions given being those of the Masoretic text.

Ch. i. 2–ii. 9 represent YHWH as Ruler and loving Father. It opens with a tender allusion to the love shown by YHWH to Judah in the past; yet Judah acted faithlessly, deserting its benefactor. Malachi

then addresses himself to the priests, **Contents.** those who are to lead the people in the way of YHWH. He castigates them for being derelict in their duty by offering on YHWH's altars polluted bread and animals that have blemishes. By doing so they show that they despise YHWH (i. 6–10). But YHWH can do without their worship, for the time will come when the whole heathen world will worship Him (i. 11–14). If the priests will not heed the admonition, dire punishment will be visited upon them (ii. 1–8).

Ch. ii. 10–17 speaks of YHWH as the supreme God and Father of all, and inveighs against those who had left their Jewish wives and married heathen women.

Ch. iii. (A. V. iii. and iv.) speaks of YHWH as the righteous and final Judge. It begins with the announcement that the messenger of YHWH will come to prepare the way for Him by purifying the social and religious life (1–4). YHWH will call to judgment all those who have transgressed the moral law and have been lax in the observance of the ritual; He invites all who have gone astray to return to Him and receive His blessings (5–15). The faithful will be blessed, while those who persist in disobeying the law of God will be punished (16–21). The book closes with a final exhortation to the godly.

Malachi, as opposed to the other prophetic books, lays much stress upon ceremonial observance (i. 6 *et seq.*, 13 *et seq.*; iii. 7 *et seq.*, 22): the priest is YHWH's messenger (ii. 7, iii. 3 *et seq.*), and the law of Moses, with its statutes and observances, must be strictly observed (iii. 22). Yet he is

**Prophetic** not a formalist; the book breathes the **Tone.** genuine prophetic spirit. Thus, from the idea of the brotherhood of all Israelites he deduces the social duties which they owe to one another (ii. 10). Ceremonial observance

is of value in his eyes only so long as it leads to spiritual service. In scathing language he lays bare the moral degeneracy of his time, a time given over to adultery, false swearing, oppression of the hireling and the widow and the fatherless (iii. 5 *et seq.*). Especially severe is he toward those who had entered into wedlock with heathen women (ii. 11–16).

The conditions that existed under his predecessors Haggai and Zechariah seem to have existed at the time of Malachi. The Exile is a matter of the past; the Temple is built, and sacrifices are being offered (i. 10, iii. 1–10). Malachi describes most faithfully the temper of his generation. The people had strayed away from YHWH, and sought, by an assumption of indifference and by mockery, to hide their restlessness. The exiles had been disillusioned when they found the land of their fathers a wilderness. Drought, locusts, failure of harvests (iii. 10 *et seq.*) had deepened their discontent. YHWH's sanctuary had been rebuilt, but still their condition did not improve; they were growing impatient and were asking for proofs of YHWH's love (iii. 13 *et seq.*). Under the pressure of these unfavorable circumstances, priests and people neglected to show YHWH the honor due to Him (i. 2 *et seq.*). Malachi lays stress upon the inevitableness of the Day of Judgment, the coming of which would prove to the skeptical that devotion and fear of God are not in vain, but will be rewarded. The messenger of YHWH and the Last Judgment form the closing theme of Malachi's prophecy. The messenger will come in the person of Elijah, who will regenerate the people and restore them to union with YHWH.

—**In Rabbinical Literature:** Malachi is identified with Mordecai by R. Nahman and with Ezra by Joshua b. Karha (Meg. 15a). Jerome, in his preface to the commentary on Malachi, mentions that in his day the belief was current that Malachi was identical with Ezra ("Malachi Hebrei Esdras Existimant"). The Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel to the words "By the hand of Malachi" (i. 1) gives the gloss "Whose name is called Ezra the scribe." According to Sotah 48b, when Malachi died the Holy Spirit departed from Israel. According to R. H. 19b, he was one of the three prophets concerning whom there are certain traditions with regard to the fixing of the Jewish almanac. A tradition preserved in pseudo-Epiphanius ("De Vitis Proph.") relates that Malachi was of the tribe of Zebulun, and was born after the Captivity. According to the same apocryphal story he died young, and was buried in his own country with his fathers.

—**Critical View:** The name מלאכי is not a "nomen proprium"; it is generally assumed to be an abbreviation of מלאכיה (= "messenger of YHWH"), which conforms to the Μαλαχίας of the Septuagint and the "Malaehias" of the Vulgate. The Septuagint superscription is ἐν χειρὶ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ, for ביד מלאכי. Wellhausen, Kuonen, and Nowack consider ch. i. 1 a late addition, pointing to Zech. ix. 1, xii. 1. Cornill states that Zech. ix.–xiv. and Malachi are anonymous, and were, therefore, placed at the end of the prophetic books. Mal. iii. 1 shows almost conclusively that the term מלאכי was misunderstood, and that the proper name originated in a

misconception of the word. The consensus of opinion seems to point to 432–424 B.C. as the time of the composition of the book. This was the time between the first and second visits of Nehemiah to Jerusalem. Some assert that the book was written before 458 B.C., that is, before the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Boehme, in *Stade's Zeitschrift*, vii. 210 *et seq.*; Driver, *Introduction*; D. Knobel, *Prophetismus der Hebräer*, i. 386, Breslau, 1837; Bleek, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2d ed., i. 357; Cornill, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, pp. 205 *et seq.*, Freiburg, 1896; Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 158, Chicago, 1895.

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**MALACHI, ABRAHAM.** See ABRAHAM MALAKI.

**MALACHI B. JACOB HA-KOHN:** Prominent Talmudist and methodologist of the eighteenth century; the last of the great rabbinical authorities of Italy; died before 1790. He was dayan at Leghorn, and apparently lived to an old age. A decision by him, dated Nisan, 1732, and referring to a civil case at Rome, is included in the responsa of Rabbi Isaiah Bassani of Reggio ("Todat Shelamim," No. 11, Venice, 1741). In the controversy between Eybeschütz and Emden he sided with the former (letter of the rabbinate of Leghorn in "Luhot 'Edut," p. 23). He is especially famous for his "Yad Mal'aki" (Leghorn, 1767; Berlin, 1856; Przemysl, 1877), a methodological work in three parts: part one contains an alphabetical list of all the rules and technical terms found in the Talmud, with explanations; part two deals with rules regarding the codifiers; part three treats of the rules relating to legal decisions, explaining certain general principles of legal responsa. Malachi wrote also a liturgical work, "Shibhe Todah" (Leghorn, 1744), containing prayers for the 22d of Shebat, a fast-day instituted by the community of Leghorn.

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**MALAGA** (מַלַּאכָה, מַלְאָכָה, מַלְאָחָה): Spanish Mediterranean seaport; capital of the province of Malaga; said to have been founded by the Phenicians. Malaga was an important place of commerce in the time of the Romans and had Jewish inhabitants at a very early date. During the Moorish supremacy the Jews there enjoyed complete equality and, especially in the time of Samuel ibn Nagdelah, were even held in high esteem, although under the Almohades they shared the sufferings of their brethren in the rest of Spain. The sources of information are very scanty concerning the Jewish community of Malaga, which, although not so large as those of Seville, Cordova, and Granada, was still of some importance. When the city was taken by the Spanish, Aug. 18, 1487, the Jews from Seville and Cordova, who had been baptized by force and had sought protection in Malaga from the persecutions of the Inquisition, were cruelly tortured and killed. All the Malaga Jews, 400 to 450 in number, mostly women who spoke Arabic and dressed like Moorish women, were taken captive and condemned to slavery with the remainder of the inhabitants. The young Solomon ibn Verga was sent to the Spanish communities to collect money for their ransom, and

succeeded in raising 20,000 gold doubloons. With this sum, added to the money and jewels the captives themselves possessed, they were redeemed and sent to Africa in two sailing vessels by the chief tax-collector Don Abraham Senior, who had become a Christian and who, probably because of his change of faith, is not mentioned by the contemporary Jewish chroniclers. After the year 1492 Jews were no longer allowed to live in Malaga, though Maranos were still found there in the eighteenth century. Malaga is the birthplace of Solomon ibn Gabirol, and there lived Isaac ha-Levi ibn Hakam ha-Sofer (a contemporary of Isaac b. Sheshet), Judah and Moses Alashkar, and others.

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**MALBIM, MEÏR LÖB BEN JEHIEL MICHAEL:** Russian rabbi, preacher, and Hebraist; born at Volochisk, Volhynia, in 1809; died at Kiev Sept. 18, 1879. The name "Malbim" is derived from the initials of his name (מַלְבִּים), and became his family name by frequent usage. Malbim was educated in Hebrew and Talmud by his father and by his stepfather (R. Löb of Volochisk). He showed unusual talent from his early childhood, and his works indicate that he had a considerable knowledge of secular sciences. From 1838 to 1845 he was rabbi of Wreschen, district of Posen, and in the latter year was called to the rabbinate of Kempen, where he remained until 1860; he was thereafter known as "der Kempener." In 1860 Malbim became chief rabbi of Bucharest, Rumania. But he could not agree with the rich German Jews there; they wished to introduce the Reformed rite, and did



Meïr Löb Malbim.

not shrink even from violence in the pursuit of their aims. By intrigues they succeeded in throwing him into prison, and though he was liberated through the intervention of Sir Moses Montefiore, it was upon the condition that he leave Rumania.

Malbim went to Constantinople and complained to the Turkish government, but obtained no satisfaction. After staying six months in Paris, he went to Lencziza, government of Kalisz, Russian Poland, as successor to his deceased father-in-law, Hayyim Auerbach (1866). Shortly after he was rabbi at Kherson, and thence was called to the rabbinate of Moghilef, on the Dnieper (1870). There, too, his lack of subservience provoked the resentment of the richer Jews; these denounced him as a political criminal, and the governor of Moghilef ordered him to leave the town. Malbim then went to Königsberg as chief rabbi of the Polish community, but there he