

The Community

Public Accusation During Worship

A Statement Made in Sumbat on September 27, 1930

T.-S. 13.28

(It was the duty of every person to be a guardian of public morality. The synagogue service was the opportunity for exposing individuals suspected of incorrect behavior (see p.). The teacher in Sumbat, ^a) whom we find here accused by a "newcomer," who was supported by a man from Aleppo, had come most probably from the same place as those persons. The beautifully written (but partly effaced) document is not signed, which shows that all the parties concerned - and in particular the accused - had second thoughts as to the advisability of following up the incident.)

The following occurred in presence of (the undersigned witnesses). Thus it was: We were present on Sabbath...in the synagogue and prayed. The cantor took the Torah codex ^b) (out of the ark), as is usual, opened it and showed it to the community, and then invited M. Gediqi, the teacher, b. Halifa, a (ay he rest in) E(den), to ascend and read a section of the weekly portion... For this is the custom of the Sumbat community, that either the cantor reads a section or one, of those present, selected by him.

However, when he invited the above mentioned person and the latter rose from his seat in order to ascend and read, a person

known as Bahrān,^{a)} the newcomer, jumped up and prevented him from ascending, saying to him: "You are a man tainted with sin;^{d)} we shall not allow you to pass over our heads."^{e)} We disapproved of this very strongly; however, he was supported by other persons speaking from their places, namely, Budair,^{f)} the Aleppan, and another person. There was a row, and the people of higher station went out.

What is known to us of this affair is confirmed herewith by our signature, and we have handed over this document to M. Ḥedīqā, the teacher, b. Ḥalfān, so that it should be in his hand as a proof and instrument to ensure his rights after this day.

The witnessing of this testimony was deferred until Friday, the New Moon^{g)} of ^{in the year} Marḥeshwan one thousand four hundred and two years according to the era to which we are used in the town^{h)} of Sunday.

Valid, ratified, and confirmed.

Notes

- a) A large village in Lower Egypt, on the right arm of the Nile, between (Kinyat) Zifta and al-Mahalla.
- b) Normally, a Torah scroll is used in synagogue service (see p.).
- c) A misspelling or mispronunciation of the name Baribā, which is a Maghribi form of the Biblical name Abraham.
- d) Literally: "upon you are sins," rajal taht ma'igil.
- e) The congregation was seated on cushions along the walls. Thus, on his way to the platform, the teacher would have been "above the heads" of the worshippers.
- f) Badair means "little moon." However, the name Badr, "moon," was not common at that time among Jews (cf. the Muslim name Abu l-Badr).
- g) The first day of the month Margašim of that year coincided with Saturday, September 1890. However, the New Moon was celebrated two days, including the preceding Friday.
- h) A translation of Hebrew Ir, which designated at that time a small provincial town.

חלונה על מה שקרה בשעת קריאת התורה

בעיר סנבאט
(27 ספטמבר 1990)

פ"ש 12.26

- 1 מעשה שהיה בפנינו אנו חחומים מטה ...
- 2 זה כן הוה חזרנא בסנבאט יום אלסבת אל] פי אן]כניסה
- 3 וצלינא ואכרג אלחזאן אלמצחף אלחורה עלי מא גראת אלעאדה בה
- 4 ופחה אוראה אלי אלנאס תם אנתאסתדעא במרנן ורבנן צדקה המלמד
- 5 בר חלפון נע ליצעד יקרא פצל מן אלפרשה וינזל לאן כנא גראת עאדה
- 6 אלגמאעה בסנבאט יקרא אמא אלחזאן פצל או מן אראה מן אלחאצור
- 7 פלמא אסתדעא בהדא אלאנסאן אלמקדם דכרה פקאם מן מוצעה
- 8 ליצעד יקרא פוחב אנסאן יערף בהרון (!) אלטארי ומנעה מן דלך ולם
- 9 ימקנה מן אלצעוד וקאל לה אנך רגל חחה מעאצי מא נמכנך חצעד
- 10 עלי ראוסנא פאמתעטנא מן דלך אמתעאט אן גפאפאפא עטים וסאעדוה
- 11 באלכלאם קום אכר מן אמכונהם // והם בדיר אלחלבי ואנסאן אכר // ואתשושו אלנאס וכרגו עליתחם
- 12 ומא עלמנא מן דלך טרחנא בה כטוסנא ודפענא דלך למרנן ורבנן
- 13 צדקה המלמד בך חלפון נע ליכוון בידה חגה ווחאק לאסתיפא חקה
- 14 לבעד אליום ואתאכרת אלשהאדה ליום אלגמעה אלדי הו ראש חדש
- 15 מרחשון דשנה אלפא וארבע מאה ותרין שנין למניינא דרגילננא ביה
- 16 בעיר סנבאט שריר ובריר וקיים

א' ח' מ' נ'