

HANUKAH FEATURE
(Continued from Page 1)

or perhaps yet another name), the story became known as "Tales of Sendebor", and the name of the inventive storyteller himself was, sad to say, completely forgotten. So widely was the story loved that it was told from land to land and repeated in many tongues. Even the very birthplace of the story was forgotten and none could swear whether the first teller lived in India, or Persia, or perhaps along the shores of the Mediterranean.

Now the story tells of a weak king, his deceitful queen, and his loyal son. The young queen vainly attempts to seduce the prince, then falsely accuses him. Before the king finally understands the truth, the queen and the sages vie in telling him many tales. In the end they all, except for the wicked queen, live happily ever after.

So, too, did the story itself, although as it flourished it experienced many adventures. For as it journeyed from land to land and from tongue to tongue, it gained some details and lost others, and even its name underwent change. Thus a Latin version was known as The Seven Sages of Rome. A Spanish version was known as The Book of Deceits. But in Hebrew it was known always as Tales of Sendebor.

As the years and centuries wore on, many scholars, as is the way with scholars, became curious as to the true origins of the story and the history of its wanderings. They studied the manuscripts they could find, and the printed books. They wondered where the story was first told and how it reached Europe from Asia. Some held it was first told in India; others said Persia.

The oldest manuscript they could find was in Syria, written in the tenth century. But this was believed to have been translated from a no longer surviving eighth-century Arabic version, which in turn had been translated from the Pahlavi. Before that, they speculated, it may have been told in India, in the Sanskrit language. The Hebrew version, Mishle Sendebor, was one of the earliest books to see print, and was published in Constantinople in 1516. However, this was never translated into English.

Now more than a thousand years after the unknown original story-teller died, there lived in the great city of New York many thousands of leagues west of the story's mysterious Asiatic birthplace another man with scholarly gifts, a certain Morris Epstein, a writer, editor and professor of the English language and literature. One day, while studying a Middle English version of a the story, Dr. Epstein also became interested in the history of the tale. He, too, began to examine the manuscripts and the books, and soon found himself pursuing the heart of the mystery of the Sendebor history.

Who first told the story? It had so many characteristic Hebrew turns of phrase, so many striking similarities to much works as the biblical Book of Esther. Was it possible that the story was Hebraic in origin?

How did the story arrive in the West from the East--and when? Was it perhaps part of the cargo of the wide-

AT TEMPLE THIS FRI.

Cantor Arthur Koret, President of the Cantors Assembly of America, now visiting our city, has graciously accepted his invitation to chant the liturgy at Temple Beth Shalom for this week's Friday evening services on December 22, 1967. Services commence at 8:30 p.m. in the main sanctuary. Cantor Koret is affiliated with the Temple Emanuel of West Hartford, Connecticut, and is renowned throughout the Eastern part of the country as an outstanding Cantor and musician. He is also a lecturer at the world-famous Juilliard School of Music.



CANTOR KORET

The Temple Sisterhood will host the congregation to an Oneg Shabbat refreshment period in the social hall im-

mediately after the services. Rabbi Aaron S. Gold, spiritual leader of the Temple will officiate and conduct the services.

ranging Jewish merchants whose ships roamed the Mediterranean in the ninth century?

What was the oldest extant true version of Mishle Sendebor? Was a manuscript he found in Oxford University, older than the book printed in Turkey in 1516, a more reliable version?

To these questions, after many stirring literary adventures and labors, Epstein felt compelled to answer, "Yes." To report his view, he wrote a book entitled, like the original story, Tales of Sendebor. And in his book he offered, for the first time since they were first told many centuries ago, a complete collection of all the stories in Hebrew, and, also for the first time, an excellent and compatible translation into English, generously annotated.

In his book, too, Epstein tells of his exciting adventures in finding and comparing lost or forgotten manuscripts in many great foreign libraries in Oxford, New York, Cincinnati, Leningrad, the Vatican, London, Budapest and elsewhere. He adduces evidence, stylistic and contextual, to support his theory. He meticulously compares the many variants in the text.

And thus it came to pass that the Tales of Sendebor which delighted so many hearers and readers in so many lands over so many centuries once again occupies a satisfying and honorable place between the covers of a book, whose magic we can finally all enjoy in our own language. And as we happily enjoy this excellent and valuable book, so may the spirits of Sendebor and his original creator live happily ever after.

HANUKKAH Greetings



Fran & Carl Cohen

HAPPY HANUKKAH



Mr. and Mrs. Harry Herzog

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Harry and Kay Wallerstein

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Hal Loew

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