

## Dr. Roman Brandstaetter

# CROSS-EYED AT THE TALMUD

A very great man. A profound thinker, a Talmud expert, a Shulchan Aruch learned commentator, who delved deeply into all our secrets, absorbed all the most secret regulations, learned the hidden maxims of the Elders of Zion and, finally, after overcoming many difficulties in ancient Hebrew, he dug out the moral foundations of our religion which, until then, had been closed, with seven seals, to non-believers and – exposed the inferiority of Jewish ethics.

Who is this? Who? Kowalski, lawyer Kowalski, looking cockeyed at the Talmud and is, therefore, able, from a special viewpoint, to accurately see all those matters which have, so far, escaped the observation of our home-grown experts.

Lawyer Kowalski, burdened with his solid knowledge, filled to the ears with Hebrew quotation, brilliantly erudite in biblical and Talmudic issues and, naturally, handicapped with a long nose – would probably be a perfect type of a fanatical and inferior gab in the court of one of our tzaddikim – if not for the cunning that ordered Radom's Demosthenes to plunge into the depths of antisemitism, if only for the reason that such a profession has always been more profitable than sniffing Jewish gabardines in the chambers of a tzaddik.

But we must admit, honestly, that it was from such a turn, we are not very satisfied with the situation, because, in the end, it had to be dealt with for some yeshiva, by a man so well acquainted with our

religious, rabbinical argumentation and with an excellent command of the Hebrew language.

Abroad, for example, in Poronin near Paris, Kowalski would certainly have a great academic career. But, here, he wastes his abilities, his outstanding academic and oratory talents on some Radom trials and on camaraderie with the ignorant peasantry.

Recently, I read in the newspapers that Oxford University announced a competition to fill the Jewish Religious Studies chair. So, is it not a huge loss for humanity that Mr. Kowalski doesn't apply for the job?

It would be enough to write a letter to the dean, something like this: Lawyer Kowalski, from the city of Łódź, humbly requests the department to accept the collected signatures of peasants from Odrzywół or, possibly, attach the opinion of Wincenty Korczak. And there it is – like "amen" in a prayer.

We, sir, Oxford is not Radom. And abroad is abroad, *richtyg*? Educated people are needed there, people of history – this one or that one.

So, we Jews are filled with great sadness that one such as Kowalski, a brilliant individual, a European leader, a giant of thought, the glory of a generation, a speaker of ancient Greek standards – is our enemy. And, what's more, we are totally powerless against him, as our insults do not affect him. He stands above us in his inviolable glory, the sage and conscience of

the nation, the tribune of the most holy cause.

What are we to do? We are an unhappy nation, especially if we remember the words of Oscar Wilde (read *Łajdel* – a note intended for the lawyer Kowalski who, as we assume, knows no other language apart from Hebrew and Polish) that "a man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies".

So, we are lost, depressed, terrified. We have bowed our faces to the ground, in sudden despair, our eyes filled with tears of bitter sorrow, that soon our end will come, final and gloomy, that we will again hang our harps on lonely willows, our heads will be sprinkled with ashes. In the dust, we will cry out to the heavens for deliverance from Kowalski who, having looked with evil eyes at the Talmud, exposed all its secrets.

But we are immediately encouraged because we remember that there is a greater truth revealed in this Talmud paragraph, in the most hidden prophecy, which says, "He who fights with a cross-eye, dies from a cross-eye". That's what it says. That's the maxim. In black and white – that's the prophecy. It's in the Talmud.

In the most dark, shocking and ghastly chapter, dripping with the living blood of Christian children, the truth is written in tiny seed, a miraculous, clairvoyant oracle, "He who fights with a cross-eye, dies from a cross-eye"

And in which chapter is this also written, Oh defender of Radom and Talmud expert?

Because if an expert in the holy books of the Jews finds this chapter, he will receive, from us, a reward – a complete non-falsified text of the Talmud, with Lenin's notes, in the treasure trove of one of Warsaw's synagogues, kept under guard of five thousand *shammaysim*, armed

with machine guns, grenades, knives and scythes.

The Talmud expert did not know anything about this? What a pity. In any case, we advise you to refer to this detail in your defence speech. We advise that. Such a sensational speech will make a very good impression – in both Pzdry and Oxford.

## A. Steinkeller

Men's Clothing Studio  
Aleja Wolności 8, Częstochowa

Accepts all orders  
within the scope of tailoring  
using our own and  
entrusted materials

This cream removes freckles  
"ORLANDO"  
and softens skin

## Dr T. Lewkowicz

Eye Specialist  
has moved his practice to  
Aleja N. Panny Marji No.6 (1st floor)

## Maxim Gorky

Maxim Gorky has died and, with his passing, so has perhaps the most outstanding representative of pre-war Russian literature.

The expressions of this natural talent are unique, developing like a wild, magnificent flower, without artificial cultural soil and that is why they speak so strongly and directly.

Maxim Peshkov, which is the real name of the writer, the son of a poor upholsterer, was born in Nizhny Novgorod in 1869.

Having barely learned to read and write, he lost his parents. His relatives, not knowing what to do with the boy, gave him to a shoemaker.

Twine and hoof were not to be his destiny. So soon, penniless, he escapes into the world that was, for him, wide and endless Russia. Leading the life of a typical tramp, he takes up all the trades that can provide the means to satisfy his always bloated stomach.

For some time, he works for a surveyor. He then tries his hand at painting icons and holy pictures. He is then a cook on a ship sailing on the Volga River.

He returns to the shoemaker, stops a while at a bakery and, for the longest time, stays in the railway workshops in Tiflis [Tbilisi].

During this wandering, he subconsciously studies and investigates mankind. He sees the disproportions of the social system of that time. Words and images grow within him, which then burst into flames of rebellion, making him a universal pioneer of the great idea of brotherhood.

And one day, as a young man in his twenties, he develops the need to be alone with his thoughts and impressions. His hand, toughened by work, takes up a pen and the first stories are written, published in "Kaukaz", under the pseudonym of Gorky.

Gorky ... *gorzki* [bitter]. This was the pseudonym which he chose for himself – a self-taught wanderer, a worker.

Because, everything that will come out of his pen will be imbued with bitterness and rebellion, as well as love for the little people.

Every word will scream with protest, shout with religion of love, demand the overthrow of all false idols and for the return, to man, of the kingdom on earth.

Having had direct experience with poverty, having looked into the most intimate recesses of life in a land of such terrible and social contrasts as in Tsarist Russia, with sketches and stories, he gains more

and more recognition, becoming, as it were, the poet of the oppressed and the poor.

The further development of Gorky's talent was influenced by his cordial relationship with Vladimir Korolenko, who sensed a great writer in him. He took care of his and helped him take further steps. Gorky becomes a collaborator of "Zyuznia" and writes the play "The Lower Depths", which brings him worldwide fame.

No writer, before or after, has shown such a ruthlessly realistic picture of human misery and the abuse of the soul due to social injustice, as did he, a regular tenant in temporary accommodation.

In this four-act play, spread by a great cry of rebellion which, in later years, would blaze with the fires of revolution, there is neither the suffering philosophy of Dostoevsky nor the somewhat stifled Christianity of Tolstoy, but a man from whom the power to fight and victory will be born.

Naturally, Gorky had to come into contact with the revolutionary currents that were gnawing away at the Russian colossus. He was also no stranger to prison.

During chats with the Volga River *burlaks* (boat or barge pullers), in confidences shared in lodging houses and taverns and clandestine meetings of Tiflis workers, he wholeheartedly and unreservedly

devotes himself to the fight for human rights.

With incredible temperament and courage, he will protest against any injustice, not even hesitating to publicly utter words of truth to the face of his dear friend Lenin, for the bloody repression of educated Russians.

Tuberculosis and escape from the *Okhrana* [Tsarist secret police] meant that this most active writer and unaffected by Russian mysticism, spent almost his entire life in exile.

Having left for America in 1906 and settling in Capri, for year, he worked on propaganda for the social-revolutionary ideal, keeping close contact with leaders of other movements around the world.

After the outbreak of the war, he returns home and even joins the ranks. But he soon realises that, together with Russia, he had embarked on a false path. His violent speech, condemning the German barbarism, became famous all over the world.

Later, working together with Lenin did not produce any positive results either. Significant differences in political views and an organic disgust for terror and rape again drove Gorky to Italy.

Only significant concession from the extreme Bolshevik doctrines, certain normalisations of relations

in the Soviet Union, allowed Gorky to return to his homeland, which welcomes him with the highest honours, having realised what service this man had made in the fight for human rights.

He becomes the leader of the literary movement, a member of the Moscow Academy and, under his supervision, a great work is prepared – "The History of the Civil War (1917-1920)".

In those years, he added to his reputation as a writer and as a man, which began with stories and the plays "The Lower Depths", "Summerfolk", "Children of the Sun" and "My Childhood", with "The Work of Artamonov" and the first part of the play epic, "Egor Bulychev", staged at the Vakhtangov Theatre.

In both Russian and world literature, Gorky is a symbol of the uncompromising fight for human rights and a tireless fighter for those rights.

He devoted his entire life to this fight, believing that the idea of humanity would one day triumph over all others, provided that humanity, tired and troubled by fruitless searches, would find the way to the ancient source of love.

He lived with his faith and died with his faith.

J.S.W.