Rabbi Kook on Art
Kashar Jewish Sculpture
REMBRANDT AND DIVINE LIGHT
BY A. MELIKOFF

As an artist, I am interested in the Biblical architecture of creating 'grooved images' that have had such a profound influence in the creation of Jewish art.

One day I talked to the late Rabbi Kook about this prohibition. I asked him whether it is true that somewhere in our holy commentaries there is a passage which says that under certain conditions sculpture is allowed to be done by Jews.

The Rabbi knitted his brows. "Let me see, let me see," he said to himself. A few moments later he brought down huge volumes from the shelves; he plowed through them, at the table, he jumped up after another, moving his delicate fingers along the lines of the holy script as he read. This went on for half an hour; he looked like a hunter on the trail, a seeker after truth and knowledge. At last he stood triumphantly. "Here it is," he said. "Now listen to what our sages say about your question."

I don't remember the exact wording he quoted, but it was something like this: "Our sages say, 'let us read out, that it is allowed for Jews to make images, if those are done imperfectly and minimalistic.'"

This made me laugh. "Why are you laughing?" he asked.

"In that case," I replied, "I am sure my sculpture is kosher."

"Why?" he asked.

"Because my work is far from being perfect."

Now was his turn to laugh. He was all kindliness. We talked about art and he told me the following story:

"When I lived in London I used to visit the National Gallery, and my favorite picture was that of Rembrandt. I really think that Rembrandt was a Zaddick. Do you know that when I first saw Rembrandt's works, they reminded me of the legend about the creation of light? We see two Suns when that crescent moon, it was so strong and pellucid, that one could see from one and the world to the other, but God was afraid that the wicked might abuse it. What did He do? He created the Moon for the righteous whom Messiah should come. But man and then there are great men who are blessed and privileged to see it. I think that Rembrandt was one of them, and that the light in his pictures is the very light that was originally created by God Almighty."

I have read much about Rembrandt, but none gives such a vivid description of his genius."

Mr. Waley is a lover of art. He is a past-president of the Society of Portrait Photographers, and a member of the board of trustees of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is a frequent contributor to the Jewish Chronicle.

Central Committee for Jewish Education

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

In the nineteenth Annual Report of the Activities of the Central Committee for Jewish Education, under the auspices of the Jewish Memorial Council, mention is made of the accomplishments of the staff of the Central Committee during the past year.

The report indicates that in the past year the staff of the Central Committee has worked in the following fields: education, culture, and community service.

The report also states that the staff of the Central Committee has been active in the following activities: the establishment of new schools, the improvement of existing schools, the development of new programs, and the provision of educational services to Jewish communities.

The Central Committee for Jewish Education is an organization that works to enhance the quality of Jewish education in the United States. The organization is funded by a variety of sources, including grants from private foundations, corporate donations, and individual contributions.

Report of the Director of Jewish Education

The following is a summary of the report presented by the Director of Jewish Education:

The Director of Jewish Education, Mr. H. M. Adler, indicated in his report that the number of schools and classes for the 1951-1952 school year was as follows:

- Jewish Religious Education Board: 3,101
- Talmud Torahs (including Hebrew and English): 3,900
- Synagogue Classes: 1,400

The total number of students enrolled in these schools and classes for the 1951-1952 school year was approximately 30,000.

The report also indicates that the number of schools and classes for the 1952-1953 school year is expected to increase, with an estimated increase of 10 percent.

The Director of Jewish Education also indicated that the budget for the 1952-1953 school year is expected to increase by 15 percent.

The report concludes with a summary of the accomplishments of the Central Committee for Jewish Education during the past year, including the establishment of new schools, the improvement of existing schools, and the provision of educational services to Jewish communities.

"A JEWS' SYNAGOGUE"-One of the many sketches by Rembrandt, revealing both his sympathetic understanding of the Jews and his use of light, discussed by the Palestinian sculptor Melikoff with the late Rabbi Kook in the above article.