About these translations and transcriptions

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They are offered so readers can explore and compare these catechisms. They are not a scholarly edition. Anyone quoting or citing these texts for research should work from the original printed books.

English translation of R. Jeudah Leon Perez, Fundamento Solido, Baza y Thypo de la Sacro Sancta y Divina Ley (Amsterdam: Ishac Jeudah Leão Templo, 5489 [1729]), a Spanish catechism in dialogue between the Teacher (M.) and the Pupil (D.). Made from the Google Books digitized text of the copy in the University of Amsterdam library (Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana); no page images were available. The Spanish (and the Portuguese approbation) is translated in full; OCR errors have been corrected silently. Hebrew proof-texts have been restored from the standard biblical text where the digitized Hebrew was scrambled; several Hebrew commendatory poems in the front matter were too corrupt in the digitized text to translate and are marked as such. Printed folio numbers appear in grey brackets, e.g. [p. 5]. Footnotes are the translator's.

קחו מוסרי ואל כסף ודעת מחרוץ נבחר

Take my instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold. (Prov. 8:10)

ואל תסורו מאמרי פי

And depart not from the words of my mouth. (Prov. 5:7)

Solid Foundation[1]

Basis and Pattern of the Sacrosanct and Divine Law,
being Legal and Moral Doctrine,
to instruct, teach, plant, and root its Foundations,
imprinting them on the hearts of God's chosen people,
so that they may suck the sweet milk of the Doctrine of our Holy Fathers.
By an easy and clear method, in the form of a Dialogue, in the Castilian Language,
by
RIBI JEUDAH LEON
son of
JOSSEPH PEREZ,
as he teaches it to his children and disciples.
Grasp hold of doctrine, do not let it go; guard it, for it is your life. Prov. 4:13.
In AMSTERDAM, Year 5489.
At the Press of
ISHAC JEUDAH LEAO TEMPLO.

[p. —] ועתה בנים שמעו לי

And now, children, hearken to me. (Prov. 5:7)

למען תלך בדרך טובים וארחות צדיקים תשמר

[1] The original Spanish title reads: *Fundamento Solido. Baza, y Thypo de la Sacro Sancta, y divina Ley, siendo doctrina Legal, y Moral, para instruir, enseñar, plantar, y raigar sus Fundamentos, imprimiendolos en los coraçones del pueblo escogido de Dios, a fin de que mamen la dulce leche de la Doctrina de nuestros Sanctos Padres. Por un methodo facil, y distinto, en forma de Dialogo, en Lengua Castellana; por Ribi Jeudah Leon de Josseph Perez. Como la enseña a sus hijos, y discipulos.* Amsterdam: Ishac Jeudah Leao Templo, 5489 (= 1729). The Hebrew epigraphs at the head of the page are partly cut off in the digitized text.

That you may walk in the way of good men and keep the paths of the righteous. (Prov. 2:20)

The Book

יסוד עוז Yesod Oz[2]

[The descriptive paragraph of the Hebrew title page is too corrupt in the digitized text to translate.][3]

Amsterdam,
in the house and at the press of the honored Isaac Judah Leon Templo, may his Rock preserve him,
in the year "His foundation is in the holy mountains" (Ps. 87:1), by the minor reckoning.[4]

החזק במוסר אל תרף נצרה כי היא חייך

Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go; keep her, for she is your life. (Prov. 4:13)

[p. —] **Approbation**

הסכמה

APPROBATION
of the Most Erudite and Most Wise Lords, the Hahamim and Rabbis
of this K. K. de T. T. of
AMSTERDAM.[5]

Having, by order of the most illustrious lords of the Mahamad of this K. K. de T. T., examined with singular attention and particular pleasure a work composed by the most learned Senhor R. JEUDAH LEON PEREZ, entitled FUNDAMENTO SOLIDO, we find it most worthy of being printed, not only because its subject is devout, its style elegant, its concepts solid, and its reasonings acute, but principally because it contains a most important doctrine, with which it instructs and teaches the Foundations of our religion, opening to disciples the eyes of the understanding, exhorting them with its truth to the observance of our holy Law, so as to attain in this life a true and secure belief, and to enjoy in the other an eternal glory. As such we approve it; and at the same time we decree that no Israelite shall dare to print or cause to be printed the said Book, neither in whole nor in part, without the license of the aforesaid Author, for the term of thirteen years from the date hereof, under penalty of incurring and transgressing the precept against encroaching upon

[2]"Foundation of Strength," the Hebrew title of the work, drawn from Ps. 8:3, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You have founded strength" (*yissadta oz*), apt for a catechism for children.

[3]Legible fragments show that it weaves together verses on the education of the young (Ps. 8:3; Ps. 92:13–15, "like a cedar in Lebanon"; Prov. 22:6, "even when he is old he will not depart from it"; Jer. 1:10, "to build and to plant"; Ps. 68:36, "who gives strength and power to the people"), and states that the work was brought to press "in the vernacular" (*la'az*) for the merit of the House of Jacob by Judah Aryeh, son of Joseph Perez, of blessed memory, of the Perez family.

[4]A chronogram: the letters of the marked words yield the year [5]489 (1729).

[5]The approbation is in Portuguese. K. K. de T. T. = *Kahal Kados de Talmud Torah*, the united Portuguese-Jewish congregation of Amsterdam; the Mahamad was its governing board; Hahamim (sing. Haham) = the congregation's rabbis.

one's fellow's boundary,[6] remaining exposed to the curse of the Sages, ופרץ גדר ישכנו נחש "whoever breaks through a fence, a serpent shall bite him" (Eccl. 10:8). And so that none may plead ignorance, we sign this with our own hand.

Amsterdam, 10 Tammuz, year 5489.
David Israel Athias.
Ishac Haim Abendana de Britto.

[p. —] **Dedication**

To the Most Illustrious and Noble Señor
ABRAHAM DIAZ FERNANDES.

If to offer sacrifices to the supreme Object of victims is the obligation of the religious man, to sacrifice offerings to the creditor of one's debts is the courtesy of one who is obliged. In observance of this laudable maxim, I have dedicated to God the time for the study of His holy Law, and I consecrate to Your Worship the product of my vigils, so that under your protection, and with the efficacy with which you are accustomed to patronize those who labor with a disinterested spirit in the Law of God, the zeal may be made manifest with which I have endeavored to instruct in the Spanish Language those who have not been able to attain knowledge of our Sacred Tongue, in which most of our Authors have written—for which reason many cannot, without a long time of study, make themselves capable of what is most important for salvation and for the practice of good conduct. In this treatise, *Fundamento Solido*, I have reduced the whole foundation for attaining in this life a secure belief and for enjoying in the other an eternal glory—such as is surely being enjoyed, among the hierarchy of the immortals in the brilliant paradise of blessedness, by the most pious, devout, and beatified Señora RACHEL, your noble Wife, of blessed memory,[7] who, to sanctify the name of our true God, chose to be a glorious martyr in order to maintain and uphold the truth of this Solid Foundation of the sacrosanct Law of Moses. Her merit remains abiding for Your Worship and for your noble children, as possessors of so glorious a diadem; and as such it falls upon me as an obligation, over and above my debts, to dedicate this work to Your Worship.

Be pleased, then (my Lord), to accept this small part of my great debt, and do not leave me destitute of your generous protection; for if this offering which I now venture to dedicate to you is poor beside the opulence of your exalted merit, I assure you that there remains in me a gigantic will to aspire to some learning in which I may show Your Worship the regard with which I intend to proclaim the great number of my obligations, so that by them I may always pride myself on the title of being Your Worship's, my Lord,

[6]The prohibition of *hassagat gevul* (cf. Deut. 19:14), applied in rabbinic law to protect a printer's or author's rights.

[7]Spanish *de F. M. = de feliz memoria*, "of blessed memory." Her "martyrdom" for the sanctification of God's name (*kiddush ha-Shem*) presumably took place at the hands of the Iberian Inquisition; the text gives no further details.

Most humble servant,
who kisses your hands,[8]
JEUDAH LEON PEREZ.

[p. —] **Hebrew Poem by the Author's Son**[9]

My father, my father, crown of the glory of my head, my teacher and master, his Excellency the Author, may his lamp shine.

[The prose introduction to this Hebrew poem is too corrupt in the digitized text to translate.]

Judah, my author, will grow mighty in strength; like Shem and Eber, a precious testimony.

He breached and fenced the vineyard of delight; his right hand glorious, to be remembered for ever;

like a lion and a lioness, and greater than a prophet,[10] my teacher and my father, to the increase of his rule.

For the pupil and the youth, for villager and townsman, to make the ignorant understand, instead of rebuke:

teaching what profits, and making the face to shine, like a garment and a robe, a covering in the cold.

With instruction and understanding he orders his words, like Heman and Calcol,[11] to give understanding of Scripture;

he laid the foundation and built, with curtain and measuring reed, and set up its base; he prepared it and searched it out.

He asks and states, answers and concludes; and the binder of sheaves fills his bosom: *Yesod Oz* is its harvest—

to search out and to expound, to knead and to grind, grain and new wine for times of distress.

The words of the Sages, sealed and closed, he guards with strength like a young wild ox.

Of the Ten Commandments he speaks uprightly, and of the Thirteen Principles by way of reason,

with perfect virtues, for the man of discretion; crystal and coral, a crown upon his head.

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[8] *Q. S. M. B. = que sus manos besa*, the customary Spanish epistolary formula.

[9] The opening and closing lines (partly legible) identify the writer as a son of the author, apparently his firstborn ("his firstborn son opened his mouth"), named Yehosef (Joseph). The poem itself is printed in square script and is largely legible; a few words are uncertain.

[10] Cf. BT Bava Batra 12a, "A sage is greater than a prophet." "Lion" plays on the author's name, Judah Aryeh (Leon).

[11] The proverbial wise men of 1 Kings 5:11.

To benefit his people he changed his manner of speech: his word is in the vernacular, in a land cut off.

He reveals to his children and all his neighbors the truth, proving them in God's clear Law.

I entreat my God: may He gather my congregation and build my dwelling in the guarded city,

and may shine forth and give light like clear heat upon the light; may a man pure and clean bring good tidings.

[Signed:] the youngest, Yehosef, son of [the author] … "A son honors his father, and a servant his master" (Mal. 1:6).

[p. —] **Hebrew Poem by Yedidyah (?) ha-Kohen Willmas and Isaac Zeqli**

[The prose introduction to this Hebrew poem is too corrupt in the digitized text to translate.]

The foundations of *Yesod Oz* were cast in the light of a tried stone,[12]

a tower and lofty fortress in its walls,

set as the head of the corner in the innermost parts,

precious stones of splendor, engraved with a pen.

His thoughts, hewing flames of fire, are lofty,

to seek out what is good for the soul and good for the bones.

Hearken to the voice of instruction, and then you will be wise;

righteousness and peace among all that breathe.

He declares to the people of a foreign tongue, to old man and youth,

all the ordinances of the Law in the path of uprightness,

to learn and to teach them in the fitting season;

with joy he shall speak with friends in the gate.

His teaching drops like dew, to give understanding to the brutish;

perfect virtues in it scatter knowledge.

The flower of Lebanon is his, like the House of the Forest,

to acquire the source of wisdom not yet known.

A lion with roaring voice to guide us—

Judah prevailed over all who wield the scribe's pen;

[12]Isa. 28:16, "a tried stone, a precious cornerstone of sure foundation." The poem is printed in square script; the OCR appears to interleave its two columns, and the order of some lines is uncertain.

drops of pearls, of honeycomb, precious, our wealth;

radiance in the utterance of his words, like the appearance of the bow.

Children, come, entreat Him who dwells in might,

that He may hasten and establish the foundation of his stronghold;

righteous and victorious is he, as His seer has said:[13]

we shall rejoice and be glad in the generations of Perez.[14]

[Signed:] … ha-Kohen Willmas, S. T. … and the humble Isaac Zeqli, his disciple, "who poured water on his hands" (2 Kings 3:11).[15]

[p. —] **Hebrew Poem by Abraham di Lonzano**

[The prose introduction to this Hebrew poem is too corrupt in the digitized text to translate.]

[Meter:] composed of two vowels and a peg, two vowels and a peg, and three vowels.[16]

I shall call the daughters of song, and they shall sing

in a tongue that is glorious, a crown of beauty.

They have delighted in its stones and will crown it;

behold, He set in the Law light, a diadem and a crown.

What shall be done for it, precious and choice?

A word fitly spoken—and they will awaken the heart.

In *Yesod Oz* it is a guardian for all,

to answer every questioner, and they shall avow [Him].

And when Judah ascends to the heavens,

the place of the tent of our delight will be enlarged;

light has shone in the darkness like noonday.

I beseech You, Lord, have pity on our nation;

let us behold Jerusalem in its building,

and build the place of Your sanctuary for our glory.

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[13] Zech. 9:9.

[14] Ruth 4:18, "These are the generations of Perez," with a play on the author's surname.

[15] The signature lines are garbled. The first name of ha-Kohen Willmas cannot be read with confidence (perhaps Yedidyah). S. T. (ס"ט) = *Sefaradi Tahor*, "pure Sephardi," a customary epithet after a signature.

[16] A note on the Hebrew quantitative meter in the Sephardic (Arabic-derived) system, in which a "peg" (*yated*) is a consonant with a vocal shewa followed by a full vowel, and "vowels" (*tenu'ot*) are full vowels.

Abraham di Lonzano, S. T.

[p. —] **Hebrew Poem by Shalom Perez Osorio**

[The prose introduction to this Hebrew poem is too corrupt in the digitized text to translate.]

The splendor of the world's foundation, glorious in strength,

a treasury of fine pearls, for a sign and a wonder;

there God set statute and ordinance … glorious;[17]

the roots of the foundations of the Law, and its boughs as well,

spreading and fair upon the heights of the city;

its fruits sweeter to the soul than honey.

Hearken, take instruction, and keep the charge,

to be illumined with the light of life, in a dew of lights.

His teaching is taken from the clouds of purity;

he has brought forth his knowledge in flashes of radiance.

I, Shalom Perez Osorio, S. T., a son among the sons, the son of old age.[18]

[p. —] **"Faithful Are the Words of a Friend"**[19]

[Hebrew commendatory prose and poem, signed "I love those who love me" (Prov. 8:17) — the digitized text of this Hebrew passage is too corrupt to translate.]

[p. —] **Décimas**

IN PRAISE

of the Book entitled FUNDAMENTO SOLIDO

composed by the most learned Señor R. Jeudah Leon Perez

In this eminent edifice

that your rare genius has made,

if erudition is the roof,

eloquence is the cornice:

against time it will endure

without doubt, for I perceive

[17] One or more words of this line are missing in the digitized text.

[18] "Son of old age" (Gen. 37:3) suggests that the writer was the author's youngest son; the signature is only partly legible.

[19] The heading adapts Prov. 27:6, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." The writer's name, if given, is not legible.

that the SOLID FOUNDATION
which sustains the building
has, to make itself eternal,
your understanding for its base.
Sacred and moral Doctrine
is its fair architecture,
where thought is refined
and ingenuity sharpened;
from a work, in short, so rare
you gain (it is a known thing),
learned Perez, supreme glory,
for now every letter proclaims
monuments to your Fame,
statues to your Memory.

ELIAU CARDOZO.
D. G. M.[20]

[p. —] **Sonnet**

A small eulogy to the great merits of the learned Señor R. Jeudah Leon Perez, by an anonymous and intimate Friend of his.

With such FOUNDATIONS you composed
the profitable doctrines that you dictated,
that you equaled many moralists
and surpassed some teachers;
in the SOLID concepts that you wrote
and in the firm foundations that you laid,
you built a temple to your fame
and gave eternity to your glory.
The benefit that the public receives,

[20]The meaning of these initials after the signature is uncertain.

the good that is shared out among many,

God esteems as the greatest gift.

Happy the wealth that is laid up

and comes to be dispensed with such art

that it is open to the profit of all.

Décima

By the same.

In the questions that you pose,

and in the answers that you give,

if you cause many to marvel,

you satisfy all.

The work that you compose

is most worthy of praise,

and none can doubt

that whoever comes to read it,

after the pleasure of seeing it,

will have the benefit of profiting by it.

[p. —] Octavas

To the exalted pen and precious work
of the most learned R. JEHUDAH LEON PEREZ.
In praise of his book entitled FUNDAMENTO SOLIDO,
by his most intimate friend and compatriot,
Y. G. D. S.

The FOUNDATION of the sacred Law

your SOLID genius defines;

like a precious jewel, highly esteemed,

for being Unique, Alone, and Rare,

it is embraced by the Jewish people,

and all walk along its path;

but your exalted style is such

that in a small volume you say everything.

In the manner of Dialogues you set forth—

the Master, the Disciple, and the Hearer—

the word of God, giving strength,

since without preaching you persuade people;

for you, strong captain, who leave the world

marveling, in suspense and ardent,

bear its weight like another Atlas:

Articles, Precepts, and constant Faith.

[p. —] **Prologue**

To the Kind Reader, peace, good, and life.

If the Divine precept that each one love his neighbor as himself contains within it the whole Law,[21] then by just consequence what is good and praiseworthy for oneself, each one ought to do for his neighbor, this sovereign teaching extending even to enemies themselves. And this being so, with greater reason ought it to be fulfilled toward friends and brothers in God and professors of His Divine Law, fulfilling it and being zealous for God and His holy Doctrine—which I find to be far removed from us, though it is very near, in the mouth,[22] as the common people are wont to say: "To live a Jew and to die a Jew"—a true axiom. But to live without knowing what one believes is a body without a soul; for just as (as the Philosopher says) the soul is the final perfection of the body,[23] so (say I) knowing the Foundations of the Religion is the final perfection of the soul. And to believe without knowing what one believes does not befit the children of God, even though necessity obliges our youth to abandon, at a very tender age, the precious task of so sovereign a lesson.

Nevertheless, it would seem very well if they knew how to recite the Foundations of the Religion by heart, having learned them in infancy, so as to be able to show on every occasion the living efficacy of their faith and its infallible and evident dogmas; equaling in this way (though with a difference) the other nations, who learn their doctrines in childhood even if they do not apply themselves to letters—which is enough for them, raised on the milk of that teaching, to live constant in it and to be buried with it. Since, then, ours alone is the holy and true one, this eminent prerogative belongs to it alone, and in far greater measure.

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[21] Lev. 19:18; cf. the saying of Hillel, BT Shabbat 31a, and R. Akiba, Sifra *Kedoshim* 4:12 ("This is a great principle of the Torah").

[22] Deut. 30:14, "For the word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart."

[23] Aristotle, *De anima* II.1 (the soul as the first entelechy, or perfection, of the body); "the Philosopher" renders Perez's *el Docto*.

To this end (beloved Reader) I clothed myself with zeal and composed this work in the Castilian Language, to instruct and teach my children and disciples with this true and sublime Doctrine of the Divine Law. I named this work FUNDAMENTO SOLIDO, since it is the whole Foundation and base of our sacrosanct Religion, which stands well established upon the sacred Texts of Holy Scripture, remaining no less firm and stable because its stones are hewn from the mountains of the Doctrines of our most learned Masters and most eminent Sages of the sacred Talmud, which is the Oral Law,[24] built up by celebrated and weighty Authors such as Rabenu Moseh of Egypt and R. Joseph Albo,[25] and many others, as you will see from the references I indicate.

And thus, to fulfill the obligation that I owe to God, blessed be He, and to my brothers in general—and in particular to those who come from the dark Kingdoms of Spain and Portugal—I was moved to write, as I say, this most useful book in the Spanish Language; all the more since most of our Authors have written and composed in the holy Hebrew, the first to write on this subject being the most virtuous R. Abraham Yaguel Galico,[26] but very succinctly and compendiously, in Hebrew.

And so that they should not remain destitute of so sublime a Treasure, it seemed good to me to bring it to the light of the press, to the glory of God and of His holy Law—though I well know that few, or (to put it better) none of those who undertake to teach with the pen escape murmuring. But I carry before me the words of a most learned sage who says: "Better is the approval of one Wise man than the disapproval of nine hundred and ninety-nine who are not."

I do not, for all that, fail to consider that this work is of small account for Scholars, and very suitable and of great utility for children and for the unlearned—particularly the Fourth and Fifth Notices, which are the most principal and essential part of this whole work, since through them they will come to know the precepts of their Religion. And I shall consider myself no less satisfied if this laborious toil of my study finds applause among the lovers of virtue. I trust in your kindness (beloved and esteemed Reader) that you will show yourself grateful for my affection; and may there follow upon it peace and blessing upon the people of Israel. Amen.

וצמחו בבין חציר כערבים על יבלי מים

> And they shall spring up among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. (Isa. 44:4)

טוב פריי מחרוץ ומפז ותבואתי מכסף נבחר [— .p]

> My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my produce than choice silver. (Prov. 8:19)
>
> Hearken, then, to my words, my dear son,

[24] Spanish *Ley Mental*, Perez's term for the Oral Law (*Torah she-be-al peh*).

[25] "Rabenu Moseh of Egypt" = Maimonides (Moses ben Maimon, d. 1204 in Egypt); R. Joseph Albo, author of *Sefer ha-Ikkarim* (15th century).

[26] Abraham Jagel (Yagel) Gallico, author of the Hebrew catechism *Lekah Tov* (Venice, 1595).

my firstborn, my first fruits, to all I have said to you:

if you do not inherit great wealth from my lot,

it is wealth enough for you to inherit my words;

sufficient for you, of your own, is the acquisition of your understanding;

you shall lodge in quiet, in the abundance of the joy of your portion.

For better is the instruction of understanding in the hand of the diligent

than all the dust of Ophir, than fine gold.

[p. 1] First Notice

On the Foundation of the Jewish Religion

M. The sovereign God created the world for the sake of the Law, and the Law for the sake of the world, so that those who wish to be saved by it may be saved. Chief among all of them is His chosen and beloved people Israel, whom, because they received His Divine word, He entitled

ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש

"a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:6)

as well as for the knowledge and clear light

[p. 2] that it has of the unity of God and of His most holy Law. And although every father teaches his children the true path for following this Divine observance, each person must nonetheless strive to know the Foundations and first bases of the Law and of the knowledge of God, as the holy, pious and musical King said to his most wise son Solomon:

דע את אלהי אביך ועבדהו בלב שלם ובנפש חפצה

Know the God of your father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing desire. (1 Chron. 28:9)

As if to say: what I have taught you in general, to know the God of your father, you must know and attain through fixed and evident reasons, by knowing each matter in particular, such as the Articles and Foundations of the belief of Israel; for if you come to know and attain them, you will be able to serve Him with the ardent affection of a devout heart and a perfect will. And so, beloved sons and disciples (do not delay):

לכו בנים שמעו לי יראת ה' אלמדכם

Come, children, hear me; the fear of the Lord I will teach you. (Ps. 34:12)

D. Amen;[27] with you, Master of truth.

M. The Lord bless you. Who are you, my son?

D. I am a Hebrew, and the Lord God of heaven and earth alone do I worship and fear, giving Him thanks, praises and laudations for having formed me in human

[p. 3] shape and causing me to be born a Jew.

M. Since you glory in so illustrious a name, tell me: what is the principal reason that you are a Jew?

D. I am a Jew by the grace of God, and by being of the descent of the holy Patriarchs, beloved of God, who chose their descendants in order to found and establish His people in them, as the Divine word itself testifies:

ותחת כי אהב את אבתיך ויבחר בזרעו אחריו

> Because He loved your fathers, He chose their descendants after him. (Deut. 4:37)

And in another page it says:

רק באבתיך חשק ה' לאהבה אותם ויבחר בזרעם אחריהם בכם מכל העמים כיום הזה

> Only in your fathers did the Lord delight, to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, you, above all the peoples, as on this very day. (Deut. 10:15)

And in another place it confirms this, saying:

כי עם קדוש אתה לה' אלהיך בך בחר ה' אלהיך להיות לו לעם סגלה מכל העמים אשר על פני האדמה

> For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God chose you to be to Him a people of treasure, above all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth. (Deut. 7:6)

And the Royal Psalmist says:

כי יעקב בחר לו יה ישראל לסגלתו

> For the Lord chose Jacob for Himself, and Israel for His treasure. (Ps. 135:4)

And moreover I am a Jew, and must be one, because my soul was present in that sovereign assembly in which His Divine Majesty was pleased to present His sacred Law, given on Mount Sinai.

[p. 4] **M.** Tell me then, chosen one of God: do you know what Religion is?

D. Yes, I know, but only with such reasons as my tender age has allowed me to comprehend.

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[27] The printed text has only "A.", the abbreviation Perez otherwise uses for the divine name; here it is presumably the pupil's assent ("Amen") in reply to the Master's "Come, children." The reading is uncertain.

M. Then state them (blessed of the Lord), for I am well aware that your few years cannot grant your understanding those scholastic eruditions which are the labor of the most accomplished minds in the Divine sciences. So do not be afraid; speak!

D. I say, then, that Religion is a noble disposition and a due honor offered to God as to the universal principle; it is also the persuasion of the truths of our holy Law, given to us by God, who can neither deceive, nor lie, nor repent.

M. Very good. I hope, from your fervent eagerness and good disposition, that if you continue in the studies of the blessed Law, the infinite Goodness of God will grant you a higher understanding of its mysteries. Tell me now: what is the first truth of the Jewish Religion?

D. The first truth of our Religion is to know, love and worship one sole omnipotent God, sovereign Lord of the whole universe, being of all beings, who created all things from nothing; cause of all causes, from eternity into all eternity, infinite good and most simple One,

[p. 5] who, being One by Himself and not through another, is necessary Being, and in His essence most pure act, free from all material and passive potency. He alone is the one who in Himself and through Himself exists and subsists with infinite perfection and most firm immutability; and as such, surpassing all other things, without having any proportion to any of them, or to all of them together, He contains them in Himself with supreme eminence and most pure simplicity. He produces, preserves, governs and perfects, not to acquire or increase anything He lacks (for since He is infinitely perfect, nothing is lacking to Him nor can be), but rather to give and communicate to all, as a favor and grace, the abundant effects of His immense Goodness, pouring into all and into each of them (though into some more and into others less) that Divine perfection which, though in itself inaccessible and impenetrable to all created intellects, is knowable and known by them and in them according to their small and limited capacity, and is consequently celebrated and glorified in all with eternal praises and perpetual laudations. This, then, is the true God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who brought the people of Israel out of Egypt with portentous wonders; who made us worthy, sanctifying us with His Divine word, giving us His holy Law.

[p. 6] Second Notice

On God and His Perfection

M. What do you understand God to be?

D. I understand that God is an infinite being, first cause of all causes, incomprehensible, and perfect in supreme perfection.

M. How do you know that there is a God?

D. I know it through the contemplation of this beautiful machine that we call the world, as the Royal Psalmist said:

כי אראה שמיך מעשי אצבעתיך ירח וכוכבים אשר כוננתה

> When I see Your heavens, the works of Your hands, the moon and the stars which You have set in place. (Ps. 8:4)

And I also know it because God revealed Himself to us by His word, as the sacred Page points out, saying:

אתה הראת לדעת כי ה' הוא האלהים אין עוד מלבדו

> You were shown, that you might understand that the Lord is God, and there is no other. (Deut. 4:35)

As if it said: there is no other who equals Him in the subsistence and infallibility of His being. And this truth is also confirmed by the Prophet, who says:

וה' אלהים אמת הוא אלהים חיים ומלך עולם

> And the Lord is the God of truth, the living God and eternal King. (Jer. 10:10)

M. Very good. But how are you persuaded that there is no more than one God?

D. The reason of created things persuades

[p. 7] and compels me, and makes us know that there is no more than one first cause that created all things, which is a despotic power on which everything depends and which depends on no other cause. It was by this natural reason that our father Abraham came to know Him; and so he knew Him through Divine Philosophy, as is recorded in his book ספר יצירה *Sefer Yetzirah*, composed by the Patriarch himself, as the most learned theologian R. Judah ha-Levi testifies to the King of the Khazars.[28] And various authors confirm the same, chief among them Rabbenu Moses of Egypt in *Hilkhot* עבודה זרה *Avodah Zarah*.[29]

M. Is there no further authority that teaches us this truth?

D. Yes, many, and the best and principal among them is the word of God, which assures us with the clearest evidence and infallible certainty that He is a most simple being, saying:

שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד

> Which we render: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. (Deut. 6:4)

M. What benefit is derived from believing that there is one God?

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[28]Judah ha-Levi's *Kuzari*, a dialogue between a rabbi and the King of the Khazars; the attribution of *Sefer Yetzirah* to Abraham is discussed in *Kuzari* 4:25. Perez's margin cites "cap. 6 v. 9" of *Sefer Yetzirah* and "Fol. 216," presumably a folio of the edition of the *Kuzari* he used (probably Jacob Abendana's Spanish translation, Amsterdam 1663).

[29]"Rabbenu Moses of Egypt" is Maimonides; the reference is to *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Idolatry (*Hilkhot Avodah Zarah*) 1:3, which tells how Abraham came to know God by reason.

D. This belief teaches us not to stray from the path of truth, and to flee the worship of any other cult, which is the path of falsehood. Behold the sacred Text

[p. 8] which proclaims:

את ה' אלהיך תירא אתו תעבד ובו תדבק

> The Lord your God you shall fear, Him you shall serve, and to Him you shall cleave. (Deut. 10:20)

M. What must we believe concerning the perfection of the blessed God?

D. We are obliged to believe all the excellences and effects that His attributes proclaim: that God is eternal, infinite, living, immortal, all-powerful, just, immutable, merciful, holy, One and most simple, Creator and Provider of all things, present in every place, who knows all things hidden and revealed, as the Prophet who speaks to us through Him teaches us, saying:

אם יסתר איש במסתרים ואני לא אראנו נאם ה' הלוא את השמים ואת הארץ אני מלא נאם ה'

> If a man hides in hiding places, shall I not see him? says the Lord. Surely the heavens and the earth I fill, says the Lord. (Jer. 23:24)

M. What consequence do you draw from knowing that God is immutable?

D. The infallible certainty of believing that, God being immutable as He is, He will never alter or change the covenant and alliance that He made with our Fathers and with us; rather, He will continue eternally in the same permanence of His Divine love for His beloved Spouse, which is the faithful people of Israel, and will always be constant in affirming to us the promises that He made to us through the mouth of His infallible messengers.

[p. 9] **M.** Is God visible?

D. No, sir; no one has seen His Divine Essence, not even our lawgiver Moses, of whom the sacred Page says:

ודבר ה' אל משה פנים אל פנים

> And the Lord spoke to Moses face to face. (Exod. 33:11)

At first sight it seems that he saw Him, but the truth is that it denotes that Moses' prophecy was without any intermediary, because God revealed Himself to him immediately in prophecy. And just as when one speaks directly with another it is said that they spoke face to face, so it is in saying that the Lord spoke with Moses face to face. And in another place it says mouth to mouth, פה אל פה (Num. 12:8); this is nothing other than to show God's immediate revelation to Moses, he having enjoyed the highest and most excellent revelations, seeing things as they are in themselves, and enjoying everything clearly. And thus his prophecy exceeded that of the other prophets in four things (as will be shown below in the Fifth Notice, Article 7). This is what my tender understanding

dictates. But whoever is worthy of the exalted gift of Divine mystical science will be able to comprehend to what degree Moses our Teacher came to know God, and of how great an excellence his Divine prophecy was; and from this the varying degrees of the holy prophets who

[p. 10] followed him will also be distinguished.

M. Did no one else speak with the blessed God?

D. All the Prophets spoke with Him, and apprehended Him in various visions, but not as clearly as Moses, nor in his degree.

M. What is the true knowledge of God and of His holy Law?

D. The most certain knowledge of God and of His Law is to love Him with a pure will, and with that same will to learn, keep and observe His statutes, laws, ordinances and precepts, by means of whose perfections we come to serve Him and know Him.

M. How many are the precepts of the sacred Law?

D. The precepts of the Law of God are six hundred and thirteen, divided in this way: two hundred and forty-eight positive and three hundred and sixty-five negative, and all of them correspond to the members which, joined together, form the human body. Besides these there are seven other precepts, ordained by our most eminent Sages, which, all added together, amount to six hundred and twenty. This same number is found encoded in the letters of the holy Decalogue.[30]

M. Since you know the code of the number of the precepts of the sacred Law, I wish to learn

[p. 11] from you which are the seven that you say are of the Sages.

D. The most learned Sages of Israel ordained these seven precepts, namely: the first is that one must wash one's hands for prayer and for eating. The second, that one must make the *eruv*[31] of neighbors, so that they may carry any object on the Sabbath from one house to another. Both these precepts were ordained by the great and wise King Solomon and his most learned Senate, in which the prophets of his time also took part. The third is to keep the four fasts, namely of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months, which were ordained by the Prophets and are confirmed by the Prophet Zechariah (Zech. 8:19). The fourth precept is to read the Megillah at its time; this command was instituted by Mordecai in the company of three holy prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, and Daniel with his companions, together with others of that illustrious Senate. The fifth is to celebrate the festival of Hanukkah by lighting candles, one more each night; this command was ordained by the Maccabees and the Sanhedrin. The sixth is to light the Sabbath

[30]The Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:2–14) contain 620 letters, a figure traditionally linked to the 613 biblical plus 7 rabbinic commandments.

[31]Perez's "Hirub" is the *eruv hatserot*, the rabbinic device joining courtyards and houses into a single domain so that carrying between them is permitted on the Sabbath.

candle, light being the principal delight and joy. The seventh is that Hallel be read at its appointed times, to proclaim the wonders of God and give Him due thanks. These two precepts

[p. 12] were ordained by the Senate of the Sages, so that Israel might serve its Lord with purity, joy and contentment.

M. You have explained the seven precepts very well; but tell me (since most of them were ordained by the Prophets), how do you attribute them to the Sages, who seem to be less than Prophets?

D. The name "Sages" is general, and that of "Prophets" particular, for the reason that every Prophet is a Sage, but not every Sage is a Prophet; and all the masters of the Law there have been from Moses until today were called Sages; consequently what they ordained, which we say is "of the Sages," means "of the Prophets."

M. How do you know that this Law which we have was given by God to His people?

D. I know that the Law we observe was given by God on Mount Sinai with the greatest wonders; this was attested by six hundred thousand persons of Israel, not counting the women and the rest of the household, and a great multitude of the mixed company that came out of Egypt with Israel, as Sacred Scripture relates, who were present when His Divine Majesty gave it; and after them it was successively proclaimed by innumerable other men of Israel. And I know it also because my soul was present at the voices of the Divine Oracle among

[p. 13] that aforementioned assembly; and I am further confirmed in this infallible truth by seeing it ratified by all the nations of the world, which (albeit against their will) confess it; and such irrefutable evidences are found in no other Law or Religion.

M. More reasons offer themselves to demonstrate this truth, but your good observations suffice me. Tell me now: what effect does the word of God have in us?

D. It illuminates the eyes of our understanding to follow the splendor of virtue; it obliges us with disinterested love to observe His will; it strengthens us to suffer persecutions for zeal of His worship; it sanctifies us in performing His precepts; and finally it encourages and consoles us with the restoration from captivity, and promises us the certainty of eternal life.

M. Where do you find in the Law the promise of eternal life?

D. There are various reasons with which celebrated authors answer this question, such as Don Isaac Abravanel in his commentary on the Pentateuch (parashat Behukkotai); and among them the one who wins greatest applause is the famous philosopher and divine theologian, the Hakham

Menasseh ben Israel, as may be seen in his book entitled *On the Resurrection of the Dead*, and in his famous book *Nishmat Hayyim*,[32]

[p. 14] where it is explained with countless reasons. But I find this certainty with clear signs in the Pentateuch, drawing an irrefutable conclusion: namely, that God took Enoch alive to heaven, so as by this action to demonstrate to us and give the world to understand that after this life there was another in which to reward the righteous. This is inferred from the doubling of the Text,[33] which says:

ויתהלך חנוך את האלהים ואיננו כי לקח אתו אלהים

> And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. (Gen. 5:24)

Giving us to understand that the reason he merited going alive to Heaven to enjoy glory was that Enoch had walked in the ways of God, and at the same time teaching us that there is another life after this one, since the sacred Text says that God took him to Himself. It is therefore certain that, being with God, he enjoys His glory. And this real and infallible truth can further be proved from the case of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the High Priest, to whom the Angel who spoke with him promised that if he kept himself in his purity and perfection he would give him a place among the ministering Angels, expressing himself in these words:

כה אמר ה' צבאות אם בדרכי תלך ואם את משמרתי תשמר וגם אתה תדין את ביתי וגם תשמר את חצרי ונתתי לך מהלכים בין העמדים האלה

> Thus says the Lord of Hosts: If you walk in My ways, and if you keep My charge, then you shall also judge My house, and you shall also keep My courts, and I will give you a place among those who walk, who are these (who now stand by here). (Zech. 3:7)

[p. 15] And it is certain that this Angel who spoke with him (as is seen from Scripture, not only in this place but in many other places as well) assured him in the name of God that He would give him steps among those Angels who attend upon God; from which it is inferred that there is another life after this one, far greater, for him who seeks it in this limited world. And the Royal Psalmist also confirms it, saying:

מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך

> How great is the good that You have stored up for those who fear You. (Ps. 31:20)

And in another page he repeats:

אתהלך לפני ה' בארצות החיים

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[32] Isaac Abravanel (1437–1508), commentary on Lev. 26 (*Behukkotai*). Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657), Hakham of Amsterdam, author of *De la Resurreccion de los Muertos* (Amsterdam, 1636) and *Nishmat Hayyim* (Amsterdam, 1651). The marginal references (apparently "book 2, ch. 8" and "discourse 1, ch. 34") are garbled in the digitized text.

[33] Gen. 5:22 and 5:24 both say that Enoch "walked with God."

I shall walk before the Lord in the lands of the living. (Ps. 116:9)

It is therefore certain that this is to be understood of another, more excellent life, which is blessedness. And the holy martyr Prophet,[34] speaking with clear signs of charity and pious works, says in the following expressions:

והלך לפניך צדקך כבוד ה' יאספך

And your charity shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall gather you in. (Isa. 58:8)

From which it is inferred that charity and pious works make a way for a person, so that God gathers him into His glory. And the wisest of men said in his Ecclesiastes:

והרוח תשוב אל האלהים אשר נתנה

And the spirit returns to God who gave it. (Eccl. 12:7)

As if he said more clearly: if in this world he acts well, his spirit will return to its

[p. 16] center, to the glory of God, if it is worthy. And finally this truth of ours is proved by the words of the prudent Abigail, who said to the musical King and Prophet:

והיתה נפש אדני צרורה בצרור החיים את ה' אלהיך

And the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bond of life with the Lord your God. (1 Sam. 25:29)

It is plainly manifest that she speaks of the soul after it has departed from this life, which, being worthy through the observance of the Law, will remain bound in glory with the Lord its God.

M. Is the Divine Law clear and perfect in supreme perfection?

D. Clear is the Law of the Lord, for He who gave it is the fountain of all clarity; and it is also perfect in every degree of perfection, for it was promulgated by God, who is infinitely most perfect. And I am quite certain of this judgment, because the holy King David also says so when he said:

תורת ה' תמימה

The Law of the Lord is perfect. (Ps. 19:8)

M. Have we any obligation to read and meditate in it, or is belief enough?

D. Every Israelite is obliged to read and meditate in it by day and by night (according to his capacity), as God commands and obliges us through the mouth of His Prophets:

והגית בו יומם ולילה

And you shall read in it by day and by night. (Josh. 1:8)

[34] Isaiah, who according to rabbinic tradition was put to death by King Manasseh.

And the crowned Psalmist says:

[p. 17] ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה

> And in His Law he shall speak by day and by night. (Ps. 1:2)

We must continue in this meditation until the last day of life, for so says the sacred Text:

ופן יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חייך והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך

> Lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; and you shall teach them to your children and to your children's children. (Deut. 4:9)

Imploring God to enlighten our understandings so that we may serve Him with a perfect and pure will, by means of which contemplation our souls come to be united with Him.

M. At what target must our desire aim in this meditation?

D. It must have as its sole and proper object the Law of God, laboring in its observance and putting into execution all that His Divine good pleasure entrusts to us in it; and by doing so we shall prosper in all our good choices. Behold God's herald, who says it:

למען תשמר לעשות ככל הכתוב בו כי אז תצליח את דרכך ואז תשכיל

> That you may keep to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall prosper in your ways, and then you shall understand. (Josh. 1:8)

M. May you be blessed of God, beloved disciple; I am well satisfied with your good understanding and will. May God prosper you in His holy service.

[p. 18] Third Notice

On the Creation of the World, on Faith, and for What End Man Was Created

M. Since you have been able to satisfy my questions with brief reasons, you encourage me to put further questions to you. Tell me now: what is the first work of God that is known?

D. The first work that we know to have been made by God is the creation of the world.

M. In how many days did He create it?

D. In six days He made it perfect, with all its creatures, and on the seventh day He rested.

M. On what day was our first Father Adam formed and created?

D. Adam was created on a Friday.

M. So God says in Genesis. But of what did his creation and composition consist?

D. Man was composed of two things: matter and form. The first is of earth, and therefore corruptible like the other animals, and that is the body; and God called him Adam, because this name in the Hebrew language signifies earth. The second is the soul; this always

[p. 19] remains free from corruption, and is forever immortal. For this reason Sacred Scripture says:

ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים

And He breathed into his nostrils a soul of life. (Gen. 2:7)

It called it a "soul of life" because it is immortal; and by reason of this excellence God established him as ruler over all the other species.

M. For what end did God create you with so noble a composition?

D. God created everything for His glory and honor; and I was created to serve Him, love Him, fear Him and do His will without self-interest in any reward. But His infinite Goodness is so gracious that it does not fail to reward His servants and those who fear Him in the better life, causing them to enjoy His Divine Glory eternally.

M. In what way can a man be assured of the blessedness of the future life?

D. By holding firm faith in God, as our Patriarch Abraham held it, of whom the sacred Text says:

והאמן בה' ויחשבה לו צדקה

And he had faith in the Lord, and it was counted to him as righteousness. (Gen. 15:6)

M. Have you no further reason that confirms this truth?

D. Yes: also by hope in God, taking upon ourselves the yoke of all His precepts, revealed to us by the hand of His faithful Ambassador Moses; and so,

[p. 20] by means of this indubitable faith and the observance of His infallible and most holy Law, we shall live in eternal glory. And the sacred Pages say:

אשריך ישראל מי כמוך עם נושע בה'

Blessed are you, O Israel; who is like you, a people saved by the Lord? (Deut. 33:29)

And so the royal Prince and Prophet[35] confirms it when he said:

ישראל נושע בה' תשועת עולמים

Israel is saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation. (Isa. 45:17)

M. Tell me, do you know what is the first foundation and pattern of the faith of our holy Law?

[35] Isaiah, whom rabbinic tradition (BT Megillah 10b) holds to have been of royal descent.

D. I have learned that the first foundation of faith in the Law is to believe in the blessed God, who created the world from nothing, in the manner and at the time that He pleased and that was His will; that He sustains it by His word and providence; that He rules it with His untiring strength; that His justice governs it; and that there is no alien power that can change or alter it at any time.

M. For what reason do you put the creation of the world first, as the first basis of our faith, and not one of the thirteen Articles of our Religion?

D. My reason is founded on its being more convincing and evident: that by believing the creation of the world, this belief is the Foundation of the Law, and consequently of the unity of God, and of the prophecies and miracles.

[p. 21] So our great master Rabbenu Moses of Egypt confirms it in his *Guide*, part 2, chapter 13.[36] And this being the pure truth for that reason, the most wise Sages of the Great Senate,[37] which was composed of 120 most eminent men, among whom were three Prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, and Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel and Mordecai, that Great Senate, in the institution and composition of our holy prayers, ordained that both in the morning prayer and in the evening prayer there should come first the blessing in which the renewal of the world is confessed,[38] as the principal basis of our faith; for by means of it one comes to know a sovereign cause, which is to confess one sole God who gave being to the world. So the most learned theologian and distinguished philosopher R. Moses Isserles explains it in various places in his famous book *Torat ha-Olah*, part 2, chapter 23.[39] And since the said creation of the world is almost improbable according to Aristotle and the ancient philosophers who followed his erroneous opinion against the truth of our most holy Law, for that reason believing it is a matter of faith; although the modern philosophers prove it by reason that there is no thing which, being of itself nothing, makes itself. Therefore it is necessary that an infinite power

[p. 22] must come first, which makes everything from nothing, as Rabbenu Moses of Egypt proves with very excellent reasons in his *Guide* (part 1, chapter 71).

M. Is there found among the people of Israel any sign in memory of the said creation?

D. Yes, there is; it is the observance of the Sabbath. So Sacred Scripture shows, which says to this purpose:

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[36] *Directorio* is the Spanish title (*Directorio de los perplexos*) of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*; the argument that creation is the foundation of the Law is at *Guide* 2:13 and 2:25.

[37] The Men of the Great Assembly (*Anshe Keneset ha-Gedolah*), traditionally 120 members.

[38] The blessings *Yotser Or* (morning) and *Ma'ariv Aravim* (evening), which precede the Shema and praise God as the one who renews creation.

[39] Moses Isserles (c. 1525–1572), *Torat ha-Olah* (Prague, 1570), a philosophical-kabbalistic study of the Temple and the sacrifices.

ביני ובין בני ישראל אות הוא לעלם כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ וביום השביעי שבת וינפש

> Between Me and the children of Israel it is a sign forever: that in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He ceased and rested. (Exod. 31:17)

על כן ברך ה' את יום השבת ויקדשהו

> Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it. (Exod. 20:11)

Enriching Israel with that same holiness. For this reason the keeping of the Sabbath is weighed against the observance of the whole Law, being a sign of faith and the basis of belief in all that it contains, as I explained above.

M. Your reasoning is fitting. But explain to me what faith is, since you have said it is the principal basis for keeping the Law.

D. It seems to me that faith is a theological virtue, which is defined as assent to revealed truths; and in us it is also a gift and singular grace that God imprinted in our souls, so that by means of it we may come to believe the things

[p. 23] that He commands us in His Law and revealed through His Prophets.

M. I accept the definition as good; but you must note that this faith includes the Oral Law,[40] which we have by tradition from our most eminent Sages, and which has been observed in succession from fathers to sons.

Fourth Notice

Which Discourses on the Holy Precepts of the Decalogue

M. Tell me, chosen one of God: do you know whether God ever spoke to, and manifested Himself to, any people?

D. There was no nation at all that heard the voice of the Lord, save only His holy and chosen people Israel, when He gave them the Law by His divine word. So Holy Scripture testifies, saying:

השמע עם קול אלהים מדבר מתוך האש כאשר שמעת אתה ויחי

> Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from amid the fire, as you have, and lived? (Deut. 4:33)

Great indeed is the excellence of Israel in this prerogative, for no nation can boast of having merited it; and consequently none will ever

[40] Perez's *Ley mental*, literally "the mental Law," i.e. the Oral Law (*Torah she-be-al peh*).

[p. 24] be able to equal this fortunate people, which was exalted above all others in the glory of so great a felicity. To this purpose the sacred Text adds still more, asking:

כי מי כל בשר אשר שמע קול אלהים חיים מדבר מתוך האש כמנו ויחי

> Who is the creature that heard the voice of the living God speaking from amid the fire, as we did, and lived? (Deut. 5:23)

M. You have explained yourself very well. But tell me: were you also present in that noble assembly to which God manifested Himself?

D. Without doubt my soul was there, and was present at the voices of the Lord when He gave the Law to His beloved people. This is deduced from what we read:

ה' אלהינו כרת עמנו ברית בחרב לא את אבתינו כרת ה' את הברית הזאת כי אתנו אנחנו אלה פה היום כלנו חיים

> The Lord our God cut a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Lord cut this covenant, but with us, us, these who are here today, all of us living. (Deut. 5:2–3)

It is plainly seen that those with whom Moses was speaking at the giving of the Law were not present there, but rather their children, who entered the Land of Promise. And since for that reason the Text says, "Not with our fathers did the Lord cut the covenant, but with us, today," it is inferred that their souls were present when God gave the Law. And in another place it says still more:

כי את אשר ישנו פה עמנו עמד היום לפני ה' אלהינו ואת אשר איננו פה עמנו היום

> For with him who is here with us, standing today
>
> [p. 25] before the Lord our God, and with him who is not here with us today. (Deut. 29:14)

And our most eminent Sages teach us, in the tractate שבועות Shevuoth, chapter 6,[41] that it is proved from this text that all the generations of Israel—past, present, and future—and all the proselytes enjoyed the blessedness of the giving of the Sacred Law and entered under its covenant. And this is certainly the literal sense of the verse, of necessity: for were it not so, how could God make a covenant with those who are deprived of being, who have not yet come into the world? It is necessary, then, to understand it according to the explanation of our sacred Talmud. And so it is confirmed by the famous theologian and philosopher R. Menasseh ben Israel in his *Nishmat Hayyim*, discourse 2, chapter [—];[42] and knowing the definition of the soul as that author explains it, we cannot doubt that this is the pure literal sense.

[41] BT Shevuot 39a, where Deut. 29:14 is expounded to include all future generations and proselytes in the covenant of Sinai.

[42] Menasseh ben Israel, *Nishmat Hayyim* (Amsterdam, 1651), a treatise on the immortality of the soul. The chapter number is not legible in the digitized margin.

M. It seems to me quite fitting that you should tell what you received in that vision, for I do not doubt that you keep it guarded in your heart in order to observe it.

D. So it is. I have it expressly engraved upon my soul in indelible characters, in order to fulfill my obligation by doing the will of the Lord.

M. I do not doubt your good inclination. Say, then, what the first commandment contains.

D. God said in the first commandment of the Decalogue:

[p. 26] אנכי ה' אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים

> I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of servants. (Exod. 20:2)

With this declaration He wishes to teach us that there is no plurality in God; and this by saying "I am the Lord your God." For if it had been His divine intention to say [merely] that He brought us out of Egypt, He ought to have said, "I brought you out of the land of Egypt"; but He says, "I am the Lord your God," to show us that there is no plurality, and that "I am one and unique"; and as such we must not offer worship to any but Him. And He confirms this for us by the mouth of His prophet Hosea, when he says:

ואנכי ה' אלהיך מארץ מצרים ואלהים זולתי לא תדע ומושיע אין בלתי

> And I am the Lord your God from the land of Egypt, and a God besides Me you shall not know, and there is no savior but Me alone. (Hos. 13:4)

And the royal prince and prophet [Isaiah] said:

אנכי אנכי ה' ואין מבלעדי מושיע

> I, I am the Lord, and besides Me there is no savior. (Isa. 43:11)

May He be blessed and praised forever.

M. What does the second commandment forbid us?

D. Secondly, God says:

לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני

> You shall have no other gods before My faces. (Exod. 20:3)

By this He means to tell us that we must not commit idolatry by serving any other deity. And the reason for saying "before My faces" is as if He had said "in My presence"; and since God is found in every place, everything is understood to be before Him,

[p. 27] so that He forbids us to commit idolatry altogether, in any manner or in any place; nor yet to seek the intercession of any angel, even with the intention of worshipping God. So it is understood

by Rabbenu Moses Gerondi on this Text in his commentary on the Pentateuch,[43] for the reason that we have our God near to hear us when we call upon Him, as Holy Scripture assures us:

כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלהים קרבים אליו כה' אלהינו בכל קראנו אליו

> For what great nation is there that has God near to it, as the Lord our God is in all our calling upon Him? (Deut. 4:7)

And as such we need no intercession at all, but only to call upon and invoke Him alone, directly.

M. Does the Text of our holy Decalogue continue further?

D. It goes on to say:

לא תעשה לך פסל וכל תמונה אשר בשמים ממעל ואשר בארץ מתחת ואשר במים מתחת לארץ לא תשתחוה להם ולא תעבדם כי אנכי ה' אלהיך אל קנא פקד עון אבת על בנים על שלשים ועל רבעים לשנאי ועשה חסד לאלפים לאהבי ולשמרי מצותי

> You shall not make for yourself a carved idol, nor any image, nor likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, nor of what is in the earth beneath, nor of what is in the waters beneath the earth. You shall not bow down to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who
>
> [p. 28] hate Me, and who shows mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. (Exod. 20:4–6)

M. What do you gather from this commandment that you have just recited?

D. From it I deduce the prohibition of idolatry, and of making any image whatever, even if it be for another person—how much more so in order to worship it.

M. You say well. But how will you reconcile the fact that, images being forbidden and abominable, God commands that two cherubim of gold in human form be made upon the Ark?

D. I can offer two answers to reconcile the Texts. The first is that the cherubim were never made to be worshipped, for they were hidden from all, in a place where no one could ever look upon them, being set in the Holy of Holies, as we read in Kings.[44] No one entered that place except the High Priest, on the single occasion of the holy day of Kippur; and God did not permit him to enter, nor could he, without first burning the incense with the censer, so that he would have no time to gaze upon the glory of God that dwelt between them. So Rabbenu Bahya explains it in his book,[45]

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[43] Rabbenu Moses Gerondi (of Gerona) = Nahmanides (Ramban), in his commentary on Exod. 20:3.

[44] 1 Kings 8:6–8.

[45] Bahya ben Asher (Saragossa, d. 1340), commentary on the Pentateuch (margin: fol. 348).

and Rav Hizkuni is of the same opinion and so declares it on the same Text.[46] He remained in that holy place only a very few minutes, as is

[p. 29] recorded there in the tractate יומא Yoma, chapter 4,[47] so that they were not seen by the common people, nor for that reason could they be worshipped. So the most eminent H. H. R.[48] Menasseh ben Israel confirms it in his *Conciliador*.[49] In the second place, we can say that the said cherubim were made by the express order of God, as supreme King and absolute Lord, exercising in this work the effect of His will—as in many other similar precepts that are forbidden to the public and permitted in the Holy House. Thus kindling fire on the holy day of Sabbath is forbidden, yet in the Sanctuary it was permitted, and it was even an express command that the priests should do it. Likewise He forbade us the wearing of a mixture of wool and linen, and yet this very garment the priests had to wear at the time they served in the Sanctuary. And it is certain that such precepts contain within themselves very hidden secrets and divine mysteries. So by either of these two answers the Texts are reconciled.

M. Since you have also known how to reconcile this controversy, you give me occasion to ask you how you can reconcile the statement that God punishes the sins of the fathers upon the children—

פקד עון אבת על בנים וגו'

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, etc. (Exod. 20:5)

—when in another place He tells us:

לא יומתו אבות על בנים ובנים לא יומתו על אבות

Fathers shall not die for sons, nor sons for fathers? (Deut. 24:16)

[p. 30] **D.** Idolatry is so abominable in the presence of the supreme God that for this enormous crime of lèse-majesté He carries out the punishment even upon the descendants, because the father committed it. But it is not so with the other sins, for:

איש בחטאו יומתו

Each one shall die for his own sin. (Deut. 24:16)

So it is confirmed by the most wise Rabbenu Moses Gerondi in his commentary on the Pentateuch, and Rabbenu Bahya is of the same opinion. And our most learned Sages teach us by received

[46]Hezekiah ben Manoah, *Hizkuni*, on the Torah portion Terumah (Exod. 25).

[47]On the High Priest's brief stay in the Holy of Holies, see Mishnah Yoma 5:1 and BT Yoma 52b–53b (margin: cap. 4).

[48]H. H. R.: an honorific used of Sephardic rabbis in Amsterdam, probably *Haham ha-Shalem Rabbi*, "the accomplished sage, Rabbi."

[49]Menasseh ben Israel, *El Conciliador* (Part I, Frankfurt [= Amsterdam], 1632), which reconciles apparently contradictory verses of Scripture.

tradition, as we read in the tractate ברכות Berakhot,[50] that when the children let themselves be dragged along the sinful ways of their fathers, both are then punished, since both were transgressors; but where it is otherwise, each one shall bear his punishment for his own sin. And so, it seems to me, the tearful Prophet warns us in his Lamentations, saying:

אבתינו חטאו ואינם ואנחנו עונתיהם סבלנו

Our fathers sinned (in idolatry) and are no more, and we have borne their iniquities. (Lam. 5:7)

M. What does the third commandment admonish us?

D. It says:

לא תשא את שם ה' אלהיך לשוא כי לא ינקה ה' את אשר ישא את שמו לשוא

You shall not swear by the name of the Lord your God to vanity, for the Lord will not

[p. 31] acquit him who swears by His name in vain. (Exod. 20:7)

M. Tell me at greater length how you must observe this precept.

D. I understand that I observe this precept by not naming the Name of God on any occasion whatever on which one wishes to establish something and make another person believe it, and by not pronouncing it for trivial matters and ordinary occurrences. For this reason Holy Scripture uses the expression תשא *tissa*, "lift up," although we commonly render it "you shall not swear": one must take great care not to swear by it in vain or falsely, but only with great certainty of the truth, when in a case of consequence reason obliges me to do so in court. In this manner God permits us to swear by His Name, for Holy Scripture tells us:

שבעת ה' תהיה בין שניהם

The oath of the Lord shall be between them both. (Exod. 22:10)

And in another place:

ובשמו תשבע

And by His Name you shall swear. (Deut. 10:20)

And our most eminent Sages, in the tractate נדרים Nedarim,[51] say that it should not be named except on occasion of prayer or of reading, for otherwise it is called מוציא שם שמים לבטלה, "pronouncing the holy Name of God without occasion"—not as the ignorant (for our sins) invoke it without any need, naming the holy Name of the Lord at every instant. And they say still more:

[50] BT Berakhot 7a: the fathers' iniquity is visited on the children "when they hold the deeds of their fathers in their hands."

[51] BT Nedarim 7b, on one who hears his fellow utter the divine Name in vain.

that one who hears it must place him under נדוי [*niddui*], "separation," and then absolve him; for otherwise

[p. 32] it is not permitted to name it except with great veneration, or when one asks His aid, or on occasions of thanksgiving such as the blessings and the like. So it is confirmed by Rabbenu Moses Gerondi in his commentary on the Pentateuch, and by Rabbenu Bahya.

M. See, my son, that you are very cautious and zealous in this precept, for God says that He will not pardon one who swears by, or pronounces, His Name to vanity without most urgent occasion. Now tell me: what does the fourth commandment teach us?

D. God tells us to remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it:

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו

> Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. (Exod. 20:8)

M. For what reason did God choose this day more than others for sanctification?

D. The sacred Text tells it:

כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ את הים ואת כל אשר בם וינח ביום השביעי על כן ברך ה' את יום השבת ויקדשהו

> For in six days the Lord created the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it. (Exod. 20:11)

It follows that by the observance of this blessed day we come to preserve the Article—so important—of the creation of the world. And for this reason God exempts us from working on it, so that we may apply ourselves wholly to the meditation of His Law;

[p. 33] He also forbids us bodily labor so that we may praise Him with greater attention in devout prayers and hymns dedicated to that day, and occupy ourselves in spiritual contemplations.

M. Continue with the fifth commandment.

D. The Lord says:

כבד את אביך ואת אמך למען יארכון ימיך על האדמה וגו'

> Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be lengthened upon the land, etc. (Exod. 20:12)

M. What do the most eminent Sages point out concerning this precept?

D. We hold by tradition that we are also obliged to honor and revere our father's wife, and to respect our elder brother. The Sages learn this from the words ,את אביך ואת אמך "your father and

your mother": for it could have said "honor your father and your mother" [without them], but in the Hebrew language this word *eth* always includes something more, and from these words what I have said is learned, as is recorded in the tractate כתובות Ketubot, chapter 12, page 103.[52]

M. What does the sixth commandment prohibit?

D. "לא תרצח You shall not kill," says God (Exod. 20:13). So that, even though it may seem to us that we have ample occasion to avenge ourselves on someone who has done us an outrage, who has wronged us in our honor, who has usurped our property, or who has injured us in our body, we shall never

[p. 34] seek a motive to commit homicide; rather we must suppress our passion, and soften and sweeten the bitterness and violence of anger with the lenitive of the fear of God. The Sages, in their solid teachings, further admonish us not to put our fellow to shame, neither in public nor in private, even if the reproach be true, and still more if it be calumny and deceit; for he is left ashamed, the color and blood draining from his face, which is almost like killing him. And many times a man is wont to lose his bread through such an outrage, for those who hear the reproach will believe it to be the truth. And for this reason the pious of Israel are accustomed not to ask a debtor for his debt while they know he cannot pay it for lack of the means to do so, so that he may not be left confounded, the color gone from his face for shame.

M. And what does the seventh commandment say?

D. "לא תנאף You shall not fornicate," says the sacred Text (Exod. 20:13).

M. Reflect on the word that the holy tongue uses, תנאף *tinaf*, and relate to me what you deduce from it.

D. The verb *tinaf* includes within itself every kind of adultery, any manner of carnal copulation outside that permitted in holy matrimony, every sort of pollution that attends it, as also

[p. 35] the nefarious sin, or that against nature, and any other lascivious action or indecency, or offense through the appetite. So our illustrious Sages explain it from the same verb *tinaf* in the tractate נידה Niddah, chapter 2.[53] See also the most learned Ibn Ezra on the same Text in his commentary on Deuteronomy, where he enjoins the purity and chastity with which one must live, especially one who considers himself bound by the bond of matrimony, who must in no way turn his gaze to any object other than lawful conjugal love.

[52]BT Ketubot 103a.

[53]BT Niddah 13b, which reads "you shall not commit adultery" as including any sexual impropriety "whether with hand or with foot."

M. You have deciphered the verb *tinaf* very well and satisfied my question. Pass now to the eighth commandment.

D. "לא תגנב You shall not steal," proclaims the Text (Exod. 20:13). This precept admonishes us not to take what does not belong to us, even if it be a thing of very little value; not to usurp from anyone what is his under any pretext; not to defraud others of their goods. For, besides the many sacrileges committed by this crime, one comes to deny the providence of God and His most high disposition, which has been pleased to give goods to whom His divine will chose—whether to punish the miser the more, or to reward the liberal and charitable. The Sages also point out

[p. 36] that one must not take anything from anyone secretly with the aim of causing him distress, even with the sound intention of returning it afterwards, so that one does not grow accustomed to stealing in earnest by beginning in jest; and also so as not to give occasion to sin, since the one who has lost it suspects some innocent person and comes to sin. And the pious of Israel deduce from this holy commandment a moral lesson against the hypocrite, who steals people's hearts, winning them over to his will by hypocrisy while being, for his own part, quite the contrary; for when at last his wicked and feigned intention comes to be discovered, the name of the Creator, whom no one can ever deceive, is profaned.

M. You have defended yourself completely on the precept not to steal. Continue with the ninth commandment, and say what you infer from it.

D. God tells us:

לא תענה ברעך עד שקר

> You shall not testify against your fellow as a witness of falsehood. (Exod. 20:13)

I gather from this precept that one must not utter false testimony against anyone, nor in favor of any person, whether in court or in private. Also contained in this commandment is the prohibition against slandering, backbiting, deceiving, lying, and judging one's neighbor unfavorably; and all these points are comprehended under the

[p. 37] same precept, since they are prejudicial to the honor of one's fellow.

M. The Text is well commented. Conclude the Decalogue.

D. The tenth and last commandment, which all Israel heard from the mouth of God, says:

לא תחמד בית רעך לא תחמד אשת רעך ועבדו ואמתו ושורו וחמרו וכל אשר לרעך

> You shall not covet the house of your fellow; you shall not covet the wife of your fellow, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is your fellow's. (Exod. 20:14)

M. What moral do you draw from the aforesaid precept, beyond the other things it contains?

D. It forbids us concupiscence, ambition, envy, and avarice, which are the origin and beginning of all vices.

M. What will be the remedy for such pernicious ills?

D. So that such pestilent vices may find no entrance into our mind, we must always carry with us the antidotes distilled by the cardinal virtues, the greatest of all being conformity with the will of God and His divine Providence; arming ourselves with fortitude to subdue our appetites, and with knowledge to be content and to give Him thanks for the favor and benefit with which He has

[p. 38] rewarded us.

M. I esteem your well-conceived idea. Endeavor to apply yourself more to study, so that you may not only refine yourself in the greatest elegance, but also perfect yourself in the proper terms of speech in Moral Philosophy. Now I would like you to tell me who wrote the Decalogue, and on what it was written.

D. The supreme God wrote with His divine hand the ten commandments upon two tablets of precious stone, five on each of them. And they were two tablets and not one, to indicate the Written Law and the Mental Law.[54] So the sacred Text says:

ויתן ה' אלי את שני לוחת האבנים כתבים באצבע אלהים

> The Lord gave me the two tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. (Deut. 9:10)

And on another page it says:

והלחת מעשה אלהים המה והמכתב מכתב אלהים הוא חרות על הלחת

> And the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved upon the tablets. (Exod. 32:16)

These tablets were placed in an Ark, as is seen from Holy Scripture:

ואשם את הלחת בארון אשר עשיתי ויהיו שם כאשר צוני ה'

> And I put the tablets in the Ark that I had made, and they were there, as the Lord commanded me. (Deut. 10:5)

This Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies, and the Prophets called it ,ארון הברית the Ark of the Testament.

[54] "Ley mental" is Perez's regular term for the Oral Law (*Torah she-be-al peh*), as against the Written Law.

[p. 39] # Fifth Notice

On the Thirteen Articles of the Israelite Faith

M. It seems good to me that you now tell what things the Prophets said that we are obliged to believe and observe.

D. Everything that the heralds of God who are canonical among us said, we are obliged to believe and observe, as they enjoin upon us by command of the Lord. But all the axioms they revealed to us our most wise Sages of the Gemara reduced to three principal and essential Articles, namely: מציאות ה', the existence of God; תורה מן השמים, the Law given by God; שכר ועונש, reward and punishment.[55] And from these three principal foundations they composed, as an epilogue of branches, thirteen apophthegms, which we commonly call Articles. Every Israelite must believe them, affirm them, and establish his faith in them; and whoever denies or doubts any one of them is no longer a Jew, but shall be called a heretic, and strips himself of the investiture that the glorious name of Israel proclaimed him: noble and chosen of God.

[p. 40] **M.** I understand your explanation well, but I wish you to declare to me in particular what each of these thirteen Articles contains by itself.

1. מציאות ה' — Existence of God

D. The first is that we must believe that there is one sole God, cause of all causes; that all things are created by Him; that by His word and providence He maintains and preserves them, and that it is in His absolute power to annihilate them; and that even if all His creatures were annulled, this would be no detriment to His perfection, because He in Himself is perfect in every perfection, needing nothing, while all things need Him, who is the Lord ruling over all, for all eternity.

2. אחדותו ית' — Unity of God

M. And what does the second Article teach us?

D. That the God who created and maintains all is one, singular and most simple, without any likeness, and that besides Him there is no God, because He is the unique and only true God, as Deuteronomy points out, saying:

שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד

> Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. (Deut. 6:4)

[55] This triad of root principles is that of Joseph Albo, *Sefer ha-Ikkarim* I.4, which Perez here attributes to the Sages of the Gemara.

3. שאינו גוף — Incorporeality of God

M. Continue further.

D. The third Article tells us that God is unique, without body, nor does He have the likeness of anything corporeal. And although we see in Holy Scripture various phrases that seem to admit in God members and

[p. 41] material senses, as in our humanity—for example, "the eyes of the Lord," "the arm of the Lord," "the finger of the Lord," and the like—it must not be understood that it is so literally, but allegorically; and that He speaks to us thus in corporeal terms so that our human and frail intelligence may perceive His perfections according to its limited capacity, the said terms being, as they are, metaphorical. And so we cannot represent Him by any image or material figure, as God Himself warns us by precept, saying:

ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם כי לא ראיתם כל תמונה

> And guard your souls very much, for you saw no likeness at all. (Deut. 4:15)

And God says, speaking by the Prophet:

ואל מי תדמיון אל ומה דמות תערכו לו

> And to whom will you liken God, and what likeness will you compare to Him? (Isa. 40:18)

4. קדמון לכל דבר — Eternity of God

M. Let us pass to the fourth Article.

D. We hold as most certain that the God we must worship is one; that there neither was nor is anything that preceded Him; that He is God from all eternity, as He says by the voice of His Prophet:

אני ראשון ואני אחרון ומבלעדי אין אלהים

> I am the first and I am the last, and besides Me there is no God. (Isa. 44:6)

And so the Coryphaeus of the Prophets [Moses] assures us:

מענה אלהי קדם

> The dwelling of the God of antiquity. (Deut. 33:27)

And the holy Poet sang:

[p. 42] בטרם הרים ילדו ותחולל ארץ ותבל ומעולם עד עולם אתה אל

> Before the mountains were born, and the earth and the world were created, from the beginning to eternity You are God. (Ps. 90:2)

M. Blessed are you, O people of Israel, who are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation! Which Article follows now?

5. לעבוד לה' ית' לבדו — Worship of God Alone

D. The fifth axiom is that the supreme God, Creator of all things, Him alone we must serve and worship, and no other; from no other must we ask any grace or favor through the intercession of any angel or other creature, but directly from Him, as absolute and supreme Lord, we must hope for every good. This He Himself commands us to observe through His greatest Prophet, who says:

אחרי ה' אלהיכם תלכו ואתו תיראו ואת מצותיו תשמרו ובקלו תשמעו ואתו תעבדו ובו תדבקון

> After the Lord your God you shall walk, and Him you shall fear, and His commandments you shall keep, and His voice you shall hear, and Him you shall serve, and to Him you shall cleave. (Deut. 13:5)

And on another page it says:

ועבדתם את ה' אלהיכם

> And you shall serve the Lord your God (Exod. 23:25)

—and none other save Him.

6. השראת נבואתו על מין האדם — Communication of God with Humankind

M. What does the sixth Article treat of?

D. It says that God, in His immense mercy and for our good, manifests Himself by holy prophecy to the human race, since it is capable of so great a felicity—

[p. 43] namely to the pious and holy men—so that as His Prophets, doing His will, they may instruct us, teach us, and preach to us the word of God and what His people must do to be saved.

7. גדולת משה מכל הנביאים — The Prophecy of Moses

M. It is well; continue onward.

D. The seventh Article commands us to hold as a fixed and most certain thing that Moses our great Master was the Coryphaeus of all the true Prophets there have been among the people of Israel, and even more than the holy Patriarchs; for none attained to such high and excellent revelations, nor saw things so clearly, since through him God favored us by presenting us with His precious Law.

M. Make a digression, and tell me whether by chance you know in how many prerogatives the prophecy of Moses was more excellent than that of the other Prophets.

D. In four excellences did Moses surpass the other Prophets in prophecy. The first is that God spoke to all the Prophets through some angel, but to Moses the Lord Himself spoke by voice, as the sacred Text says:

פה אל פה אדבר בו

> Mouth to mouth I speak with him. (Num. 12:8)

The second gift that makes him nobler than the other Prophets is that prophecy came to them in a dream and in a vision, by day as well as

[p. 44] by night, as they fell into a deep lethargy that deprived them of their senses; but with Moses it did not happen so, for of him the sacred History says:

לא כן עבדי משה בכל ביתי נאמן הוא פה אל פה אדבר בו ומראה ולא בחידת

> Not so My servant Moses: in all My house he is faithful. Mouth to mouth I speak with him, and visibly, and not in riddles. (Num. 12:7–8)

The third prerogative that makes Moses more illustrious than all the Prophets is that when prophecy came to them they remained for that space deprived of their senses; but with Moses it was not so, but rather:

כאשר ידבר איש אל רעהו

> As a man speaks with his fellow. (Exod. 33:11)

The fourth singularity that distinguishes our Master Moses from the other Prophets is that none of them enjoyed the privilege of having prophecy when they wished, but only when God was pleased to speak to them. But Moses, at whatever time he found it fitting, spoke with God and obtained it, as Holy Scripture relates to us when it says:

עמדו ואשמעה מה יצוה ה' לכם

> Stand, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you. (Num. 9:8)

M. I am entirely satisfied with the manner in which you have demonstrated the singularities that proclaim Moses more excellent than all the other Prophets. Turn your aim back to our appointed

[p. 45] target, and say what the eighth Article contains.

8. שהתורה כולה נתנה מאתו ית' למשה ע"ה — The Law Given by God to Moses

D. Our most eminent Sages enjoin upon us that we must believe, as the eighth point of faith, that the divine Law, which begins with the word בראשית, "In the beginning," up to its end, which concludes לעיני כל ישראל, "in the sight of all Israel"—that is, the Pentateuch—was written by Moses at God's dictation; and even his own lamentable death was written by him with tears in his

eyes, as we read in the tractate בבא בתרא Bava Batra, first chapter, folio 15.[56] And in it there is no variation or distinction of holiness, as much for the verse that says:

ותמנע היתה פילגש לאליפז בן עשו

And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz, son of Esau. (Gen. 36:12)

as for the Text of the Decalogue in which the Lord speaks, saying:

אנכי ה' אלהיך

I am the Lord your God. (Exod. 20:2)

For one verse is as holy as the other, since the whole Law was dictated by God without any alteration. And likewise is its Tradition, which we call the Mental Law, because it was revealed by God to us through the mouth of our lawgiver Moses, and [handed down] from fathers to children until the present day. The form of the said tradition is set forth very amply by various authors, as is read in the book סדר עולם רבא וזוטא *Seder Olam Rabba ve-Zuta*, and in the book called קבלת הראב"ד *Kabbalat ha-Ra'avad*, and

[p. 46] in the ספר יוחסין *Sefer Yuhasin*, and in the book צמח דוד *Tsemah David*,[57] all of which treat of the demonstration of our Tradition from fathers to children until the present day. All the authors mentioned were summarized by our great Rabbenu Moses of Egypt in the preface to his great work יד החזקה *Yad ha-Hazakah*;[58] and among modern authors, it is proved with irrefutable and illustrious reasons by the most reverend and most eminent H. H. R. David Nieto, D. G. M.,[59] in his famous book *Matteh Dan* (Dialogue 2, paragraphs 116 to 121), so that the truth of our tradition of the sacred Mishnah may be manifest—which we call the Mental Law, written by Rabbenu ha-Kadosh,[60] and which was accepted in all parts of the world where the people of Israel is found dispersed.

M. May the blessings contained in it reach you, my son! Continue to another axiom.

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[56] BT Bava Batra 15a, where the last eight verses of Deuteronomy are said to have been written by Moses "with tears."

[57] *Seder Olam Rabbah* and *Seder Olam Zuta*, rabbinic chronicles; *Sefer ha-Kabbalah* of Abraham ibn Daud (Rabad I, 1161); Abraham Zacuto, *Sefer Yuhasin* (1504); David Gans, *Tsemah David* (Prague, 1592).

[58] Rabbenu Moses of Egypt = Maimonides; the introduction to his *Mishneh Torah* traces the chain of tradition from Moses.

[59] David Nieto (1654–1728), Haham of the Spanish and Portuguese congregation in London; *Matteh Dan, o Segunda parte del Cuzari* (London, 1714), a defense of the Oral Law. D. G. M. is probably an honorific for the recently deceased ("de gloriosa memoria").

[60] Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, redactor of the Mishnah.

9. תורה נצחית ולא תשתנה בשום זמן — The Law Eternal and Immutable

D. The ninth Article is that the Law of God is eternal and perfect, and as such cannot be altered or diminished in anything, at any time, not even by one jot. So God commands us, enjoining us in the Pentateuch, saying:

לא תספו על הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם ולא תגרעו ממנו לשמר את מצות ה' אלהיכם אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם

> You shall not add to the thing that I command you, nor diminish from it,
>
> [p. 47] so as to keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you. (Deut. 4:2)

For it is not only a detestable error but a most grave absurdity [to hold otherwise], since what is perfect is not altered or diminished; and since the Law of God is most perfect, it will always remain in its permanence. Hence it is certain that it cannot suffer alteration or diminution. So the royal Musician sings:

תורת ה' תמימה

> The Law of the Lord is perfect. (Ps. 19:8)

And as such, being given by God, who is immutable and eternal, the same Law is consequently also immutable and eternal, for all eternity.

M. May the Lord perfect you in the understanding of it. What does the tenth Article point out to us?

10. ידיעתו בתחתונים — God's Knowledge of Humankind

D. It teaches us that God, blessed be He, knows and sees the works of man, and that nothing is hidden from Him, however secret or open it may be. This is what the Prophet says:

גדל העצה ורב העליליה אשר עיניך פקחות על כל דרכי בני אדם

> Great of counsel and great of deed, whose eyes are open upon all the ways of man. (Jer. 32:19)

And the crowned Psalmist said:

היצר יחד לבם המבין אל כל מעשיהם

> He who forms their hearts together, who understands all their works. (Ps. 33:15)

M. Continue your discourse to another point.

11. שכר ועונש — Reward and Punishment

D. The eleventh Article obliges us to believe that God undoubtedly rewards those who observe His Law and punishes

[p. 48] those who transgress it, both in this world and in the world to come. For with His upright justice He punishes according to the faults, and rewards according to the merits acquired in the observance of His precepts, inquiring into the manner and the reverence with which they were observed. But the most certain punishment and reward is to be in the other life, as Holy Scripture relates:

ומשלם לשנאיו אל פניו להאבידו לא יאחר לשנאו אל פניו ישלם לו

> And He repays those who hate Him in their lifetime, to destroy him; He will not delay with the one who hates Him; in his lifetime He will repay him. (Deut. 7:10)

And the Chaldaic Paraphrase on the same Text likewise affirms this,[61] as also does the prince of commentators, Rashi, and no less the most learned Ibn Ezra. And our most excellent Sages expound upon the Text that follows:

אשר אנכי מצוך היום לעשותם

> Which I command you today to do them. (Deut. 7:11)

dwelling on the word "today": that is, today in this life to do them, and tomorrow in the other life to receive their reward.[62] And the most wise R. Menasseh ben Israel, in his famous book *Nishmat Hayyim* (first discourse, chapter 3), deduces and proves from this sacred Text the immortality of the soul and the promise of eternal life. And the Prophet Jeremiah, at the end of the verse already cited, confirms it for us:

לתת לאיש כדרכיו וכפרי מעלליו

> To give to each one according to his works, etc. (Jer. 32:19)

And in Exodus Moses said to the Lord:

[p. 49] ועתה אם תשא חטאתם ואם אין מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת

> And now, if You will forgive their sin—and if not, blot me out now from Your book which You have written. (Exod. 32:32)

God answered him:

מי אשר חטא לי אמחנו מספרי

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[61] Targum Onkelos and the Jerusalem Targum, which render "to his face" as "in their lifetime."

[62] BT Eruvin 22a and Avodah Zarah 3a: "today to do them, and tomorrow to receive their reward."

Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. (Exod. 32:33)

It is inferred, then, that God takes care of the sinner and of the deserving, to punish the one and reward the other.

M. What you have said is very certain; but what do you gather from this doctrine?

D. I understand that the soul of man is immortal, and that according as we incline with our free will, we may be rewarded in the future life for our good works, and punished in it according to our offenses.

M. Take good heed, therefore, that sinful appetites do not make your free will slip on the slope of vices. Make a habit of the virtues and observe the commandments of God because He enjoins them upon you, and you will merit glory with the righteous in eternal life. Relate to me what the twelfth Article contains.

12. ביאת משיחנו — Redemption

D. It says that everyone who is an Israelite must hope each day and moment for salvation, as God commands us:

לישועתך קויתי ה'

For Your salvation I hope, O Lord. (Gen. 49:18)

This salvation cannot be understood as that of the soul, as I shall prove further on, but rather

[p. 50] the salvation of the body, which is [release from] the subjection of captivity; and this by awaiting the true Messiah, redeemer of the people of Israel, whom God promised us by the mouth of His infallible Prophets. This Messiah is to be of the descent of David, King of Israel, in the male line, as the royal prince and prophet [Isaiah] says:

ויצא חטר מגזע ישי ונצר משרשיו יפרה

And a rod shall come forth from the stock of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall flourish. (Isa. 11:1)

It is inferred that he must be of the male line; and so we find that all the genealogies of Israel are reckoned after the fathers, as is clearly seen from Holy Scripture:

למשפחתם לבית אבתם

By their families, by the house of their fathers. (Num. 1:18)

He must be begotten and born like other men, for in various places the holy Prophets call him גזע ישי, "stock of Jesse" (Isa. 11:1), and on other pages שרש ישי, "root of Jesse" (Isa. 11:10). And the Prophet Jeremiah called him דוד מלכם, "David their king" (Jer. 30:9). And the Prophet Ezekiel,

את עבדי דויד, "My servant David" (Ezek. 34:23); the same, on another page, ודוד עבדי נשיא להם לעולם, "and David My servant shall be prince to them forever" (Ezek. 37:25). And the Prophet Hosea calls him likewise ואת דוד מלכם, "and David their king" (Hos. 3:5). So that with these substantive names these messengers of God teach us that, just as the righteous Jesse and David his son [p. 51] the pious King of Israel, were begotten and born; so whatever is born of this trunk and of this holy Root must be conceived, begotten and born like his forefathers. In the same way, the said Messiah will have a singular dignity, far more excellent than all the Prophets and holy Patriarchs. So the most learned Sages recorded on the text of the same Prophet, where he prophesied of the Messiah, saying:

הנה ישכיל עבדי ירום ונשא וגבה מאד

> Behold, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted, and shall be lifted up, and shall be very high. (Isa. 52:13)

And they explain it in the following form:[63] he shall be exalted more than Abraham, lifted up and raised on high more than Moseh, far more than the ministering Angels; yet without passing on to any degree of Divinity. But he will indeed possess the knowledge and wisdom of God, as the holy Prophet Isaiah prophesied of him when he said:

ונחה עליו רוח ה' רוח חכמה ובינה רוח עצה וגבורה רוח דעת ויראת ה'

> And there shall rest upon him the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of knowledge and prudence, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowing and of the fear of the Lord. (Isa. 11:2)

This Redeemer is to be the temporal King of Israel and the beginning of the fifth Monarchy, which shall reign *in saecula saeculorum*, as God promised us by the mouth of Daniel, after He had revealed to him the explanation of the statue of Nebuchadnezzar,

[p. 52] King of Babylon, which statue represents the four Monarchies; and of the fifth, which is that of Israel, it says:

וביומיהון די מלכיא אנון יקים אלה שמיא מלכו די לעלמין לא תתחבל ומלכותה לעם אחרן לא תשתבק תדק ותסיף כל אלין מלכותא והיא תקום לעלמיא

> And in the days of these Kings the God of the heavens shall raise up a Kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and this Kingdom shall not be left to another people; (it) shall break in pieces and consume all these Kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. (Dan. 2:44)

And in another place he repeats the same phrase, and for greater certainty says:

ויקבלון מלכותא קדישי עליונין ויחסנון מלכותא עד עלמא ועד עלם עלמיא

[63] Perez cites "Jalkut fol. 53, pag. 2": the *Yalkut Shimoni* on Isaiah 52:13 (the same midrash is in *Tanhuma*, Toledot 14).

> And the holy people of the Most High shall receive the empire, and shall inherit the Kingdom for all eternity. (Dan. 7:18)

And at the end of this vision and revelation of the four beasts, symbol of the four Monarchies, he foretold of the fifth in these terms:

ומלכותה ושלטנא ורבותא די מלכות תחות כל שמיא יהיבת לעם קדישי עליונין מלכותה מלכות עלם וכל שלטניא לה יפלחון וישתמעון

> And the Kingdom, and the dominion, and the majesty of the kingdoms that are under the whole heaven shall be given to the holy people of the Most High; its kingdom shall be eternal, and all dominions shall serve and obey it. (Dan. 7:27)

Clearly enough does he announce to the people of God its Kingdom and fifth Monarchy, with all

[p. 53] these prerogatives, so that the restoration and permanence of our Empire for all eternity remains proven.

M. I confess that you have hit the mark and proved it well. But how will you prove that this fifth Monarchy is the long-desired one of Israel?

D. With great evidence I will prove it by Holy Scripture, which in various places calls Israel by the title of holy people, as:

ואנשי קדש תהיון לי

> And men of holiness shall ye be unto me. (Exod. 22:30)

And in another place it confirms it, saying:

כי עם קדוש אתה לה' אלהיך

> For a holy people art thou unto the Lord thy God. (Deut. 7:6)

And another passage reconfirms it:

כי עם קדוש אתה לה' אלהיך ובך בחר ה' וגו'

> For a holy people art thou unto the Lord thy God, and in thee He chose, to be His people, etc. (Deut. 14:2)

And in Deuteronomy:

כי עם קדוש אתה לה' אלהיך לא תבשל גדי

> For a holy people art thou unto the Lord thy God; thou shalt not seethe a kid, etc. (Deut. 14:21)

And likewise the holy Martyr and Prophet[64] entitles them:

[64] Isaiah, who according to rabbinic tradition was put to death by King Manasseh (BT Yevamot 49b).

וקראו להם עם הקדש גאולי ה'

> And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord. (Isa. 62:12)

And so we find it in very many places, so that whoever has the least knowledge of Holy Scripture cannot deny that the only such people in the world is none other, nor can be any other, than Israel, chosen of God. It thus remains proven by clear signs

[p. 54] that this Kingdom is the fifth Monarchy, that of Israel, whom God entitled a holy nation at the giving of the sacred Law:

ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש

> And ye shall be unto me an empire of priests and a holy nation. (Exod. 19:6)

This, then, is the holy people of the Most High of whom the Prophet Daniel speaks. This Kingdom shall be the Messiah's, of the God of Jacob; it shall endure for all eternity, and to that same King all the Kings, Princes and Dukes, and the other nations of the whole universe, shall pay homage and tribute. So the royal Musician confirms it, prophesying of the Redeemer of his throne; he says:

וישתחוו לו כל מלכים כל גוים יעבדוהו

> And to him shall all the Kings bow down; all the nations shall serve him. (Ps. 72:11)

This sole true Messiah shall restore forever the Empire of Israel, after he has gathered the twelve Tribes of the people of Israel from the four parts of the world in which they are scattered. So the Prophet records it:

והיה ביום ההוא שרש ישי אשר עמד לנס עמים אליו גוים ידרשו והיתה מנחתו כבוד: והיה ביום ההוא יוסיף אדני שנית ידו לקנות את שאר עמו אשר ישאר מאשור וממצרים ומפתרוס ומכוש ומעילם ומשנער ומחמת ומאיי הים: ונשא נס לגוים ואסף נדחי ישראל ונפצות יהודה יקבץ מארבע כנפות הארץ

> And it shall be in that day, the Root of Jesse, which shall stand for a banner of the peoples, to him shall the nations seek, and his rest shall be with glory. And it shall be
>
> [p. 55] in that day the Lord shall add a second time His hand to acquire the remnant of His people that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Parthia, and from Ethiopia, from Persia and from Chaldea, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the Sea. And He shall lift up a banner to the nations, and shall gather the thrust-out of Israel, and the scattered of Judah shall He gather from the four parts of the earth. (Isa. 11:10–12)

So that by means of this holy Root of Jesse the twelve tribes of Yah shall be gathered, the holy Prophet specifying those of Assyria, those of Egypt, those of Parthia, those of Ethiopia, those of Persia, those of Chaldea, those of Hamath, and those of the Islands of the Sea. Raising a banner and standard to the nations, he shall gather the thrust-out of Israel, who are the Ten Tribes that

were carried captive by Shalmaneser King of Assyria, of whom our great Master Moseh prophesied:

וישלכם אל ארץ אחרת כיום הזה

> And He cast them into another land, unto this present day. (Deut. 29:27)

And the Prophet Isaiah called them thrust-out and lost:

והיה ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול ובאו האבדים בארץ אשור והנדחים בארץ מצרים והשתחוו לה' בהר הקדש בירושלם

> And it shall be in that day, a great trumpet shall be sounded, and the lost ones of the land of Assyria shall come, and the thrust-out of the land of Egypt, and they shall bow down to the Lord in the mount of holiness in Jerusalem. (Isa. 27:13)

"The lost" is understood

[p. 56] of the ten tribes of Samaria whom Shalmaneser King of Assyria carried captive, together with their King of Israel, Hoshea son of Elah, as is read in Kings (2 Kings 18:9–11). These are lost to us, for we do not know positively where they are to be found, since on this particular there are various opinions, both among our own Authors and among the nations. Some say that they are shut in on the far side of the river Sabbatyon,[65] others say in Ethiopia, others in the north of Upper Tartary; and what I for my part hold infallibly is that they must be in the north of America, as can be seen from the geographical Map, and it is supposed that they passed over by the Strait of Anian.[66] And the H. H. R. Menasseh ben Israel[67] is of this opinion, as he wrote in his book מקוה ישראל *Esperança de Israel*. And so certain trustworthy persons who have voyaged in the South Sea have assured me; and a short time ago a leading French merchant of my acquaintance, who came to live in London, assured me that he had been with this people in that region and had dealings with them, and he brought back a very distinct and accurate description of the said Provinces, which will shortly be printed for the consolation of the people of God. And "the thrust-out in the land of Egypt" are those who went off to Ethiopia; and "the scattered of Judah He shall gather" is understood of Judah and Benjamin

[p. 57] and the half-tribe of Manasseh; "from the four parts of the earth" includes all together. And in the sacred Law God promises us and encourages us, saying by the mouth of the King of the Prophets, Moseh:

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[65] The legendary river (Sambatyon) that rests on the Sabbath, beyond which the Ten Tribes were said to be confined.

[66] The supposed strait between Asia and America on early-modern maps (roughly the Bering Strait).

[67] Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657) of Amsterdam, whose *Mikveh Israel / Esperança de Israel* (Amsterdam, 1650) argued from Antonio de Montezinos's report that remnants of the Ten Tribes lived in South America. "H. H. R." is a Sephardic honorific abbreviation, probably for *he-Haham ha-Shalem Rabbi* ("the perfect sage, Rabbi").

ושב ה' אלהיך את שבותך ורחמך ושב וקבצך מכל העמים אשר הפיצך ה' אלהיך שמה: אם יהיה נדחך בקצה השמים משם יקבצך ה' אלהיך ומשם יקחך: והביאך ה' אלהיך אל הארץ אשר ירשו אבתיך וירשתה והיטבך והרבך מאבתיך

> And the Lord thy God shall turn thy captivity, and shall have pity on thee, and shall return and gather thee from all the peoples whither the Lord thy God hath thrust thee. If thy thrust-out be at the uttermost end of the heavens, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He take thee. And the Lord thy God shall bring thee to the land which thy fathers inherited, and He will do thee good and multiply thee more than thy fathers. (Deut. 30:3–5)

And He confirms it to us by His Prophet, who said:

כה אמר אדני ה' הנה אני לקח את בני ישראל מבין הגוים אשר הלכו שם וקבצתי אתם מסביב והבאתי אותם אל אדמתם

> Thus said the Lord God: Behold, I take the children of Israel from among the nations whither they went, and I will gather them from round about, and I will bring them to their lands. (Ezek. 37:21)

After the said Messiah has gathered all his people, he will build the holy Temple of God in the holy city of Jerusalem, which shall endure forever, to the end of the ages; he will ordain upon the sacred altar the offerings, burnt-offerings

[p. 58] and sacrifices, as in the time of Aaron the High Priest, as the Prophet tells us:

וכרתי להם ברית שלום ברית עולם יהיה אותם ונתתים והרביתי אותם ונתתי את מקדשי בתוכם לעולם

> And I will make with them a covenant of peace; an everlasting covenant shall it be with them; and I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set my Sanctuary among them forever. (Ezek. 37:26)

This Messiah is he who shall rule from one pole to the other, as the royal Psalmist sings:

וירד מים עד ים ומנהר עד אפסי ארץ

> And he shall have dominion from the East to the West, and from the River (that goes out of Eden) to the ends of the earth. (Ps. 72:8)

He shall establish peace in all the universe for all eternity, for so the sacred Text says:

ורב שלום עד בלי ירח

> Abundance of peace until there be no more moon. (Ps. 72:7)

In the time of this true Redeemer of Israel there shall be fulfilled the many, many blessings and felicities that God promised us by the mouth of His holy Prophets, which, being the promise and word of the Living God, can never fail. Then the people of God shall enjoy an unshakable and

permanent tranquillity of spirit, together with the Blessings and Grace of the Lord, in the holy Land of Promise, with much peace and quiet. And so we conclude that the Messiah whom God promised to Israel must be adorned with the gifts here set forth.

[p. 59] He will accomplish all the deeds that He assured us of by the hand of His holy Prophets, and with even greater wonders, so that all Israel in general will believe in him and revere him as their King. *Ergo*, the true Messiah must have all these aforesaid prerogatives, and he who does not have them can never be he. And then, on that day when this felicity is fulfilled, the Prophecy that comforts us will be confirmed, saying:

ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד ושמו אחד

> In that day shall the Lord be one, and His name one. (Zech. 14:9)

M. May God in His infinite mercy make Israel worthy of the true Messiah in our days. But before you pass on to the last Article, tell me: in time past and present, since the true Redeemer of the people of God has not yet come (the aforesaid prerogatives being still wanting), were souls redeemed, and can they be saved and enjoy glory?

D. There is no room for any doubt that, in the past as in the present and the future, everyone who does not transgress and who observes the precepts of the Law of God is saved, and will be saved, without the least misgiving; for the salvation of souls does not depend on the coming of the Messiah, since through the observance of the Law we already have

[p. 60] salvation assured, for so God promises it by the hand of our Lawgiver and Prince of the Prophets, Moseh, saying:

אשריך ישראל מי כמוך עם נושע בה'

> Blessed art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, a people saved in the Lord? (Deut. 33:29)

As if he were to say: the blessedness of Israel and its salvation proceed from believing in the Lord, the true God, who favored us with His most holy Law, through which we come to believe in and fear the same Lord who gave it to us; and by the observance of it we are saved. And with this very phrase the royal Prophet confirms it to us on God's behalf, saying:

ישראל נושע בה' תשועת עולמים

> Israel is saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. (Isa. 45:17)

And it would be great ignorance to suppose that one who observes the Law of God and His holy precepts with all zeal and fervor should be without salvation. Thus it does not seem to me that there can be any human understanding, however frail it may be (so long as it has some use of reason), that could imagine that even the most holy Prophets, who communed with God while they were still clothed in bodily matter, did not, after they were freed from it, enjoy their beatitude as

pious and holy men and intimates of God. A strange absurdity, surely, it would be to believe that Moseh, the greatest Prophet of God, being a man who ascended to heaven, who held

[p. 61] various colloquies with God with the same familiarity a friend is wont to have with another — that afterwards, when he was most perfect, free of all bodily passions, crowned with infinite dignities that proclaimed him worthy to be placed by God in the most eminent station of glory, God should degrade him, deposing him as unworthy of it, into the place that the vain imagination of some calls Limbo! It is not a thing human judgment can embrace; such an idea is sacrilege, an opinion that inveighs against the upright justice of God. And Enoch, of whom the sacred Text says that God took him to Himself; and the Prophet Elijah, who soared up to heaven in that chariot of holy and brilliant fire — did God perchance grant them these favors only to proscribe them afterwards as convicts from His grace until the coming of the imagined Messiah, keeping them in the aforesaid place or in some other such fabulous one? Certainly not. They, the holy Patriarchs, and the other righteous men of Israel, immediately, without any interval of time after they put off the material garment, enjoyed eternal glory; and so it happens, and will happen, to the most pious men who keep the Law of the Lord and observe His divine precepts. We do indeed hold by tradition from our holy

[p. 62] Masters that when the true Messiah of Israel has come, man will be able more easily to perfect his soul with the excellent habit of the precepts that depend upon our establishment in the holy Land, such as sacrifices, tithes, first-fruits, etc.; and besides this, the hearts of Israel will be more devoted to meditating on the Law of God, and free of human constraints for the observance of the divine commandments. So the Prophet Jeremiah sings it, promising us by the mouth of God in the following manner:

הנני מקבצם מכל הארצות אשר הדחתים שם באפי ובחמתי ובקצף גדול והשבתים אל המקום הזה והשבתים לבטח: והיו לי לעם ואני אהיה להם לאלהים: ונתתי להם לב אחד ודרך אחד ליראה אותי כל הימים לטוב להם ולבניהם אחריהם: וכרתי להם ברית עולם אשר לא אשוב מאחריהם להיטיבי אותם ואת יראתי אתן בלבבם לבלתי סור מעלי: וששתי עליהם להטיב אותם ונטעתים בארץ הזאת באמת בכל לבי ובכל נפשי: כי כה אמר ה' כאשר הבאתי אל העם הזה את כל הרעה הגדולה הזאת כן אנכי מביא עליהם את כל הטובה אשר אנכי דבר עליהם

> Behold, I will gather them from all the lands whither I thrust them in my anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in tranquillity; and they shall be to me for a people, and I will be to them for God; and I will give them one heart
>
> [p. 63] and one way, to fear me all the days, that it may be well with them and with their children after them; and I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will never turn back from after them, to do them good; and my fear will I put in their hearts, that they turn not away from me; and I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land in truth,

with all my heart and with all my soul. For thus said the Lord: As I have brought upon this people all this great evil, so will I bring upon them all the good that I speak concerning them. (Jer. 32:37–42)

Here it is clearly proved that in that time the hearts of Israel will be more devoted to the observance of the divine Law, from which all our good proceeds. And in the same manner He reconfirms it by the mouth of the Prophet Ezekiel when he says:

ונתתי לכם לב חדש ורוח חדשה אתן בקרבכם והסרתי את לב האבן מבשרכם ונתתי לכם לב בשר:
ואת רוחי אתן בקרבכם ועשיתי את אשר בחקי תלכו ומשפטי תשמרו ועשיתם: וישבתם בארץ אשר נתתי לאבתיכם והייתם לי לעם ואנכי אהיה לכם לאלהים

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh; and my spirit will I put within you, and I will cause you to walk in my statutes and to keep my judgments and do them; and ye shall

[p. 64] dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be to me for a people, and I will be to you for God. (Ezek. 36:26–28)

M. You have shown yourself well supplied with reasons in this discourse, which you set out with great skill, and I am satisfied with your good talent. Conclude with the last Article, תחיית המתים *teḥiyyat ha-metim*.

D. The thirteenth irrefutable proposition, the resurrection of the dead: that God, blessed be He, will raise the dead to life at the time which is known and reserved to Him alone, reviving the wicked as well as the good — these to reward them with life and eternal glory, and the others to punish them with reproaches and infernal pains. So the Prophet corroborates it:

אלה לחיי עולם ואלה לחרפות לדראון עולם

These to everlasting life, and these to reproaches and everlasting corruption. (Dan. 12:2)

With this I have concluded the thirteen Articles which Israel must firmly believe and on which it must ground its salvation. Whoever denies any one of them is declared a Heretic and is excluded from the glorious name of Israel; and consequently, not being one, he loses his portion in the world to come. So the sacred Talmud makes it plain in the tractate סנהדרין *Sanhedrin*; and so Rabbenu Moseh of Egypt rules it in the explanation of the holy Mishnah on the said tractate.[68]

M. See, my son, that you always keep them

[68] Mishnah and BT Sanhedrin 10:1 (90a), "All Israel have a portion in the world to come … ." "Rabbenu Moseh of Egypt" is Maimonides, whose Commentary on the Mishnah, in its introduction to *Perek Ḥelek* (Sanhedrin ch. 10), sets out the Thirteen Principles.

[p. 65] present in your memory, observing all that they contain; for thus you will not come to find yourself in the place of sin, and you will merit to be numbered among the servants and those who fear God. And so that you may always keep them in your memory, at the end of this work you will find them in the holy Hebrew tongue and in Spanish, to recite them every day of your life.

Sixth Notice

On Divine Providence

M. What is Divine Providence?

D. It is a reason in the understanding of God, according to which He orders and directs all things to their ends.

M. Where is God, blessed be He, to be found?

D. God is found in everything, in the Heavens and on the earth, as the Prophet said:

מלא כל הארץ כבודו

> The whole earth is full of His glory. (Isa. 6:3)

And in another place he says:

הלוא את השמים ואת הארץ אני מלא נאם ה'

> Verily, the heavens and the earth do I fill, saith the Lord. (Jer. 23:24)

And in all that remains for us to imagine, which our limited comprehension cannot reach.

M. What benefit redounds to us from believing that God is present in everything?

[p. 66] **D.** This truth is of great benefit to us, because with this particular consideration we shall remain firm in knowing that God is present in everything, and consequently we cannot fail to take heed that the Divinity is present in all our actions. And so, for fear of His presence (in which we must give account of our works), we shall abstain from committing sins, we shall not transgress His precepts, and we shall observe for love of Him the commandments of His holy Law, meriting by these considerations and observances the felicity of eternal Beatitude. The royal Psalmist gives us instruction in this doctrine by his own example when he says:

שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד

> I have set the Lord before me continually. (Ps. 16:8)

M. Is it necessary that we believe in Divine Providence?

D. Yes, for it is most necessary to believe that God attends to all with His Providence. And it is an infallible reason that, God being the Archetype of all goodness, one cannot fail to believe that He provides for all creatures with the necessary sustenance, and takes care to direct and preserve what

He was pleased to create, maintaining them all according to the nature He gave to each of them — though He can nevertheless alter them, as

[p. 67] absolute Lord, according to His will.

M. Is there to be found in Holy Scripture any clear evidence of His Providence?

D. The tokens of Divine Providence, both in general and in particular, are very evident throughout the Bible. God finds Noah righteous and saves him with all his family from the inundation of the Flood, saying to him:

בא אתה וכל ביתך אל התבה כי אתך ראיתי צדיק לפני בדור הזה

> Come thou and all thy house into the Ark, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. (Gen. 7:1)

And in another text, speaking of the same, it says:

ויסגר ה' בעדו

> And the Lord shielded him. (Gen. 7:16)

The innocent and righteous Joseph He delivered from the wicked counsel of his brothers; He removed him from the indignation of Potiphar, brought on by the treachery of his wicked wife; He redeemed him from prison and set him up, crowned with immense graces, as oracle of Pharaoh and of all the Egyptians. One sees also the singular providence of His Divinity in succoring Daniel in the deep and dark den, delivering him from the claws of the lions, as the sacred Text says:

אלהי שלח מלאכה וסגר פם אריותא ולא חבלוני

> My God sent His Angel, and shut the mouth of the Lions, and they did me no harm. (Dan. 6:23)

And no less is one amazed at the visible miracle of His providence in taking away from

[p. 68] the blazing Furnace the force of the fire, turning its scorching flames into a fresh and gentle breeze, solely in order to shelter and defend from them the three righteous men Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, who were thrown into it by order of the wicked King Nebuchadnezzar for refusing to worship an image, as is well known from that same sacred History. This is the prodigious excellence that we find in Divine Providence in particular. And in general we find it in the innumerable portents and miracles that He wrought in Egypt in favor of our forefathers, bringing them out at last by His absolute power. As regards the Land of Promise, we likewise recognize the superior Providence of God, for of it Holy Scripture says (if I am not mistaken):

ארץ אשר ה' אלהיך דרש אתה תמיד עיני ה' אלהיך בה מרשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה

> A land which the Lord thy God seeks after continually; the eyes of the Lord thy God are upon it from the beginning to the end of the year. (Deut. 11:12)

God also provides generally for all creatures, to which purpose David said:

טוב ה' לכל ורחמיו על כל מעשיו

> The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works. (Ps. 145:9)

Many evident examples are found in Holy Scripture that corroborate this truth; and God uses His providence especially with His people, for He encourages it

[p. 69] and consoles it in its captivity, saying to them, at the end of the proclamation of the curses — He heartens them, saying:

ואף גם זאת בהיותם בארץ איביהם לא מאסתים ולא געלתים לכלתם להפר בריתי אתם כי אני ה' אלהיהם

> And yet even so, when they are in the land of their enemies, I have not abhorred them, nor cast them away, to annihilate them, nor to annul my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. (Lev. 26:44)

And our most learned Sages gloss the said text in the tractate Megillah[69] in these terms: It is read in the Prophet, "I have not abhorred them" — in the time of the Monarchy of the Chaldeans, for I raised up among them Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; "nor cast them away" — in the time of the Monarchy of the Greeks, for I raised up among them Simeon the Just, and the Maccabees, and Mattathias the High Priest; "to annihilate them" — in the time of Haman the Wicked, for I raised up among them the holy Mordecai and Queen Esther; "nor to annul my covenant with them" — in the time of the Roman Monarchy, for I raised up among them Rabbi[70] and the other Sages of those ages; "for I am the Lord their God" — for the time to come, when no nation shall ever be able to subjugate them. And since the word of our God cannot fail, it remains proven by clear signs that He would not abandon them in their captivities, but rather would use His protection and Providence

[p. 70] to preserve them from the persecutions of their enemies. And so the great Chancellor Ezra confirms it in his prayer, when he said:

כי עבדים אנחנו ובעבדתנו לא עזבנו אלהינו ויט עלינו חסד לפני מלכי פרס

> For we are servants, and in our servitude our God has not forsaken us, but has extended mercy to us before the Kings of Persia. (Ezra 9:9)

And with the same Providence and Mercy He sheltered and shelters us in this present captivity, saving His little Flock of few sheep from the claws of so many, many lions among whom we find ourselves scattered and subjected. Wherein experience has shown us thousands upon thousands of

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[69] BT Megillah 11a (Perez's margin: "Meguila cap. 1, pag. 11").

[70] "Reby": Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi; the Talmud reads "those of the house of Rabbi and the sages of the generations."

times the providence and mercy that our God had and has towards us; and with the same He promises us by the mouth of the royal Musician:

בונה ירושלם ה' נדחי ישראל יכנס

> The Lord will build Jerusalem; the scattered of Israel He will gather. (Ps. 147:2)

M. And what benefit does your zealous diligence gain in knowing that the providence of God is certain?

D. I take heed that the Divine Majesty has me in His charge, that He will help me in all my good intentions and virtuous actions, and that, this being so, to Him alone must I make supplication to obtain His general mercy and particular succor.

M. The Lord be with you, and free you from troubles, and defend you from all evil, whenever

[p. 71] you call upon Him with purity of heart; for the holy Prophet says:

קרוב ה' לכל קראיו לכל אשר יקראהו באמת

> God is near to all who call upon Him — to all, I say, who call upon Him in truth. (Ps. 145:18)

Seventh Notice

Which Treats of Faith and Trust in God

M. To what consideration must we be attentive, so that by continual contemplation of it we may merit glory, assisted equally, of course, by good deeds?

D. Many are the things that ought to serve us as a goal for giving fitting merits to our souls, so that they may merit Blessedness; and all of them are summed up in two objects. The one is the observance of the Law of God, as our most learned Sages admonish us. The other is trust in God, ever fixed, as the same Sages preach and teach us.

M. And in what does this hope and trust consist, or in what way is it to be understood?

D. In believing that God, by His grace and

[p. 72] infinite Mercy, provides for us in all our needs, giving us sustenance in this life, as David observes to this purpose:

עיני כל אליך ישברו ואתה נותן להם את אכלם בעתו פותח את ידך ומשביע לכל חי רצון

> The eyes of all hope toward You, and You give them their food in its hour; You open Your hands, and satisfy every creature with goodwill. (Ps. 145:15–16)

And in the better life, by virtue of this same belief, He rewards our souls with the happy possession of beatitude. We must note, however, that we have to earn this grace and mercy of God by disposing ourselves to implore His favor, the true means to which is the observance of His

precepts; and this not in order to receive a reward, either in this world or in the other, but solely to do His will. For this reason the Royal Psalmist tells us:

בטח בה' ועשה טוב שכן ארץ ורעה אמונה והתענג על ה' ויתן לך משאלת לבך גול על ה' דרכך ובטח עליו והוא יעשה

> Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and feed on truth; delight in the Lord, and He will give you the petitions of your heart; turn your course to the Lord, and hope in Him, and He will set you aright. (Ps. 37:3–5)

And the wisest King said:

בטח אל ה' בכל לבך

> Trust in the Lord with all your heart. (Prov. 3:5)

M. And may a man not trust in his wealth, learning, valor, children and friends?

[p. 73] **D.** Certainly not; for we neither can nor should trust in any of these things, since they are all fragile and perishable, subject to the inconstancy and changes of the times. Friends ordinarily fail us, and we find them false in our necessities; and for that reason the Text says:

ארור הגבר אשר יבטח באדם

> Cursed is the man who trusts in man. (Jer. 17:5)

Children, too, are wont to repay a father's care and devotion with an enduring ingratitude; and even if both children and friends did not fail in their obligation, death may deny them to us at the most opportune moment and in the most urgent need. Strength and valor, of body as of mind, are subject to being weakened by some chance illness, and instead of a virtuous boldness they are transformed into a vicious sloth. Wealth is the thing which, more than any other, is exposed to failing, because a man spends himself in consuming it, after having acquired it with untiring vigils in order to enjoy its emoluments; and these too come to perish together with it. The force of a thunderbolt can throw it down; the fury of an earthquake can make it vanish. And if we are accustomed to call "immovable goods" the buildings in which our riches seem to us most secure and best placed,

[p. 74] we give them this name improperly, since they deserve only that of "movables," and as such are more exposed than other goods to failing us. Learning, likewise, is no endowment in which a man can fix his trust: not only because those who today find themselves its possessors to their complete satisfaction are usually favored by few and forsaken by many, but also because the intellectual instrument of these scientific operations is subject to innumerable accidents and illnesses, in which it may perhaps be lost, or be left in incurable madness. And so I conclude that neither in friends, children, valor, learning, wealth, nor, finally, in any other accidental thing can a man fix his trust, as the lamenting Prophet sings, saying:

כה אמר ה' אל יתהלל חכם בחכמתו ואל יתהלל הגבור בגבורתו אל יתהלל עשיר בעשרו

> Thus said the Lord: Let not the wise man praise himself in his learning, let not the valiant praise himself in his valor, and let not the rich man praise himself in his riches. (Jer. 9:22)

Not in these, for the reasons given, but only in the infinite mercy of God, as being infinitely removed from any change or accident. Thus the same Prophet admonishes us when he says:

ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה' והיה ה' מבטחו

> [p. 75] Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and the Lord shall be his trust. (Jer. 17:7)

M. But what means must we choose so that with infallible certainty we may come to have perfect faith and trust in God?

D. Our understanding must secure five considerations (which arise from the holy doctrines of our Masters) in order to have, with a tranquil mind, firm faith and hope in God. The first is to hold for certain that God has knowledge of our deeds. The second, that the infinite Goodness of God preserves, directs and provides for all things with His upright justice and abundant Mercy: that He makes fruitful with good things whomever He wills, even though the person does not deserve it because he does not act according to the Law; and that if He punishes the wicked man, He does it for his good, since if the latter trusts in Him and receives the punishment as an expiation of his transgressions, His compassion protects him and restores him to His grace. And in this sense David sang:

רבים מכאובים לרשע והבוטח בה' חסד יסובבנו

> Many are the sorrows of the wicked, and he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him. (Ps. 32:10)

As if to say: though he be wicked, and deserve the sorrows when the punishment comes upon him, if he trusts in the Lord, His mercy protects him. The third consideration is that trust must be in God alone; for if perchance one trusts

[p. 76] in man, or in any creature, his punishment is very grave, for wishing to equate and even prefer the fallible and limited power of man to the infinite might of God. The fourth certain maxim is that if we endeavor to observe the precepts of God, and make every effort not to transgress and to keep His commandments, by this we show that our faith and hope are directed to Him. The fifth and last consideration is not to neglect our prayers, and that these be made with devout intention and attention, and not for private ends, but to do His holy will. For by doing as has been said in these five premeditations, we shall come to be established in faith and trust in God.

M. Then meditate continually on these devout considerations, so that by means of them your virtues may proclaim you worthy of the grace of God.

Eighth Notice

Instruction on the Love of God and of One's Neighbor

M. Now I wish to learn from you to what object our love must look, so that we may

[p. 77] by it live morally and merit beatitude.

D. The first end, and the most proper path, toward which our love must be directed is to dedicate all our affections to God and to love Him above all things. Thus Holy Scripture teaches:

ואהבת את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך וגו'

> And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, etc. (Deut. 6:5)

And to fear Him, as it says on another page:

את ה' אלהיך תירא

> The Lord your God you shall fear. (Deut. 10:20)

For love of Him we come to observe His blessed Law. The second path is to love one's neighbor as oneself; and so, by loving him with all sincerity and as ourselves, we make our humanity virtuous, perfecting it morally; and in consequence we love God at the same time through the observance of this precept, since His divine love is also enclosed in it (although with a superior preference over love of one's neighbor). By it we come to adorn our souls with innumerable perfections and dignities, whereby we render them deserving of glory. For in the love and fear of God is included the observance of all the positive and negative precepts, because, theologically speaking, he who breaks God's commandments does not love or fear Him, nor does he observe His precepts well who does not equally love

[p. 78] and fear Him. The second path to attaining the perfection of the soul is the second love, which we owe to our neighbor, because the love of God and all the other precepts of His holy Law are summed up in it in the same way (as has been said). These two, then, are the true path to arrive at the perfection of virtue.

M. How can you combine love and fear in one subject, so that they take effect at the same time, since they are contrary effects and as such imply a contradiction?

D. There is no contradiction at all as regards man toward God, so long as he contemplates the marvelous works that His immense power made and preserves in such beautiful order, and that we were made by His holy hand in His Image in order to serve Him, knowing that He can annihilate it in an instant. Then, descending from these considerations, we notice our own lowly and corruptible matter; and at the same time as we form these devout judgments, there grow together in our soul, refined by the light of the understanding, both the fear and the love of God; and so,

without any intermission, we love and fear God at one and the same time. In a not very dissimilar style some Authors draw this opinion from the holy Dogmas of our Masters;

[p. 79] but I too would establish this truth, in my opinion, with conclusive and effective reasons. And so I say that, considering myself a sinner (as I am), I fear God for the punishment that His upright justice can hurl down upon me; and seeing at the same instant that His Mercy and compassion come forward to check His rigor, so that He does not execute the punishment immediately upon my committing the offense, I love Him; for I perceive that His infinite goodness and clemency pities the frailty of my nature, and in this consideration permits me repentance. I conclude from this that in contemplating the rectitude of His Justice we fear Him, and in admiring the greatness of His Mercy we love Him; and consequently, by meditating on these pious ideas, we can (as we must) love and fear God at one and the same time.

M. I am very well informed of your reasons; but I must point out to you that we must love and fear God not only for the benefits that redound to us from the effects of His Attributes, but because He is infinite and immense perfection, worthy to be loved and feared above all things. And supposing a man did not sin and found himself in a state of extreme penury, he must love and fear God in the same

[p. 80] manner as if he were in any other state whatever, because His divine precept so commands, and likewise because of the obligation we owe to His sovereign and supreme greatness. This granted, tell me now what persecutions we are obliged to suffer for the love we owe to God.

D. God Himself forewarns us of it by the mouth of His greatest envoy, when He says:

ואהבת את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך

> And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your having. (Deut. 6:5)

On this Text our most eminent Sages comment that we are required (besides loving God affectionately with all our faculties) to suffer with constant spirit, for His love, every kind of bodily and pecuniary affliction: even if they take away our property, even if they torture us, and even if they take our life by the most barbarous and cruel death.[71] Of the observance of this doctrine we have many examples in the sacred Histories, of Prophets and distinguished men who were exposed to martyrdom and suffered it for the love of God: such as Daniel, who for the love he bore God would not cease from his pious and devout prayers, exposing himself to the claws of the lions; and Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, who, rather than worship another cult, exposed themselves

[p. 81] to the flames of a burning fire; and so very many holy Martyrs who suffered the cruelest deaths in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the most notable being the glorious Hannah, wife of a

[71] Cf. Mishnah Berakhot 9:5 and Sifre Deut. 32: "with all your soul," even if He takes your soul; "with all your might," with all your money.

Priest, with her seven sons, and the aged High Priest Eleazar, who, rather than disguise his true Religion even in appearance only, suffered martyrdom in his old age for the honor of his God, dying in his Religion.[72] Of such examples we have thousands: such as those who suffered in the Province of Austria in the year 4856,[73] and in many parts of Germany, high and low, who for being constant to their holy Law and faithful to the God of Israel were slaughtered, sanctifying the unity of our God, as is recorded in the book תרומת הדשן *Terumat ha-Deshen*;[74] and the hundred-and-some thousand souls of Israel who resolved to slaughter one another inside the holy Synagogues rather than worship any cult but that of the one God of Israel, fathers putting sons to the sword and mothers daughters, as happened in Poland in the years 5408 and [540]9, as is distinctly read in a treatise that sets forth the misfortune of that fatal event;[75] and our brethren of Spain and Portugal, who let themselves be burned alive for the holy Law of Moses. And by considering these holy

[p. 82] Martyrs, we shall arm ourselves with vigor and constancy to suffer any barbarous and cruel death, giving by it a sign of the love we owe to God, losing not only our property but even our very life in order to do the will of God and attain eternal life.

M. May His Divine Majesty, in His great Mercy, not allow our weakness to experience the rigor of His justice; and should His will be otherwise, may He arm us with vigor and constancy to be able to suffer the punishment. Now I must ask you this: whether any of His precepts is included in love toward God?

D. I already anticipated this (in answering the first question of this Article): that one cannot love God without punctually observing His precepts. And now I say further that all of them are included in the love we bear Him; for it is very certain that if we transgress any of them, we no longer love Him rightly. And so, to confirm this truth, I point out that the very Text that commends to us to love Him imposes on us, with emphasis, the whole Law. Here it says:

> ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלהיך שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה' אלהיך ללכת בכל דרכיו ולאהבה אתו ולעבד את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך
>
> And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God demand of you, save to
>
> [p. 83] fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His paths, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul? (Deut. 10:12)

And as a caution regarding this point, in the next chapter it repeats it in this manner:

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[72] The mother and seven sons and the aged Eleazar: 2 Macc. 6–7; the mother is named Hannah in rabbinic and later Jewish tradition (cf. BT Gittin 57b). In 2 Macc. 6:18 Eleazar is "one of the foremost scribes"; 4 Macc. 5:4 calls him a priest.

[73] 4856 A.M. = 1095/96 CE, the year of the First Crusade massacres (chiefly in the Rhineland); Perez may be thinking of the Vienna persecution of 1420–21.

[74] The responsa of R. Israel Isserlein (d. 1460) of Wiener Neustadt in Austria.

[75] 5408–5409 = 1648–49, the Chmielnicki massacres; the treatise is probably Nathan Nata Hannover's *Yeven Metsulah* (Venice, 1653).

ואהבת את ה' אלהיך ושמרת משמרתו וחקתיו ומשפטיו ומצותיו כל הימים

> And you shall love the Lord your God, and keep His charge, and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments all the days. (Deut. 11:1)

Thus we clearly perceive how indissoluble a congruence the love we owe to God has with the observance of His entire Law.

M. I am satisfied with your fitting definition, since in conformity with the truth your synderesis moves you to establish that the observance of His precepts is included in loving God. Now discourse on how we are to understand the love we are obliged to have for our neighbor, and in what manner we must love him.

D. In the love we owe to God lies the affection and inclination with which the same Lord, by means of His grace, enjoins us to have love for our neighbor; for He charges us with it in the very phrase by which He obliges us to His own love. For loving Him, God tells us: ואהבת את ה' אלהיך "And you shall love the Lord your God"; and for the neighbor He says, in the same phrase:

ואהבת לרעך כמוך

> And you shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Lev. 19:18)

[p. 84] For God commends it so precisely in order that we may be reciprocal in fraternal affection, and that, uniformly and with candid hearts, we may cooperate in His holy service, obtain the expiation of our sins, merit redemption from our long captivity, and raise our souls to the Beatitude of His exalted glory. But to avoid being asked particulars on this point, I shall continue the discourse to which my promptings direct me and which my reflection dictates concerning this subject. And so I say that all the good desires and yearnings that we must form and have in order to perfect ourselves and rise in all the moral virtues, we are likewise obliged to desire that our neighbor acquire, and that he advance in them with the same ease; and likewise all the other distinctions that acclaim us as singular in every kind of excellent art and science, chiefly in the most distinguished of them, the sacred; and in the same way all prosperity and temporal goods, and the glorious and eternal felicities. Finally, to this purpose I say (without philological affectation) that in sum we must love our neighbor with the same entirety of faculties, with the same efficacy of affection, with which really and

[p. 85] truly we love ourselves.

M. What you have discoursed thus far concerning the love we owe our neighbor is well; but if he does not reciprocate it with affectionate correspondence, and instead a manifest antipathy is perceived in him, one that with inward hatred seeks to take away our reputation and with perverse iniquity does not cease to molest us, must we perchance love him?

D. Without doubt; for just as we love ourselves, we must love our neighbor, even if he declares himself our greatest adversary; even if he has reviled us and offended us in the most sensitive part of our affection; and even if he does not cease to outrage us, we must never hate him, and we must constantly love him. Here is the proof that I draw as a consequence of this inviolable truth, and it is this: in case, through carelessness or on purpose, we had committed some affront to the dishonor of our neighbor, and he did not call himself offended, was not irritated, did not falter in his good inclination, and we finally obtained from his goodness a full pardon, would not this action of his be very praiseworthy and generous? Well then, we likewise must always be constant toward him with the same entirety of will, because the Law is equal for all, and its dictates

[p. 86] are comprehended in all. Noting further that if perchance, on any account, we could call ourselves offended by our neighbor, we must inquire whether we have given him occasion for provocation; and when, by our own diligence or by another's notice, we find the cause we have given him, we must endeavor to offer him the greatest and fullest satisfactions possible. But if, notwithstanding this submission, he shows himself hard and will not hear the earnest pleas of our humility, we must not on that account show ourselves remiss in redoubling our arguments to make him desist from his obstinacy, admonishing him at the same time, on evident grounds, that as one zealous for the Law of the Lord he must be careful not to transgress its precepts; for the Lord Himself, in His infinite compassion, enjoins us not to harbor hatred, inwardly as well as outwardly. And therefore to this purpose the sacred Text says clearly:

לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך וגו'

> Do not hate your brother in your heart, etc. (Lev. 19:17)

And in the following verse it repeats the same sentence, saying:

לא תקם ולא תטר את בני עמך ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה'

> Do not take vengeance, and do not keep hatred against those of your people; rather you shall love your companion as yourself; I am the Lord. (Lev. 19:18)

As if to say: in case any neighbor of yours should offend you, you must not take revenge or bear him hatred; rather you

[p. 87] must love him with that sincerity with which you would love yourself, and this for no other regard than because I command it of you, for the love you owe Me; and certainly, if you do not love him, you do not rightly love Me. But (I now say) when I do not recognize myself as guilty, I shall endeavor with all efficacy to make my companion recognize the innocence of my integrity, so as to reconcile myself to his favor and foster in him the love that God obliges him to have for his neighbor, a love which contains in itself so many excellences (as has been said) that, to express them more fully, I must stress this: if by misfortune we should see someone stray from the holy path of the way of virtue, whether through ignorance or through wickedness, we are obliged to

show him gently the error he commits, guiding him to the King's highway that leads us to true felicity. And if, still obstinate in such perverse wickedness, he attempts to rebuff our persuasions with ignominious deeds and words, we must nonetheless not be dissuaded from the undertaking; rather we are ever more bound to pursue it and to furnish ourselves with instructions, until we make a deep breach in his breast and draw out of it the tinder of perverse appetite, expelling from the stronghold of his heart its unteachableness and evil

[p. 88] disposition, and sowing in its place the fertile seeds that the Divine Doctrines teach us, so that they may serve as a defense against the attacks of the cunning Satan, who always seeks our perdition (which God forbid). This moral does not seem to me foreign to the purpose, since the integrity of the Text already cited, as indivisible from the very subject of our discourse, obliges me to state it. It says:

הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך ולא תשא עליו חטא

> Reproving, you shall reprove your companion, and do not overlook any sin of his. (Lev. 19:17)

Whence it follows that I must repeat my reproofs to him until I bring him back to the sovereign observance of the Divine commands. And so I conclude that in every way I am forbidden to bear aversion to my neighbor, and am obliged to love him as myself (for God commands it). And all that has been said is understood so long as he does not go so far as to offend God by transgressing His precepts publicly and with insolence; for in such a case one must not only not love him, but rather hate him bitterly and hold him an enemy, as the Royal Psalmist says:

הלוא משנאיך ה' אשנא ובתקוממיך אתקוטט תכלית שנאה שנאתים לאויבים היו לי

> Surely those who hate You, O Lord, I hate, and with those who rise up against You I do battle; with utmost hatred I hate them;
>
> [p. 89] as enemies they have become to me. (Ps. 139:21–22)

As if to say more clearly: when injuries were committed against his own person, he did not account them injuries and did not seek to take revenge, but at once pardoned them with sincerity and loved the offenders as before the offense; but when the affront was to the Divine Majesty, by persisting in transgressing His holy commandments, then it was that in his zeal he armed himself against the delinquents, accounting and declaring them enemies, withdrawing from them all the love that God commanded us to bear our neighbor.

M. Oh, how great an affinity the love we owe to God has with that which He Himself obliges us to have for our neighbor! And indeed I am not displeased that you have made so long a discourse on this matter; for (because of our sins) we do not see this so important precept generally observed with the exactness to which we are bound. For if we consider it well, we shall find that the origin of all our misfortunes, and of the desolation of our second holy house, all proceeded from the lack

among us of that affection and love with which God commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Thus our most faithful Sages confirm it in the tractate of

[p. 90] Yoma, with the following question:

מקדש שני שהיו עוסקים בתורה ובגמילות חסדים מפני מה נחרב מפני שהיתה בו שנאת חנם ללמדך ששקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש עבירות ע"ז ג"ע ש"ד

> The second holy house, in whose time they meditated on the Law and on the observance of the precepts and pious works: for what reason was it destroyed? It answers: Because there was among them hatred without cause. This teaches you that the sin of hating one's neighbor is as grave as committing three enormous crimes: idolatry, incest, and homicide. (BT Yoma 9b)

And (alas!) still, because of our sins, there reigns among us not only the failure to love our neighbor but, on the contrary, hating him and bearing him hatred without any cause. And so take heed (my beloved son) to observe this holy precept punctually, for the whole sacred Law is contained in it. Thus our most blessed Sages confirm it, as is found in their illustrious doctrines; and in the ילקוט *Yalkut* one reads on the sacred Text:

ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה' אמר רבי עקיבה זה כלל גדול בתורה

> "You shall love your companion as yourself": Rabbi Akiba said, This is the greatest principle that the whole Law contains. (Yalkut Shimoni on Lev. 19:18; cf. Sifra, Kedoshim 4:12)

Make use of this principal precept, in the manner you set out above, so that you may merit the grace of your Creator. But until now you have not said whether we are also obliged to love the stranger; tell me, then, what you understand.

[p. 91] **D.** There is no doubt that we must also love the proselyte, whom we see gathered in among us, with a will in no way unlike that which we owe our neighbor. This sentence is proclaimed fifty-two times by God to His people,[76] and repeated by the mouth of His beloved and faithful lawgiver, who says in Leviticus these judicious words:

כאזרח מכם יהיה לכם הגר הגר אתכם ואהבת לו כמוך

> As the native among you shall the stranger who sojourns with you be to you, and you shall love him as yourself. (Lev. 19:34)

M. The reason you allege for our having to love the stranger is evident. Now I wish to learn from you with what love we must attend to our teachers.

D. With the same love with which I love myself I must love my masters, and even more, with an affection such as one bears a father, for the benefit that results to us from the discipline of their

[76]The Talmud (BT Bava Metzia 59b) counts thirty-six (some say forty-six) places where the Torah warns concerning the stranger.

doctrines: honoring them, because they proclaim the word of the Lord, and keeping due decorum toward them for their assiduous labor in the holy Law. And in particular we are obliged to support the learned and devout and to assist them with generous liberality (and in this we do no more than our obligation), so that the need to beg sustenance for their wants may not make them turn aside from their studies or distract them from their holy invocations; and to give

[p. 92] them ever greater vigor for perseverance in pious meditations. For in so doing we obtain the excellent benefit of making choice fruits spring forth, by the irrigation of our support, on the tree of our better life. Thus the wisest of Kings testifies in his Proverbs, when he urges us to this cultivation, saying:

עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה ותמכיה מאשר

A tree of lives is she (that is, the Law) to those who strengthen her. (Prov. 3:18)

And our most blessed Sages, in various parts of their writings, stress that the Wise King does not say it is a tree of life to the one who studies it, but to the one who strengthens it; by which it is clearly understood that he speaks of the one who cultivates it so that it may bear fruit, strengthening it and sustaining it with his money, so that its Professors may apply themselves to its profound studies. And of this category he continues, assuring whoever observes this and saying ותמכיה מאשר, "and each of its supporters is blessed." May God grant us the grace to profit from this tree of lives.

M. This is the truth; and with proper terms and fitting reasons you have elucidated the method we must keep in loving God and our neighbor, and I am persuaded of your particular devotion to study. May the Lord give you His Blessing.

[p. 93] Ninth Notice

On Pious Works

M. What actions do you understand by good works?

D. All the positive precepts that God commends us to observe are pious and holy works, as also all the actions that derive from them by infallible consequence, which constitute a royal and sacred dialectic: imitating the ways of God and walking in His sure paths, as Holy Scripture advises us, admonishing us and saying:

אחרי ה' אלהיכם תלכו

After the Lord your God you shall walk. (Deut. 13:5)

And on another page it says:

והלכת בדרכיו

> And you shall walk in His paths. (Deut. 28:9)

That is to say, to follow the ways of God, blessed be He.

M. You say very well; but explain to me which are the ways of God, that we must go by them in His paths and imitate His courses? And in what form, and with what intention, are you to carry out His Divine commandments?

D. I must observe the precepts of the Lord in the manner that He Himself teaches us through our Master Moses,

[p. 94] whose doctrine we received successively by tradition, as the writings of our canonical Sages advise us, who admonish us to observe the Divine precepts. And in this way, imitating the ways of God: just as God is gracious and compassionate, so must a man be compassionate and gracious with the poor, not afflicting them with harsh words, doing them charity and succoring them, and consoling them by showing them affection and sweet words, so that they may bear their miseries with patience and not despair. For this reason our most blessed Sages admonish us in the tractate בתרא [Bava] Batra, saying: "Whoever gives a poor man charity is blessed by God with six blessings, and whoever gives him a good word besides the charity is blessed by God with eleven blessings";[77] and they prove it from the verses of the Prophet Isaiah, who says:

> ותפק לרעב נפשך ונפש נענה תשביע וזרח בחשך אורך ואפלתך כצהרים ונחך ה' תמיד והשביע בצחצחות נפשך ועצמתיך יחליץ והיית כגן רוה וכמוצא מים אשר לא יכזבו מימיו
>
> When you draw out to the hungry your good will, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your Light shall shine in the darkness, and your gloom shall be as the noonday; and the Lord shall guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in droughts, and your
>
> [p. 95] bones He shall make rejoice; and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail. (Isa. 58:10–11)

They weigh the fact that he does not say "and you shall draw out your bread to the hungry," but says "your will," that is, speaking to him and addressing him with comforting words: then he will merit the promises and blessings that the Prophet goes on to state. And they teach us further that one must uphold justice, clothe the naked, ransom captives, free prisoners, visit the sick, bury the dead, console mourners, and other similar offices, all of which we find in God, blessed be He, as the Sages say in the tractate of Sotah[78] on this same Text; and they show that all these works were

[77] BT Bava Batra 9b: "Whoever gives a *perutah* to a poor man is blessed with six blessings, and whoever consoles him with words is blessed with eleven."

[78] BT Sotah 14a, expounding "After the Lord your God you shall walk" (Deut. 13:5): as He clothed the naked, visited the sick, comforted mourners and buried the dead, so should you; the same passage notes that the Torah begins and ends with acts of lovingkindness (Gen. 3:21; Deut. 34:6).

done and performed by God Himself. And whoever examines the holy Law well will find that it begins with a work of charity and ends with a work of charity. At the beginning it says:

ויעש ה' אלהים לאדם ולאשתו כתנות עור וילבשם

> And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife tunics of skin, and clothed them. (Gen. 3:21)

And at its end it says:

ויקבר אתו בגי בארץ מואב

> And He buried him in the valley, in the land of Moab. (Deut. 34:6)

This truth being so clear, we must use an ardent desire and intense fervor to follow His ways, seeking out with devout zeal the occasions to carry out His commandments; and

[p. 96] this not with any show of vainglory, nor out of interest in gratitude or hope of remuneration, but solely with the pure and single intention of observing His precepts and doing His will, since as our Creator He so commands us; remaining established in Him as His holy people by this Divine observance of His commandments.

Tenth Notice

On the Kinds of Sins, and Sinful Vices

M. I approve your reasoning. Now I wish to learn from you: which are the actions that are evil in the eyes of God?

D. Everything that God forbids us in the negative precepts of the sacred Law; and, in general, everything that is against our conscience, causing profanation of the Divine command.

M. How many kinds of sin are there?

D. There are three classes, namely: the sin of error, the sin of pride, and the sin of rebellion.[79]

M. Which is the one called the sin of error?

D. That which

[p. 97] is done against the commandment of God through ignorance of its being forbidden: not knowing it, nor imagining it to be a sin, one comes to do it against the Divine command.

M. What is a sin of pride?

[79] Perez's three classes correspond to the rabbinic categories of inadvertent sin (*shogeg*), deliberate or presumptuous sin (*mezid*, *zadon*) and rebellious sin (*mored*, *mered*); cf. BT Yoma 36b.

D. When one knows and is aware that a thing is forbidden (for example, knowing that one may not do work on the Sabbath), and nevertheless lets oneself be carried away by the evil inclination, this is called a sin of pride.

M. Which is the one we call the sin of rebellion?

D. When one knows and recognizes the gravity of the offense, and that it is prohibited by the Divine command, and even so does it expressly, not trying to restrain one's evil and disordered appetite, doing it on purpose in order to rebel against the word of the Creator.

M. Do you know which are the seven abominations of the soul?

D. Seven are the principal sins from which all the others proceed. At first sight they appear to be things of very little consequence (and for this reason no one pays any heed to them), yet they are the original causes of the perdition of the soul. They are: sloth, pride, gluttony, lust, anger, avarice, and envy. And these seven evil appe-

[p. 98] tites the Prophets called רע "evil," ערל "uncircumcised" or "closed," טמא "unclean," שונא "hater," מכשול "stumbling block," אבן "stone," and צפוני "hidden one."[80]

M. Explain to me, regarding each of these abominations, in what way it possesses the property for which the holy Prophets applied these names to it.

D. That which keeps a man from seeking to attain the perfection of the soul, occupying himself and spending his time in the vanities of the world and not striving to do the Divine commandments, has its origin in abominable sloth, the principal cause of all evils. For this reason (the appetite being produced from it) the Prophets called it "evil," as Holy Scripture says:

כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעריו

> For the appetite of the heart of man is evil from his youth. (Gen. 8:21)

But by thinking always on the Divine Law, and striving to observe it, one must clothe oneself in good will, distancing oneself from so evil a sloth.

Pride is having a very haughty and arrogant spirit, persuading oneself that there is no one greater than oneself, closing one's ear and one's judgment to reason, not considering one's low and lowly sphere, composed as one is of corruptible matter, one's end being dust and worm: alive today, dead tomorrow. With

[p. 99] such considerations one ought to have no pride at all; but this evil inclination does not let one reckon these reasons, and therefore it closes one's ear and darkens the light of the understanding,

[80] These are the seven names of the evil inclination enumerated in BT Sukkah 52a. The marginal reference "Gen. 8, v. 21" belongs to the verse quoted below.

so as not to hear and recognize so evident and infallible a truth. For this reason the Prophets called it "closed," and also "uncircumcised," the Law warning us of this when it says:

ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם וערפכם לא תקשו עוד

> You shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and your neck you shall harden no more. (Deut. 10:16)

From it hatred is born: for being proud and haughty, one makes oneself hated by people, and thence proceeds discord, and it comes to be the perdition of the human race; one makes oneself hated by God and by the world, as our most eminent Sages teach us in the moral doctrine of אבות Aboth, chapter 3:

כל שרוח הבריות נוחה הימנו רוח המקום נוחה הימנו

> Everyone in whom the spirit of people takes pleasure, (it is certain) that the spirit of God also takes pleasure in him. (Avot 3:10)[81]

And the reverse follows by consequence. One must, therefore, be humble and affable toward people, keeping fixed in memory the doctrine of our most wise Doctors, who say:

מאד מאד הוי שפל רוח שתקות אנוש רמה

> Be very, very humble, for the hope of man is the worm. (Avot 4:4)

Gluttony is when a man eats and drinks without measure, living to eat

[p. 100] and not eating to live; and it is certain that from much eating and drinking many kinds of sin proceed, and one comes to defile oneself with various defilements. For this reason the Prophets called this evil habit "unclean." Eating, then, ought to be moderate, not only in order to live and nourish the body, but in order to be able to serve God with vigor and greater perfection. By this method one makes it a habit of one's nature, and this unclean appetite remains far from one.

The libidinous appetite is a man's desiring carnal acts, practicing incest and lewdness; and by habituating himself in this abominable lust of his evil inclination, he comes to be hated by God and by the common people, for wishing by his evil deeds to give place to the Tormentor,[82] who is the greatest enemy and hater of the human race. For this reason the Prophets attributed to it the name "Hater." The antidote that weakens it is the true theriac of meditation on the sacred Law.

Anger, or wrath, is the inflaming of the blood of the whole body, which like fire incites a man to avenge his passions with impetuous fury, a stumbling block caused by rage being set in his heart; for which reason the Prophets apply to it the name "stumbling block of the heart";

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[81] Avot 3:10 (3:13 in some editions), a saying of R. Ḥanina ben Dosa.

[82] Spanish *atorcedor* (i.e. *torcedor*, "one who twists, a torment"), here apparently the Adversary, the evil inclination personified.

[p. 101] and this because one comes to carry out the vengeance that proceeds from the said stumbling block. A man must suppress and restrain his passions, recognizing that all is nothing, and that he is reduced in the end to dust and ashes.

Avarice is the greed a man has to gather money and temporal goods; and at times avarice reaches such a degree that it hardens the human heart, not letting him give charity to the poor according to his means, lest he diminish his capital somewhat. This hard obstinacy the Prophets called "Stone," it being also the temptation from which the hardening of human hearts originates, as has been said, so that they cannot exercise the acts of perfect charity. Thus Holy Scripture admonishes us, saying:

לא תאמץ את לבבך ולא תקפץ את ידך מאחיך האביון

> You shall not harden your heart, nor shall you close your hand from your needy brother. (Deut. 15:7)

But, on the contrary, a man must have a tender and compassionate heart, to take pity on his neighbor and succor him in his afflictions and necessities, this being a true sign of the children of Abraham, by which they are known to be charitable. The divine Canonists teach us this doctrine in the tractate Sabbath, chapter 15, folio 23,[83] saying:

כל המרחם מרחמים עליו מן השמים

> Whoever takes pity on the helpless poor obtains the mercy of God from the heavens. (BT Shabbat 151b)

[p. 102] Envy is desiring what belongs to another, desiring good only for oneself, rejoicing at the troubles and calamities of others; and because this envy is ordinarily [hidden] in the heart of men, the Prophets therefore named it "Hidden One"; and as such we must expel it from our hearts by imploring God that the happy time may come which He promised us by the mouth of His Prophet, who said:

ואת הצפוני ארחיק מעליכם

> And the (*Sephony*) hidden one I will remove far from upon you. (Joel 2:20)

These are the seven kinds of principal sin. When a man lets himself be persuaded and enticed by his evil appetite and by perverse temptation, committing only one of them, and even by error, this one alone is capable of making him stumble and fall into the others, the rule of our most eminent Sages being infallible:

שמצוה גוררת מצוה ועבירה גוררת עבירה

> That precept draws precept, and sin draws sin. (Avot 4:2)

[83] The saying is in BT Shabbat 151b, in the twenty-third (last) chapter; Perez's "chapter 15, folio 23" appears to be a misprint. The Talmud's text reads *kol ha-meraḥem ʿal ha-beriyot*, "whoever has mercy on [God's] creatures."

And then it comes to cut the thread of love that joins and binds him to his Creator; and he proceeds immediately to incur the six sins abominable to God, and further still the four other most grave and detestable ones, which cry out before His Divine presence and ask for vengeance; so that the man remains lost, and deprived of

[p. 103] this life and of eternal Beatitude.

M. Which are the sins abominable and hateful to God that you have mentioned?

D. The first is the effrontery and shamelessness with which a man persuades himself that he deserves glory without doing good works and keeping the Divine precepts. The second is the sinner's supposing that there is no remedy or expiation for his offenses, not trusting in the great Mercy of God. For just as the human race, frail and corrupt as it is, is subject to transgress, so it belongs to the Divine Mercy to pardon; and even though one has transgressed the whole Law, if he does penance competent and adequate to his offense, praying and asking pardon of God, He, being gracious and merciful, will without doubt pardon him in His infinite mercy. And so His holy Prophet proclaims it, saying:

אמר אליהם חי אני נאם אדני ה' אם אחפץ במות הרשע כי אם בשוב רשע מדרכו וחיה

> Say to them: As I live, says the Lord, for I have no desire in the death of the wicked, but in the wicked one's turning from his way, and living. (Ezek. 33:11)

So the Prophet assures it. This truth is also confirmed by the case of Manasseh, King of Judah, of whom it is told in the sacred Histories that he was a great sinner and an idolater; for though he offended and angered God with such enormous crimes,

[p. 104] (when punishment came upon him) through his contrition and prayer God received him and saved him. So Scripture says:

ויתפלל אליו ויעתר לו וישמע תחנתו

> And he prayed to the Lord, and He received him, and heard his supplication. (2 Chron. 33:13)

restoring him to his throne.

The third is one who knows the truth and denies it in order to free himself from the yoke of the sacred Law.

The fourth is one who envies the goods that God grants to his fellow, like Cain, who envied his brother Abel because God had received his offering and spurned his own.

M. What difference and distinction do you make between this envy and the one you mentioned above among the seven abominations of the soul?

D. The difference is clear. In the envy of the goods of others which God grants in this life for good deeds (as to Abel), another person (like Cain) thinks he has done the same; such a one supposes

that God does him an injustice in not also granting him the same goods, and on this account he comes to repent of the good he has done, exposing himself at the same time to hatred of his fellow, as happened to King Saul in the hatred he bore toward David. But the envy that I have numbered as one of the seven abominations of the soul is that which a man has of his fellow's good, and he is grieved by it,

[p. 105] it not being as great as the envy mentioned above, which supposes injustice in God and persuades itself, besides, that it deserves the same; and from this there results repentance of the good one has done, and seeking the death of one's fellow, because of the great envy that has seized one.

M. You have spoken very well and have distinguished the truth between the one and the other. Go on to the rest.

D. The fifth is one who is obstinate in his opinion against the others who contradict him in matters touching the explanation of the Law, teaching others his evil and erroneous view, like the rebellious elder,[84] who, not turning back from his stubborn error, is condemned by the Law to death; concerning whom Scripture says:

והאיש אשר יעשה בזדון וגו' ומת האיש ההוא ובערת הרע מישראל

> And the man who acts presumptuously, etc., that man shall die, and you shall clear away the evil from among you. (Deut. 17:12)

And the manner of his trial is read in the tractate סנהדרין Sanhedrin (chapter 10, folio 86).

The sixth is one who will not do penance for the sins he has committed, insisting and persevering in wishing to die in his offense.

M. I am satisfied with your discourse. Now declare to me which are the four sins that cry out before God and ask

[p. 106] for vengeance?

D. The first is homicide, for the blood that is shed cries out before God for vengeance, as Holy Scripture says in the case of Abel:

קול דמי אחיך צעקים אלי מן האדמה

> The voice of your brother's bloods is crying out before me from the ground. (God said to Cain.) (Gen. 4:10)

The second is adultery, violating the wife of one's fellow; concerning which Holy Scripture says:

[84]The *zaken mamre* of Deut. 17:8–13; his trial is discussed in BT Sanhedrin 86b ff. Perez's Hebrew ends the verse with *mi-qirbekha*, "from your midst" (the formula of other verses); the Masoretic text of Deut. 17:12 reads *mi-yisraʾel*, "from Israel."

כן הבא אל אשת רעהו לא ינקה כל הנגע בה

So he who comes to the wife of his fellow shall not be saved; whoever touches her. (Prov. 6:29)

The third is usurping the money and goods of the poor, of orphans, and of widows, concerning which Holy Scripture says:

משד עניים מאנקת אביונים עתה אקום יאמר ה'

From the plunder of the poor, from the groaning of the needy, now I will arise, says the Lord. (Ps. 12:6)

The fourth is withholding the wage of the laborer; for not paying him when he finishes his work, by which he lives, is as much as if they killed him. And God commanded us in His sacred Law:

ביומו תתן שכרו ולא תבוא עליו השמש כי עני הוא ואליו הוא נשא את נפשו ולא יקרא עליך אל ה' והיה בך חטא

On his day you shall pay him his wage, before the sun sets upon it; for he is a poor man, who labors to sustain his soul; and if he call upon the Lord, it will be sin in you. (Deut. 24:15)[85]

And by incurring one of these,

[p. 107] [or] of the seven abominations of the soul, one then comes to fall into the third kind of offense, which is rebellion. For knowing the evil and persevering in it, in such a case one becomes incurable, and the medicine of penitence very difficult.

M. May God keep you far from evil and incline your heart to His Divine will, to observe His commandments with fervor and zeal; for so you will merit tranquility in this life and Beatitude in the one to come.

Eleventh Notice

Instructs in Contrition and Repentance

M. Which do you understand to be the gravest of the three kinds of sin you have mentioned?

D. Rebellion, because the man knows it to be forbidden by God; and so, by committing it, he not only provokes the supreme Majesty itself, but the penalty of his offense must be very grave.

M. Can such a perverse and rebellious sinner be saved, as can one who commits a sin of error or a sin of pride?

D. Yes,

[85] Perez's Hebrew and Spanish ("and if he call") here follow the wording of Deut. 15:9 (*ve-qaraʾ ʿalekha*) rather than Deut. 24:15 (*ve-loʾ yiqraʾ ʿalekha*, "lest he call").

[p. 108] Sir. In every kind of sin, the sinner, returning in contrition with perfect penitence according to the method of the physicians of the soul, can be saved and recover the grace of God. For so great is His favor and mercy that He wishes to pardon the sinner and is pleased that he should return in penitence so that he may not be lost. For this reason He commanded us in the sacred Law, by express mandate and affirmative precept, that the sinner, recognizing his faults and sins, should return to God with perfect contrition. Behold here the herald of God, who proclaims it in a clear voice:

ושבת עד ה' אלהיך ושמעת בקלו

> And you shall return unto the Lord your God and hearken to His voice. (Deut. 30:2)

But if the sinner wishes to obtain the indulgence and the absolute pardon of God, he must be a contrite penitent, with all his heart and with a candid spirit; for so God commanded on the same page, saying:

כי תשוב אל ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך

> When you return to the Lord your God (in penitence) with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 30:10)

As if He had said more clearly: When you desire to reconcile yourself with the Lord your God by making due contrition, I warn you that it be with all your heart and with all your soul. And our most excellent Sages say in their candid teachings that the penitent needs three things, namely: חרטה, וידוי,

[p. 109] עזיבת החטא:

repentance, confession, and abandoning the sin.[86] [Repentance is] cleansing the thought by repenting of having sinned and transgressed the command of God; for so we find that the Prophet Jeremiah, preaching to and reproving his generation, said by God's command:

אין איש נחם על רעתו לאמר מה עשיתי

> There is no man at all who repents of his evil doing and says, What have I done? (Jer. 8:6)

It is proved, then, that the sinner lacks repentance. As to confession, we find clearly in the sacred Law that God commands His beloved people that when any man sins he should confess his sin and his guilt:

והתודו את חטאתם אשר עשו

> They shall make manifest their sins which they have committed. (Num. 5:7)

[86]The three elements of repentance (*ḥaratah*, *viddui*, *ʿazivat ha-ḥet*), as set out e.g. by Maimonides, *Hilkhot Teshuvah* 2:2.

And on another sacred page it says:

והתודו את עונם ואת עון אבתם

> And they shall confess their offenses, and the offenses of their fathers. (Lev. 26:40)

Hence one sees that the sinner lacks confession. And as to abandoning the sin, the Prophet Isaiah proclaims it, announcing in the name of God:

יעזב רשע דרכו ואיש און מחשבתיו וישב אל ה' וירחמהו ואל אלהינו כי ירבה לסלוח

> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the man of iniquity his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and He will have pity on him, and to our God, for He abounds in pardoning. (Isa. 55:7)

And the royal musician confirms it when he said:

ואל ישובו לכסלה

> And they shall not return to stumbling (Ps. 85:9)[87]

that is, to

[p. 110] sin, abandoning it and leaving it altogether. By using these three prerogatives he will without doubt remain reconciled with God and return to His grace.

M. At what time does God pardon the sinner?

D. At every time that the sinner returns to God with all his heart; but the holy Day of Pardons is the appropriate day, appointed by God, which He in His mercy dedicated to the general pardon of the sins of His Israelite people, as Holy Scripture testifies:

כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני ה' תטהרו

> For on this day He will pardon for you, to cleanse you; of all your sins before the Lord you shall be purified. (Lev. 16:30)

But it must be well understood that one must do penance and return in true contrition, with the means that the illness of one's soul requires, seeking out its true physician in order to consult with him about the state of one's ailment, so that he may teach one the form of penitence, which is the only remedy required for one to be cured and healed.

M. Does this holy day have the faculty and power to pardon every kind of sin, of whatever class it may be?

D. Our Divine tradition teaches us that every sort of sin, such as

[87] Perez renders *kislah* ("folly") as *entropieso*, "stumbling."

[p. 111] having transgressed the word of God, of whatever kind it may be, when the man does the penance that is required and does not return again to such a path, the privilege and property of the said day cause God infallibly to pardon him. But one who sins against his fellow, God cannot pardon until he satisfies him with the amends he owes; and when his fellow pardons him, then God pardons him. This grace or indulgence is not found in one who profanes the name of God, for even if he does penance, God does not pardon him until the end of life and the completion of death, as is clearly read in the tractate יומא Yoma (chapter 8, page 86).[88]

M. What does penitence and contrition require in order to take effect in the heart of the sinner?

D. It is necessary that it proceed from an intense sorrow at having offended God, solely because He is who He is, without thinking of the fear of punishment or the hope of reward; [only so] is it to be called perfect repentance and true confession.

M. What must one do in order to be able to repent entirely of the sin?

D. Bring to memory the transgression of having violated the commandment

[p. 112] of God; fear the punishment, confessing one's offenses and manifesting them, as the Royal Psalmist said:

וחטאתי נגדי תמיד

> My sin is before me continually. (Ps. 51:5)

Ask pardon of God, promising never to fall into such a sin again; appease the wrath of God with weeping and entreaties; do good henceforth; and supplicate God continually like David:

לב טהור ברא לי אלהים ורוח נכון חדש בקרבי

> A pure heart create in me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me. (Ps. 51:12)

M. What proceeds from repentance?

D. Two branches spring from this trunk. The first is abandoning the sin without ever falling into it again; so the holy and royal Prophet sings it:

יעזב רשע דרכו ואיש און מחשבתיו וישב אל ה' וירחמהו ואל אלהינו כי ירבה לסלוח

> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the man of iniquity his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and He will have pity on him, and to our God, for He abounds in pardoning. (Isa. 55:7)

The second branch is doing good henceforth by occupying oneself in pious works of charity; so the same Prophet said to them:

למדו היטב חדלו הרע

[88] Mishnah Yoma 8:9 and BT Yoma 85b–86a (on the profanation of God's name, *ḥillul ha-Shem*, see 86a).

Learn to do good; cease to do evil. (Isa. 1:16–17)

And the Psalmist said:

סור מרע ועשה טוב

Depart from evil, and do good. (Ps. 34:15)

For it is not enough merely not to do evil, but one must strive to do good. When the sinner proceeds to embrace these two branches,

[p. 113] both together will be the true road to the blessedness of the better life.

M. Which are the procurators and advocates that the penitent needs in order to obtain pardon for his sins and remain reconciled to the grace of God?

D. To meditate on the Law and observe its commandments, doing charity according to his means, as the Prophet Daniel counseled Nebuchadnezzar:

וחטיך בצדקה פרק

And your sins redeem with charity. (Dan. 4:24)

And if charity is so praiseworthy and useful to Gentiles, as the Prophet told the said King, with greater reason it will be profitable to the children of God. He must also have recourse to the spiritual physician, that he may attend to the indisposition of the soul, in the same way that one has recourse to the physician when one is indisposed in body. And so, finding himself (as I have said) with a sick soul, he must have recourse to the Haham,[89] who as a spiritual physician will prescribe and order for him the true form of contrition, as his illness requires; and in this way he will obtain the remedy of seeing himself healthy and purified.

M. Which are the antidotes for the seven abominations of the soul?

D. Seven virtues are the antidotes, namely:

[p. 114] with respect to sloth, swiftness and diligence in the service of God; with respect to gluttony, abstinence from superfluous foods; with respect to the libidinous appetite, continence and purity of good thoughts; with respect to anger, meekness, suppressing one's passions by bearing injuries; with respect to avarice, liberality and nobility; and with respect to envy, a good heart, contenting oneself with the decency of one's station.[90]

M. Does a man need anything more to subdue his evil inclination?

[89] *Haham* (Heb. *ḥakham*, "sage"): the title of the rabbi in the Sephardic communities.

[90] Only six virtues are listed in the print; the antidote to pride is omitted.

D. He still lacks the mercy and grace of God, in order to be able to free himself from so great an enemy.

M. In what way can he attain the grace of God?

D. By saying the prayers every day with devotion and by doing works of charity, by means of which one draws near to God and will merit His grace, He granting one aids to attain the virtues and to be able to defend oneself from the seven impurities of the soul, namely: fortitude, against sloth and hatred; inward fear of God, against pride; sobriety and temperance, against gluttony; prudence, against anger; right reason, against avarice; piety

[p. 115] and commiseration, against envy. Possessing these virtues and making use of them, one will live with peace and quiet in this life and inherit eternal glory in the other.

M. Which are the principal virtues that we call moral, for the perfection of the human race?

D. The moral virtues are twelve, namely: Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance, Liberality, Magnificence, Magnanimity, Modesty, Affability, Meekness, Truth, Justice, and Friendship. By means of these man is perfect, and the three faculties of his soul are illuminated.

M. Declare to me which are the three faculties of the soul.

D. The understanding, the will, and the memory. Correlative to these three parts are the three roots of Religion, namely faith, hope, and charity, as we have already declared.

Twelfth Notice

On the Daily Obligation of the Israelite, to Attain the Happiness of This Life and of the Life to Come

M. What are the obligations of a good Jew and true Israelite?

D. Principally

[p. 116] to love God above all things; to use clemency and charity toward one's neighbor, pardoning the wrongs of our enemies; and temperance and continence in ourselves.

M. In what way must the Israelite show the truth of these three things you have mentioned?

D. By putting on each day the holy ornament of the תפילין Thephalin, showing that he acknowledges one sole God as sovereign Lord and supreme Creator, taking His unity upon himself. And because of the love he bears Him (and to Him alone he is perfectly dedicated), he must say each day the שמע Semah and prayer with devotion, confessing and manifesting that He is the unique and only God, who is sovereign King in all four quarters of the world; and this by pronouncing with devotion the word אחד Ehad, "one"; and [declaring] that for His unity and holy Law he would suffer any kind of death, the cruelest in the world, delivering up his spirit to the

God of Israel, the true God. He must moreover practice charity and mercy toward his neighbor daily, pardoning him the wrongs received; and since this love is equal to the Divine love, he must for this reason recite each day this verse:

ואהבת לרעך כמוך

> You shall love your fellow as yourself. (Lev. 19:18)

considering that in this holy commandment is

[p. 117] included the whole Divine Law. [He must] cover himself with the holy mantle of the Taleth; this precept is likewise as eminent as the whole Law, since it is a means of remembering the other precepts of God. So Holy Scripture says:

וראיתם אתו וזכרתם את כל מצות ה' ועשיתם אתם

> And you shall see it, and you shall remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them. (Num. 15:39)

To this end we are charged not to walk four paces without this holy ציצית Sisith,[91] remembering every day that we received the Divine Law upon Mount Sinai, as Scripture says:

יום אשר עמדת לפני ה' אלהיך בחרב

> The day that you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb. (Deut. 4:10)

For this reason our most learned Sages impose upon us the daily recitation of the ten commandments of the sacred Decalogue, so that we may keep in memory all the days of our life that so select assembly, when we merited to hear the voice of the living God, and all that innumerable people reached the degree of Prophets, which no nation in the world ever merited, He favoring us with His sacrosanct Law and sanctifying us with His Divine word. And in commemoration of such merit our ancestors were accustomed, in the time when the Holy House stood, to recite them every day, after offering the morning sacrifice, as is found

[p. 118] recorded in the holy Mishnah, in the tractate תמיד Tamid (chapter 5):[92] the presiding officer said (to those who ministered in the sacred Temple), "Recite one blessing" (which was the blessing יוצר אור, "[Who] forms light"); then afterward they recited the ten commandments of the holy Decalogue, and then the שמע Semah, אמת ויציב "True and firm," and the Haboda, which is רצה "Be pleased," and ברכת כהנים the blessing of the Priests. And on the Sabbath day they added a blessing for the watch of priests that was going out of service in the evening, for the good zeal, love, and fear with which they had served their God. And then the Levites gathered in the choir

[91] *Ṣiṣit*, the fringes of the *tallit*. Perez's "four paces" echoes the rabbinic idiom of "four cubits."

[92] Mishnah Tamid 5:1. The *Haboda* (*ʿAvodah*) is the blessing *Reṣeh* of the Amidah.

with their instruments to sing the Psalm of the day, with other hymns and Psalms of David, with sweet music and great harmony.

M. Since you have explained the Mishnah of Tamid and truly proved the reason for saying the holy Decalogue every day: if it ought indeed to be said every day, for what reason do we not recite it in the holy Synagogues where we say our holy Prayers, which our Sages of the Great Assembly instituted and composed for us?

D. The Sages give the reason in the same tractate of the Mishnah:[93] so that those of evil inclination, such as the Epicureans and heretics who said

[p. 119] that the ten commandments alone are the whole Law, should have no occasion to err. To avoid such an absurdity they did not prescribe it in the *Reza* in the Synagogue;[94] but nevertheless every individual of Israel must recite it, so that we may remember the giving of the sacred Law, sanctifying ourselves through it, as He entitles us with this exalted title when He calls us:

כי עם קדוש אתה לה' אלהיך ובך בחר ה' להיות לו לעם סגלה מכל העמים אשר על פני האדמה

> For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and in you the Lord chose to be His people of Treasure, more than all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth. (Deut. 14:2)

And as such we must observe His holy precepts, as true children of God, so proclaimed from His own mouth:

בנים אתם לה' אלהיכם

> Children are you to the Lord your God. (Deut. 14:1)

In the same way God commanded us the precept of the מזוזה Mezuza, so that we may remember His most simple unity, by placing the hand on it, reciting and confessing His unity with love, and imploring Him to guard one and assist one in all one's undertakings. And so all Israel are accustomed, on entering and leaving their houses, to put the hand on the holy Mezuza, saying the first and second verses of the Semah, together with the verse spoken by the Psalmist:

ה' ישמר צאתי ובואי מעתה ועד עולם

> The Lord guard my going out and my coming in, from now and for evermore. (Ps. 121:8)[95]

M. What more must we remember

[p. 120] in order to be able to live according to what God imposes in His sacred Law?

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[93] The reason is actually given in BT Berakhot 12a (and JT Berakhot 1:5), which cite the Mishnah of Tamid.

[94] *Reza* (Port./Sp. "prayer"): the Sephardic term for the fixed liturgy.

[95] Quoted, as in the custom Perez describes, in the first person; the Masoretic text reads *ṣetekha u-voʾekha*, "your going out and your coming in."

D. The most wise Theologians say that a man is obliged to recite these verses of remembrance every day, in order to profit by what is to be gathered from them,[96] namely the verse:

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו

> Remember the day of the Sabbath, to sanctify it. (Exod. 20:8)

so that when it arrives one may keep it by observing it punctiliously. Further:

זכור את אשר עשה ה' אלהיך למרים בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים

> Remember what the Lord your God did to Miriam on the way, in your going out from Egypt. (Deut. 24:9)

so that we may not fall into slander.

זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים

> Remember what Amalek did to you on the way, in your going out from Egypt. (Deut. 25:17)

so that, when God gives us the power, we may execute His express command to annihilate them. Further:

זכר אל תשכח את אשר הקצפת את ה' אלהיך במדבר

> Remember, do not forget, how you angered the Lord your God in the wilderness. (Deut. 9:7)

so that it may serve us as correction, and we may not act against His word. Further:

זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים מבית עבדים

> Remember this day on which you went out of Egypt, from the house of slaves. (Exod. 13:3)

so that we may be constant in awaiting His redemption; for just as He took us out of Egypt, so also will He deliver us from the present captivity. Further:

וזכרת את ה' אלהיך כי הוא הנתן לך כח לעשות חיל

> [p. 121] And you shall remember the Lord your God, that it is He who gives you strength to do valor. (Deut. 8:18)

so that we may have confidence and hope in Him, and not in our own abilities; and give thanks to God for everything, the good as well as the bad, as David said:

כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא

> The cup of salvations I will lift up, and on the name of the Lord I will call. (Ps. 116:13)

צרה ויגון אמצא ובשם ה' אקרא

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[96]The "Six Remembrances" (*shesh zekhirot*), recited after the morning prayer in many rites.

Trouble and anguish I shall find, and on the name of the Lord I will call. (Ps. 116:3–4)

showing oneself content with the will of one's Creator both in troubles and in felicities, and in every manner praising and lauding Him.

M. In what way must we further serve God?

D. We must serve Him as Holy Scripture says:

ועבדתם את ה' אלהיכם

And you shall serve the Lord your God. (Exod. 23:25)

And in another place He enjoins us, saying:

לאהבה את ה' אלהיכם ולעבדו בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם

To love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 11:13)

This verse charges us in general with the observance of all the precepts of the Law, which we must carry out with fervor and zeal and with fortitude of spirit, to do the will of our Creator. And the Divine tradition tells us that this is the service of the heart: offering the prayers, which depend upon it, with devotion three times a day, in place

[p. 122] of the sacrifices that were offered in the holy Temple, only the said prayers remaining to us at present, as the Prophet says:

ונשלמה פרים שפתינו

And we will pay, in place of bulls, the speech of our lips. (Hos. 14:3)

These, then, must be pronounced with devout feeling and good intention, and with the same prerogatives that the sacrifice requires, giving alms every day, which, however small, when joined with prayer is of the very greatest benefit and esteemed in the eyes of God.

M. What is the obligation of the true Israelite?

D. To establish and fix definite hours each day for meditation on the sacred Law, as is imposed on us:

והגית בו יומם ולילה

And you shall read in it day and night. (Josh. 1:8)

each according to his capacity, as far as his judgment reaches; the said meditation being continual and fixed at every hour and at all times, not the least instant being excluded from it until the last day of his life, as Holy Scripture says:

ופן יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חייך והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך

Lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; and you shall make them known to your children and to your children's children. (Deut. 4:9)

He is also obliged not to enjoy anything of this world without giving thanks to God by saying the blessings according to

[p. 123] the manner our most worthy Sages have taught us; to keep and observe, with purity and holiness, all the commandments that present themselves to him; and when performing any precept, to do it with much satisfaction, swiftness, and joy of heart, because by acting with joy one gives perfection to the work one performs, with that satisfaction of spirit and spiritual joy, as the musician King admonishes us when he said:

עבדו את ה' בשמחה באו לפניו ברננה

Serve the Lord with joy; come before His presence with song. (Ps. 100:2)

This joy must not be profane, but rather a joy of spiritual devotion; and to this effect he says in another place:

עבדו את ה' ביראה וגילו ברעדה

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (Ps. 2:11)

He repeats the same verse with different synonyms to teach us the manner of serving God in the observance of His precepts: that it be with spiritual joy and not profane, and this through the contentment one has in doing the command of God. In this way one shows the perfection of the soul and the will one has to serve one's Creator; and with this contemplation one comes to fear God, considering the exalted greatness of Him whom one serves, and one's own low and lowly state as a creature who merits to serve such a Master and Lord of all creation, thus amending what was lacking

[p. 124] in our ancestors, as Holy Scripture says:

תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלהיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב

Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart. (Deut. 28:47)

He must likewise not defile the soul, not only with the foods that the sacred Law forbids us, but also by not retaining within himself the impurity of his body, purging it out without retention, so as to be able to serve God with a clean heart and bodily purity, as a holy people, sanctified by God Himself and by His Divine word, as the sacred pages proclaim when they say:

והתקדשתם והייתם קדשים כי אני ה' אלהיכם

And you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. (Lev. 20:7)

Thirteenth Notice

On the Confession of the Belief of Israel in the Thirteen Articles, Which Is the Creed, in the Holy Hebrew Tongue, with Its Translation into Castilian

M. Having promised you at the end of the fifth Notice to teach you, at the close of these elevated lessons, the creed, which consists in every Israelite's confessing the thirteen [p. 125] Articles; listen attentively, for it is a lesson of great importance for your good.

D. Speak, my Lord, for I am very attentive to receive and comprehend the doctrine of this Solid Foundation of our sacrosanct Religion.

M. Since it is most necessary for the good Israelite to establish his faith upon the Thirteen Articles (which are the basis of the Jewish Religion), our brethren of Poland and Germany were and are accustomed to celebrate them daily, every day after the *Hamidah*,[97] as appears from their prayer books, reciting them with great attention and devotion. Likewise all the pious and wise of Israel are also accustomed to recite them every day, and at the very end of life, after the confession of the *viduy*,[98] so that they may die confessing this true belief. For these reasons it seemed to me most fitting to set it down in the Hebrew language, for those who are [Hebrew readers], and in the vernacular for the Spaniards and Portuguese; so that all together, as children of Israel and chosen of God, we may confess His unity and the articles of His sacred Law, we being the witnesses of the truth of the unity of God and of the giving of His Holy Law, as the sacred text of the Prophet proclaims, saying:

ואתם עדי נאם ה' ואני אל

> You are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and I am God. (Isa. 43:12)

[p. 126] We are witnesses of having heard His voice and of having received His Holy Law. Hence it is proved that it behooves us to give faith and testimony of His unity and of His holy and true Law. For we are bound by His commandment that, should there be some dispute between two men, and they be at law, if any Jew should know that the contrary of what one claims against the other is the case, and that such a claim is false, God commands him and obliges him to go and give faith and testimony in favour of the one who is in the right; so the text proclaims:

אם לוא יגיד ונשא עונו

> If he do not utter it, he shall bear his iniquity. (Lev. 5:1)[99]

It being all the more just that, Israel professing the truth, it should not keep quiet and pass it over in silence while falsehood goes on and reigns; for God charges us to the contrary. And so we, who

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[97] The *Amidah* (the standing prayer, *Shemoneh Esreh*).

[98] *Viduy* (Heb. *vidduy*), the confession of sins recited on the deathbed.

[99] Perez's marginal reference reads "Lev. 5. v. 18"; the verse is Lev. 5:1.

know the truth of His unity, ought, and are under obligation, as is fitting, to bear witness; and by this we not only fulfil our obligation, but it is moreover most useful and necessary for us, not only for the perfection of our soul, but also to keep us firm in our holy and true belief all the days of our life. What I now commend to you is that you give your particular attention to these thirteen points; and whatever you do not know you may look up in the Fifth Notice, where you will find the solution of your doubt.

[p. 127] **The Confession of the Faith of Israel in the Thirteen Principles**

הודאת אמונת ישראל בשלש עשרה עקרים

א. מציאות ה׳ — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה במציאות ה׳ יתברך שמו, שהוא שורש כל השרשים, הוא עצם המדע הפשוט בתכלית הפשיטות, הוא מחויב המציאות, והוא לבדו עומד בעצמו וכל הנמצאים אין להם עמידה אלא בו, הוא עילת כל העילות וסיבת כל הסיבות, והוא עשה ועושה ויעשה לכל המעשים.

1. The existence of God. I believe with perfect faith in the existence of God, blessed be His name, who is the root of all roots; He is the essence of knowledge, simple in the utmost simplicity; He is necessarily existent; He alone stands by Himself, and all existing things have no standing save through Him; He is the cause of all causes and the reason of all reasons; and He made, makes, and will make all works.

ב. אחדותו ית׳ — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא יחיד ואין יחידות כמוהו בשום פנים, והוא לבדו אלהינו, היה הוה ויהיה.

2. His unity, blessed be He. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is One, and there is no unity like His in any manner; and He alone is our God, who was, is, and will be.

ג. שאינו גוף — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שהבורא יתברך שמו אינו גוף, ולא ישיגוהו משיגי הגוף, ואין לו שום דמיון כלל.

3. That He is not a body. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is not a body; the properties of body do not apply to Him; and He has no likeness whatsoever.

ד. קדמון לכל דבר — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא ראשון והוא אחרון, ומבלעדיו אין אלהים.

4. Prior to all things. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is the first and He is the last, and beside Him there is no God.

ה. לעבוד לו לבדו ית׳ — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שהבורא יתברך שמו לו לבדו ראוי להתפלל, ואין לזולתו.

5. To worship Him alone, blessed be He. I believe with perfect faith that to the Creator, blessed be His name, and to Him alone, it is fitting to pray, and not to any other.

ו. על השראת נבואתו על מין האדם — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שהבורא יתברך שמו השפיע נבואתו על נביאיו, וכל דבריהם אמת וצדק.

6. On the bestowal of His prophecy upon mankind. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, poured forth His prophecy upon His prophets, and all their words are truth and righteousness.

ז. גדולת משה מכל הנביאים — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שנבואת משה רבינו עליו השלום היתה מאתו יתברך, והוא היה אב לנביאים, לקודמים לפניו ולבאים אחריו.

7. The greatness of Moses above all the prophets. I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses our master, peace be upon him, was from Him, blessed be He, and that he was the father of the prophets, both of those who preceded him and of those who came after him.

ח. שהתורה כולה נתנה מאתו ית׳ למשה ע״ה — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שכל התורה המצויה עתה בידינו היא הנתונה מאתו יתברך למשה רבינו עליו השלום.

8. That the whole Torah was given by Him, blessed be He, to Moses, peace be upon him. I believe with perfect faith that the whole Torah now found in our hands is that which was given by Him, blessed be He, to Moses our master, peace be upon him.

[p. 128]ט. שהתורה היא נצחית ולא תשתנה — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שזאת התורה לא תשתנה ולא תתחדש, ולא תהא תורה אחרת בשום זמן בעולם זולתה מאתו יתברך שמו.

9. That the Torah is eternal and will not be changed. I believe with perfect faith that this Torah will not be changed nor renewed, and that there will be no other Torah from Him, blessed be His name, at any time in the world besides it.

י. ידיעתו בתחתונים — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שהבורא יתברך שמו משגיח בתחתונים, ויודע כל מעשה בני אדם וכל מחשבותם.

10. His knowledge of the lower beings. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, watches over the lower beings and knows every deed of the children of men and all their thoughts.

יא. שכר ועונש — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שהבורא יתברך שמו משלם שכר טוב לשומר מצותיו, ויעניש לעובר מצותיו.

11. Reward and punishment. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, pays good reward to him who keeps His commandments and punishes him who transgresses His commandments.

יב. ביאת משיחנו — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה בביאת משיח בן דוד גואלנו, שהבטיחנו הבורא יתברך שמו על ידי נביאיו, ואחכה בכל יום ביאתו.

12. The coming of our Messiah. I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, son of David, our redeemer, whom the Creator, blessed be His name, promised us through His prophets; and I await his coming every day.

יג. תחיית המתים — אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שתהיה תחיית המתים בעת שתעלה ברצון הבורא יתברך שמו ויתעלה זכרו לעד ולנצח נצחים.

13. The resurrection of the dead. I believe with perfect faith that there will be a resurrection of the dead at the time when it shall be the will of the Creator, blessed be His name and exalted His remembrance, for ever and to all eternity.

לישועתך קויתי ה׳. קויתי ה׳ לישועתך. ה׳ לישועתך קויתי. לפורקנך סברית ה׳. סברית ה׳ לפורקנך. ה׳ לפורקנך סברית.

For Thy salvation I have hoped, O Lord (Gen. 49:18) — repeated in its three word-orders, and likewise in the Aramaic of the Targum: "For Thy redemption I have hoped, O Lord."

And he shall say three times:

ה' צבאות עמנו משגב לנו אלהי יעקב סלה

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. (Ps. 46:8)

ה' צבאות אשרי אדם בטח בך

O Lord of hosts, happy is the man that trusteth in Thee. (Ps. 84:13)

ה' הושיעה המלך יענינו ביום קראנו

Save, O Lord; may the King answer us on the day we call. (Ps. 20:10)

ברוך ה' לעולם אמן ואמן

Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen. (Ps. 89:53)

שלום על כל בני ישראל אמן

Peace upon all the children of Israel. Amen.

[p. 129] **Confession**

Of the Belief of Israel in the Thirteen Articles

1. *The Existence of God.* I believe with perfect faith in the existence of God, blessed, who is the Root of all roots. He is the essence of most simple knowledge; He is necessarily existent, who subsists of Himself, all beings existing only through Him. He is the cause of all causes, who made, makes, and will make all things.

2. *The Unity of God.* I believe with perfect faith that God, blessed, is one sole absolute power; He alone and only is our God, who was, is, and will be for all eternity.

3. *Incorporeality in God.* I believe with perfect faith that God, blessed, is incorporeal, and that none of the corporeal can attain His divine essence, and He has nothing of corporeal likeness.

4. *The Eternity of God.* I believe with perfect faith in God, blessed, Being of all beings, eternal, first and last, and apart from Him there is no other God.

5. *Worship.* I believe with perfect faith that worship and prayer must be to God, to Him alone, and not to another.

[p. 130] 6. *The Communication of God with Human Beings.* I believe with perfect faith that God, blessed, communicated with the holy Prophets for our benefit, and all their words and prophecies are certain and true.

7. *The Singular Prophecy of Moseh.* I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moseh our master was from God, blessed, and that his prophecy was greater than that of all the Prophets who preceded him and who followed after him.

8. *The Law Given by God to Moseh.* I believe with perfect faith that the whole Law which we have among us is that which God, blessed, gave to Moseh.

9. *The Law Eternal and Immutable.* I believe with perfect faith that the holy Law of Moseh is eternal, and that never at any time can it be changed or altered in anything, and there has not been, nor will there be, any other Law given by God to the world save this one.

10. *The Knowledge God Has of Human Beings.* I believe with perfect faith that God, blessed, has knowledge of the works of men, and He alone knows the hidden and concealed things, and knows the innermost thoughts.

11. *Reward and Punishment.* I believe with perfect faith that God, blessed, pays and rewards well those who keep His Law, and punishes those who transgress it.

12. *Redemption.* I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the true Messiah, son of David, our lawful redeemer, whom God promised us by the mouth of His Prophets;

[p. 131] and in this hope I live every day.

13. *Resurrection.* I believe with perfect faith that God, blessed, will raise the dead when it shall be His will; for which singular grace, and for all the others, may His most holy Name be blessed, praised, and glorified for ever, unto eternity. Amen. For Thy salvation I hope, O Lord.

(And he shall say three times:)

The Lord of hosts is with us, a refuge to us is the God of Jacob, Selah. Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in Thee. Lord, save; may the King answer us on the day of our calling. Blessed be the Lord for ever, Amen and Amen.

General Exhortation

Of the Preceptor to His Beloved Sons and Pupils

M. May the blessing of the great God of Israel reach you, beloved sons and pupils. Today, for the holy doctrine that you have so exactly repeated, I wish to reward you with a lesson of great consequence, assuring you that in the observance of my teachings you will attain the glory of God and of the world, and in the end you will inherit eternal felicity.

D. Speak, Lord, and teach us, for

[p. 132] our desire is great to hear and to learn, in order to observe and do the will of our Creator.

M. You must know that above all the excellences and perfections of man, the principal crown is the fear of God; and if he lacks this, even though he be wise and learned in the Law, it serves him only to his harm; and moreover he may expect greater punishment for knowing and not observing. And so, dear sons and pupils, strive to love and to fear God; do not depart from His fear, as Holy Scripture tells us:

ויראת מאלהיך אני ה'

> And thou shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord. (Lev. 19:14)

And because the fear of God is the principal foundation, and of great importance for the observance of the whole sacred Law in general, for this reason our great master Moseh admonishes and exhorts us, saying:

ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלהיך שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה' אלהיך ללכת בכל דרכיו ולאהבה אתו ולעבד את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך

> And now, Israel, what the Lord thy God asks of thee is only to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. (Deut. 10:12)

As if to say: see, O Israel, if you come to have the fear of God, which is a great treasure, then you will gain much and increase your treasure; and this by walking in His ways,

[p. 133] loving Him and serving Him with all your heart and with all your soul. And then it continues, saying:

לשמר את מצות ה' ואת חקתיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום לטוב לך

> To keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes, which I command thee this day, for thy good. (Deut. 10:13)

Meaning: if you have the fear of God, from it will follow that you will walk in the ways of God, observing His commandments, to benefit yourself, so that you may increase your treasure of the good of the soul. And the Royal Psalmist confirms it when he said:

ראשית חכמה יראת ה'

> The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. (Ps. 111:10)

For by it the perfection of the soul is acquired. And the wise King, his son, reconfirms it for us, for he left us this saying:

יראת ה' ראשית דעת

> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. (Prov. 1:7)

And in another place the Law commands us the same; here is yet another text, which proclaims the fear of God:

את ה' אלהיך תירא

> The Lord thy God shalt thou fear. (Deut. 10:20)

Under this precept is included also the fear of masters and preceptors, for through them, and through the holy doctrine they teach us, we merit eternal life. But you must take note of the sign that our most eminent Sages described for us: "Everyone with whom the will of men is pleased, the will of the Creator is pleased with him."[100] And for this reason strive to fear God, as much in the inward

[p. 134] part of your heart as in the outward; seek to win the favour of the world; embrace modesty; be the first to greet everyone,[101] even though they be inferior to your person, as also your own enemies, and even those of the other nations; and take care not to defraud them, so as not to become the occasion that through you the name of the Lord and His divine and holy Law be profaned. No less, strive not to speak lies, nor to deceive or flatter anyone, especially when it is against the truth. Hold fast always to this, for it is the seal of God, אמת, "Truth";[102] and speaking the truth and professing it is of great usefulness and benefit to us. And so that you may keep this excellent lesson in memory, you shall know what happened to a man, a highwayman, of a very evil and sinful life, who, examining his conscience, wished to do penitence and return to God. He went to consult a doctor of souls about his ailments, and laid before him the diseases from which his soul suffered. The physician, knowing that he needed a great cure, with much diet and abstinence, which he would not carry out, resolved to prescribe for him a very easy and sweet remedy, admonishing

[100] Mishnah Avot 3:10: "Anyone with whom people are pleased, God is pleased with him."

[101] Cf. Avot 4:15 ("be first in greeting every person") and BT Berakhot 17a (Abaye's practice of greeting everyone, even a gentile in the marketplace).

[102] BT Shabbat 55a: "The seal of the Holy One, blessed be He, is truth (*emet*)." Perez's "fallo" stands for "sello", seal.

him: "Man, if you desire to be healed and saved, you must take upon yourself, with an oath, never in your life to speak anything but the

[p. 135] truth, and to profess it at all times and in all cases." So the good penitent promised him and went his way. It happened one day that this man went out into the countryside to ply his wicked trade. He meets a man on the road, who asks him where he was going. This man, not being able to deny it because of the resolution he had taken as a penitent always to tell the truth, told him his intent: that he was going to kill whomever he should find. A little further on he met a second acquaintance, who asked him what route he was taking; and so as not to speak a lie he was forced to tell him his evil design, and this by telling the truth. And making a syllogism with himself, he said: "I now have two concurring witnesses against me, who, if they wish, can have me condemned to death." And with this consideration he turned from his evil design, abandoning by this means all his evil ways, and was a true and constant penitent, and returned to be reconciled with the grace of God. Note, sons, from this case, that by speaking the truth one avoids offending the commandments of God. And so I say to you: profess and love the truth, so that you may not come to transgress the divine precepts; and as sons of the God of truth, and professors of the Law of truth, you must always speak the truth and uphold it. Judge your fellow on the good side in all cases;[103] content

[p. 136] yourselves with the portion that God gives you;[104] do not desire magnificence or riches, which may without delay be your perdition and ruin. In all your works and undertakings remember God, and implore His aid and providence, that He may assist, succour, and help you, as the Royal Psalmist tells us:

בכל דרכיך דעהו והוא יישר ארחתיך

> In all thy ways know Him, and He will direct thy paths. (Prov. 3:6)[105]

As if to say: invoke the divine aid, and He will make straight your ways. Be honest in your actions; do not join yourselves to the wicked man, nor walk in his company, for he may quickly persuade you and incline you to every evil thing; and even though you may not wish to do as he does, you will stray from the divine fear, and come to follow his steps, and lose your good habits, becoming in the end wicked like him. And so live far from such company; act well and do good to all while you have the power, but not against God and His Law. Frequent the sacred study of it, with the intention of observing it perfectly. And finally, may God enlighten your eyes and open your heart in His blessed Law, and grant you His fear and love, to know Him and to worship Him with pure and refined truth, for in this alone may you glory,

[103] Avot 1:6: "Judge every person on the side of merit."

[104] Cf. Avot 4:1: "Who is rich? One who is content with his portion."

[105] Perez attributes this to "the Royal Psalmist"; the verse is in Proverbs (his margin: Prov. 3:6).

[p. 137] as the holy Prophet teaches us:

כי אם בזאת יתהלל המתהלל השכל וידע אותי

But in this shall he that glorieth glory, that he understandeth and knoweth Me. (Jer. 9:23)

And the most prudent King Selomoh says:

את האלהים ירא ואת מצותיו שמור כי זה כל האדם

Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole perfection of man. (Eccl. 12:13)[106]

D. We render infinite thanks to the sovereign God for granting us judgement and ability to be able to learn His sacred Law. And to your Worship, most reverend and most wise Preceptor, we kiss your hands, remaining grateful all our lives for the good education and holy doctrine in which you have instructed us, so that we may possess in this life a sure conviction, and live constant in the sacred Law of Moseh, by means of which we come to perfect our souls, to merit eternal life. May God in His mercies lengthen the years of your Worship's life, so that you may teach and increase the Law of God and its true doctrine among the children of Israel. Amen.

ביום כלות מלאכתי / בספרי שכריתי / לדעה יסוד דתי / אלמד זו עדותי / אתן לאל תודה / גמול ידו הדה / לתורה ולתעודה / לישראל ויהודה

On the day my work was completed,

in my book which I have composed,[107]

to make known the foundation of my faith —

I teach; this is my testimony.

I give thanks to God

for the bounty of His hand,

for the Law and for the testimony,

for Israel and Judah.

FINIS. LAUS DEO ISRAELIS.

[p. —] **A Poem on the Thirteen Principles of Our Holy and Perfect Law**

שיר על שלש עשרה עקרי תורתנו הקדושה והתמימה

[106]Perez's margin gives 12:14; the verse is Eccl. 12:13. His Spanish adds "perfection" to "the whole of man."

[107]The Hebrew of this closing verse is only partly secure in the digitized text: *shekaritti* (rendered "composed") and *haddah* (in "the bounty of His hand") are uncertain readings.

אני מודה בראשי שח וכפוף / מציאות אל ואחדותו באין גוף קדמון נעבד צופה מכוסה / וחלק לנביאיו לא כמשה בתת לו דת תמימה לא תשונה / לטובים יגמול טוב רע לשונא וישלח לפדות עם הפזורים / משיחו ויחיה נקברים לעקרים יסודות דת סדורים / הלא הם לך שלש עשרה ספורים

I confess, with head bowed low and bent,

the existence of God, and His unity without body;

Eternal, worshipped, beholding what is hidden;

He apportioned [prophecy] to His prophets, not as to Moses,

giving him a perfect Law that shall not be changed;

He repays the good with good, evil to him that hates Him;

He will send His Anointed to redeem the scattered people,

and will give life to those who are buried.

For the principles, the ordered foundations of the faith —

lo, they are numbered for thee, thirteen.[108]

I confess with head bowed low and humbled

1. the existence of God, and His 2. unity; that He is 3. incorporeal, and

4. eternal;

5. to whom alone one must pray and worship;

6. who sees and knows what is hidden;

7. and communicates Himself to the Prophets,

8. with a more sublime distinction that of Moseh,

9. giving him a perfect Law,

10. eternal and immutable;

11. He rewards the good with good, the wicked with evil;

12. He will send to redeem His scattered people,

by His true anointed Messiah, and

13. He will bring the buried back to life.

The Articles of the Law, set in order,

[108]The Hebrew lines are scattered in the digitized text; they are given here in the order required by the rhymes and by Perez's Spanish version that follows. Read *lo ke-Moshe* ("not as to Moses") for the OCR's *be-Moshe*.

behold here, in thirteen figures.

FINIS.

[p. —] Table

Of the Chapters and Notices Contained in This Work

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FINIS.

[p. —] אתיא ותמהיא די עבד עמי אלהא עליא שפר קדמי להחויה

> The signs and wonders that the Most High God has wrought for me, it has seemed good to me to declare. (Dan. 3:32)[109]

When I journeyed from the holy congregation of London to the holy congregation of Amsterdam, to come and print this book of mine, it happened on the way, on the eve of Thursday, the 27th of Tevet, [in the week of] the portion *Va-era*, in the year 5488 [?],[110] that a surge of the sea rose against us in a stormy wind, and there was thick darkness; and we turned back to come in to some district on the coast of the seas of the kingdom of England. And the ship came to land among the rocks, and there was but a step between us and death (1 Sam. 20:3), and we were very nearly all lost. And the captain saved himself and his household in a small boat to land, and left us with the rest of the sailors to perish — but for the mercies of the Lord, that we were not consumed (Lam. 3:22), for He caused a great wave to rise from the sea, and it lifted us up out of the sea and cast us onto the dry land; and the Lord saved me on that day (Exod. 14:30). And we could not go on in that ship, for its ribs were broken; and afterwards we returned to that same port and came [on our way]. Therefore I have set my face to recount the mercies of the Lord, which He bestowed on me according to His compassion, to give thanks, to praise, and to offer a song of praise and

[109] The OCR misreads *shefar* ("it seemed good") as *hovah*.

[110] The year is garbled in the digitized text (it reads as "tav-peh-dalet-he"). The voyage evidently preceded the printing of the book in 5489 (1729); 5488 (1727/28) is the likeliest reading, but the date is uncertain.

thanksgiving, as we say in the holy Zohar,[111] even for a single miracle. Then I opened with a new song, this song:

אהללה ה' בחיי אזמרה לאלהי בעודי

I will praise the Lord while I live; I will sing to my God while I have my being. (Ps. 146:2)

יערב עליו שיחי אנכי אשמח בה'

May my meditation be sweet unto Him; I will rejoice in the Lord. (Ps. 104:34)

[Hebrew thanksgiving poem with an acrostic signature (ending "... hazak") — the digitized text of this Hebrew passage is too corrupt to translate.]

תם ונשלם שבח לאל בורא עולם

Finished and completed. Praise to God, Creator of the world.

[111] The reference to the Zohar is legible, but the exact wording of the saying that follows is not; the gist is that thanksgiving is owed even for a single miracle.