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Translated into English by Claude from the Google Books scan (Koninklijke Bibliotheek copy) of J. Johlson, אלומי יוסף. Erster Theil, welcher den Unterricht in der Mosaischen Religion für die Israelitische Jugend beiderlei Geschlechts enthält, nebst einem Anhange von den Ceremonialgesetzen und Gebräuchen (Frankfurt am Main: Jäger, 1814; Hebrew title page: Rödelheim, W. Heidenheim, 1814). This is the first edition of the catechism that Isaac Leeser translated into English as Instruction in the Mosaic Religion (Philadelphia, 1830). Numbers in grey brackets mark the beginning of each printed page of the original. Footnotes are Johlson's own unless they begin "Translator:". Translator's notes also record the places where Leeser's 1830 English differs in substance from Johlson's German (passages omitted, added or softened).

[p. —] אלומי יוסף **[*Alumme Yosef*, "Joseph's Sheaves"]**[1]

First Part,
which contains the

Instruction in the Mosaic Religion

for
Israelite Youth of Both Sexes.
With an Appendix
on the
Ceremonial Laws and Customs.
*
by
J. Johlson.
Printed by W. Heidenheim in Rödelheim
1814.

[p. —] **Instruction in the Mosaic Religion**

for
Israelite Youth of Both Sexes.
With an Appendix
on the
Ceremonial Laws and Customs.
*
by
J. Johlson,
Teacher at the Bürger- and Realschule of the Israelite Community at Frankfurt am Main.[2]

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[1]Translator: The Hebrew title alludes to Joseph's dream of the sheaves (Gen. 37:7, והנה אנחנו מאלמים אלמים), punning on the author's first name, Joseph.

[2]Translator: The school of the Frankfurt Jewish community, later known as the Philanthropin.

Frankfurt am Main,
At the Jäger Book, Paper and Map Shop.
1814.

[p. —]

יראת ה' ראשית דעת, חכמה ומוסר אוילים בזו.

The fear of God is the beginning of all knowledge; only fools despise discipline and wisdom. (Prov. 1:7)

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[p. —] Errata.[3]

Page 12, line 14: for *Gestalt* [form] read *Gleichheit* [likeness].

Page 13, line 2 from bottom: for *verbrannt* [burned] read *verbannt* [banished].

[3]Translator: Page and line numbers refer to the German original; the corrections are to German (and, in the last case, Hebrew) wording, which is therefore given here with a bracketed gloss. Most have been silently observed in the present translation.

Page 14, line 1: for *Verstehet* read *versteht* [understands].

Page 16, line 18: for *gegenwärig* read *gegenwärtig* [present].

Page 24, line 12: for *wider* [against] read *wieder* [again].

— line 13: for *Widerauflebenden* read *Wiederauflebenden* [those coming back to life].

Page 27, line 14: for *offenbaret die,* read *offenbaret, die* [punctuation].

— line 1 from bottom: for *Arm* [arm] read *arm* [poor].

Page 28, line 20: for *Verrichtet* read *verrichtet* [performs].

Page 32, line 23: for *befohlen worden; die* read *befohlen; die* [commanded; the].

— line 27: for *Fol. 7.)* read *Fol. 5.)*.

Page 37, line 2 from bottom: for *dem E. deinem Gotte* read *den E. deinen Gott* [the Eternal thy God; case correction].

Page 40, line 18: for *Gewiß* read *gewiß* [certainly].

— line 19: for *Schwört* read *schwört* [swears].

Page 42, line 18: for *der Vergebung* [of forgiveness] read *und Vergebung* [and forgiveness].

Page 59, line 5: for *Seinem* read *seinem* [his].

Page 106, line 12: for *Und diese Letztere aber* read *Diese Letztere aber* [But this latter].

Page 116, line 17: for *Tage* read *Tagen* [days; case correction].

— line 1 from bottom: for *chon* read *schon* [already].

Page 121, line 2: for *July; der* read *July. Der* [punctuation].

Page 130, line 7: for *daruf* read *darauf* [thereupon].

Page 134, line 4 from bottom: for יהיה read יהיו.

The names of the subscribers will be printed at the front of the 2nd Part of the אלומי יוסף.

The subscription price for the two following Parts, namely 2.) a new, thorough Hebrew Grammar, together with a practical guide to analysing, etc., etc., and 3.) a complete Concise Dictionary, etc., remains, until Easter 1815, fl. 3:20 kr. for both together.

[p. —] **Preface.**[4]

The person who emerges from a state of moral neglect has this in common with the sick: he becomes truly aware of his weakness, and of his need for strengthening remedies, only when he enters the opposite state, that of health. The fresh air surrounding him seems harsh to him until, strengthened by that very air, he grows ever more receptive to its beneficence.

This simile, in its moral application, fits the individual person as well as a whole people; and the history of our time presents just such a people to us in the Israelite nation.

Never has this nation felt more keenly the need to struggle upward out of its state of degradation than now, when the insight and justice of so many illustrious sovereigns are summoning every outward and inward means to lift it out of its confinement into a freer sphere.

With the first beat of the pulse of freedom, so long arrested, it awoke to a clearer consciousness of its weakness, and to a noble striving for strength.

[p. II] Every thinking Israelite now feels what he was, what he is, and what he can become; in each of them the joyful feelings of gratitude and hope are ripening into the noble resolve to merit this favor more and more, and to let the fair seed sown by his deliverers ripen into wholesome fruit.

A glance at the common striving of the nation will confirm this truth to every impartial observer.

Hitherto, however, there has been less agreement on the choice of means than on the goal. Each believed he could reach it most surely only by *his own* way; and the diversity of these ways can all too easily lead us away from the goal, or at least make us go far around it. On one point only does there seem to be general agreement: that the first step toward future ennoblement must consist in the earliest education of the young. On this ladder of improvement, however, a suitable religious instruction, in the purely moral spirit of the Bible, is unquestionably the first and most necessary rung. And it is chiefly to the lack of a work that meets the just requirements and could serve as a guide to this end that we must ascribe the ignorance—so ruinous in every respect—in which our young people, and especially the *female* sex,[5] have until now been left, precisely concerning what must be the most consoling, the dearest and the holiest thing to a person in every situation of life.—

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[4]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English omits Johlson's Preface entirely, printing his own translator's preface instead.

[5]In the Mishnah (Tractate Sotah, ch. 3) it says: מכאן אמר בן עזאי חייב אדם ללמד את בתו תורה ..... ר' אליעזר אומר, המלמד את בתו תורה מלמדה תפל' "Hence, says *Ben Azzai*, everyone is obliged to instruct his daughter in the Law ..... *R. Eliezer*, however, used to say: whoever lets his daughter study *Torah* gives her instruction in lewdness" (because so many expressions and passages in it are unavoidable that partly offend delicate modesty and partly may also prove dangerous to frivolity). — Without paying the least regard to the teaching of *Ben Azzai*, people held so literally to the opinion of *R. Eliezer* that, through an unfortunate misunderstanding, they extended the word *Torah* (by which the rabbis usually understand the explanation of the whole Law—the Talmud) even to religious instruction; whereas the latter is expressly commanded for *both* sexes in the passage cited on page 133 (Deut. 31:12). — More than that: in explaining the verse Exod. 19:3, the Talmud says: כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישרא' "To the *house* of Jacob—to the women you shall present religion in a particularly gentle and comprehensible manner." The instruction of the *female* sex, then, whose powerful influence on the upbringing and education of the male sex was well known to the Lawgiver, is here even recommended *first*. — [Translator: The Mishnah is Sotah 3:4; the Hebrew abbreviation תור' מלמד'

[p. III] Although I feel thoroughly pervaded by all the diffidence that the preparation of such an elementary book for the entire Israelite youth was bound to inspire in me, I nevertheless venture, in firm trust in God and in the purity of my intentions, to offer my mite as well for the good of my coreligionists with the present attempt—which might be more finished if my powers stood in proportion to my warm will and striving.

Amid the most varied occupations connected with my teaching post at the Gymnasium in Kreuznach, I composed this work (at the beginning of 1812) in German and French, and submitted it for examination to my spiritual authority at that time, the venerable Israelite [p. IV] Consistory at Bonn,[6] to which, in a somewhat lengthy letter, I at the same time gave my reasons:

1.) Why I, though by no means losing sight of the articles of faith laid down by *M. Maimonides*,[7] could nevertheless not present them in that order.

2.) Why I considered it more advisable to let the present outline precede a small catechism for younger children; in my opinion the latter would do us far more harm than good as long as the rabbis neither concern themselves with the religious education of the young nor are willing to draw up a curriculum for it suited to the spirit of the age.

3.) Why I added to the title of the manuscript the words—now, to be sure, reluctantly omitted—*"For youths and maidens who, on entering their fourteenth year, are presented for confirmation."*

In doing so I presupposed an institution which unfortunately does not yet exist among us at all; for I nourished the consoling hope that the Most Reverend Central Consistory would surely make every effort to introduce in these lands as well one of the most exemplary arrangements of *Councillor Jacobson*,[8] a man so tirelessly active and so meritorious on behalf of the welfare of his nation.

It was this arrangement, too, that occasioned the present outline, which was designed especially for the age indicated *here*, and which must therefore form the chief consideration in any judgment of it.

On the advice of the venerable Consistory at Bonn— [p. V] which expressed its undivided approval to me in the most flattering terms—this work was laid, at my request, by His Excellency the

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תפל stands for "Torah, [it is as if] he teaches her lewdness." The interpretation of Exod. 19:3 ("house of Jacob" = the women, to be addressed gently) is found in the Mekhilta and Exodus Rabbah 28:2 and is quoted by Rashi ad loc., rather than in the Talmud proper.]

[6]Translator: Under French rule Kreuznach and Bonn lay in the département of Rhin-et-Moselle, whose Jewish consistory had its seat at Bonn; the Central Consistory (Consistoire central) sat in Paris.

[7]Translator: The Thirteen Principles of Faith of Moses Maimonides (1138–1204).

[8]Translator: Israel Jacobson (1768–1828), president of the Israelite Consistory of the Kingdom of Westphalia, who introduced the confirmation of Jewish boys and girls.

Minister of Worship[9] before the Israelite Central Consistory for a further review and, finally, for sanction.

Circumstances that arose, however, and changes in the personnel of the Consistory itself, delayed its report; and still in his last letter (Paris, 16 June 1813) the present President, the famed Chevalier A. de Cologna,[10] writes to me, among other things:

". . . You may count on my representations to this effect to His Excellency. Our report, while containing a few observations of which your work seemed to us susceptible, does justice to your zeal and your learning, and makes known the desire and the hope we have of being able to adopt your aforesaid work as one of the best elementary books for the religious instruction of Israelite youth. Assured in advance of the merit of your works on the Hebrew language, of which your letter speaks, I am impatient to become acquainted with them, etc., etc."[11]

In order to meet the wishes of the Most Reverend Consistory as far as possible, I have—besides enlarging the work by *seven* sections, which I have inserted at various places—not only gratefully adopted the remarks of the Chief Rabbi here, *H. Hurwiz*,[12] but have also sought to introduce many substantial improvements here and there. And though I can [p. VI] by no means flatter myself that I have given this work the degree of perfection that one might perhaps expect, I believe I may all the more claim the indulgence of those versed in the subject, since *they* will surely not fail to recognize the manifold difficulties that a conscientious treatment of this subject presents, nor my good will to overcome them.

The first five half-sheets had already been printed when the request reached me from several quarters that I should also combine with it an instruction in the *ceremonial laws and customs*, insofar as they belong to the knowledge of the growing Israelite. And however much I otherwise believed that I ought not to touch on this point—as lying outside my plan—in a work of this kind and of such limited scope, I could all the less resist the urgent wish of these friends of religion, since the weight of their reasons was all too plain to me. I hope, however, that no one will hold it against me that I included only the little that directly concerns worship, and treated it as briefly as possible. A proper exposition of our religious customs could by itself easily fill a considerable volume; and if such a work were really to do good, it would necessarily have to be undertaken by one or more rabbis of proven standing. It would certainly be a highly desirable event if these men—animated only by the spirit of truth, without fear or narrow-mindedness—sought to bring the motley mass of laws and customs, in a lucid manner intelligible to the people, [p. VII] under the main headings given on p. 106.

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[9]Translator: The French Minister of Worship (Ministre des Cultes).

[10]Translator: Abraham de Cologna (1755–1832), rabbi from Mantua, Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory in Paris.

[11]This last refers to the new Hebrew grammar together with a dictionary, prepared by me, which will likewise appear shortly. [Translator: The letter is quoted in French in the original.]

[12]Translator: Zvi Hirsch Horowitz (d. 1817), Chief Rabbi of Frankfurt am Main.

Through this arrangement alone, the noble man who would undertake this labor could render great service to the religion of our fathers as well as to the welfare of the whole nation. In the eyes of the people and of the half-learned, even the most trifling custom is already a law, if not indeed an essential part of religion; and it would lead me too far to enumerate the manifold harm that this almost universal ignorance necessarily produces.

Indeed, it is perhaps not saying too much to assert that it is precisely because of this that most of the Israelites of today are divided into three—almost equally unhappy—classes. The *one* consists of the ignorant, whose religion consists merely in ceremonies; who indeed observe every custom with the utmost care, but very often neglect a real law over it, even the holiest, and live on in constant fear and anxiety. The *second* comprises those unhappy ones whom the Psalmist (17:14) aptly depicts.[13]—Because they imagine themselves entwined in the fetters of countless laws, they seek to wrest themselves free from the yoke of a religion which, in their opinion, prescribes for them only so many burdensome rules that hamper every step; and not seldom they sacrifice to this licence their own temporal and eternal happiness and that of their families.—The man of the *third* class, finally, the better instructed, does indeed enjoy peace *within*: knowledge and the rational practice of his religion grant his heart heavenly peace; he knows what God prescribes for him and what men prescribe for him—he knows and loves his religion, and may rejoice in all its consolation. But how greatly he too needs its support against the storms [p. VIII] from without! His situation, in political respects, is precisely the most painful of all. To those of the first-mentioned class he is a heretic, because he goes about bareheaded—while the strays of the second class shun him, because he does not share their frivolity and takes no pleasure in their mockery and licentiousness. A word about religion from his mouth offends their estranged ear; in their eyes he is a hypocrite, because he—can still *pray*.

However disheartening this picture may be, the number of the right-minded is still, thank God, large enough that those consecrated men ought to feel all the more powerfully called upon to meet their pious wish, and to set forth in luminous order a system of religion through which many would surely be led back to it who could become estranged from it only through want of knowledge or through preconceived erroneous notions.

Should I be so fortunate as to have furnished here a small contribution toward that desired work, I would consider my labor gloriously rewarded. More gladly could I then satisfy the strongest impulse of my heart and thank the noble men of all religious parties whose insightful counsel and encouraging approval spurred me on to publish this work. Were I permitted to set down their names here, my work would gain much thereby; but I make this sacrifice to their modesty. These noble men need no praise of mine, and the most powerful thanks are already rendered them by the glad

[13]Translator: Ps. 17:14 speaks of "men of the world, whose portion is in this life."

consciousness of being able to claim for themselves a large share of whatever good it may please the wisdom and grace of God to spread through this work.

Frankfurt, September 1814.
The Author.

[p. —] First Section[14]

On the Dignity and Destiny of Man.

1. *Which is the noblest creature of all those we know?*

Man. Not only the beautiful and ingenious formation of his *body* and its members, his upright posture and other important advantages, but chiefly the noble powers and faculties of his *soul*, especially reason and freedom of the will, raise him above all the other creatures of the earth.

כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם

> "For God created man in His image." (Gen. 9:6)

2. *What is understood by* reason*?*

The faculty or power of the human soul to judge and to infer; to perceive the connection of causes and effects; to distinguish the true from the false, and what is right and good from what is wrong and evil.

[p. X] **3. *What is meant by* freedom of the will*?***

Man can, of his own free choice, resolve upon actions or refrain from them, according as he recognizes them to be right and useful or wrong and harmful. The animal blindly follows its instinct (natural drive) and strives merely after sensual pleasure; man, however, has the power to master his sensuality (the drive toward what pleases his senses, and the aversion to what is unpleasant and repugnant to them) by his reason: that is, to satisfy his inclinations only when and so far as this is necessary for his preservation and conducive to his intellectual and moral perfection.

ראה נתתי לפניך היום את החיים ואת הטוב ואת המות ואת הרע

> "See, I set before you now: life and the good, death and evil." (Deut. 30:15)

אל תהיו כסוס כפרד אין הבין במתג ורסן עדיו לבלום בל קרב אליך

> "Be not like mule and horse, which, without understanding, are tamed by strap and goad, the proud bit, that they may not harm you." (Ps. 32:9)

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[14] Translator: The first page of the text bears no printed number; the following pages are numbered X, XI, etc., in Roman numerals continuing the Preface (I–VIII), though the Contents and the Preface's cross-references (pp. 106, 133) presuppose Arabic pagination beginning with this page as p. 1. The page markers here follow the numbers as printed.

4. ***Is this freedom of the will also important for man?***

Very important; it alone gives man and his actions a moral worth. Only because he acts freely, after examination and deliberation, can his doing and not-doing bring him praise and blame, reward and punishment.

The application of this power of the soul to curbing his desires—*self-mastery*—is most necessary for man, so that his inclinations may not [p. XI] degenerate into passions and vices;[15] and the rational use of this moral freedom produces the purest delight of the soul and grants a tranquil conscience.

הלוא אם תיטיב שאת ואם לא תיטיב לפתח חטאת רבץ ואליך תשוקתו ואתה תמשל בו

> "Is it not so? If you conduct yourself well, you can lift up your eyes; but if you do not conduct yourself well, sin lies at the door: its desire is toward you, but you can rule over it." (Gen. 4:7)

5. ***What is called*** **conscience*?***

The inner awareness and knowledge of whether we are doing right or wrong; the voice of *God* within us, which judges our words and actions. For the law is imprinted on the hearts of all men: to approve and practice the good, but to disapprove and shun evil;[16] if, then, we are aware that we have acted rightly and commendably, we feel comfort, joy and contentment; we have a good, tranquil conscience.—If we do wrong, the awareness of it causes us anxiety and unrest: we have a bad conscience.

והרשעים כים נגרש כי השקט לא יוכל אין שלום אמר אלהי לרשעים

> "The wicked are like the churning sea, which cannot rest. The wicked have no peace, says God." (Isa. 57:20)[17]

[p. XII]

חטאים תרדף רעה ואת צדיקים ישלם טוב.

> "Vice itself pursues the sinners; the pious are already rewarded by their virtue." (Prov. 13:21)

6. ***Does man then bring these advantages into the world already fully developed?***

No; rather, he appears there as the weakest of creatures; his childhood lasts the longest, and his faculties develop only gradually: so that he may feel his weakness and dependence, and learn to

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[15] *Passions* are inclinations that have become so strong and persistent that, disturbing the peace of mind, they put the soul into a *passive* state in which it no longer acts by free choice and deliberation. *Vice* is the inclination, become habitual, to transgress a divine law.

[16] We call that person *conscientious* who always heeds the judging voice of his conscience and in general does nothing without the awareness that it is right.

[17] Translator: The second line, "The wicked have no peace, says God" (אין שלום אמר אלהי לרשעים, literally "says my God"), is Isa. 57:21.

develop each of his powers through instruction, education and practice. Herein, too, a great advantage of man shows itself, namely that he is capable of ever-advancing perfection.[18]

7. ***Since we rightly infer from the nature and properties of a being its destination, that is, the purpose of its existence: what must the great faculties and advantages of man teach us in this respect?***

The excellent mental faculties with which man is pre-eminently endowed (reason, freedom of the will, conscience, and the ever-active drive toward higher perfection and happiness) already show us clearly that we are destined to become ever more perfect, wiser and better: we are to develop and use the powers of our soul in order to become virtuous, and through virtue to attain temporal and eternal happiness.

אז תבין צדק ומשפט ומישרים כל מעגל טוב. כי תבוא חכמה בלבך ודעת לנפשך ינעם.

> "Only then do you learn to recognize virtue, right and uprightness, the path to the true good: when wisdom has come into your heart, and knowledge has become pleasant to your soul." (Prov. 2:9)[19]

[p. —] **8.** ***What is called*** **virtue*****?***

Virtue is active love of the good and abhorrence of evil; or the settled readiness to practise the good gladly and willingly, and carefully to avoid evil.

We call virtuous the person who, out of pure love of the good, earnestly strives to master his sensuality and always to live in accordance with the will of God.

9. ***But what gives man the strength and insight to recognize the will of God and to act accordingly?***

It is *religion*, and the law revealed by God, that gives us a living, penetrating and clear knowledge of the will of God, and gives virtue the strength to win the victory over passion.[20]

כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעריו.

> "For the desire of the human heart is evil from its youth." (Gen. 8:21)

Sensuality so blinds a person that he takes an apparent good for a true and lasting good, and flees a brief discomfort as though it were a real evil; so that, short-sightedly, he snatches only at the shadow of the good and thereby brings real evils upon himself.

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[18]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English adds a sentence here (that the Almighty made man's infancy so feeble on purpose) and recasts the last sentence as proof of man's "superiority over other animals"; neither is in Johlson.

[19]Translator: the quotation runs on into Prov. 2:10.

[20]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English adds a further sentence here ("This knowledge of religion is necessary to enable us to become really virtuous"), which is not in Johlson.

יראת ה' מקור חיים לסור ממקשי מות.

"Religion alone is the source of life; it teaches how to escape the snares of destruction." (Prov. 14:27)

אל תהי חכם בעיניך ירא את ה' וסור מרע.

"Never think yourself wise! Fear God, and shun evil!" (Prov. 3:7)

באין חזון יפרע עם ושמר תורה אשרהו.

"Without revelation the people runs astray; but if it lives according to the law, it is happy." (Prov. 29:18)

[p. 2] Second Section. Of Religion.

10. ***What, then, is*** **religion*?***

The knowledge and worship of God through contemplation of His omnipotence, wisdom and goodness, and through faithful observance of His commandments. To develop and use all our powers to this end is man's highest goal and true destination.

סוף דבר הכל נשמע את האלהים ירא ואת מצותיו שמור כי זה כל האדם.

"The concluding word, which contains everything, is: Fear God and keep His commandments! For this is man's destination." (Eccl. 12:23)[21]

ראשית חכמה יראת ה' שכל טוב לכל עשיהם תהלתו עמדת לעד.

"The goal of wisdom is the fear of God; to act accordingly is true understanding; it brings imperishable praise." (Ps. 111:10)

ויאמר לאדם הן יראת ה' היא חכמה וסור מרע בינה.

"To man He said: Let the fear of God be wisdom to you; let shunning evil be your reason." (Job 28:28)

What, accordingly, does it mean to **have religion*?***[22]

When we acknowledge God, our almighty Creator and Lord, as the all-perfect and holiest Being, and think, act and live as befits this knowledge and the teachings of Holy Scripture; [p. 3] when love and reverence toward the Eternal constantly animate us, and we display these pious feelings through confident trust in His wise providence and childlike submission to His holy will.

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[21] Translator: printed "12, 23"; the verse is Eccl. 12:13.

[22] Translator: this unnumbered question is printed as a centered heading between Q. 10 and Q. 11. Leeser's 1830 English drops the question and runs the answer on as part of Q. 10.

הולך בישרו ירא ה' ונלוז דרכיו בוזהו.

"Whoever lives uprightly honors God; but whoever walks crooked ways dishonors Him." (Prov. 14:2)

לאהבה את ה' אלהיך לשמע בקלו ולדבקה בו כי הוא חייך וארך ימיך.

"Love the Eternal, your God, obey His voice, hold fast to Him; for on this rests your preservation and your happiness." (Deut. 30:20)

11. ***And what does religion bring about in man?***

Religion makes man good and happy. Those truly pious dispositions, which our fathers called התהלך את האלהים (walking with God) and קרבת אלהים (drawing near to God), grant a person lasting inner well-being, constant contentment and serenity of soul, and inspire and strengthen him for the practice of virtue. The joyful feeling of being worthy of God's love and His good pleasure lets a person enjoy the purest and highest joy, and feel that true *bliss* which raises the pious man, whose inheritance it is (ותמימים ינחלו טוב, Proverbs 28 [:10]), above all earthly suffering, and makes the enjoyment of temporal goods (of fortune) dispensable to him.

ואני תמיד עמך אחזת ביד ימיני בעצתך תנחני ואחר כבוד תקחני

I abide with You for ever;
You hold me by my right hand:
Your counsel leads me on a darkened path;
At last You take me up to honor.

[p. 4]

מי לי בשמים ועמך לא חפצתי בארץ כלה שארי ולבבי צור לבבי וחלקי אלהים לעולם כי הנה רחקיך יאבדו הצמתה כל זונה ממך ואני קרבת אלהים לי טוב שתי באדני ה' מחסי לספר כל מלאכותיך.

What could I wish for in heaven beside You?
What here on earth beside You!
Though body and soul should waste away, God is
Ever my heart's comfort, my portion.
Lost are they who withdraw from You,
Lost, whoever goes whoring after others.
To hold fast to God is my highest good!
In You, O Lord! my God! I place my confidence,
And proclaim Your wondrous deeds. (Ps. 73)

12. ***How, then, is the revealed law to be regarded?***

As the greatest of all benefits. As a loving father provides for the education and true welfare of his children, so God the Lord has made known to us His will, how we may worship Him and become happy. Now since this salutary teaching, which acquaints us with our relationship to God and with

our destination, was communicated to us through *Moses* (son of Amram, of the tribe of Levi), the religion we profess is called *the Mosaic religion*.

זכרו תורת משה עבדי אשר צויתי אותו בחרב על כל ישראל חקים ומשפטים.

> "Remember the teaching of Moses, My servant, to whom I gave at Horeb statutes and ordinances for all Israel." (Mal. 3:22)

13. ***Do not all people, then, profess one religion?***

No; people are not of one mind about the manner of worshipping God. There are therefore different [p. 5] religions, which nevertheless all acknowledge one God and Creator, who wills only the welfare of His creatures. Hence our sages also teach:

חסידי אומות העולם יש להם חלק לעולם הבא.

> "The pious of all nations have a share in the world to come, that is, they attain eternal bliss."

כי ממזרח שמש ועד מבואו גדול שמי בגוים ובכל מקום מקטר מגש לשמי ומנחה טהורה כי גדול שמי בגוים אמר ה' צבאות.

> "For My name is highly praised among the nations, from the rising of the sun to its setting; everywhere offerings and incense are brought to My name, and offerings made with pure devotion." (Mal. 1:11)

14. ***Can it, then, be a matter of indifference to us which religion we profess?***

No; rather, it is the most sacred duty of every Israelite to remain faithful to the religion which our fathers most solemnly accepted, and swore to, for themselves and their descendants.

ולא אתכם לבדכם אנכי כרת את הברית הזאת ואת האלה הזאת כי את אשר ישנו פה עמנו עמד היום לפני ה' אלהינו ואת אשר איננו פה עמנו היום.

> "Not with you alone do I establish this covenant and this curse of the oath, but with him who is present here with us, and also with him who is not present here." (Deut. 29:13–14)

We therefore cannot in any way renounce the religion of our fathers without breaking the covenant and bringing upon ourselves the curse which the whole people pronounced before the Eternal (Deut. 27:26).[23] We must therefore also die in the religion in which we were born, and say with the pious Psalmist:

[23] Translator: printed "5. B. Much" (a misprint for "5. B. Mos.").

ה' — אתה תומיך גורלי חבלים נפלו לי בנעמים אף נחלת שפרה עלי אברך את ה' אשר יעצני.

"You, Eternal One, have chosen the lot for me! My portion has fallen in pleasant places; my inheritance, too, is dear to me; I thank You, O God, that You have counselled me so." (Ps. 16:5, 6, 7)[24]

15. ***Which, then, are the commandments that we have to obey?***

They are partly such laws as God has written in the hearts of all people, and whose transgression brings inevitable punishments in its train even in this life; and partly such commandments as God, out of special grace, communicated through Moses and the prophets to us, the descendants of His first true worshippers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), and whose transgression is punished and avenged either already in this life, or only in the life to come.

16. ***What is the book called in which the history of our forefathers, as well as the commandments and the instructions for our happiness, are recorded?***

[p. 7] It is called the *Bible* (the Book of all Books), Holy Scripture; and it falls into three principal divisions: תורה נביאים וכתובים, the Pentateuch or five books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa or holy writings, songs and hymns.

17. ***Does the Bible perhaps promise us freedom from all earthly sufferings and troubles?***

No, certainly not that; but the religious person who strives to order his life according to its precepts has the comfort and the certainty that nothing can befall him without the wise and fatherly will of his God; that therefore even the sufferings and adversities of life must be salutary and useful in their consequences; and that the all-gracious Father can and will compensate him for every earthly hardship in the land of fulfilment.

לולי תורתך שעשעי אז אבדתי בעניי.

"Were not Your law my comfort, I would long since have perished in my misery." (Ps. 119:92)

תורת ה' תמימה משיבת נפש פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב.

"The teaching of God is complete, it refreshes the soul; upright are the Lord's commands, they gladden the heart." (Ps. 19:8, 9)

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[24]Chief Rabbi H. Hurwiz [Translator: Zvi Hirsch Horowitz (d. 1817), chief rabbi of Frankfurt am Main] pointed out to me, in this connection, the following verse and its interpretation as further support for this passage: שמע בני מוסר אביך ואל תטש תורת אמך. "Heed, my son, the teaching of your father, and do not neglect the instruction of your mother" (Prov. 1:8). "The teaching of your father," that is, of the Father in heaven (say our teachers of the law), which He communicated to Moses in writing and orally; "the instruction of your mother," that is, of the community (כנסת ישראל [*Keneset Yisra'el*, the "Congregation of Israel"; Johlson writes *Kirche*, "church"]), namely those precepts that were introduced as a fence around the law.

18. ***But what are the doctrines of faith on which the Mosaic religion is founded?***

The principal articles of faith from which our holy religion proceeds are of *two kinds*, namely: partly such truths as we can already perceive with our reason and comprehend from the nature of things; [p. 8] and partly historical truths and doctrines which the understanding can neither devise by itself nor prove from everyday experience.

19. ***Which are the truths of the*** **first kind*****?***

1) There is *one single eternal God*; namely, the highest Being, who is almighty, all-wise and all-good; the Creator, Preserver and Ruler of all things.

2) Our soul is *immortal*; it therefore cannot in any way cease to be and to live on with the death of our body, but

3) will certainly, in that eternal life, receive from the all-just God the reward or the punishment for its deeds.

20. ***And which are the doctrines of the*** **second kind*****, which are founded on historical truth?***

a) That God revealed Himself in a supernatural manner to our forefathers, and especially to our teacher Moses (the greatest of all prophets who ever were or ever will be), and communicated to us laws and teachings for our happiness, which are contained in the book of the law that we actually possess.

2) That Moses wrote down and taught nothing arbitrarily or of his own impulse, but everything by divine inspiration. That therefore everything that God has promised us through [p. 9] Moses and the prophets will certainly be fulfilled, as soon as His all-wisdom and goodness find us worthy of it.

3rdly[25] That the more detailed explanations and specifications of the written laws were likewise communicated to Moses by God Himself and handed down orally; so that this tradition (which was afterwards transmitted by Moses to the elders and leaders of the people, and further propagated from generation to generation, likewise only orally) constitutes an essential part of the law.

Third Section. Of God and His Attributes.

21. ***How does reason itself already lead us to the existence of a God?***

When I contemplate the world in which I live, I find that in it one thing always arises through another, and I therefore conclude: that the world, too, cannot have come into being of itself, but must have a wise author and creator; and this first cause, this wise and mighty Creator of all things, I call *God*.

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[25] Translator: the items of Q. 20 are numbered inconsistently in the original: "a)", "2)", "3tens" ("3rdly").

ואולם שאל נא בהמות ותרך ועוף השמים ויגד לך. או שיח לארץ ותרך ויספרו לך דגי הים. מי לא ידע בכל אלה כי יד ה' עשתה זאת.

> "Ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds under the heavens, they will tell you; or but consider the earth, and it will teach you, and the fish in the sea will make it known to you. Who does not recognize in all these that the hand of the Eternal created them all?" (Job 12:7, 8, 9)

22. ***From what must we conclude and clearly recognize that God is not merely the Creator, but also the Preserver and Ruler of the world?***

We see this already in the preservation and propagation of all beings and creatures on earth; we recognize it especially in the regular course of the sun, the moon and the stars. For it is still with them as it was many thousands of years ago: the seasons always alternate in their order, and the heavenly bodies travel their path (even in the widest orbits) and reappear regularly and with the most exact punctuality at the place from which they set out.

שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה המוציא במספר צבאם לכלם בשם יקרא מרב אונים ואמיץ כח איש לא נעדר.

> "Lift up your eyes to heaven and see: who created these? He leads out their host by number, calls them all by name (assigns them their course and destination). From Him, the Almighty, the All-powerful, not one of these beings escapes." (Isa. 40:26)

השמים מספרים כבוד אל ומעשה ידיו מגיד הרקיע וגו'.

> "The heavens tell the glory of God; the firmament proclaims the work of His hands, etc." (Ps. 19)

23. ***But surely we cannot see God?***

No power can be seen; consequently not the highest power either. A power appears only in its effect; [p. 11] but the effects of the highest power we see everywhere and in every place, in His countless creatures, from the greatest to the smallest. God is a spirit, an invisible Being.

כי לא ראיתם כל תמונה.

> "For you saw no form whatever of the Deity." (Deut. 4:15)

24. ***What does it mean: God is a spirit?***

God is the highest power: an incorporeal Being, to whom no property, accident or quality of body and matter belongs or can be attributed.

ואל מי תדמיוני ואשוה יאמר קדוש.

> "To whom will you compare Me, that I should be like him? says the All-Holy." (Isa. 40:25)

25. ***But it says (Num. 12:8): "He (Moses) beheld the form of the Eternal." How are we to understand this and so many other expressions of the Bible in which God is even spoken of as having limbs, such as: the hand of God, the mouth of God, the eye of God, and the like?***

All these and similar expressions we must not take in their literal sense, according to their ordinary meaning; they are used only in a *borrowed* way, in order to make the attributes and effects of God (which would otherwise be wholly incomprehensible to us) somewhat intelligible to us sensuous human beings. Because we are accustomed to perform everything we do only by means of our limbs, the effects of God are therefore presented to us in these *figurative expressions*, in order to make them more comprehensible to us and, as it were, vivid to the mind. So, [p. 12] too, the above figurative expression is meant only to indicate the superiority of Moses over all the other prophets, insofar as he had a far better knowledge of the attributes and the providence of God; and it is merely a further extension of the preceding clause, where it says:

במראה ולא בחידות

> "God spoke with him in full clarity, not in riddles."

26. ***Must we, then, also understand in a figurative way that expression of the Bible where it says: "Let us now make a human being in our image, in likeness with us"?*** נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו ***(Gen. 1:26)***

Certainly these, too, are only figurative expressions, and they aim all the less at bodily form, since otherwise בתארנו ובתמונתנו (form, image) would have had to stand there. Those words, however, mean only this much: that the *spirit* of man in some measure resembles the Deity; namely in this, that it is not only *immortal*, but also endowed with such noble powers of understanding that man is found *alone* among all living things to recognize his Creator, to reflect on his own being, and to *rule* over all the animals: just as God is truly *one and alone* the wisest and mightiest Ruler of all things. In this sense the same verse also explains it further: "That they may rule over the fish, over the birds, over the cattle, and over the whole earth." So, too, *David* sings:

ותחסרהו מעט מאלהים וכבוד והדר תעטרהו תמשילהו במעשי ידיך כל שתה תחת רגליו.

> "You have set him but little below the angels, have crowned him with honor and adornment,
> You appoint him ruler over Your works, and lay all things at his feet." (Ps. 8)

[p. 13] **27.** ***What does it mean: God is*** **one*****?***

This self-subsistent spiritual Being is simple, unified and one alone. *Simple*, without parts and limbs; *unified*, so that no multiplicity can be conceived in Him; and *one alone*, so that no other being apart from Him can resemble Him.

שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד.

> "Hear, Israel! The Eternal, our God, is one single eternal Being." (Deut. 6:4)

28. ***What is understood by this: God is*** **eternal*****?***

This self-subsistent single Being has existed from eternity, and remains ever the same for all eternity. God is without beginning and without end, so that His non-existence or ceasing to be is impossible and inconceivable.

אני ראשון ואני אחרון ומבלעדי אין אלהים.

> "I am the First, I am also the Last, and apart from Me there is no God, says the Lord of the universe." (Isa. 44:6)

29. ***What duty arises for us from the knowledge of this truth, that the Eternal our God is one and alone, and that apart from Him there is none?***

That we are therefore bound to *worship* this one God alone, and no other being besides Him; that is: we are to learn to acknowledge with all our powers His infinite greatness, goodness and mercy; we are to expect our temporal and eternal welfare from Him alone, and to implore *Him alone*, and no other being, for it, and to call upon Him for aid and help in time of need.

זבח לאלהים יחרם בלתי לה' לבדו.

> "Whoever sacrifices to an idol shall be burned. To the Eternal alone belongs the honor." (Exod. 22:19)[26]

[p. 14] **30.** ***What is understood by*** **almighty*****?***

God can do, make and create whatever He wills, without needing the help of any other being. Man, by exerting all his powers, can only give things already in existence whatever outward shape he pleases; but all creatures together are not able to create anew even the smallest thing in the world, that is, to bring something forth without first having a stuff or matter for it. God, on the other hand, has created and brought forth everything we see, all creatures and beings together with all their powers and drives (the whole of nature) out of nothing, without pre-existing stuff, without any means whatever, but solely and alone by His mighty will. With this same goodness and omnipotence He also preserves and governs all creatures, and can annihilate them all in an instant.

כי הוא אמר ויהי הוא צוה ויעמד.

> "For when He speaks, it comes to pass; He but commands, and there it stands." (Ps. 33:9)

תסתיר פניך יבהלון תסף רוחם יגועון.

> "If You turn away Your face, they vanish; if You take away their breath, they perish." (Ps. 104:29)

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[26] Translator: Johlson renders יחרם ("shall be utterly destroyed") as "verbrannt werden" ("shall be burned"); Leeser's 1830 English softens this to "shall be condemned".

31. ***To what, further, does the remembrance of the great, mighty miracle of creation lead us.***

To belief in the possibility of miracles: namely, that God can easily alter for a short time the laws of nature which He Himself established, and let extraordinary things happen, when His wisdom sees fit thereby to work good upon many people and to impart to them teachings which they could have obtained in *no other* way. [p. 15] As was the case, for example, with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, with the Israelites and others:

למען תדע כי לה' הארץ.

> "That you may learn that the earth is the Eternal's (and that He governs in it as He pleases)." (Exod. 9:29)

למען תדע כי אני ה' בקרב הארץ.

> "That you may know that I, the Eternal, am present in the midst of the land (and attend to each one in particular)." (ibid. 8:18)

אהה אדני ה' הנה אתה עשית את השמים ואת הארץ בכחך הגדול ובזרעך הנטויה לא יפלא ממך כל דבר.

> "O Eternal God! You have made heaven and earth with Your great strength and with Your mighty power. Nothing can be impossible for You." (Jer. 32:17)

32. ***What does it mean: God is*** **omniscient*?***

God knows everything that has ever happened, what is happening now, and what is yet to happen; nothing is unknown to Him. For God is everywhere *present*; the whole world is full of His glory, and nothing escapes His omniscience. He observes the actions and thoughts of His creatures, and without His divine will nothing can happen.

היצר יחד לבם המבין אל כל מעשיהם.

> "He who formed all their hearts together also observes all their doings." (Ps. 33:15)

הנטע אזן הלא ישמע אם יצר עין הלא יביט המלמד אדם דעת ה' ידע מחשבות אדם כי המה הבל.

> "Shall He not hear, who planted the ear? Shall He not see, who forms the eye? He who gives man insight, the Eternal, knows the devisings of men, how vain they are." (Ps. 94:9)[27]

[p. 16]

גדל העצה ורב העליליה אשר עיניך פקחות על כל דרכי בני אדם לתת לאיש כדרכיו וכפרי מעלליו.

> "You, Lord! great in counsel, mighty in execution! whose eyes are directed upon all the ways of men, to repay each one according to his conduct and according to the fruit of his deeds." (Jer. 32:19)

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[27] Translator: the quotation combines Ps. 94:9, the second half of 94:10, and 94:11.

33. ***The knowledge of this truth, that God is omniscient and omnipresent: what impression must it make upon us?***

That we must therefore always apply ourselves to an upright and God-pleasing way of life, and seek to keep our hands clean of wrong and our hearts in innocence. That we must always remain faithful to the truth, not sin even in the most hidden corner, and always picture to ourselves as present the all-seeing, all-just, holy God, who rewards the good and punishes the evil. So, too, the pious David says:

שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד.

"I always picture the Eternal to myself as present." (Ps. 16:8)

הן אמת חפצת בטחות.

"Behold, You desire truth in what is hidden." (Ps. 51:8)

הלא הוא יראה דרכי וכל צעדי יספור.

"He sees my ways indeed, and counts all my steps." (Job 31:4)

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

"If anyone hides himself ever so secretly, should I therefore not see him? says the Eternal. Is it not I who fill heaven and earth?" (Jer. 23:24)

אני ה' חקר לב בחן כליות.

"I, the Eternal, search the heart and test the reins (see through the inner self)." (ibid. 17:10)

[p. 17] **34.** ***What is understood by*** **all-good*****?***

God wills only the welfare of His creatures. He has formed them with His wisdom, and allotted them such powers, drives and capacities, that they are all (each according to its kind and destination) to become perfect and happy. So, too, He nourishes and preserves them out of goodness and love; and when He punishes, He chastises only out of love. Hatred, malice and anger are merely the *defects* of a weak, finite being, which therefore cannot occur in the almightiest and all-perfect Being.

חסדי ה' כי לא תמנו כי לא כלו רחמיו.

"God's goodness has no end; His mercy never ceases." (Lam. 3:23)[28]

טוב ה' לכל ורחמיו על כל מעשיו.

"The Lord is beneficent to all, has mercy on all His works." (Ps. 145:9)

[28]Translator: printed "3, 23"; the verse is Lam. 3:22.

טוב וישר ה' על כן יורה חטאים בדרך.

"Good, just and upright is the Eternal; therefore He points sinners to the right way." (Ps. 25:8)

35. ***To what must this consideration lead us?***

That we always submit confidently to the holy will of this loving God; that we accept His dispensations (however hard they may strike us, and even if we do not see their salutary consequences) with childlike devotion, and thank Him, the good Father, for them.

כי את אשר יאהב ה' יוכיח וכאב את בן ירצה.

"For the Eternal chastises only out of love, like a father who wishes to improve his son." (Prov. 3:12)

וידעת עם לבבך כי אשר ייסר איש את בנו ה' אלהיך מיסרך.

"You must in your heart acknowledge that the Eternal chastens you as a father chastens his child." (Deut. 8:5)

36. ***How do our sages express themselves on this?***

כשם שמברכין על הטובה כך מברכין על הרעה כל מה דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד.

"We must thank God for misfortune as well as for good fortune; for all that the All-Good does happens for the welfare of His creatures."

37. ***Can you tell me some examples that Holy Scripture sets before us of resignation to the holy will of God?***

Job said (1:21):

ה' נתן וה' לקח יהי שם ה' מברך.

"The Lord had given it to me, the Lord has taken it away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)

Eli said (2 Sam. 3:18):[29]

ה' הוא הטוב בעיניו יעשה.

"He is the Lord. Let Him do as pleases Him." (2 Sam. 3:18)

David said (2 Sam. 15:26):

הנני יעשה לי כאשר טוב בעיניו.

"Here I am! Let the Eternal deal with me according to His good pleasure." (2 Sam. 15:26)

[29]Translator: The words are Eli's, at 1 Sam. 3:18; "2. Sam." is a misprint. Leeser's 1830 English reads "1 Sam."

38. ***What does Moses teach us about the attributes of God?***

ה' ה' אל רחום וחנון ארך אפים ורב חסד ואמת נצר חסד לאלפים נשא עון ופשע וחטאה ונקה לא ינקה.

> "The Eternal is unchangeably the eternal Being, an almighty God, all-merciful and all-gracious, long-suffering, of infinite kindness and faithfulness; who still keeps His kindness for the thousandth generation, who forgives iniquity, apostasy and sin, but who lets nothing pass without retribution." (Exod. 34:6, 7)

[p. 19]

הצור תמים פעלו כי כל דרכיו משפט אל אמונה ואין עול צדיק וישר הוא.

> "The Rock of protection! His work is without flaw; for all His dealings are justice. A God of faithfulness, without crookedness, just and upright is He." (Deut. 32:4)

39. ***How, then, are divine providence and justice to be reconciled with so much evil that happens in the world?***

God has given man freedom of the will — without which neither virtue nor vice could exist — and therefore He often permits evil as well; but He punishes it, sets it a limit and a boundary, and directs it toward a good end. Thus Joseph, too, says to his brothers:

ואתם חשבתם עלי רעה אלהים חשבה לטבה.

> "Though you had the intention of doing me harm, God nevertheless turned it to good." (Gen. 50:20)

40. ***But it often goes badly with the good man, and well with the wicked?***

In events of this kind we must be extremely cautious and circumspect in our judgment, because we never know exactly the inner nature and connection of things. For even supposing that the fortunate man whom we call wicked might not in fact have a good heart, and that the pious unfortunate might not be a secret villain: still, sufferings and adversities are often very wholesome to the truly pious, and the good fortune of the villain is often only *apparent* and of short duration. Moreover, it is only in the *future* life that virtue will receive its full reward and vice its whole punishment.

אל תתחר במרעים אל תקנא בעשי עולה בטח בה' ועשה טוב שמר תם וראה ישר כי אחרית לאיש שלום.

> "Do not be jealous of the good fortune of the wicked; never envy evildoers. Trust in the Lord, do good. Hold fast to innocence, mark the upright; in the end it (virtue) brings bliss as its reward." (Ps. 37)[30]

[30]Translator: The Hebrew combines Ps. 37:1, 37:3 (first half) and 37:37.

אשר אין נעשה פתגם מעשה הרעה מהרה על כן מלא לב בני האדם בהם לעשות רע אשר חטא עשה רע מאת ומאריך לו כי גם יודע אני אשר יהיה טוב ליראי האלהים אשר ייראו מלפניו.

> "Because swift punishment does not follow the guilt, the heart of man grows presumptuous and acts wickedly. But let the sinner do evil a hundred times over and meet with forbearance: I am nonetheless firmly convinced that bliss is surely the lot of the pious, because he fears God." (Eccl. 8:11, 12)

41. ***What further does Holy Scripture teach us about this?***

That we should never be so presumptuous as to find fault with God's wise dispensations, because His ways are unsearchable. That it would be culpable insolence were blind mortals to seek to penetrate into the mysterious counsel of the Godhead.

הוי רב את יצרו חרש את חרשי אדמה היאמר חמר ליצרו מה תעשה ופעלך אין ידים לו.

> "Woe to him who contends with his Maker! Let the potsherd quarrel with other earthen potsherds; but can the clay say to its potter: What are you doing? You show no hands in your work!" (Isa. 45:9)

ואחשבה לדעת זאת עמל היא בעיני עד אבוא אל מקדשי אל אבינה לאחריתם ואני בער ולא אדע בהמות הייתי עמך.

> "I pondered it and sought the truth, yet all searching was only torment, until I came into the sanctuary of the Lord and learned to discern their end." (Ps. 73:16, 22)

Now I am gladly a fool, and will not search; gladly I am like the beast before You.

[p. 21] ∗So also say our sages:[31]

אין בידינו לא משלות הרשעים ואף לא מיסורי הצדיקים.

> "Our understanding does not suffice to explain either the good fortune of the godless or the misery of the righteous." (Avot, ch. 4)

Fourth Section: On Immortality

42. ***What consequences does our death have?***

We lose all the earthly goods we have possessed; our body passes into decay, but our soul has the promise of another, better life.

[31] Translator: Johlson prints an asterisk at the head of this paragraph (and of the paragraphs beginning "Our rabbis…" on p. 27 and "In the Talmud…" on p. 32) with no corresponding note; it apparently marks supplementary matter drawn from rabbinic sources. Leeser's 1830 English drops the asterisks.

וישוב העפר אל הארץ כשהיה והרוח תשוב אל האלהים אשר נתנה.

"The dust returns to the earth from which it came, and the spirit soars up to God, who gave it." (Eccl. 12:7)

43. ***What impression must that make upon us?***

We must never cling too much to the goods of this world of the senses, never be proud of beauty and strength, but must seek early on to acquaint ourselves with our true and higher destiny.

כה אמר ה', אל יתהלל חכם בחכמתו, ואל יתהלל הגבור בגבורתו, אל יתהלל עשיר בעשרו, כי אם בזאת יתהלל המתהלל השכל וידע אותי כי אני ה' עשה חסד משפט וצדקה בארץ כי באלה חפצתי נאם ה'.

"Let the clever man not boast of his cleverness, the hero not of his heroism, the rich man not of his riches; but in this let him boast: that he has understood and learned to know Me, how I, the Eternal, practise grace, justice and benevolence, and how I take pleasure in such things, says the Eternal." (Jer. 9:22)

44. ***What grounds does reason alone already give us for the immortality of the soul?***

We see clearly that nothing in all of nature perishes; of annihilation we have no concept whatever. Only the forms change; the forces nevertheless go on working; the fruit rises out of decay, new, young and manifold; animals transform themselves — (as, for example, the butterfly). How then could we think that the All-Good would annihilate the human soul, the masterpiece of His creation, after He has endowed it with so many noble excellences and capacities, all of which point to its great destiny of the highest happiness?

No, it is not to deceive me that God has placed in my heart this ardent wish for continued existence, this longing for eternal happiness. From His faithfulness and goodness, therefore, I can confidently expect a happier eternal life.

מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך.

"How great is that bliss which You have stored up for those who revere You!" (Ps. 31:20)

והיתה נפש אדני צרורה בצרור החיים את ה' אלהיך.

"Your soul shall be bound up in the bond of life with the Eternal your God." (1 Sam. 25:29)

45. ***And the knowledge that we have of the attributes of God — must not that, too,*** [p. 23] ***already lead us to infer the immortality of our soul?***

Certainly. We know Him, after all, as an all-wise and all-just God; and yet we see that He has bestowed upon man drives and capacities (as, for example, the ever-active drive toward knowledge of the truth, the never-to-be-quenched thirst for learning and higher wisdom) which would be purposeless and serve him only as a torment, were he to die away, in the midst of his striving, so

unsatisfied, forever and irretrievably. — Further, we often see the righteous man oppressed and miserable, or dying before his time, and many a godless man living long and in abundance. This must then instil in us still greater certainty that the all-wise and just God has not confined our destiny to this earthly life, as short as it is uncertain, but has set before us a far greater goal, a higher purpose, and destined us for an eternally continuing life, where we shall attain that perfection which here below we cannot possibly reach in full.

העולם הזה דומה לפרוזדר בפני העולם הבא. התקן עצמך בפרוזדר כדי שתכנס לטרקלין.

> "This life is only a forecourt (a preparatory school) to the future life. See that you so prepare yourself in it that you may be worthily received into the palace." (Avot, ch. 4)

46. ***What follows first from the doctrine of the immortality of the soul?***

That the eternal, all-just God will reward with an unspeakable happiness, in the future eternal life, those human beings who strove here for a God-pleasing conduct of life, but will punish the wicked who died in their obduracy without repentance. So that [p. 24] the true reward and punishment take place only in that future life, where each will be allotted what his deeds are worth.

ולך ה' החסד כי אתה תשלם לאיש כמעשהו.

> "You, Lord, are gracious; You will repay each according to his doing." (Ps. 62:18)[32]

ויתהלך חנוך את האלהים ואיננו כי לקח אתו אלהים.

> "And Enoch walked with God, and he was no longer to be found, for God had taken him to Himself." (Gen. 5:24)

47. ***How do our sages express themselves on this?***

הילודים למות והמתים לחיות והחיים לדון לידע להודיע ולהודע שהוא אל הוא היוצר הוא הבורא הוא המבין הוא הדין הוא העד הוא בעל דין הוא עתיד לדון ברוך הוא, שאין לפניו לא עולה ולא שכחה ולא משא פנים ולא מקח שחד ודע שהכל לפי החשבון ואל יבטיחך יצרך שהשאול בית מנוס לך שעל כרחך אתה נוצר ועל כרחך אתה נולד ועל כרחך אתה חי ועל כרחך אתה מת ועל כרחך אתה עתיד לתן דין וחשבון לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא.

> "Those who were born are destined to die; the dead, to live again; those who live again, to be judged: so that one may learn, come to know and be convinced that God, the almighty Creator and Fashioner, is at once Examiner, Judge, Witness and Accuser. Blessed be He! for with Him there is neither injustice nor forgetfulness, neither respect of persons nor bribery. Know therefore that *there* everything is reckoned up; and do not let your evil desire persuade you that the grave would be a refuge for you; for without your consent you were born, and without your

[32] Translator: Johlson prints "Ps. 62, 18," evidently a misprint for Ps. 62:13 (the verse quoted); Leeser's 1830 English repeats "v. 18".

consent you live and die, and so too, against your will, you will one day have to render account in judgment before the King of all kings, the Holy One — blessed be He!" (Pirkei Avot 4:22)

[p. 25] **48.** ***What impression must* this*, and the uncertainty of the time of our death, make upon us?***

That we may never count on a long life on earth; and, so that our memory may remain a blessing among posterity and we may appear pure before the judgment seat of the Most High, we must conduct ourselves each day as though it were the last of our life; thus use our time and powers well, and examine and amend ourselves daily with sincerity.

שוב יום אחד לפני מיתתך.

"Turn back one day before your death!" that is, every day. (Avot 2:10)

49. ***What further do we derive from the doctrine of immortality?***

We believe that the Almighty will one day awaken human beings from death and grant the pious an eternal well-being.

ורבים מישני אדמת עפר יקיצו אלה לחיי עולם ואלה לחרפות לדראון עולם.

"And many who sleep in the earth shall awaken; these to eternal life, those to eternal reproach and shame." (Dan. 12:2)

יחיו מתיך נבלתי יקומון הקיצו ורננו שכני עפר.

"Yes, your dead shall live again, the bodies shall rise. 'Awake! exult and sing, you who rest in the dust!'" (Isa. 26:19)

50. ***Do we have any closer information about the circumstances and the time of this great and wondrous event?***

No; both the *how* and the *when* are entirely unknown to us.

[p. 26]

פליאה דעת ממני נשגבה לא אוכל לה.

"Such knowledge is too hidden from me, too high for me to attain." (Ps. 139:6)

But we know, nonetheless, that God's promises are infallible; the time of their fulfilment is revealed to *Him alone*.

יבש חציר נבל ציץ ודבר אלהינו יקום לעולם.

"Let grass wither, the flower fade: God's word endures forever." (Isa. 40:8)

כי ישר דבר ה' וכל מעשהו באמונה.

"For upright is the promise of the Eternal, and all His doing faithfully fulfilled." (Ps. 33:4)

51. ***Do we, then, have a clearer knowledge of the state of the soul after the death of this body, and of its reward and punishment?***

As long as we are enveloped in this earthly shell, we can form no really clear concept either of the essence of the soul itself or of its state after this life. We place its reward, however, in a far more perfect contemplation of God, of His attributes and His government of the world; in general, in the enlargement of its knowledge of things that here below exceed its power of comprehension, the attainment of which affords it the purest, uninterrupted happiness; just as its punishment consists in a state of the soul full of shame and remorse, which must be extremely painful and tormenting to it.

אני בצדק אחזה פניך אשבעה בהקיץ תמונתך.

> "In righteousness I shall behold Your face; awakening, I shall delight in Your divine form." (Ps. 17:15)

[p. 27] ∗Our rabbis are of the opinion that Isaiah, too, points to this when (according to their interpretation) he says:

עין לא ראתה אלהים זולתך יעשה למחכה לו.

> "God alone, and the eye of no human being (prophet), can behold that bliss which the Lord prepares for those who wait and trust in Him." (Isa. 64:3)

Fifth Section: On Revelation

52. ***What is meant when one says: we believe in a revelation?***

We believe that the almighty, loving God bestows on some pious persons who particularly please Him the gift of prophecy. That is: He reveals to them, through divine inspiration, things that are unknown to other people, and through them at times sends His divine will and His commands to other people,[33] which we are then bound to obey.

[p. 28]

נביא מקרבך מאחיך כמני יקים לך ה' אלהיך אליו תשמעון.

> "A prophet from your midst, from your brothers, like me, will the Eternal your God raise up for you; him you shall obey." (Deut. 18:15)

[33] The manner in which the eternal, invisible Being revealed Himself to His worshippers, appeared to them in their waking or dreaming state, and through the inspiration of His holy spirit disclosed secrets to them and put words into their mouths which they had to deliver — this can be represented to us sensuous human beings only through such words and expressions as we must, of course, understand only in a borrowed manner and in a figurative sense; for the thing itself, however, every language must naturally be too poor and inadequate here.

53. ***By what means did such a prophet customarily demonstrate his divine mission?***

He customarily made it credible through miraculous signs. The prophet needs to do this, however, only when through his teachings he wishes to suspend one of the Mosaic laws from force and effect for a time (56), because otherwise we might perhaps not give him credence.[34][35]

אשר ידבר הנביא בשם ה' ולא יהיה הדבר ולא יבא הוא הדבר אשר לא דברו ה', בזדון דברו הנביא לא תגור ממנו.

> "If the prophet proclaims something in the name of the Eternal, and it does not happen and does not come true, then the Eternal has not spoken this word. The prophet has invented it out of wanton presumption, and you need not stand in awe of him." (ibid. 18:22)

54. ***Did our teacher Moses also perform miracles?***

Yes, very many.

[p. 29]

ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה אשר ידעו ה' פנים אל פנים לכל האתת והמופתים אשר שלחו ה' לעשות בארץ מצרים ולכל היד החזקה ולכל המורא הגדול אשר עשה משה לעיני כל ישראל.

> "And there arose no more a prophet in Israel like Moses, to whom the Eternal appeared so clearly; also with regard to the signs and wonders that the Eternal sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, and in all the mighty and fearful deeds that Moses performed before the eyes of all Israel." (ibid. 34:11, 12)[36]

55. ***Is the giving of the law, then, also founded merely on miracles?***

No, the revelation of the laws is an immediate fact before more than six hundred thousand witnesses. Our forefathers themselves saw and heard at Mount Sinai,[37] how the Eternal proclaimed and enjoined the Ten Commandments in the most solemn manner.

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[34]Even in this case it is not always necessary for the prophet to perform miracles, as appears from Maimonides, ה' יסודי התורה [Translator: *Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah*, "Laws of the Foundations of the Torah," in the *Mishneh Torah*; prophecy and its proofs are treated in chs. 7–10] and from the Talmud (Tractate סנהדרין [Sanhedrin]). If God lets miracles happen — say our sages — we must regard this with a grateful heart as a special, superabundant grace of which not every age could be worthy; but we are not entitled to demand miracles, nor to found our faith upon them, because miracles alone cannot count as proofs for or against the truth of any doctrine.

[35]Translator: At this point Leeser's 1830 English inserts a long parenthetical passage (on temporary suspension of precepts, Elijah on Carmel, and the false prophet whose prediction fails) that is not in Johlson's text.

[36]Translator: The quotation begins at Deut. 34:10; the Hebrew omits the words "to Pharaoh and all his servants and all his land" of v. 11.

[37]In the year of the world 2448.

את הדברים האלה דבר ה' אל כל קהלכם בהר מתוך האש הענן והערפל קול גדול ולא יסף ויכתבם על שני לחת אבנים ויתנם אלי.

> "These words the Eternal spoke to your whole congregation on the mountain out of fire, clouds and dark tempest, with a loud voice, and no more; He also wrote them on two tablets of stone, and these He gave to me." (ibid. 5:19)

56. ***But what need was there for this great, eternally memorable appearance, since Moses had already performed so many miracles and was already sufficiently accredited as God's messenger?***

Miracles and extraordinary signs are no proofs [p. 30] *for or against* eternal truths. They can only confirm testimonies, support authorities, and serve to make us follow what the worker of wonders commands to be done *for the present*, insofar as this command does not otherwise contradict any eternal truth: as, for example, *Joshua*, when he commanded that the city of Jericho be taken on a Sabbath day, and *Elijah*, when on Mount Carmel he commanded a sacrifice contrary to the law. Through the giving of the law, however, doctrines and laws were to be fixed irrevocably for *all succeeding generations*, and for that miracles alone would not have sufficed. There therefore had to be an immediate revelation from the Eternal to the people itself. This, too, the Eternal said to Moses, Exod. 19:9:[38]

בעבור ישמע העם בדברי עמך וגם בך יאמינו לעולם.

> "The nation must hear it when I speak with you, so that they may also believe you *forever*."

57. ***What follows from this fundamental doctrine of Judaism?***

That these holy laws and doctrines, communicated in so solemn a manner directly to the entire nation there present, also cannot be abrogated and set out of force for us otherwise than by an equally solemn public proclamation of the divine will.

58. ***But if a prophet demonstrates his mission through public miracles, and in the name of God declares a part of the fundamental laws abolished, ought we not then to obey him?***

No; of such a prophet it is said, Deut. 13:4:

לא תשמע אל דברי הנביא ההוא או אל חולם החלום ההוא כי מנסה ה' אלהיכם אתכם לדעת הישכם אהבים את ה' אלהיכם בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם.

> "You shall not obey the words of this prophet or of this dreamer, for the Eternal your God only wishes to put you to the test (wishes to give you the opportunity) to prove that you love the Eternal your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

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[38] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English adds here that Elijah's sacrifice was contrary to Deut. 12:13 and that Joshua and Elijah "were thus obliged to confirm their mission by miracles"; neither remark is in Johlson.

59. ***On what, then, is the belief founded that Moses added nothing arbitrarily, and wrote down and taught nothing, without being commissioned to do so by God?***

This reliable credibility of Moses rests upon the historical truth that the whole nation placed the most complete trust in his faithfulness and integrity, itself chose him as mediator, and said unanimously:

הן הראנו ה' אלהינו את כבדו ואת גדלו ואת קלו שמענו מתוך האש היום הזה ראינו כי ידבר אלהים את האדם וחי קרב אתה ושמע את כל אשר יאמר ה' אלהינו ואת תדבר אלינו את כל אשר ידבר ה' אלהינו אליך ושמענו ועשינו.

> "Behold, the Eternal our God has now let us see His glory and His greatness; we have heard His voice out of the fire, and now see well that God speaks with a human being and he remains alive. Do *you* now go near, hear all that the Eternal will yet say, then report back to us all that the Eternal our God will speak with you, and we will accept it and act accordingly." (Deut. 5:21, 24)

60. ***And did God also approve this choice, this mediation?***

Yes. God said:

שמעתי את קול דברי העם הזה אשר דברו אליך היטיבו כל אשר דברו מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם ליראה אתי ולשמר את כל מצותי כל הימים למען ייטב להם ולבניהם לעלם.

> "I have heard these words which the people spoke to you; they have spoken well! If only this mind would remain constant in them, to fear Me and to keep all My commandments at all times, so that it may go well with them and their descendants forever." (ibid. v. 26)

61. ***And what does God Himself attest, in another passage, about the credibility of Moses?***

עבדי משה בכל ביתי נאמן הוא.

> "My servant Moses is a faithful steward in My whole house." (Num. 12:7)

After this most exalted testimony, and after the general, unanimous trust of the whole nation, we can no longer doubt that all the laws and doctrines of Holy Scripture that we still have in our hands are of divine origin.

62. ***Is there, then, no essential difference between the Ten Commandments, which God Himself proclaimed to the whole people on Mount Sinai, and the other laws, which were communicated to us through Moses?***

No, rather the latter as well as the former were commanded by God Himself; the Ten Commandments, however, were made known with so much solemnity only because they in a certain sense comprehend all the other laws within themselves and contain the foundation of all the rest.

∗In the Talmud (Tractate Berakhot, fol. 7)[39] reference is made, in support of this principle, to that verse where it says:

ואתנה לך את לחת האבן והתורה והמצוה אשר כתבתי להורתם.

> "I will give you: the tablets of stone, the law, the commandments, which I have written, and which you shall teach them." (Exod. 24:12)

[p. 33] "The tablets of stone" — our sages explain — signify the Ten Commandments; "the law" — the Pentateuch; "the commandments" — the Mishnah; "which I have written" — the Prophets and Hagiographa; "which you shall teach them" — through an oral tradition. "All this was taught and imparted to Moses on Mount Sinai."

Sixth Section: On the Ten Commandments

63. ***What, then, are the words of the Ten Commandments that we heard at Mount Sinai?***

אנכי ה' אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים.

1) I am the Eternal your God, who led you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves.

לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני 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.

2) You shall have no other gods before My face. You shall make yourself no idol, nor any likeness of what is above in heaven, or below on the earth, or in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them, nor worship them; for I the Eternal am a zealous God,[40] [p. 34] who punishes the iniquity of the fathers upon children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, namely among those who hate Me; but who shows grace to the thousandth generation to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

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

3) You shall not misuse the name of the Eternal your God (neither utter it in vain nor for an untruth); for the Eternal will not leave unpunished the one who misuses His name.

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל מלאכתך ויום השביעי שבת לה' אלהיך לא תעשה כל מלאכה אתה ובנך ובתך עבדך ואמתך ובהמתך וגרך אשר בשעריך כי ששת ימים עשה ה'

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[39] Translator: The passage (R. Levi bar Ḥama in the name of R. Simeon ben Lakish) is at BT Berakhot 5a; Leeser's 1830 English reads "fol. 5".

[40] The word קנא (originally from קן, to brood) properly signifies the firm will and resolve to pursue and carry something out with zeal, diligence and assiduity.

את השמים ואת הארץ את הים ואת כל אשר בם וינח ביום השביעי על כן ברך ה' את יום השבת ויקדשהו.

4) Be ever mindful of the day of rest, to hallow it. Six days you may work and do all your business, but the seventh day is a day of rest in honour of the Eternal your God; on it you shall do no manual work: neither you yourself, nor your son or your daughter, your male slave, your female slave, nor through your cattle or through the stranger who dwells within your gates. For in six days the Eternal made heaven, earth and sea, together with all that is in them, and on the seventh day rested. Therefore the Eternal blessed the day of rest and declared it holy.

כבד את אביך ואת אמך למען יארכון ימיך על האדמה אשר ה' אלהיך נתן לך.

5) Honour your father and your mother! so that you may live long on the soil which the Eternal your God gives you.

לא תרצח.

6) You shall not murder.

לא תנאף.

7) You shall not commit adultery.

[p. 35]

לא תגנב.

8) You shall not steal.

לא תענה ברעך עד שקר.

9) You shall not testify against your neighbour as a false witness.

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

10) You shall not lust after your neighbour's house, and you shall have no desire for your neighbour's wife, for his male slave, for his female slave, for his ox, for his ass, or for anything that your neighbour possesses.

64. ***How are the Ten Commandments usually divided?***

They are usually brought into two main divisions: the first five, namely, treat of the duties we have toward God, and the last five contain such duties as we have to observe toward our fellow human beings.

65. ***What entitles us to this division?***

Both the content and the form of these commandments: for in the last five the name of God is not mentioned; and they were also so arranged on the two stone tablets of the covenant.

66. ***But why is the fifth commandment, "Honour your parents!", still reckoned among the duties of the first kind?***

Because he who has no respect for his parents; who does not particularly love and honour father and mother, his *visible creators* on earth, and is ungrateful enough to forget all the benefits that they show their child with so much self-sacrifice and toil — such a one can certainly neither honour nor love his *heavenly Father* and *invisible Creator*.

[p. 36] So too we find (Deut. 27) that right after the curse pronounced against idolatry comes: ארור מקלה אביו ואמו "Cursed be he who treats father and mother with contempt."

67. ***Why might it say in the first commandment, "Who brought you out of the land of Mizraim," and not rather, "Who created the whole world and all that is in it," which is surely a far greater wonder than the redemption from Egypt?***

Because the wonder of creation would not have worked so forcefully on many as the wonders that all of them had only recently experienced themselves. It is also meant to indicate that the observance of the revealed laws is incumbent on us Israelites alone, and that out of particular gratitude for the redemption from Egyptian slavery, which concerned us alone. Even in the commandment of the Sabbath, where the history of creation is mentioned, it nevertheless says for this reason (Deut. 5:15):

וזכרת כי עבד היית בארץ מצרים על כן צוך ה' אלהיך לעשות את יום השבת.

> "For you must remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and that the Eternal brought you out with wondrous power; therefore your God commands you to keep the Sabbath day." (Deut. 5:15)

68. ***And what lesson must we draw from this?***

That we should never undertake to persuade persons of any other people to adopt our faith. Still less may we hate or look down on others because they do not live by laws that were never prescribed to them. For all other peoples are [p. 37] bound only to observe the laws of nature, or the seven Noahide commandments; but:

תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב.

> "The teaching that Moses commanded us is the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." (Deut. 33:4)

69. ***Which, then, are the Noahide commandments, through whose observance people of all nations attain bliss?***

They are the following, which were commanded to Noah immediately after the Flood, for himself and all his descendants:

1) To refrain from idolatry.
2) To utter no blasphemy.
3) Neither to wound nor to kill one's neighbor.
4) Not to steal and not to defraud.
5) To administer justice.
6) Not to be guilty of adultery or unchastity.
7) Not to eat of the flesh of an animal before it is actually dead. (Gen. 9:4, 7)

70. ***What does the*** **second** ***commandment command us?***

That we should place our hope and our trust in the one eternal God alone, and in no other being besides Him; that we may not imagine the Supreme Being in any image or under any form whatever, still less conceive of Him with bodily properties or attributes. Further, that we should ascribe supernatural power to no other being, and must in general guard carefully against every kind of superstition.

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך.

"You must hold fast wholly to the Eternal your God." (Deut. 18:13)

[p. 38] **71.** ***Since our transgressions can do the Eternal no harm (Job 35:6: "If you sin, what effect can that have on Him? However great your misdeeds, what harm do you do Him?"), why then does God forbid idolatry so sternly, and even call Himself a zealous God, in order to punish this sin with particular severity?***

All of God's commands aim solely at our own good. His all-wisdom knows well that nothing so easily leads a person away from his duty as idolatry and superstition. False notions of God and His attributes darken the understanding and corrupt the heart, by making it ungrateful toward the almighty, true Benefactor and inclined to give itself over to every excess; of which history, too, presents us with so many examples of the most abhorrent abominations that were actually committed by the ancient idolatrous peoples.

לא תלמד לעשות כתועבת הגוים ההם, לא ימצא בך מעביר בנו ובתו באש קסם קסמים מעונן ומנחש ומכשף וגו'. כי תועבת ה' כל עשה אלה וגו'.

"You may not learn to imitate the abhorrent customs of those nations. Let no one be found among you who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, who practices the arts of divination, a caster of times, a consulter of clouds, a reader of birds, a charmer of snakes, or a sorcerer; for whoever does such things is an abomination to the Eternal, etc." (Deut. 18:9)

72. ***But does it not contradict the justice of God that He will punish the crimes of the fathers even upon children and children's children? He Himself teaches us, after all (Jer. 31:30 and Deut. 24:16):***

[p. 39]

לא יומתו אבות על בנים ובנים לא יומתו על אבות איש בחטאו יומתו.

> "Fathers shall not perish for children, nor children for fathers; each shall die for his own offense." (Deut. 24:16)

Our verse itself explains this, by adding here: "*namely, of those who hate Me*"; that is: when the descendants of a godless man continue to walk in his footsteps and, despite the instruction by which they are shown that their parents acted wrongly, nevertheless persist in the very same sins, on the pretext that they had seen it done this way by their parents before them. Such an excuse, says God, does not hold; let them not flatter themselves with the hope of going unpunished. A person is obliged always to recognize what is better and to follow it; but if the descendants of a wicked man do *this*, then God promises them (Ezekiel ch. 18) that they need not atone at all for the sins of their fathers.

בן לא ישא בעון האב ואב לא ישא בעון הבן לכן איש כדרכיו אשפט.

> "The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. Truly, I will judge each according to his own conduct." (Ezek. 18)

73. ***When does one already make oneself guilty of a subtle idolatry?***

When one places one's trust more in others, or in one's own powers and possessions, than in God, to whom we ultimately owe all the good we enjoy; for it is indeed the loving God from whom all benefits originally flow.

וזכרת את ה' אלהיך כי הוא הנתן לך כח לעשות חיל.

> "You must remember that it is the Eternal your God who gives you the strength to acquire this wealth." (Deut. 8:18)

כה אמר ה' ארור הגבר אשר יבטח באדם ושם בשר זרעו ומן ה' יסור לבו. ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה' והיה ה' מבטחו.

> "Thus says the Lord: Cursed be the man who relies on human beings and makes flesh his strength, but turns his heart away from the Eternal. Blessed is he who trusts in God." (Jer. 17:5)

74. ***What does the*** **third** ***commandment command us?***

That we should not misuse the divine Name, never pronounce it in vain, and never otherwise than with feelings of the deepest reverence. Hence a heartless or thoughtless prayer is already a sin; how much more a vain or even a false oath, which would be an unpardonable contempt and profanation of the holy Name of God (Lev. 19:12).

ולא תשבעו בשמי לשקר וחללת את שם אלהיך אני ה'.

> "You shall not swear falsely by My Name. You would thereby profane the Name of your God. I am the Eternal! (who will surely punish this)." (Lev. 19:12)

75. ***When does one swear falsely?***

When one promises by an oath that one will do something or refrain from something, and afterward does not do it or does not refrain from it; or when one affirms by an oath that something is true which one knows is not true.

76. ***When does one swear in vain?***

When one lightly, without sufficient cause, swears to *that* where *Yes* or *No* would already suffice to decide the matter.

77. ***When is an oath permitted to affirm the truth?***

[p. 41] Only when we are called upon to do so by the judge, and necessity demands it. But even then we must first prepare ourselves for this solemn act, examine our hearts, and inwardly repent, so that we do not pronounce the holy Name as unworthy persons.

את ה' אלהיך תירא אתו תעבד ובו תדבק ובשמו תשבע.

> "The Eternal your God you must revere, Him serve and to Him cleave, and only then swear by His Name." (Deut. 6:13; 10:20)

78. ***What does the*** **fourth** ***commandment command us?***

That we should hallow the Sabbath and the festivals in honor of the Eternal, and thereby make known that we sincerely believe that the All-Holy brought forth the universe out of nothing, created and ordered it; that He alone is Lord and Preserver of all creatures, and is and always will be our Benefactor.[41]

79. ***How should one hallow a day in honor of the Eternal?***

We should devote it chiefly to divine worship; rest from all worldly business; attend the public houses of prayer and of study; and engage in earnest reflection on ourselves and our conduct, so that through instruction and good resolutions we may keep ourselves in the way of virtue and the fear of God.

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[41] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English adds at the end of this answer a clause not in the 1814 text: "since his power and will must ever remain unaltered."

אם תשיב משבת רגלך עשות חפצך ביום קדשי וקראת לשבת ענג לקדוש ה' מכבד וכבדתו מעשות דרכיך ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר אז תתענג על ה'.

> "If on the Sabbath your steps rest, if on My holy day trades rest; if you call the Sabbath *the delight of the soul*, wholly consecrated to the hallowing of God; consecrated by [p. 42] resting from the world's tumult; if the soul is silent of vain wishing and the mouth of empty words: then you will surely find peace of soul with the Eternal." (Isa. 58:13)

80. ***How many festival seasons do we have besides the Sabbath?***

We have *five* further festival seasons each year, namely:

1) The Festival of Unleavened Cakes, חג המצות, commonly פסח [Pesach], or the so-called *Easter* [Ostern], as the time of our going out of Egypt and of our liberation from slavery.

2) The Feast of Weeks, שבועות [Shavuot], the so-called *Pentecost* [Pfingsten], from the Greek *pentecoste*, that is: the *fiftieth* day (counted from the first day of Passover), as the day of the revelation of the laws on Mount Sinai. It was at the same time also the harvest festival, and is therefore called יום הבכורים [the day of the first fruits].

3) The New Year's festival, commonly ראש השנה [Rosh Hashanah], but in Holy Scripture: יום הזכרון, the Day of Remembrance.

4) The Day of Atonement, or the general day of repentance, for repenting and obtaining forgiveness of our sins, יו' הכפורי' [Yom Kippur]; and finally—

5) The Feast of Tabernacles and of Conclusion, or the Autumn Festival, חג הסכות and חג האסיף.[42]

81. ***When do children honor their parents as the*** **fifth** ***commandment commands?***

When they cherish esteem for them in their hearts and show it by word and deed at every opportunity, and also always remember with a grateful mind the benefits that their parents have shown them and still show them.

שמע לאביך זה ילדך ואל תבוז כי זקנה אמך.

> "Obey your father who begot you, and do not despise your [p. 43] mother, even when she grows old." (Prov. 23:22)

82. ***The esteem owed to parents—what does it require of children?***

That they speak of their parents with every sign of reverence, not contradict them, listen to and accept their reproofs and punishments calmly, and in general conduct themselves so that the parents may have joy and honor from their child.

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[42] More is said about these festivals in the *Appendix*.

גיל יגיל אבי צדיק ויולד חכם ישמח בו ישמח אביך ואמך ותגל יולדתך.

> "How the father of the righteous rejoices! He who has begotten a wise son, how glad he is! So act, then, that father and mother may rejoice in you, that those who raised you may live to see joy." (Prov. 23:24)

83. ***If a child sincerely loves its parents, how must it conduct itself to convince them of this love?***

It must do with a willing soul everything that gives its parents joy; it must strive to earn their approval more and more, and, as far as it possibly can, seek to promote and increase their means.

גוזל אביו ואמו ואמר אין פשע חבר הוא לאיש משחית.

> "But whoever steals from father or mother and says it is no crime is the companion of a highway robber." (Prov. 28:24)

84. ***What can it teach us that a reward is especially promised by God for the observance of*** **this** ***commandment?***

The express promise of a reward for the fulfillment of such a duty, one already written in all our hearts and which every good person practices with pleasure, must give us still greater certainty of the [p. 44] comforting assurance that the All-Good will all the more amply reward the observance of those duties and commandments that are less agreeable to a person and cost him all manner of trouble, exertion, and self-conquest.[43]

85. ***What further lesson can we draw from the fact that (Deut. 5:16) the words*** כאשר צוך ה' אלהיך***, "As the Eternal your God has commanded you!" are added to this commandment?***

This expression can teach us two things: *first*, that in all we do and leave undone we should always hallow our intention and our will. Even those laws to which our natural sentiments and feelings of love, gratitude, and so on already impel us, we should observe not so much because they are pleasant to us and, as it were, a need of our heart, but chiefly because they are holy commands of our God, [p. 45] whose will we must always fulfill out of so pure a love for God that we subordinate to it all our wishes and the stirrings of our heart. *Secondly*, that nothing—not even love for our parents and the reverence we owe them—may ever move us to transgress any divine commandment. Holy Scripture indicates both with the words כאשר צוך ה' אלהיך: "*Because* and *insofar as* the Eternal your God commands it!"

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[43] In the Mishnah (Tractate Chullin, last chapter) [Translator: Mishnah Chullin 12:5; the further interpretation "in the world that is wholly good ... in the world that is wholly long" is found in the Babylonian Talmud, Chullin 142a and Kiddushin 39b, not in the Mishnah], where the commandment concerning a bird's nest that one finds (Deut. 22:6, 7) is discussed, it says: ומה אם מצוה קלה שהיא כאיסר אמרה תורה למען ייטב לך והארכת ימים, קל וחומר על מצות החמורות שבתורה. "If of a commandment that involves so little trouble and expense it already says, 'that it may go well with you and you may live long,' how much more will the observance of those commandments be rewarded that are incomparably harder and more laborious to keep." In the same place the biblical expression "that it may go well with you and you may live long" is also explained, as beautifully as it is truly and fittingly: "That it may go well with you *there*, *where* you live long—eternally."

And to this also that commandment points, where it says:

איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתתי תשמרו אני ה' אלהיכם.

> "Let each revere father and mother, and keep My days of rest; I am the Eternal your God (to whom both—the child as well as its parents—owe thanks, love, and obedience first of all)." (Lev. 19:3)

86. ***What must we conclude from the fact that the following commandments are expressed so briefly and generally, as: You shall not murder! You shall not steal! and so on?***

This teaches us, *first*, that these acts are forbidden to us in themselves, without regard to the person on whom they are committed, whether that person be our fellow believer or of another faith, whether it concern our fellow citizen or a stranger; indeed, even if harm could thereby be done to no one but ourselves, the deed in itself is in every case forbidden to us without distinction.

Secondly, that these acts are thereby forbidden to us not merely in the restricted literal sense of the words used here, but also in their most extended and far-reaching meaning, as is everything that leads to these abhorrent acts or in any way resembles them.

[p. 46] **87.** ***What, accordingly, does the* sixth *commandment forbid?***

That we may inflict on no one, neither on ourselves nor on any other person, bodily harm or any injury to health or honor that could in any way result in the shortening of the life that the All-Good has given.

ואך את דמכם לנפשתיכם אדרש, מיד כל חיה אדרשנו. מיד האדם מיד איש אחיו אדרש את נפש האדם.

> "Your own blood, too, will I require; whether it be shed by your own person, or by the hand of another human being, or by any other living creature, I will require human life of the human being."—"And," our sages add, "whoever shames his neighbor in public, or drives the blush of shame into his face, already commits a sin akin to murder." (Gen. 9:5)[44]

88. ***And when does one already commit, as it were, a murder upon oneself?***

When one deliberately harms oneself, or needlessly puts oneself in mortal danger, or else undermines one's health through a dissolute way of life.

[44] Translator: The rabbinic saying is from BT Bava Metzia 58b ("whoever whitens his fellow's face in public is as though he shed blood").

89. ***What does the*** **seventh** ***commandment forbid?***

By it we are forbidden every kind of unchastity, including lewd conduct and speech by which we or others could be incited to lewdness. The consequences of transgressing this holy commandment are especially terrible, and inevitably take their revenge on the body and soul of the libertine.

ואחריתה מרה כלענה חדה כחרב פיות רגליה ירדות מות שאול צעדיה יתמכו ונהמת באחריתך בכלות בשרך ושארך ואמרת איך שנאתי מוסר ותוכחת נאץ לבי כמעט הייתי בכל רע בתוך קהל ועדה.

> "The outcome of lust is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Its feet lead to ruin, [p. 47] its steps conduct to hell. Vain then is the late sighing, when flesh and blood are consumed. Ah! you will then cry out in vain, why did I hate good morals! why did my heart disregard discipline! how quickly I fell into deep misery, in the sight of the whole world." (Prov. 5:1–23; 6:24–35; 7:5–37,[45] and elsewhere)

90. ***How can one best defend oneself against the sin of unchastity?***

By carefully fleeing everything that incites to lust, and in every temptation thinking of God as present.

כי נכח עיני ה' דרכי איש וכל מעגלתיו מפלס.

> "A person's actions are always present to the Eternal; He measures each of his steps." (Prov. 5:21)

כי עיניו על דרכי איש וכל צעדיו יראה. אין חשך ואין צלמות להסתר שם פעלי און.

> "For His eyes look upon the ways of every man, and He beholds all his goings. Neither darkness nor shadow can hide the sinner from Him." (Job 34:21, 22)

91. ***To what does the*** **eighth** ***commandment oblige us?***

That we should leave to everyone what he possesses, and also give what belongs to him and what we owe him; that we may neither lie to nor deceive anyone, as is explained and commanded in many places in Holy Scripture.

לא תגנבו ולא תכחשו ולא תשקרו איש בעמיתו. לא תעשק את רעך ולא תגזל לא תלין פעלת שכיר אתך עד בקר.

> "You shall not steal, nor deny anything to one another, nor lie. You shall not withhold anything from your neighbor, [p. 48] nor rob anything. You shall not let the wages of the day laborer remain with you overnight until morning." (Lev. 19:11)

[45] Translator: Proverbs 7 has only 27 verses; read 7:5–27 (as Leeser's 1830 English has it).

92. ***What else is to be understood under this prohibition?***

Every kind of deceit and falsehood by which one seeks to mislead one's neighbor even in his thoughts and to instill a false opinion in him, by outwardly putting on a different appearance from what one means in one's heart. Such a person Holy Scripture calls a *thief of hearts*.[46]

כסף סיגים מצפה על חרש שפתים דלקים ולב רע.

> "Like earthenware overlaid with silver glaze are lips hot with love joined to an evil heart." (Prov. 26:23)

תועבת ה' שפתי שקר ועשי אמונה רצונו.

> "False lips are an abomination to the Eternal; in those who deal sincerely He takes delight." (ibid. 12:22)

93. ***Who bears false witness, against which the*** **ninth** ***commandment warns us?***

He who, being questioned upon his conscience and called upon to speak the truth, nevertheless speaks otherwise than he knows to be true.

עד שקרים לא ינקה ויפיח כזבים יאבד.

> "A lying witness does not remain unpunished; whoever spreads deceit perishes." (Prov. 19:9)

94. ***What further is contained in this commandment?***

That we should not slander our fellow human being or otherwise speak ill of him.

לא תלך רכיל בעמיך.

> "Do not go about among your people as a talebearer." (Lev. 19:16)

[p. 49] **95.** ***Who deserves the name of slanderer?***

He who, with evil intent, speaks evil of his fellow human being in his absence, or even falsifies the truth and spreads false, evil reports about him.

דבר שקר ישנא צדיק ורשע יבאיש ויחפיר.

> "The righteous man hates a lying word; the wicked slanders and disgraces." (Prov. 13:5)

96. ***Is it then in no case permitted to make known to others the evil one knows of one's neighbor?***

Yes, in case the general welfare or justice requires it; then it is a duty to report the evil. To keep silent would then be a crime.

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[46] Translator: German *Herzdieb*, rendering the Hebrew idiom *genev lev*, "stealing the heart," i.e. deceiving (Gen. 31:20, 26; 2 Sam. 15:6).

אם לוא יגיד ונשא עונו.

> "If he does not report it, he must atone for his guilt." (Lev. 5:1)

Or also when the sinner himself can thereby be reformed and others warned. In every case, however, it must be done without bitterness, without scornful mockery or malicious joy.

אולת שמחה לחסר לב ואיש תבונה יישר לכת.

> "Folly (or another's wrongdoing) gives joy only to the heartless; the sensible man would rather point out the right way." (Prov. 15:21)

97. ***What does the*** **tenth** ***commandment command us?***

That we should strive always to remain masters of our inclinations and wishes, so as not to let ourselves be carried away by desires and passions, and still less ever to covet the goods of others or envy them for them. [p. 50] Rather, we should rely wholly on the wisdom and goodness of God, by which each is allotted what is due to him and truly wholesome for him.

בטח אל ה' בכל לבך ואל בינתך אל תשען בכל דרכיך דעהו והוא יישר ארחתיך.

> "Trust in God with all your heart, and never lean on your own understanding. In all you do, heed Him; He will make your ways smooth." (Prov. 3:5)

מכל משמר נצר לבך כי ממנו תוצאות חיים.

> "Be above all watchful over your heart (that your desires and inclinations do not run to excess); it is the source of life (the ground of all happiness)." (ibid. 4:23)

98. ***How can we regard this commandment?***

We can rightly regard this commandment as one that contains the foundation of all moral teaching and the chief means for following most of the laws. For whoever accustoms himself always to master his inclinations and to begrudge no one his own will find it easy always to fulfill all his duties calmly and cheerfully.

עיר פרוצה אין חומה איש אשר אין מעצר לרוחו.

> "But he who does not restrain his desires is like an open city without walls." (Prov. 25:28)

All passions and sins have free access to his heart. He will envy and hate his fellow human beings, and become dissatisfied with his own station and its duties. Himself a plaything of the passions, he will be wholly incapable of virtue and of any sacrifice.

הקנאה והתאוה והכבוד מוציאין את האדם מן העולם.

> "Envy, (greed,) lust, and ambition drive a person [p. 51] out of the world and rob him of his bliss." (אבות פ"ד [Avot, ch. 4])[47]

99. ***Does God also require that one should rather give up one's life than transgress one of His laws?***

Not in the case of each and every commandment, but certainly in the case of some.

100. ***And which are these?***

Idolatry, murder, and adultery. Of these three cardinal sins it holds that one must rather let oneself be killed than commit one of these vices.[48]

עבודה זרה גלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים יהרג ואל יעבור.

> [Idolatry, forbidden sexual unions, and bloodshed: let one be killed rather than transgress.][49]

For it is better to let the body, which in any case cannot escape death, die a few years earlier than to ruin the immortal soul forever through these vices.

Seventh Section. Of Tradition.

101. ***Did Moses, then, write down all the commandments and ordinances explicitly?***

No; we believe that God communicated some teachings to Moses orally, which he was not permitted to pass on [p. 52] otherwise than likewise only orally; and so we also explain the verse (Exod. 34:27):

כתב לך את הדברים האלה כי על פי הדברים האלה כרתי אתך ברית ואת ישראל.

> "Write down only these words, for on the basis of the meaning and content of these, I make a covenant with you and with Israel."[50] (Exod. 34:27)

102. ***Are there not still other traces of the existence of a tradition?***

Yes, a great many; among others, the passage in Deut. 12:21:

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[47] Translator: Mishnah Avot 4:21 (4:28 in some editions), a saying of R. Eleazar ha-Kappar.

[48] It would be far too lengthy to list here all the conditions and cases in which, and to what extent, we should, according to the teachings of our sages, sacrifice property and life for the preservation of religion.

[49] Translator: The Hebrew dictum is from BT Sanhedrin 74a; the bracketed English is supplied by the translator, as Johlson gives no rendering of it. The sentence that follows in the German is his own justification.

[50] The scriptural passage cited at § 62 can also be applied here.

וזבחת מבקרך ומצאנך כאשר צויתך.

> "You shall slaughter from your large and from your small cattle *as I have commanded you*." (Deut. 12:21)

Now since among all the written laws there is none that prescribes the manner of slaughtering, this verse must surely presuppose an oral teaching to which it refers, and which explains *this* and many other commandments more fully. Indeed, without this oral teaching we would know how to practice properly even the fewest of the religious laws.

103. ***Are there, then, two kinds of teaching, a written teaching and an oral teaching?***

No, that is surely not so; for at bottom there is only One Law and One Teaching. Both, namely the written and the oral, together make up only one whole.[51]

[p. 53] **104.** ***What, then, do we understand by the oral teaching?***

That part which explains the written laws more fully and fixes their meaning and application, so that *these* would not be left to the arbitrary will of human beings, whose understanding is limited and often blinded by passions.

105. ***Why, then, should this explanation not also have been written down?***

Because otherwise this explanation would in time have been exposed to the very same distorted interpretations or arbitrary twistings by people of such differing views. For this reason this oral teaching, or rather this clearer explanation of the written laws, was communicated only to a few chosen ones, or to especially pious and learned men, so that through them the teaching might be preserved pure and unfalsified.

106. ***Was this oral teaching not, after all, finally written down?***

Yes; in the times of *Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi*, called the Holy, around the year of the world 3980.[52] For when the scholars of that time saw that, through ever-increasing oppression, the teachers of the law were becoming fewer and fewer, and that forgetfulness and neglect of the laws were steadily growing, they resolved, under the presidency of this pious head, רבי יהודה הנשיא הקדוש, to set down the tradition handed down until then in writing, in concisely formulated sayings; this book they called the *Mishnah* (that is, Repetition of the Laws).

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[51] The Chief Rabbi, Mr. H. Hurwitz [Translator: Zvi Hirsch Horowitz, c. 1730–1817, chief rabbi of Frankfurt am Main], drew my attention here to the numerical value of the letters of the words בכתב [in writing] and בעל־פה [by mouth]. The numerical value of the former is 424, while בעל־פה amounts in its letters to 187; which together make the number 611, exactly as much as the word תורה (law).

[52] Translator: Anno mundi 3980 corresponds to about 220 CE.

They said in doing so, with the Psalmist (119:126):[53]

עת לעשות לה' הפרו תורתך.

> "It is a time when, for the [p. 54] Eternal, set aside a law in order to preserve the whole, or what is essential.

107. ***And did it remain with the Mishnah alone?***

No; this was later found to be too brief and not readily intelligible. Therefore, two hundred and eighty years later, under the presidency of the pious and learned heads *Rabina* and *Rav Ashi*, this Mishnah, and indeed the whole law, was explained and elucidated more fully and at greater length. This work, in 36 (מסכתות [*massekhtot*, tractates]) books, is called the *Talmud* or the *Gemara*.

108. ***Were not other such law books composed later on?***

Yes, but they are not *new* law books; rather, in the form of a code, briefly and in systematic order, they contain what was decided and established as law in the Talmud, omitting all further discussion.

109. ***Which are the foremost books of this kind?***

The work *Yad ha-Ḥazakah* (יד החזקה) in 14 books, which Rabbi Moses *Maimonides* composed (in the year of the world 4936), and the work *Shulḥan Arukh* (שלחן ערוך) in 4 volumes, which Rabbi *Joseph Karo* published (in the year of the world 5325).

110. ***In what order do our sages reckon the succession and course of this tradition?***

משה קבל תורה מסיני ומסרה ליהושע ויהושע לזקנים וזקנים לנביאים ונביאים מסרוה לאנשי כנסת הגדולה.

> "Moses received the Teaching at Mount Sinai and handed it down to Joshua; Joshua handed it down to the elders; these left it to the prophets; and the prophets imparted it to the members of the Great Synod." [Mishnah Avot 1:1]

111. ***Was this arrangement useful?***

Very useful; it is to this that we owe the fact that the written Teaching, too, has come down to us pure and unadulterated. For since these pious men were thereby appointed, as it were, guardians and interpreters of the laws, they paid close attention to it: they even counted the words and letters of Holy Scripture, showed how it was to be written, and at the same time taught how it must be read and punctuated. This was afterwards also expressed by signs, made generally intelligible, and became known under the name *Masorah*, מסרה (tradition).

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[53] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English inserts before this sentence an admission not found in the 1814 text: "Although it must be confessed, that this was, to a certain degree, acting contrary to the letter of the law."

112. ***What particular benefit did that wise arrangement have besides?***

The judges and elders of the people thereby gained the opportunity to introduce many wise teachings and suitable institutions that were appropriate to the circumstances of each time; and the people felt the necessity of holding their scribes and interpreters of the law in honour, and of always following their words and admonitions precisely; which is also the express will of the Lawgiver:

על פי התורה אשר יורוך ועל המשפט אשר יאמרו לך תעשה לא תסור מן הדבר אשר יגידו לך ימין ושמאל.

> "According to the teaching which they (the elders) teach you, and according to the judgment which they declare to you, you shall act; and from what they tell you, you shall not turn aside, either to the right or to the left." (Deut. 17:10)[54]

[p. 56] **113.** ***What duties arise from this for the popular teachers, rabbis and consistories of each time?***

They are to enlighten the people in matters of faith, so that it may learn to distinguish true religion from superstition and foolish additions.

They are to make the people aware of its true duties, which God and the state require of it. They are to keep a watchful eye on the religious education of the children, and in general to make such arrangements and institutions as are suited and necessary to the circumstances and needs of each time. And should they in some cases act even against customs which popular opinion had, as it were, turned into laws, then they must say with that pious teacher of the people:

עת לעשות לה׳ הפרו תורתך.

> "There is a time when one must set aside such a law in honour of the Eternal."[55]

114. ***How do our sages, the Talmudists, express themselves on this?***

וכל העוסקים עם הצבור יהיו עוסקים עמהם לשם שמים שזכות אבותם מסיעתם וצדקתם עומדת לעד ואתם מעלה אני עליכם שכר הרבה כאלו עשיתם.

> "Whoever has the affairs of the community to attend to, let him conduct them only with pure intention; then the merit of the forebears helps to further the affairs, and their virtue never wavers. 'For every good intention I promise you the same reward as for the deed!'" (אבות פ״ב [Avot, ch. 2])[56]

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[54] Translator: The verse quoted is Deut. 17:11.

[55] The Chief Rabbi mentioned above remarked to me that here again he must refer me to the passage he had indicated to me at § 13.

[56] Translator: Mishnah Avot 2:2. The chapter numeral is printed in small rabbinic type and is not fully clear in the scan; *bet* (ch. 2), which matches the source, is the most likely reading.

[p. 57] **115.** ***And what are the duties that arise from this for us?***

Religion makes it a sacred duty for every Israelite to honour his teachers of the law and to support them to the best of his ability; also willingly to comply with the ordinances of the consistories of each time, to acknowledge gratefully the good intention of their regulations, and faithfully to live by them, since they aim only at the welfare of the community.

ובאת אל השפט אשר יהיה בימים ההם ושמרת לעשות ככל אשר יורוך.

> "To the judge of the time, who will be in office then, you shall go. You must carefully observe all that they teach you." (Deut. 17:9, 10)

116. ***But if the elders and popular teachers are authorized to introduce ordinances and institutions — as we do in fact have a number of such commandments and ordinances***[57] ***—: how, then, must we understand the prohibition*** לא תוסיפו על הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם וגו' ***"You shall not add anything to what I command you," etc. (Deut. 4:2)?***

It merely enjoins us to carry out the already existing commandments exactly as they are prescribed for us (by the written or the oral Teaching), so that we do not disfigure them by diminishing or increasing their own component parts — as if, for example, we were to make fringes[58] on more than *four* corners of a garment; to put more than four compartments into the tefillin;[59] or to take, for the bouquet with which we celebrate the solemnity of the Feast of Tabernacles,[60] more [p. 58] than the prescribed four kinds of plants. — For since every commandment has been so ordained according to divine wisdom, and we are too short-sighted always to be able to discover its true reason, we ought not to presume to depart from the prescribed manner and to deal with it arbitrarily. This, then, is impressed upon us by the verse above, as well as by the following verse:

את כל הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם אתו תשמרו לעשות לא תסף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו.

> "Every commandment you must carefully observe, exactly as I command it to you (in writing or orally): add nothing to it and take nothing from it." (Deut. 13:1)

Eighth Section: On the Duties According to Their Classification

1st: Duties toward God

117. ***How are duties generally classified?***

One usually distinguishes *three* kinds of them: namely, we have duties toward God, duties toward ourselves, and duties toward others (toward the state as a whole as well as toward each of our fellow men).

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[57] More on this occurs in the Appendix.

[58] Num. 15:38 and Deut. 22:12.

[59] Exod. 13:16.

[60] Lev. 23:40.

118. ***In what, then, does the essential difference consist between those two kinds and the last kind of duties, since they are*** **all** ***holy commands and laws of God?***

[p. 59] Whoever sins against God alone, or merely against himself, can again become partaker of God's grace and expect forgiveness from His mercy, as soon as he but turns back and sincerely repents. But if someone has transgressed against his fellow man, all repentance and remorse are of no avail until he has first also asked him for forgiveness, fully made good the damage done to him, or otherwise satisfied him. (See on this the Talmud, tractate *Yoma*.)[61]

והיה כי יאשם לאחת מאלה והתודה אשר חטא עליה וגו׳.

> "When, then, he has become guilty in one of these things (against God), he shall confess what he has sinned," etc. (Lev. 5:5)

והיה כי יחטא ואשם והשיב את הגזלה אשר גזל או את העשק אשר עשק או את הפקדון אשר הפקד אתו או את האבדה אשר מצא.

> "But if he has sinned against men, he must give back what was robbed, and what he has unjustly withheld, or what was given to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing that he has found." (Ibid. v. 23) (More on this in Num. 5:5–8)

119. ***What, then, does it properly mean to*** **repent*****?***

One repents, or turns back, when one confesses the sin one has committed before God with a contrite heart and sincerely asks Him for forgiveness for it; but above all, when one forms the firm resolve to improve oneself, earnestly to fight one's evil desires, to watch over one's conduct, and as far as possible to make good the fault committed through good works.

מכסה פשעיו לא יצליח ומודה ועזב ירחם.

> "Whoever only seeks to cloak his transgressions will not prosper; but whoever recognizes [p. 60] them and amends himself will be received into grace." (Prov. 28:13)

שובה ישראל עד ה׳ אלהיך כי כשלת בעונך. קחו עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה׳ אמרו אליו כל תשא עון וקח טוב ונשלמה פרים שפתינו.

> "You who have fallen through your sin, return to the Eternal your God, O Israel! Only turn to the Lord with prayer and say: Most Perfect One! Forgiver of sins! do accept our amendment! In place of bullocks we will offer You thanks." (Hos. 14:2)[62]

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[61] Translator: Mishnah Yoma 8:9; BT Yoma 85b, 87a.

[62] Translator: The quotation comprises Hos. 14:2–3.

120. ***Does repentance avail even against grave sins and misdeeds that one has committed deliberately and out of disobedience to God?***

Certainly repentance avails even for these; God's infinite grace is granted to everyone who but seeks it heartily and sincerely. Nothing may hold us back from repentance; for the only unforgivable thing would be for us to despair of God's mercy, which He has after all promised us through all His prophets.

חי אני נאם ה׳ אלהים אם אחפץ במות הרשע כי אם בשוב רשע מדרכו וחיה.

> "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but I desire that he turn from his way and live." (Ezek. 33:11)

כי לא אחפץ במות המת נאם ה׳ אלהים והשיבו וחיו.

> "Truly, I have no pleasure in putting to death one who is dead (a sinner), says the Lord God; only let yourselves be led back to the good, so that you may live." (Ibid. 18:32)

121. ***What, in general, are the duties that we have to observe toward God alone?***

Holy Scripture tells us this briefly in this verse:

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 (after He has done all this for you), what does the Eternal require of you, but that you hold the Eternal your God in reverence with all your heart and with all your soul, walk in all His ways, love Him and serve Him?" (Deut. 10:12)

122. ***What does this mean: to serve God? Does He need our service?*** אם צדקת מה תתן לו או מה מידך יקח? ***"However pious you may be, what can you bestow on Him by it?" (Job 35:7)***

The next verse explains this to us further:

לשמר את מצות ה׳ ואת חקתיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום לטוב לך. הן לה׳ אלהיך השמים ושמי השמים הארץ וכל אשר בה.

> "You shall, namely, observe the commandments of the Eternal and His laws, which I now prescribe to you; and that for your own good. Behold, the heavens and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all that is on it and in it, belong to the Eternal! (So He needs neither your sacrifices nor your services.)" [Deut. 10:13–14]

123. ***How, accordingly, are the expressions "honour of God," "service of God," and so forth to be understood?***

The words "service," "honour" and the like have an entirely different meaning in relation to God than in relation to human beings. *Divine service* is not a service that I render to God; *the honour*

of God is not an honour that I confer on God. The All-Good wills only the well-being of His creatures — which we are to promote through beneficence and virtue — and a grateful disposition.

זבח תודה יכבדנני ושם דרך אראנו בישע אלהים.

> "Whoever offers Me thanks honours Me; whoever pays heed to his [p. 62] conduct, to him I show divine salvation." (Ps. 50:23)

124. ***Worship of God through obedience to His commandments: how is it divided?***

It consists of two principal parts, namely: *inward* and *outward* divine service.

125. ***What is meant by inward worship of God?***

Reverence, trust and willing obedience arising from a sincere love of God and from gratitude for His countless benefactions; knowledge of God through contemplation of His works — how He has ordered them all with power, wisdom and goodness, and sustains them with infinite grace and fatherly faithfulness. Whoever fills his heart with love and reverence toward this great, holy God, who is near to us everywhere, notices our doings and thoughts, and directs all our destinies — he will also always strive after a pious, God-pleasing way of life and seek to imitate His benefactions. David, too, commends this to his son in the words:

ואתה שלמה בני דע את אלהי אביך ועבדהו בלב שלם ובנפש חפצה כי כל לבבות דורש ה׳ וכל יצר מחשבות מבין.

> "You, my son Solomon, *know* the God of your father; then you will serve Him with a whole heart and a willing soul, for the Eternal searches all hearts; He perceives every impulse and thought." (1 Chron. 28:9)

126. ***What is meant by*** **outward** ***worship of God?***

Those pious acts by which we make known our love of God through word and deed: to these belong not only the exercise of the duties of [p. 63] beneficence, but also domestic and public prayers and the observance of the ceremonial laws.

לא המדרש הוא עקר אלא המעשה.

> "Contemplation and reflection alone are not enough — say our sages — one must also act and do." [Mishnah Avot 1:17]

127. ***Why must we worship God not only*** **inwardly** ***but also*** **outwardly***?*

Because man, on account of his weaknesses and many needs, cannot always reflect on lofty truths, nor keep them constantly before his eyes, unless he is often reminded of them by word and deed; moreover, it is only the repeated expression of pious feelings that makes him virtuous: through it he acquires the facility of always doing good willingly and always shunning evil.

ויצונו ה׳ לעשות את כל החקים האלה ליראה את ה׳ אלהינו וגו׳. וצדקה תהיה לנו כי נשמר לעשות את כל המצוה הזאת לפני ה׳ אלהינו כאשר צונו.

> Therefore the Eternal commanded us to practise all these commandments, so that we may always have reverence for the Eternal our God. "It will also be reckoned to us as godliness when we keep all the commandments before the Lord as He has prescribed them to us." (Deut. 6:24)[63]

128. ***Are there not yet other reasons that must move us to public divine service?***

Yes, we already feel the need for it within ourselves. Of one whom we truly love with all our heart we also like to speak often, him we also like to praise often and on every occasion; what the heart is full of passes over into mouth and action.[64]

And by praising God publicly, proclaiming His benefactions and salutary laws, and performing His commandments [p. 64] publicly, we at the same time edify and instruct our fellow men, and thereby follow God's word:

ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל.

> "I will be hallowed among the children of Israel," that is, publicly. (Lev. 22:32)

129. ***Can outward divine service exist without the*** **inward** ***and be pleasing to God?***

By no means; a heartless prayer, a ceremonial act without sense and meaning, can neither profit nor avail a person anything.

רחמנא לבא בעי.

> "And God requires the heart."[65]

Every observance of a ceremonial law is meant to remind us of God's benefactions and to fill us with gratitude for them; but if we do not take its *meaning* to heart, then it is said:

מסיר אזנו משמע תורה גם תפלתו תועבה.

> "Whoever does not attend to the Teaching, his prayer too is an abomination to the Eternal." (Prov. 28:9)

יען כי נגש העם הזה בפיו ובשפתיו כבדוני ולבו רחק ממני.

> "For this people draws near to Me with its mouth; only with its lips does it honour Me; but its heart is far from Me." (Isa. 29:13)

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[63] Translator: The quotation comprises Deut. 6:24–25.

[64] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English adds a further sentence here not in the 1814 text (that every good man's love of God should move him to speak of Him and to keep His laws).

[65] Translator: BT Sanhedrin 106b: "The Merciful One desires the heart."

130. ***In what image does Holy Scripture show us this relation of outward to inward worship of God?***

In the fitting image of a lantern in which a burning light is set, which without the lantern would go out in wind and weather; whereas the lantern without the light within would be entirely useless and merely a burden. Both together, however, illuminate the way and lead a person safely to the goal.

כי נר מצוה ותורה אור ודרך חיים תוכחות מוסר.

> "The commandment is a lantern, the Teaching is the light within it; [p. 65] moral teaching shows the way to happiness." (Prov. 6:23)

131. ***But is not the sacrificial service also a necessary condition of public worship of God?***

By no means are sacrifices an indispensable requirement for it. Formerly, in very ancient times, it was the custom among almost all peoples to slaughter animals in honour of their gods; now, in order to keep the Israelites of that time — who had seen such sacrifices before them and, for their own peace of mind, held them to be necessary — away from idolatry:[66]

ביום צותו את בני ישראל להקריב את קרבניהם לה׳.

> "The children of Israel were commanded to offer their sacrifices (which, after all, they insisted on bringing) in honour of the One, eternal God alone." (Lev. 7:38)

132. ***Does this also agree with the teaching of the prophets and teachers of the law?***

Completely; all the prophets and teachers of the nation are unanimous about it; they said this often and on every occasion:

כי לא דברתי את אבותיכם ולא צויתים ביום הוציאי אותם מארץ מצרים על דברי עולה וזבח.

> "I said nothing to your fathers, I commanded them nothing when I led them out of the land of Egypt — neither about burnt offerings nor about slaughtered sacrifices." (Jer. 7:22)

הנה שמע מזבח טוב להקשיב מחלב אילים.

> "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; to be obedient, better than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15:22)

זבח ומנחה לא חפצת אזנים כרית לי עולה וחטאה לא שאלת.

> "Sacrifice and gift do not please You; ears You have opened for me — burnt offering and sin offering You do not demand." (Ps. 40:7)

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[66] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English replaces this explanation of sacrifice as a concession to the Israelites' habits, meant to keep them from idolatry, with a different answer: sacrifices were commanded only at the Temple, ceased of necessity with its destruction, and even then private offerings were not obligatory.

[p. 66] Ninth Section: (2.) On the Duties toward Oneself

133. ***What is the chief duty that a person has to observe toward himself?***

That he be mindful of his dignity and his high destiny, and act accordingly.

חביב אדם שנברא בצלם חבה יתרה נודעת לו שנברא בצלם שנאמר כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם.

> "Man is dear to the Eternal, for He created him in His image (26); but a special love was shown him in that God made known to him that he was created in His image." (אבות פ״ג [Avot, ch. 3])[67]

134. ***What, then, are we to learn from the first part of that verse, where it says (Gen. 1:26):*** נעשה אדם בצלמנו ***"Let us make a human being in our*** **image*****"?***

It indicates to us the will of God: that we should strive most zealously to perfect as far as possible the powers that God has bestowed on us, to apply them to the good, and, like Him, always to unite power with wisdom and goodness; so that everything a person does may proceed from a good intention and have a rational purpose.

135. ***What further duties arise from this?***

That we seek to keep ourselves healthy and cheerful in body and soul, and must avoid everything that could harm our health; that we regard our body as a temple of God, and should guard against [p. 67] deliberately damaging it, or even weakening and profaning it through excesses and sins.

ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם.

> "Take good care of your body and of your soul!" [Deut. 4:15]

136. ***What can we conclude from the*** **second** ***part of that verse:*** וירדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובבהמה ובכל הארץ וגו׳ ***"That they may rule over the fish of the sea, over the fowl, over the cattle and over the whole earth," etc.?***

This must be one more proof to us that man, according to God's intention, is destined for *social life*; for in no other way can he, alone and without the help of others, subject to himself either the animals, or the earth, or the sea; rather, he then appears as a very weak creature, since he could not even satisfy the needs that God gave him precisely for this reason. Therefore it also says וירדו (in the plural): *they* shall rule — that is, human beings united in societies.

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[67] Translator: Mishnah Avot 3:14. The "(26)" in Johlson's German appears to point to Gen. 1:26 (cited in the next question); Leeser renders it "(§ 26)". The scriptural proof-text "for in the image of God He made man" (Gen. 9:6), present in the Hebrew, is not translated in the German.

137. ***What duty must we derive from this?***

That a person, in order to be able to fulfil his destiny *wholly* according to God's will, should so conduct himself in all he does and refrains from doing, in his whole behaviour, that he also gains and merits the goodwill and favour of his fellow men.

חסד ואמת אל יעזבך ומצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני אלהים ואדם.

> "Magnanimity and faithfulness must never leave you; so that you may find favour and goodwill in the eyes of God and of men." (Prov. 3:3, 4)

[p. 68] **138.** ***What do our sages say about the duty of observing a well-mannered and agreeable behaviour in one's outward conduct as well?***

כל שרוח הבריות נוחה הימנו רוח המקום נוחה הימנו וכל שאין רוח הבריות נוחה הימנו אין רוח המקום נוחה הימנו.

> "Whoever is well liked among people is also pleasing to God; but whoever is disagreeable to people cannot be agreeable to God either." (אבות פ״ג [Avot, ch. 3])[68]

For even the purpose of all learning and virtue is partly missed if one does not seek to gain entry into people's hearts through agreeable manners and kindly behaviour.

139. ***By what means can one best preserve one's health and make oneself beloved by God and men?***

Through temperance and moderation of the desires; through diligence, activity and a useful employment of our time and powers; and all this joined with a peace of soul and cheerfulness that must rest on a joyful trust in God.

לב שמח ייטב גהה ורוח נכאה תיבש גרם.

> "A glad heart gives sound health; a downcast spirit consumes the bones." (Prov. 17:22)

140. ***And what are the vices that we must shun if only because they are, as it were, the corrupting leaven, the cause of all sins and vices?***

There are chiefly *seven*, which are equally ruinous to body and soul, and against which Holy Scripture emphatically warns us; namely: pride, avarice, [p. 69] envy, anger, gluttony and drunkenness, idleness and sloth, and bad company.

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[68] Translator: Mishnah Avot 3:10.

141. ***Make this clear to me, and show me at the same time the opposite virtues which we ought to cultivate.***

(1.) *The proud man* holds himself high and haughtily despises his fellow men, and is hated by them in return; he is easily offended and provoked to vindictiveness, and so makes himself and others unhappy; his pride also prevents him from accepting instruction and letting himself be taught.

רום עינים ורחב לב נר רשעים חטאת.

"A haughty look and a proud heart are the seed-field of sin for the wicked." (Prov. 21:4)

תועבת ה׳ כל גבה לב.

"A proud heart is an abomination to the Eternal." (Ibid. 16:5)

142. *Humility and modesty*, on the other hand, are well liked by God and by people, keep a person always in tranquillity and composure, and are therefore equally beneficial to body and mind.

Therefore, among all the virtues of our teacher (Moses), it was his humility in particular that God praised.

והאיש משה ענו מאד מכל האדם אשר על פני האדמה.

"Moses was a very modest, humble man, more than any person on the face of the earth." (Num. 12:3)

גאות אדם תשפילנו ושפל רוח יתמך כבוד.

"Pride brings a person low; the modest one gains honour." (Prov. 29:23)

143. (2.) *The miser* wants only to amass money; he thus regards the means as [p. 70] an end, and begrudges himself every enjoyment, which might often serve to strengthen body and soul; he also neglects many a fine duty because it costs money, and lets himself be led into many sins by greed.

וכלי כליו רעים הוא זמות יעץ לחבל ענוים באמרי שקר.

"The miser makes use of the most shameful means; he devises wiles to deceive the innocent with lying words, to oppress the downtrodden." (Isa. 32:7)

נבהל להון איש רע עין.

"The one greedy for money is also a man of an evil eye (grudging)." (Prov. 28:22)

144. *Beneficence*, however, and a reasonable use of one's lawfully acquired wealth, are becoming and useful to a person, do good to his body and his soul, and make him agreeable to God and men.

טוב מעט ביראת ה׳ מאוצר רב ומהומה בו.

"Better to possess little with firm fear of God than a great treasure with an uneasy conscience." (Prov. 15:16)

טוב עין הוא יברך כי נתן מלחמו לדל.

"The generous man will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor." (Ibid. 22:9)

145. (3.) *Envy* arouses hatred and strife, and so leads to the transgression of all laws. The envious person enjoys neither rest nor contentment, and so makes himself and others unhappy.

146. *Contentment and goodwill*, on the other hand, keep a person cheerful, calm and satisfied. For the contented person grants everyone his own, relies [p. 71] on God, and fulfils his duties all the more faithfully.

חיי בשרים לב מרפא ורקב עצמות קנאה.

"A contented heart keeps the body healthy; greedy envy is a gnawing rot of the bones." (Prov. 14:30)

147. (4.) *Anger* harms a person's health, confuses his understanding, inflames him against God and men, and leads him into many sins.

איש אף יגרה מדון ובעל חמה רב פשע.

"A hot-tempered man stirs up strife; an angry one commits many offences." (Prov. 29:22)

148. *Patience, gentleness and composure*, on the other hand, bring a person honour and joy, give him comfort in adversity, and make him capable of true divine service.

טוב ארך אפים מגבור ומשל ברוחו מלכד עיר.

"One who is slow to anger is better than a war hero; whoever masters his temper, better than a conqueror of cities." (Prov. 16:32)

149. (5.) *Gluttony and drunkenness* lead to lust, to extravagance, to poverty, and finally to stealing and to other vices; for which reason, in former times, a young person who gave himself over to drunkenness was even put to death, in order to prevent greater crimes. (Deut. 21:21)

זולל וסבא. ורגמהו כל אנשי עירו ובערת הרע מקרבך.

"The dissolute glutton and drunkard you shall stone, and so remove the evil from your midst." [Deut. 21:20–21]

כי סבא וזולל יורש וקרעים תלביש נומה.

"Glutton and drunkard become poor; drowsiness clothes in rags." (Prov. 23:21)

[p. 72] **150.** *Moderation*, on the other hand, keeps a person healthy and cheerful. The moderate person says: I eat only in order to live, but I do not live in order to eat. And since he knows how to limit his needs to what is indispensable, he is never overcome by the temptation to obtain his livelihood by unlawful means.

צדיק אכל לשבע נפשו ובטן רשעים תחסר

"The righteous wants only to eat his fill; the gullet of the wicked is never filled." (Prov. 13:25)

151. (6.) **Idleness and sloth** make a person dejected and lead him to evil thoughts—to unchastity, to poverty, and to every sin. Besides, it is in itself already inexcusable to waste precious, noble time—life itself—to no purpose.

תאות עצל תמיתנו כי מאנו ידיו לעשות

"The sluggard dies of his craving, because his hands will not work." (Prov. 21:25)

גם מתרפה במלאכתו אח הוא לבעל משחית

"Whoever is negligent in his business is the brother of the squanderer." (ibid. 18:9)

152. *Activity and diligence* belong to the proper calling and destiny of a human being:

בזעת אפיך תאכל לחם

"In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread." (Gen. 3:19)

Work makes a person healthy and cheerful, and protects him from want and from sin. And when a person diligently does his part, he can also rely on the blessing of God.

יד חרוצים תמשול ורמיה תהיה למס

"The diligent hand rules, but the slack hand must become subject to forced labor." (Prov. 12:24)

[p. 73] **153.** (7.) **Bad company** has a very pernicious influence on a person's heart and morals; it makes him forget his duty and leads him into many vices. Bad examples act so imperceptibly upon his mind that little by little he loses all sense for what is good, and in the end stifles every seed of virtue. Thus we also find that both the pious David and the wise Solomon each begin their book by warning against bad company.

בני אם יפתוך חטאים אל תבא. בני אל תלך בדרך אתם מנע רגלך מנתיבתם

"My son, if sinners would entice you, do not listen to them! Do not go with them, my son; avoid their paths." (Prov. 1:10–19)

אשרי האיש אשר לא הלך בעצת רשעים ובדרך חטאים לא עמד ובמושב לצים לא ישב

"Happy the man who does not come into the counsel of the wicked, who never set foot on the way of sinners, never sat where scoffers sit." (Ps. 1[:1])

154. *Association with the wise*, on the other hand—indeed, even the mere striving after good company—ennobles a person, constantly spurs him on to virtue, and helps him fulfill his destiny: to become better and wiser every day.

הולך את חכמים יחכם ורעה כסילים ירוע

"The companion of fools comes to grief; but whoever walks with the wise will himself become wise." (Prov. 13:20)

[p. 74] ## Tenth Section

Third: Of the Duties toward Our Fellow Human Beings

155. ***How does Holy Scripture express itself concerning the duties that we are to observe toward our fellow human beings?***

הגיד לך אדם מה טוב ומה ה' דורש ממך כי אם עשות משפט ואהבת חסד והצנע לכת עם אלהיך

"It has been told you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: namely, to practice justice, to cherish faithfulness and kindness, and to be humble before your God." (Micah 6:8)

ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה'

"You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself. I, the Eternal!" (command it of you). (Lev. 19:18)

156. ***Do these duties also form an essential part of our holy religion?***

Certainly they do; love of one's neighbor is the foundation of all the laws, and flows directly from the love of God.

157. ***Explain to me how love of one's neighbor is bound up with the love of God.***

Whoever sincerely loves and honors God also loves all those whom He has created in His image and destined for happiness.

בנים אתם לה' אלהיכם

"You are children of the Eternal your God." (Deut. 14:1)

And what upright child would not gladly contribute with all his strength so that his brothers may fare well—and so that the Father, who loves them all, may take joy in the well-being of His children?

[p. 75] **158.** ***And how, according to the explanation of our sages, must we understand the expression of the Bible where it says:*** לאהבה את ה' אלהיך ולדבקה בו ***"You shall love the Eternal your God and cleave to Him"? (Deut. 30:20; 10:20; 13:5)***

הדבק בדרכיו ובמעשיו, גמול חסדים וגו'. מה הוא רחום אף אתה רחום. מה הוא חנון אף אתה חנון וגו'

> "That is to say: you shall imitate your God in His loving works; as He is compassionate, so you too be merciful; as He is benevolent, you too be benevolent; He is all-good, so let your compassion likewise extend over all His creatures."[69]

159. ***How, further, does the Talmud express the idea that love of one's neighbor is the foundation of all the laws?***

ר' עקיבא אומר ואהבת לרעך כמוך זהו כלל גדול בתורה

> Rabbi *Akiva* (one of the most eminent of our teachers of the law) used to say: "The chief principle of our religion is contained in the commandment: Love your neighbor as yourself!"[70]

—And when a heathen once asked our great teacher *Hillel* about the Jewish religion, wishing to know in a few words what it actually consisted of, Hillel answered him:

מה דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד הא לך כל התורה כלה ואידך פירושה זיל גמור

> "Do not do to your neighbor what you would not want done to you! On this rests the whole law; all the rest is only the commentary on it, or a consequence of it."[71]

160. ***But whom does Scripture call*** ריע, עמית, אח ***neighbor, fellow human being, brother?—Are those who adhere to another religion also understood by these terms?***

[p. 76] By these are meant not merely Israelites, but all human beings who live with us in one state, whatever religion they may otherwise profess or whatever nation they may belong to.

161. ***Can you prove this to me from Holy Scripture itself?***

This can be irrefutably demonstrated from a great many passages; for, *first*, whenever Israelites alone are spoken of, Scripture always expressly adds עברי [Hebrew] or בני ישראל [children of Israel] (as, for example, Lev. 25:46; Deut. 15:12 and 24:7, and many others); *second*, even the Egyptians—at the very time when they were treating the Israelites harshly and cruelly—are expressly called our *neighbors*, our *fellow human beings*:

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[69] Translator: A conflation of rabbinic dicta on "imitating God" (cf. BT Sotah 14a on "walking after the Lord"; BT Shabbat 133b and Sifre Deut. Ekev 49: "As He is merciful, so you be merciful; as He is gracious, so you be gracious"). גמול חסדים = "acts of loving-kindness."

[70] Translator: Sifra Kedoshim 4:12; JT Nedarim 9:4: "Love your neighbor as yourself—this is a great principle of the Torah."

[71] Translator: BT Shabbat 31a. Literally: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow; that is the whole Torah, the rest is its commentary—go and learn it."

וישאלו איש מאת רעהו ואשה מאת רעותה

["Let them ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor."] (Exod. 11:2)

162. ***And even after the Israelites had been freed from slavery to the Egyptians and had departed from their land, what does Holy Scripture still enjoin upon us toward them, and toward the people of*** **Edom***, which was the first to march out with a strong army to destroy the Israelites without having been provoked by them? (Num. 20:18, 20)***

לא תתעב אדמי כי אחיך הוא. לא תתעב מצרי כי גר היית בארצו

You shall not abhor the Edomite, for he is your *brother*. Nor shall you abhor the Egyptian, for you were a stranger in his land. (Deut. 23:8)

163. ***What, then, must we conclude from this?***

That we are bound with far greater right, according to the laws [p. 77] of religion, to love as brothers those who really are our neighbors, our fellow citizens, and inhabitants of a state in which we enjoy equal protection with them, and to whom we are therefore already bound by the tie of gratitude and of a common fatherland.

164. ***What does religion command us with regard to the foreigner, the stranger?***

וגר לא תונה ולא תלחצנו כי גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים

"A stranger you shall not wound with words, nor oppress; for you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exod. 22:20)

וכי יגור אתך גר בארצכם לא תונו אתו. כאזרח מכם יהיה לכם הגר הגר אתכם ואהבת לו כמוך אני ה' אלהיכם

"You shall not take advantage of the stranger; he shall be to you just like a native; you shall love him as you love yourself. I, the Eternal your God!" (command it of you). (Lev. 19:34)[72]

הקהל חקה אחת לכם ולגר הגר חקת עולם לדרתיכם ככם כגר יהיה לפני ה'

"To you, assembly of the people, one and the same law is prescribed, for you and for the stranger who dwells among you. Let this be an everlasting statute for your descendants: that you and the stranger are equal before the Eternal." (Num. 15:15)

כי ה' אלהיכם הוא וגו'. אשר לא ישא פנים, ואהב גר לתת לו לחם ושמלה. ואהבתם את הגר וגו'

"I am the Eternal your God, who does not judge according to the person, who loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing; so you must likewise love the stranger." (Deut. 10:17, 18)[73]

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[72]Translator: The Hebrew quoted is Lev. 19:33–34.

[73]Translator: The Hebrew, abbreviated with "etc.", runs from Deut. 10:17 to 10:19.

165. ***Does Holy Scripture perhaps anywhere make a distinction between an Israelite and a non-Israelite in those laws and prohibitions that forbid us to do something against our fellow human beings?*** [p. 78]

Nowhere do we find a trace of such a distinction. God says: You shall not murder! You shall not steal, not deceive!

לא תעשו עול במשפט, במדה, במשקל ובמשורה

> "You shall do no wrong in judgment! nor any wrong in ell, weight, or measure." (Lev. 19:35)

Everywhere it is simply the act itself that is forbidden as an abomination to the Eternal, without regard to the person against whom it is committed.

166. ***What do our sages say of one who permits himself to injure or deceive a non-Jew?***

Our teachers of the law unanimously declare that such an Israelite not only sins grossly against the express laws of God, but also brings upon himself the unpardonable crime of profaning the holy name of God, since he thereby debases his religion and his coreligionists in the eyes of other nations.

ולא תחללו את שם קדשי ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל אני ה' מקדשכם

> "You shall not profane My holy name; I will be sanctified through the children of Israel." (Lev. 22:32)

167. ***Our teachers the Talmudists, who did not yet enjoy all these advantages that especially oblige us—what duties of love do they already teach us toward our fellow human beings of another religion?***

"Every Israelite," our sages teach, "is bound by the divine [p. 79] law to love as his brothers those people of every nation who observe the seven Noahide commandments; to visit their sick, to bury their dead, to care for and support their poor and needy, just as those of Israel; and so, in general, there is no act of human kindness that a true Israelite could withhold from those who observe the Noahide teachings." (§ 69.)

168. ***Should we, then, also lend money without interest to the non-Israelite?***

Certainly; in this, too, there is not the slightest difference whether the borrower is an Israelite or of another faith, so long as he uses the money for his necessary needs and not for trade. It is a commandment of charity and of love of humankind:

וכי ימוך אחיך ומטה ידו עמך והחזקת בו גר ותושב וחי עמך. אל תקח מאתו נשך ותרבית ויראת מאלהיך וחי אחיך עמך. את כספך לא תתן לו בנשך ובמרבית לא תתן אכלך

> "If your brother beside you becomes poor and his hand fails, you shall support him, so that the stranger and sojourner too may live with you. You shall take neither interest nor increase from

him, but fear your God and let your brother live beside you. Do not give him your money at interest, nor your provisions for increase." (Lev. 25:35)[74]

169. ***But since the taking of interest is already expressly forbidden in this passage, and also in Exod. 22:24, what is it that is further forbidden in this regard in Deut. 23:20?***

[p. 80] In this last passage, according to the explanation of the Talmudists and of all the teachers of the law, the Israelite who must borrow money is forbidden to *give* interest on it to another Israelite.

לא תשיך לאחיך נשך כסף נשך אכל נשך כל דבר אשר ישך (אזהרה ללוה שלא יתן רבית למלוה)

"You shall not *give* interest to your brother, whether on money or on food, or any other interest that causes harm." [(A warning to the borrower not to give interest to the lender.)][75]

170. ***But why might it have been specially forbidden to*** **give** ***interest?***

Because the whole constitution of the Israelite people aimed at its one true destiny, namely: to be owners of the land, and to occupy themselves not with trade but solely with agriculture and the most necessary arts and crafts. Hence the commandments concerning the year of release and the many other agrarian laws. To that end not only was the duty laid upon them to help one another out in time of need with advances free of charge, but here, too, it is commanded as a rule of household economy not to *give* interest. Agriculture would not have yielded enough for it, and the land and society could have suffered as a result.[76]

171. ***What, then, does the 21st verse of the same chapter (23) say?***

This is merely the continuation of the immediately preceding verse.

לנכרי תשיך ולאחיך לא תשיך

"If you cannot obtain a loan from the native without interest, then you *may* give interest to the foreigner, but only not to your brother." [(Deut. 23:21)]

Some scholars add the further explanation: If you have promised interest to the foreigner, then you must [p. 81] give it to him; but if you have stipulated it with an Israelite, then you may not fulfill this contract; it is invalid. (See *Abarbanel* and *R. Obadiah Sforno*.)[77]

172. ***But if one nevertheless wished to give this verse another interpretation, and to apply it not to the borrower but to the*** **lender***—as though the commandment read: "From a foreigner you***

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[74]Translator: The Hebrew and German quoted are Lev. 25:35–37.

[75]Translator: Deut. 23:20. The parenthetical Hebrew gloss ("a warning to the borrower not to give interest to the lender") reflects the rabbinic reading of the verb תשיך (cf. Rashi ad loc.; BT Bava Metzia 75b).

[76]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English considerably expands this answer, adding a passage on the concentration of land and money in few hands and the resulting "aristocracy," which is not in Johlson's 1814 text.

[77]Translator: Don Isaac Abravanel (1437–1508) and Obadiah Sforno (c. 1470–1550), both of whom wrote commentaries on the Torah; Johlson's "R. Abadja Sapurny" is Sforno.

may* take *interest, but not from your brother!"—can one then conclude from this that we may practice usury with those who are not of our faith?

By no means can we conclude such a license from it. For, *first*, there can be no question here of *usury*, because we find no word at all in Holy Scripture that denotes this concept.[78] *Second*, all our fellow citizens—whatever their faith—are surely also our *brothers* (160, 162, 163), whom we are obliged to help out in need free of charge.

הלוא אב אחד לכלנו הלוא אל אחד בראנו מדוע נבגד איש באחיו

> "Have we not *all* one Father? Did not one God create us? Why should brother deal faithlessly with brother?" (Mal. 2:10)

[p. 82] **173.** ***What, then, with respect to the taking of interest, is the relation between an Israelite and a non-Israelite?***

In this, as everywhere, the relations are the same as between one Israelite and another. If our fellow citizen needs the loan to help along his rural or domestic trade, or to support his family, religion forbids us to take any interest whatever for it. The consciousness of having fulfilled a duty of love of humankind, of having performed an action pleasing to God, must be reward enough for us. But if our neighbor wishes to use the borrowed money for a commercial speculation, then the lender is permitted to have a share of his profit given to him, namely to take as much interest as the prevailing custom and the laws of the land allow. Whether, moreover, the borrower professes our religion or another can have no bearing whatever on this.[79]

174. ***Can you recite for me a psalm in which the chief duties toward our fellow human beings are already contained?***

ה' מי יגור באהלך

> Who, O Lord, may dwell in Your tent?

מי ישכן בהר קדשך

> Who may rest upon Your holy mountain?

הולך תמים ופעל צדק

> He who walks uprightly, practices justice;

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[78] In this the philologists must fully agree with our scriptural scholars; for usury means interest beyond what the law permits; but in the Mosaic law no rate of permitted interest is anywhere specified according to which the relative concept of usury could be determined—rather, every kind of interest is everywhere expressly forbidden to us. If, then, there is no legally authorized interest, there can also be no word that means usury.

[79] Translator: Johlson's 1814 text applies the same rule to Jew and non-Jew alike and ends by saying the borrower's religion makes no difference. Leeser's 1830 English restricts the permission to non-Israelite borrowers and adds a long passage (which he marks as his own, drawn from Yoreh De'ah 177) on partnership arrangements required when the borrower is an Israelite.

ודבר אמת בלבבו

Speaks truth from the heart;

לא רגל על לשנו

Never slanders with his tongue;

לא עשה לרעהו רעה

Never does evil to his neighbor,

וחרפה לא נשא על קרבו

Never reviles his fellow human beings;

נבזה בעיניו נמאס

Holds the contemptible as nothing,

ואת יראי ה' יכבד

Honors those who fear God;

נשבע להרע ולא ימר

Swears to his own hurt, and keeps his word; [p. 83]

כספו לא נתן בנשך

Who lends his money without interest,[80]

ושחד על נקי לא לקח

And, unbribable, protects the innocent:

עשה אלה לא ימוט לעולם

Whoever does this shall endure forever. (Ps. 15)

[80]To whom? אפילו רבית נכרי "Even to the foreigner, even to the heathen," explains the Talmud (Tractate *Makkot*, fol. 24). In the same place it is further said: "Moses taught us religion in 613 precepts; *David* (in our psalm) sums them up in the above *eleven*; *Isaiah* (33:15) brings them down to the following *six*: הלך צדקות, ודבר מישרים, מאס בבצע מעשקות, נער כפיו מתמך בשחד, אטם אזנו משמע דמים, ועצם עיניו מראות ברע '(The pious man) walks in innocence, speaks the truth honestly, despises unlawful gain, withdraws his hands from bribery, closes his ear to bloodthirsty slander, [and] his eye, so as not to see evil being done.' *Micah* (6:8) teaches them to us in *three* propositions: 'To cultivate justice, to practice faithfulness and kindness, and to walk in quiet humility before your God.'" (§ 155.)

175. ***What does religion command us with regard to those who have injured us, or who in general behave as enemies toward us?***

בנפל אויבך אל תשמח ובכשלו אל יגל לבך, פן יראה ה' ורע בעיניו

"When your enemy falls, do not rejoice over it; when he stumbles, do not exult. The Eternal sees it and disapproves." (Prov. 24:17)

אם רעב שנאך האכלהו לחם ואם צמא השקהו מים כי גחלים אתה חתה על ראשו, וה' ישלם לך

"If your enemy is hungry, offer him bread; if he is thirsty, hand him water. Even if you thereby heap [p. 84] glowing coals upon his head, the Eternal will yet reward your deed." (Prov. 25:21)

כי תפגע שור איבך או חמרו תעה השב תשיבנו לו. כי תראה חמור שנאך רבץ תחת משאו וחדלת מעזב לו עזב תעזב עמו

"If you come upon the ox or the ass of the one who hates you going astray, lead it back to him. If you see the ass of your enemy collapsing under its load, take care not to leave him alone with it! Rather, help him unload it." (Exod. 23:4[–5])

לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך. הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך ולא תשא עליו חטא. לא תקם ולא תטר

"Do not hate your brother in your heart! You may reprove your neighbor when he has offended you, but do not hold the offense against him. You shall not take revenge, nor bear a grudge." (Lev. 19:17[–18])

176. ***How do our sages explain the last words of this verse?***

"If someone refused you a favor today," it says in the Talmud (Tractate *Yoma*, fol. 23), "and tomorrow asks a service of you, you must not withhold it from him on that account: *You shall not take revenge!* But neither may you say to him: 'See, I am doing you this service even though you refused me that favor yesterday.' As soon as you speak thus, you have already transgressed the commandment: 'You shall not bear a grudge.'"[81]

אל תאמר כאשר עשה לי כן אעשה לו, אשיב לאיש כפעלו

"Do not say: As he has treated me, so will I treat him in return; I will repay each according to his conduct." (Prov. 24:29)

[p. 85] **177.** ***What must we further conclude from these teachings, and acknowledge as a sacred duty?***

If religion commands us to show love, forbearance, and indulgence toward enemies who injure us personally, then all the less may we hate or injure those Israelites who commit such sins as they must answer for before God alone. For, *first*, one can easily repent of such transgressions, even in

[81] Translator: BT Yoma 23a, expounding Lev. 19:18.

secret and at any hour (§ 118 ff.). *Second*, it is not for us to take sides on God's behalf; rather, it would be culpable presumption if we wished to set ourselves up as His deputies or advocates.

הנסתרת לה' אלהינו

> "Hidden things are reserved to the Eternal our God alone." (Deut. 29:28)

אל תאמר אשלמה רע, קוה לה' וישע לך

> "But you may not say: I will repay evil; trust in the Lord, He will help you" (to lead your brother onto the path of virtue). (Prov. 20:22)

178. ***What, accordingly, is the conduct that religion prescribes for us with regard to those who transgress the laws of religion?***

Such an erring or blinded person we should seek to improve with gentleness and sparing love—by mild words as well as by our own virtuous conduct; but we should in no way injure or shame him.

הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך. יכול אתה מוכיחו ופניו משתנות? ת"ל ולא תשא עליו חטא. שכל המלבין פני חבירו אין לו חלק לעה"ב. (תלמוד. ורמב"ם ה' דעות.)

> "Seek to correct your neighbor in so gentle a manner that you do not shame him, and thereby bring a grave sin upon yourself." (§ 87.)[82]

In general, the rule applies here too [p. 86] (§ 158): והלכת בדרכיו "Walk in the ways of God!"—who indeed shows Himself long-suffering and grants grace to sinners. Moreover, unloving conduct toward the sinner—our erring brother—would only estrange him from us all the more, and make every improvement all the harder for him; and so we ourselves would, as it were, bar his way to the good, to which we ought rather to lead him back through loving treatment.

טוב וישר ה', על כן יורה חטאים בדרך

> "Good is the Eternal and upright; He shows the erring the right path." (Ps. 25:8)

Eleventh Section

Of Civic Duties

179. ***What are those duties called which, in accordance with the laws of religion, we are to observe toward the whole community of all our fellow citizens?***

They are called *civic duties*, or duties toward the state and the fatherland.

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[82] Translator: The Hebrew (BT Arakhin 16b; cf. Bava Metzia 59a; Maimonides, *Hilkhot De'ot* 6:8) reads literally: "'You shall surely reprove your neighbor'—might you reprove him even until his face changes color? Scripture says: 'and do not bear sin because of him'; for whoever shames his fellow in public has no share in the world to come." Johlson's German gives only the gist.

180. ***And in what do they chiefly consist?***

In loyalty and obedience to the laws and authorities of the land; esteem, devotion, and attachment to the sovereign; and—love of the fatherland.

181. ***Which, then, is our fatherland?***

Properly speaking, every country in which we were born, [p. 87] or where we have settled and reside, and under whose laws we find protection and security; but especially that country where we enjoy an equal share in the law and equal civil rights.

182. ***And what does religion command us in this regard?***

That we should love the country in which we live as our fatherland, and contribute with all our strength to the promotion of its prosperity as well as to the maintenance of peace and order within it; that we may not separate our private advantage and the welfare of our own family from the welfare of the great family of the state; and that we are, moreover, bound by the laws of religion and of the state to defend this our fatherland with our property, and with our blood and our life.

183. ***Must this duty be sacred to us?***

This law—and indeed the very feeling of *love for the fatherland*, which God has placed in every human heart—must be to every upright person a sacred calling and the voice of God. Hence this duty is so important to us that religion even releases every Israelite, for as long as he serves the fatherland as a soldier, from the observance of those ceremonial laws that are incompatible with military service.[83]

184. ***What did God have His prophet Jeremiah (29:5, 7) say to those Israelites who were carried off into captivity in Babylon—even though they were to remain there only seventy years?***

כה אמר ה' צבאות אלהי ישראל. בנו בתים ושבו ונטעו גנות ואכלו את פרין ודרשו את שלום העיר אשר הגליתי אתכם שמה והתפללו בעדה אל ה' כי בשלומה יהיה לכם שלום

> "Thus says the Lord of the universe, [p. 88] the Eternal, God of Israel: Build houses there and dwell in them! Plant plots of land and enjoy their fruits. Seek to promote the welfare of the state to which I have had you led; pray for it to God the Lord! For the welfare of the state must also be your welfare." (Jer. 29:5, 7)

Further, it says in the same book (40:9):

[83] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English omits the statement that religion releases Israelite soldiers from ceremonial laws incompatible with military service, substituting a general duty to join the defenders of the country.

וישבע להם גדליהו בן אחיקם לאמר אל תיראו מעבוד הכשדים שבו בארץ ועבדו את מלך בבל וייטב לכם

> "And *Gedaliah* had the children of Israel swear that they would faithfully serve the king of Babylon. 'Be confident in being subject to the Chaldeans,' he said to them; 'remain in the land, serve the king of Babylon faithfully, and it will go well with you.'" (Jer. 40:9)

185. ***To what reflections must this necessarily lead us?***

That we are still far more obliged to serve with all our strength a state that is truly our fatherland, where we enjoy equal civil rights, and whose laws must be as sacred to us as the commandments of religion.[84]

186. ***What are the precepts that the Talmud lays down for us as fundamental principles in this matter?***

דינא דמלכותא דינא

> "The laws of the land—the laws of the state—are at the same time religious laws, and fully equal to them."

מלכותא דארעא כעין מלכותא דרקיע

> "The dominion and power of kings on earth is a reflection of the dominion of God in heaven."

[p. 89]

הרוא' מלכי אומות העול' יברך: ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר חלק מכבודו לבשר ודם

> "If you see a king of another nation, pronounce the blessing: Blessed are You, Eternal, our God, King of the world, who have imparted something of Your majesty to a human being!"[85]

187. ***How does religion express itself concerning the duties incumbent upon us toward the head of the state, toward the king?***

ירא את ה' בני ומלך, עם שונים אל תתערב

> "Fear the Eternal, my son, and also the king! Do not get involved with rebels." (Prov. 24:21)

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[84]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English adds a qualification not in Johlson's text: that such laws must not restrict liberty of conscience or compel violation of the laws and ceremonies of Judaism.

[85]Translator: *Dina de-malkhuta dina*, "the law of the kingdom is law" (BT Bava Kamma 113a; Nedarim 28a; Gittin 10b; Bava Batra 54b). The second saying and the blessing (literally "...who have given of Your glory to flesh and blood") are from BT Berakhot 58a.

אני פי מלך שמר ועל דברת שבועת אלהים. אל תבהל מפניו תלך. אל תעמד בדבר רע כי כל אשר יחפץ יעשה

"I warn you: carry out the king's commands! Your prince fulfills a duty sworn before God. Do not forsake him out of rashness, and do not entangle yourself in evil schemes." (Eccl. 8:2[–3])[86]

גם במדעך מלך אל תקלל, ובחדרי משכבך אל תקלל עשיר וגו'

"Even in your thoughts do not curse a king! Even in your most secret bedchamber, do not rail against your superior." (ibid. 10:20)

הוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות. שאלמלא מוראה איש את רעהו חיים בלעו. (אבות פ"ג)

Pray diligently for the welfare of the government of the land; for through it discord is checked, and right and order are maintained in the state.[87]

188. ***Does Holy Scripture also furnish us with examples of loyalty and devotion toward kings of another religion?***

Certainly. Daniel (6:23) said to the king of Babylon:

[p. 90]

אלהי שלח מלאכה וסגר פם אריותא ולא חבלוני כל קבל די קדמוהי זכו השתכחת לי ואף קדמיך מלכא חבולה לא עבדת.

"God the Lord has sent His angel to rescue me from the jaws of the lions, because He found me innocent, and because I have always been loyal and devoted to you, my lord and king!"

Mordecai lived under the tyrannical rule of *Ahasuerus*, king of Persia, who sought to exterminate the entire people of Israel; nevertheless he at once disclosed a conspiracy that had been hatched against the life of this king by his own courtiers (Esther 2:21). For, Mordecai thought, I must always remain true to my duty; as for the rest, the king may do with us as he will:

פלגי מים לב מלך ביד ה' על כל אשר יחפץ יטנו.

"The king's heart is, after all, in the hand of the Eternal, like streams of water; He turns it wherever it pleases Him." (Prov. 21:1)

189. ***What effect must these examples have upon us?***

That we must strive all the more to prove, on every occasion, to the crowned heads under whose beneficent sceptre we have the good fortune to live as citizens and members of the state, our loyalty

[86] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English omits this quotation from Ecclesiastes.

[87] Translator: Mishnah Avot 3:2 (R. Hanina, deputy of the priests). Literally: "Pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for fear of it, people would swallow one another alive."

and attachment to their sacred persons; and, in general, to show ourselves faithful subjects through obedience and blameless conduct, as well as through the practice of every civic virtue.[88]

190. ***Do we Israelites not have, besides, special duties of gratitude towards the rulers and princes of our age?***

Yes, both we and our descendants have the most powerful motives to be grateful to the princes of our time, [p. 91] and to implore the blessing of God upon them and their beneficent rule: because they have restored us to the rights of humanity and permit us the free, undisturbed exercise of our religion and of all civic duties, by placing us on an equal footing with all other citizens of the state. They are thus our true liberators, who loosed the dishonouring bonds and tore down the dividing wall that, alas, for so long separated us from our Christian fellow brethren.

191. ***What more do these wise and beneficent governments do for us?***

Convinced that our holy religion contains nothing that would stand in contradiction to the laws of the state, they are releasing Israel from its ignominious fetters, and are taking a truly fatherly interest in the regeneration and improvement of our morals. It is therefore the sacred duty of every Israelite to support with all his strength the beneficent intentions of these exalted fathers of the land, and to follow their wise ordinances willingly and gratefully.[89]

192. ***And what do those wise governments require of us as necessary means for the improvement of our moral and civil condition?***

Nothing other than what is in complete agreement with the spirit and the will of our holy religion. We are to acquire landed property, cultivate the land ourselves, and practise useful arts and crafts.[90]

בטח בה' ועשה טוב, שכן ארץ ורעה אמונה.

> "Trust in the Lord, do good! *Stay in the land, and support yourself honestly.*" (Ps. 37:3)

עבד אדמתו ישבע לחם ומרדף ריקים חסר לב.

> "He who tills his field shall have his fill of bread; but he who chases after empty [p. 92] schemes is senseless and will in the end suffer want." (Prov. 12:11 and 28:19)

יגיע כפיך כי תאכל אשריך וטוב לך.

> "If you support yourself by the work of your hands, then happy are you! It is well with you." (Ps. 128:2)

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[88] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English replaces "the crowned heads … and their sacred persons" with the more neutral "the princes and governments, under whose protection we … live."

[89] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English expands the "ignominious fetters" into fetters "with which ages of superstition and barbarism had loaded them."

[90] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English greatly expands this answer (on religion's fitness to form a race of agriculturists and on gratitude to those who share their liberty with the Jews) and adds a long note of his own on the American situation; none of this is in Johlson.

193. ***Is there any craft that is forbidden to us by a law of religion?***

No, there is none. Religion rather makes it the duty of every father to have his son taught some craft or useful art. "And," the Talmud adds,

כל שאין מלמדו אומנות כאלו מלמדו לסטות.

> "whoever neglects this, it is as though he were training his child for highway robbery."[91] (Tract. *Kiddushin* 30)

194. ***Have our teachers themselves also given us examples in this?***

Certainly; work in the fields was always the favourite occupation of our forefathers, and most of the Talmudists were themselves craftsmen. Indeed, they even made it a point of honour to be named after the craft they practised; for example, Rabbi *Johanan* the Shoemaker, Rabbi *Joseph* the Carpenter, Rabbi *Judah* the Smith, Rabbi *Simeon* the Weaver, and many more of the kind.[92] They used to carry their tools about in public and to exclaim:

גדולה המלאכה שמכבדת את בעליה.

> "Every craft you must hold in honour! It honours the master."[93]

195. ***With what disposition should one work?***

With trust in God; without restlessness or anxious cares; and in the pious hope that God may grant blessing and prosperity to our work from on high.

גל אל ה' מעשיך ויכנו מחשבתיך.

> "Commit your affairs to the Eternal, and your plans will succeed." (Prov. 16:3)

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[91] "Is it not enough, then," objected one Talmudist, "if he teaches his son *trade*?" No! replied Rabbi *Judah*: trade requires money and luck; these could fail him, and so he would in the end take to stealing and cheating. [Translator: BT Kiddushin 29a–30b.]

[92] Translator: Rabbi Yohanan ha-Sandlar ("the sandal-maker") appears in Avot 4:11; the other epithets follow the Talmudic tradition of sages known by their trades. Leeser's English gives the smith as "Jehoshua."

[93] Talmudic literature contains a great many such rules of life, exhortations to a useful industriousness and to keeping away from a condition more speculative than active. "Love work!" say those sages, "and hate putting on airs." (אבות פ' א' [Avot, ch. 1]) "Flay a carcass in the street, take your earned wage for it, and do not say: I come of too distinguished a family, etc.; only do not make yourself dependent on the charity of your neighbour." (פסחים קיג [Pesahim 113]) "Live on the Sabbath as meanly and simply as on all other days, so as not to need people's gifts," and much more. Indeed, they even exempted the working man, the day labourer, etc., from burdensome religious exercises, from long prayers and the like, so that he should not neglect his work or shortchange his employer in anything. [Translator: the first saying is Shemaiah's in Avot 1:10; the third is found at BT Pesahim 112a and 113a.]

Twelfth Section

Means to Piety

196. ***What must one do in order to grow daily in virtue?***

One must often take to heart virtue's indispensable necessity and [p. 94] its consequences; seek and love the company of virtuous and good people; read the word of God in Holy Scripture diligently and attentively; and finally implore God devoutly for grace and help — *pray*.

197. ***What, then, does praying properly mean?***

When we lift our thoughts to God; when we lay our wishes and requests, for ourselves or for others, before Him; or when we direct our joy and our thanks to Him, the Author of all good — then we *pray*.

198. ***What qualities must prayer have?***

A true prayer must be devout, humble, and earnest from the whole heart.

זבחי אלהים רוח נשברה לב נשבר ונדכה אלהים לא תבזה.

> "The sacrifice that pleases You is a broken spirit; a humble, bowed heart You will not despise, O God!" (Ps. 51:19)

199. ***What may we expect from such a sincere prayer?***

That the All-Good will graciously grant us *what* we ask of Him, if, according to His wisdom, it is truly good, wholesome and useful for us —

קרוב ה' לכל קראיו לכל אשר יקראהו באמת. רצון יראיו יעשה ואת שועתם ישמע ויושיעם.

> "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him sincerely; He does what pleases those who fear God; He hears their supplication and helps them." (Ps. 145:18[–19])

200. ***Does prayer in itself not already bring us great benefit?***

Yes indeed; a devout turning of our thoughts [p. 95] to God elevates our soul, makes us content with the will of providence, magnanimous and just towards others, and strengthens us for the fulfilment of our duties.

201. ***Make it clear to me how praying in itself can already be useful to us.***

If we bring wishes before God, we thereby learn to test our wishes, whether they are just and of a pure kind. If we find ourselves in difficulty and beg God's help and mighty assistance, we learn at the same time to examine whether we have not put ourselves into this difficulty, and whether we cannot apply our own powers to extricate ourselves from it. If we pray for others, our soul becomes

sympathetic and inclines towards beneficence. And finally, in the prayer of thanksgiving we experience the good once more in its purest form, by tracing it back to the source of all good.[94]

202. ***Is the rocking and loud shouting during prayer that is still customary in some places a praiseworthy practice, and worthy of imitation?***

No; it is rather behaviour unworthy of a rational person, which disturbs the calm required for devotion, and is thus entirely contrary to the rules that our sages laid down for us concerning conduct during prayers.

203. ***And what do these rules say?***

תפלה צריכה כונת הלב.

> "Prayer must be performed with the collection of [p. 96] all our thoughts — devoutly."

תפלה בלא כונה כגוף בלא נשמה.

> "A thoughtless prayer is like a body without a soul."[95]

ויפנה את לבו מכל המחשבות ויראה עצמו כאלו הוא עומד לפני השכינה. כעבד העומד לפני רבו וגו'. הכון לקראת אלהיך ישראל."

> "Therefore one should carefully refrain from all distractions, picture to oneself the majesty of God as present, and in general maintain a reverent posture, as befits a servant when he stands before his master …" (רמב"ם הלכות תפלה [Maimonides, Laws of Prayer])

So too says the prophet (Amos 4:12): Prepare yourself, O Israel, before your God, etc.

So as not to disturb either ourselves or others, we must therefore follow the example of the pious *Hannah* (1 Sam. 1:13):

וחנה היא מדברת על לבה רק שפתיה נעות וקולה לא ישמע.

> "She spoke to herself alone, so that her lips indeed moved, but her voice was not audible."

204. ***Should we also pray for others?***

Yes, this is everyone's duty; and our scholars say:

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[94] For "to pray" the Hebrew says התפלל, properly the reflexive of פלל, "to judge, to examine": thus — to examine oneself. Prayer, תפלה: self-examination.

[95] How greatly our sages regarded the collection of one's thoughts — devotion — as the first and most necessary requirement for prayer, they showed among other things by the *short* prayer formulas that they prescribe for one who is on the water, in a dangerous place, or otherwise in a situation that makes long praying and reflection impossible for him (Talmud *Berakhot* fol. 29). Of these *Maimonides* cites only the following: צרכי עמך ישראל מרובים ודעתם קצרה. יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתתן לכל אחד ואחד כדי פרנסתו ולכל גויה וגויה די מחסורה והטוב בעיניך עשה. ברוך אתה ה' שומע תפלה. "The needs of Your people are many and great, but their understanding short and limited. — May it be pleasing to You, O Eternal our God, to give each one his sustenance and what he needs for body and soul. For the rest, deal with us as pleases Your wisdom; Your will be done! Blessed are You, Eternal, who hears prayer!"

כל המתפלל על חברו והוא צריך לאותו דבר הוא נענה תחלה.

> "Whoever prays for his neighbour, his prayer is especially pleasing to the Eternal, and he himself will be helped all the sooner when he is in need."[96]

205. ***Does Holy Scripture set forth examples of this?***

Yes, a great many. — When God said to Moses:

ועתה הניחה לי ואכלם ואעשה אותך לגוי גדול. ויחל משה את פני ה' אלהיו וגו'.

> "Now leave off praying for them; I will destroy them, and make you into a great nation. Then Moses entreated the Eternal, etc." (Exod. 32:10[–11])

And so too did *Jeremiah* and all the prophets.

206. ***And also for other peoples?***

When King Solomon dedicated the Temple, he fervently prayed that God, in His all-goodness, might graciously receive the prayers of other nations as well, hear their supplication, and help them in their need (1 Kings 8:41 and 2 Chron. 6:32). When Abraham was informed of the imminent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, heavily burdened with sins, he sought by his intercession to avert the punishment wholly or at least in part (Gen. 18:23 to 33).

הנה נא הואלתי לדבר אל ה' ואנכי עפר ואפר.

> "Behold, I have now ventured to make representations to my Lord, although I am but dust and ashes."

[p. 98] **207.** ***Should we also pray for our enemies?***

Certainly; it is even our duty to say every day, on rising, before going to sleep, and before performing the prayers:

הריני מוכן ומזומן לקים מצות ואהבת לרעך כמוך. שרא ליה מרא למאן דמצער לי.

> "I am ready to fulfil the commandment of love of neighbour with all my heart; I forgive all my enemies. May You, O God, forgive them too."[97]

And David said (Ps. 35):

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[96] Translator: BT Bava Kamma 92a (there: כל המבקש רחמים על חבירו).

[97] Translator: The Aramaic formula ("May the Lord forgive whoever vexes me") derives from Mar Zutra's bedtime prayer, BT Megillah 28a.

ואני בחלותם לבושי שק עניתי בצום נפשי ותפלתי על חיקי תשוב. כרע כאח לי.

"When my enemies suffer, I wrap myself in sackcloth; I waste myself away with fasting, and sink my prayer into my bosom, as though they were friend and brother to me." [(Ps. 35:13–14)]

208. ***What did Solomon ask of God the Lord?***

ונתת לעבדך לב שמע ... להבין בין טוב לרע ... חכמה ומדע תן לי.

"Give, O Lord, oh give Your servant an attentive, willing heart! Give me wisdom and knowledge! Understanding and insight, to distinguish good from evil." (2 Kings 3:9 and 2 Chron. 1:10)[98]

שתים שאלתי מאתך אל תמנע ממני בטרם אמות. שוא ודבר כזב הרחק ממני ראש ועשר אל תתן לי הטריפני לחם חקי.

"Two things more I ask of You; do not deny them to me as long as I live: remove vain delusion and folly far from me! Let neither riches nor poverty be my lot; grant me only my modest livelihood." (Prov. 30:7[–8])

209. ***What must this model of a wise prayer teach us?***

[p. 99] That the goods of the soul must be our chief concern, the foremost object of our wishes. With temporal goods we should content ourselves with what is most necessary, and not burden our heart with needless cares. In this spirit Jacob too prayed (Gen. 28:20):

ושמרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך ונתן לי לחם לאכל ובגד ללבש.

"May God protect me on this way, and give me only bread to eat and clothing to wear!"

210. ***And how did David pray to God?***

ה' חקרתני ותדע. אתה ידעת שבתי וקומי בנתה לרעי מרחוק. ארחי ורבעי זרית וכל דרכי הסכנתה. כי אין מלה בלשוני הן ה' ידעת כלה ... אנה אלך מרוחך ואנה מפניך אברח. אם אסק שמים שם אתה ואציעה שאול הנך. אשא כנפי שחר אשכנה באחרית ים. גם שם ידך תנחני ותאחזני ימינך. ואמר אך חשך ישופני ולילה אור בעדני. גם חשך לא יחשיך ממך ולילה כיום יאיר כחשיכה כאורה ...

Lord! You search me out, and You know:
Whether I sit or rise, to You it is known;
You test from afar what I think;
You have measured out my walking and my lying down,
And guided all my ways.
Before a word hovers upon my tongue,

[98] Translator: Printed "2. König 3, 9"; read 1 Kings 3:9. The Hebrew combines 1 Kings 3:9 with 2 Chron. 1:10.

You, Lord, have already known it wholly.
Where shall I go from Your spirit?
Where flee from Your presence?
Were I to climb up to the heavens, You are there;
And were I to make my bed in the underworld, I would find You.
Were I to take the wings of the dawn,
To rest at the farthest end of the sea,
Your hand would lead me there too;
There too Your right hand would grasp me.
And were I to say: Let darkness cover me!
Then even the night about me would turn to light.
Darkness obscures nothing from You;
Night shines like the day,
And light and dark are alike to You.
(Ps. 139)

[p. 100]

לב טהור ברא לי אלהים ורוח נכון חדש בקרבי. אל תשליכני מלפניך ורוח קדשך אל תקח ממני. השיבה לי ששון ישעך ורוח נדיבה תסמכני.

Create, O God, a pure heart in me!
And give me a new, upright spirit!
Do not cast me away from Your presence;
Do not withdraw Your holy spirit from me!
Give me back the joy of Your salvation,
Let the spirit of magnanimity sustain me!
(Ps. 51)

כי גדול אתה ועשה נפלאות אתה אלהים לבדך. הורני ה' דרכך אהלך באמתך יחד לבבי ליראה שמך. אודך ה' אלהי בכל לבבי ואכבדה שמך לעולם.

For You are great and do wonders;
You alone, the only one, O God!
Teach me, O Eternal, Your ways!
Let me walk in Your truth,
And let my heart devote itself
Solely to the reverence of Your name;
That, God, my Lord, my whole heart
May thank You, and honour Your name forever.
(Ps. 86:10 ff.)

[p. —] # Appendix[99]

Some Remarks on the Ceremonial Laws and Customs

1.

The six hundred and thirteen laws (365 prohibitions and 248 commandments) which, in the opinion of our most eminent scholars of Scripture,[100] are contained in the five books of Moses, may appropriately be arranged in three classes. They are namely:

1) *Moral laws*, i.e., precepts for morality, for right conduct towards God and men;

2) *Local and police laws*, which relate to the circumstances of that time in the land in which the Israelites [p. 102] once formed a state of their own (to which also belong each and every kind of penal law); and finally:

3) *Ceremonial laws*, or rules and ordinances concerning outward worship, the cult, whose purpose is to keep the belief in the eternal, one God, and the remembrance of His benefits, ever alive in us.

2.

Since the dissolution of the Jewish state, however, not only all the laws of the second kind, but also most of those of the third kind (of the ceremonial laws) have become inapplicable. To these belong, for example, the laws of sacrifice, the Temple, the priests and purification, which (apart from a very few) are now all out of force and effect. In this way the total number of laws still in use is reduced to 369.[101]

3.

Among these, however, there are again 99 — namely 78 commandments and 21 prohibitions — that are only accidental or conditional, i.e., whose application depends first on certain circumstances and cases which never arise for some people. Whoever, for example, keeps no labourers is affected neither by the commandment (Deut. 24:14[–15]): "To the poor day labourer — be he of your brethren or a stranger — you shall give his wage on the same day, and not let the sun go down upon it!" nor by the prohibition (Lev. 19:13): "You shall not keep the day labourer's wage with you overnight until morning!" [p. 103] and many more of the kind. — Of absolute positive laws, accordingly, there remain only 270; or 48 commandments and 222 prohibitions.[102]

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[99] See the Preface on this.

[100] דרש ר' שמלאי, תרי"ג מצות נאמרו לו למשה בסיני. שס"ה לאוין כמנין ימות החמה רמ"ח עשה כמנין איבריו של אדם. (Talmud, Tractate *Makkot* fol. 23, 2 [i.e., 23b]) Rabbi *Simlai* once opened his discourse as follows: 365 are the days in a solar year, and just as many *prohibitions* were given to Moses on Sinai; 248 limbs does a man count in his body, and so many are the *commandments* that were given to Moses. So that every day and every limb may remind you of a law of God!

[101] Translator: Leeser's 1830 English adds an explanation that these laws lapsed because they were bound up with the Temple in Jerusalem.

[102] From the preface to the justly esteemed and commendable ספר החינוך [*Sefer ha-Hinnukh*].

4.

The female sex is exempted from many ceremonial laws, namely from observing most of those *commandments* that are not to be performed at any and every time of day and year, but are restricted to a particular point in time:

מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא נשים פטורות מהן. ברכ' כ'. [Positive commandments that depend on a fixed time — women are exempt from them. *Berakhot* 20.]

Thus, for example, they are affected neither by the commandment of the fringes nor by that of the phylacteries (because these do not apply after sunset), still less by the commandments

ישיבת סוכה ונטילת לולב [dwelling in the sukkah and taking the lulav]

of the Feast of Tabernacles and of the festive bouquet with which the celebration of this day is observed in the synagogue; and many more of the kind.[103]

5.

Besides the *Mosaic* laws still in use, there are also a number of *Rabbinic* precepts (מצות דרבנן), which all of us, *without distinction of sex*, are to observe. Such as, for example, the commandment of washing the hands, and of the blessings *before* every enjoyment. (The prayer of thanksgiving *after* the meal is a *Mosaic* ordinance.) The lighting of candles at the onset of Sabbaths and festivals; the reading of the Book of *Esther* at the feast of Purim; the lighting of the lights during the eight days of Dedication (נר חנוכה); the singing, ordained for the joyful festivals, of certain songs of praise and thanksgiving from the Psalms of David (קריאת ההלל), and more of the kind.

[p. 104] **6.**

If it is already in keeping — say our sages — both with the natural feeling of gratitude and with the divine law that we should thank God for every enjoyment whose only purpose is the strengthening of our bodily powers, then we must surely do this also at an enjoyment of the soul; that is, in observing those commandments whose aim is the welfare and perfection of our soul. Therefore we have not only prayers of thanksgiving, or *blessings*, *before* and *after* enjoyment,[104]

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[103]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English adds a parenthesis that a woman who has once accustomed herself to an optional commandment is thereafter bound to keep it.

[104]For example, before eating bread of rye, wheat, etc.: "Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Lord of the world, who brings forth bread from the earth." Over all kinds of pastry: "Blessed are You, Eternal … who created various kinds of food." Before drinking wine: "Blessed … who created the fruit of the vine." Over all fruits that grow on trees: "Blessed … who creates the fruit of the tree." Over all produce of the ground and of shrubs: "Blessed … who creates the fruit of the earth." Over meat, eggs, cheese, etc., as well as over all beverages (except wine): "Blessed … by whose word all things came into being." After eating the last-mentioned foods and drinks: "Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Lord of the world! You created many beings with needs which make them dependent on other created things; thereby the being of all living things is sustained. Blessed be the Ever-Enduring!" On enjoying the fragrance of herbs: "Blessed … who creates fragrant herbs." On the fragrance of things that do not grow from the earth: "Blessed … who creates various kinds of fragrance!" On seeing a rainbow: "Blessed … who remembers Your covenant, remains faithful to it, and keeps Your promise." On seeing trees in blossom: "Blessed … who has let nothing be lacking in the world, and has created in it such beautiful creatures and lovely trees for the enjoyment of mankind." Over lightning and sheet

but also [p. 105] before the performance of every ceremonial commandment. For example: "Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Lord of the world, who has sanctified us by Your commandments, and commanded us the commandment of the fringes."

"Blessed are You, Eternal — — and commanded us to put on the phylacteries."

"Blessed are You — — — and commanded us to occupy ourselves with the study of the Law." And so with each and every commandment.

Since, now, religion obliges us (as may be seen from § 112) to follow the precepts of our sages as well, we also pronounce, before the performance of each of the 7 chief commandments of the Rabbis (שבע מצות דרבנן), the very same formula of thanksgiving as before the Mosaic commandments. For example: "Blessed are You, Eternal — who has sanctified us by Your commandments, and commanded us to kindle the light of Dedication (נר חנכה)." — "Blessed — — and commanded us the reading of the Scroll (of the Book of *Esther*)." And so too with the others.

[p. 106] **7.**

Nevertheless, every Israelite ought to know, or to find out, when performing a commandment, whether it is Mosaic or Rabbinic; for error and ignorance in this regard entail gross abuses and often very harmful consequences. — The ceremonial laws still in use, which one finds recorded in the book שלחן ערוך (mentioned in § 109), especially in its first and second parts (ארח חיים and יורה דעה), are namely of *three* kinds: 1.) מצות דאורייתא, *Mosaic* commandments; 2.) מצות דרבנן, *Rabbinic* precepts; 3.) מנהגים, *customs*.

These last, however, are in turn very diverse; many among them are merely local customs, usual only in some places or regions, and many others are of the kind called מנהג חסידות or מדות חסידות, i.e., customs arising from special piety, or the habit of certain pious men. — Such as, for example, the custom of abstaining from all wine and meat dishes in the last 13 days of the month of תמוז [Tammuz]; or, during these days and until after the 9th day of the month of אב [Av] (which period is called בין המצרים [*Bein ha-Metzarim*, "between the straits"]), of neither eating any *new* fruit nor putting on a *new* garment, so as not to have to pronounce the blessing (שהחיינו) mentioned last in the note above. — The custom of fasting on the 29th of every month (ערב ר"ח [the eve of the New Moon]) and saying special penitential prayers, or, as people say, keeping a Day of Atonement in miniature (יום כפור קטן). — Of using on the Sabbath day absolutely no language other than Hebrew

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lightning, etc.: "Blessed … who continually works the work of creation." At thunderstorms and unusual storms: "Blessed … whose power and might fill the whole world." On receiving bad news: "Blessed … You are a faithful, all-righteous Judge!" On learning good news: "Blessed are You, Eternal … all-good Benefactor!" At every first sensory enjoyment of new things: "Blessed … that You have kept us alive and in well-being, and let us reach this season."

alone. — And to this *class* (מדות חסידות)[105] the scholars רש"ל, דרכי משה [p. 107] and מגן אברהם (סי' צא)[106] also reckon the custom of keeping the head covered outside the synagogue.[107]

8.

What our sages particularly recommend to us is *cleanliness*.

נקיות מביאה לידי טהרה טהרה מביאה לידי פרישות ופרישות מביאה לידי קדושה.

> This, they say, leads to purity of morals, and finally to true piety.

Therefore they made it a law for us to wash our hands well every time on rising, before performing prayer, and before eating. And for this salutary ordinance itself we thank God in a special formula of prayer: "Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Lord of the world, who has sanctified us by Your commandments, and commanded us to wash the hands."

9.

But since, immediately upon waking, we are to direct our first thoughts to God and His benefits, and yet may pronounce the name of God only after washing [p. 108] the hands, we therefore have for this purpose another short prayer formula in which, without mentioning the holy Name, we acknowledge God's first kindness immediately upon waking, with the words:

מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקים, שהחזרתי בי נשמתי בחמלה רבה אמונתך.

> "I thank Thee, ever-living, everlasting King, that Thou dost once again grant me, through Thy great grace and faithfulness, the use of the powers of my soul."

10. When we put on that garment (ארבע כנפות [*arba kanfot*, "four corners"]) to which the fringes prescribed by the law (ציצת [*tsitsit*]) are attached (Num. 15:37 and Deut. 22:12), a prayer of thanksgiving is likewise spoken: "Blessed etc. — who hast sanctified us through Thy laws and hast prescribed to us the commandment concerning the fringes" (וצונו על מצות ציצת). On putting on the so-called prayer shawl (טלית [*tallit*]), however, the last words of this formula of blessing run: (וצונו להתעטף בציצת) "who hast sanctified us and commanded us *to wrap ourselves in the fringed shawl*."

These fringes are to be regarded as signs of remembrance and reminders, by which we are constantly put in mind of God's commandments, as it is written:

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[105]Translator: Printed מדות הסידה, a misprint for מדות חסידות.

[106]Translator: *Darkhei Moshe* (Moses Isserles), Rashal (Solomon Luria), and *Magen Avraham* (Abraham Gombiner) on Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim § 91.

[107]In mentioning this oriental custom of keeping the head covered in the houses of prayer as well, the *Midrash* says: אמר ליה הקב"ה לישראל הרי לא הטרחתי עליכם לקרות פרועי ראש וכו'. "See now," God says to the Israelites (how little slavish service I require of you), "I did not even wish to put you to the trouble of baring your heads while you read the *Shema* and acknowledge Me as Lord and King over you."

והיה לכם לציצת וראיתם אתו וזכרתם את כל מצות ה' ועשיתם אתם ולא תתרו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם אשר אתם זנים אחריהם. למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצותי והייתם קדשים לאלהיכם.

> "These fringes shall serve you to this end, that you see them and remember all the commandments of the Eternal and keep them, and do not follow after your heart and your eyes, which lead you astray. Thereby you shall remember My commandments, keep them, and be holy unto your God." (Num. 15:39)[108]

[p. 109] **11.** As soon as the boy has completed his thirteenth year and now has understanding enough to keep his thoughts, as well as his body and clothing, clean, he puts on every day — except on Sabbaths and festivals — the phylacteries (תפלין [*tefillin*]). These consist of two cube-shaped capsules made of parchment, in which are contained the four chapters from the Pentateuch given below,[109] written on parchment. To these capsules, of which one is placed [p. 110] on the upper part of the left arm and the second before the forehead, straps are attached; the latter closes around the head and hangs down on both sides about the neck, while the *former* is wound seven times around the left arm and three times around the middle finger.

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[108]Translator: The passage quoted runs through Num. 15:40.

[109]שמע "Hear, O Israel! The Eternal our God is a single, eternal Being. Thou shalt love the Eternal thy God with all thy heart, all thy soul and all thy might. The words that I now command thee shall remain ever in thy heart. Thou shalt impress them upon thy children and speak of them always: when thou sittest at home or art on a journey, when thou liest down and when thou risest up. Bind them as a sign upon thy hand; wear them as a frontlet between thine eyes. And write them upon the doorposts of thy house and upon thy gates." (Deut. 6:4–9.) והיה "If, then, you obey My commandments which I now give you — to love the Eternal your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to serve Him — then I will give your land rain in due season, the early rain and the late rain, that thou mayest gather in thy grain, wine and oil. And I will make grass grow in thy field for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat in abundance. But beware lest your heart be led astray, so that you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them. The anger of the Eternal would be kindled against you; He would shut up the heavens so that no rain should come, the earth would not bring forth its produce, and you would very soon perish, far from the excellent land which the Eternal will give you. Take these words, therefore, to heart and to mind; bind them as a sign upon your hand and wear them as a frontlet between your eyes. Teach them to your sons, so as to speak of them constantly: when thou sittest at home or art on a journey, when thou liest down and when thou risest up. Write them upon the doorposts of thy house and upon thy gates. That you and your children may remain long years upon the soil which the Eternal swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens shall be above the earth." (Ibid. 11:13–21.) קדש "Sanctify unto Me every firstborn, whatever first comes forth from the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast; it is Mine. Moses said to the people: Remember this day on which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage! For with strength of hand the Eternal has led you out from here. Nothing leavened shall be eaten. Today you go forth, in the month of the ripening ears. When, then, the Eternal brings thee into the land of the people of the Canaanite, Hittite, Amorite, Hivite and Jebusite, which He swore to thy forefathers to give thee — a land where milk and honey flow — thou shalt keep this service in this month: seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival in honour of the Eternal. Unleavened bread shall be eaten the whole seven days; and no leavened bread shall be seen, nor shall any leaven be seen in all thy borders. To thy son thou shalt then say: This is done because of what the Eternal did for me when I went out of Egypt. This shall serve thee as a sign upon thy hand and as a reminder between thine eyes, that the teaching of the Eternal may remain in your mouth (that is, may be continually handed down): that the Eternal led thee out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Observe this ordinance, therefore, at its season, from year to year." (Exod. 13 [Translator: 13:1–10].) והיה כי יביאך "When, then, the Eternal brings thee into the land of Canaan, which He swore to thee and thy forefathers, and gives it to thee, thou shalt set apart for the Eternal whatever first comes forth from the womb: namely, every male that is first born of thy cattle shall be consecrated to the Eternal. Every firstborn of the ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; but if thou dost not redeem it, thou must break its neck. And every firstborn of man among thy children thou shalt redeem. When, then, thy son shall one day ask thee: What does this mean? say to him: With a mighty hand the Eternal brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. When Pharaoh so stubbornly refused to let us go, the Eternal slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of man to the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice in honour of the Eternal every male that has first come forth from the womb, and every firstborn of my children I redeem. This shall serve thee as a sign upon thy hand and as a frontlet between thine eyes: that the Eternal led us out of Egypt with a mighty hand." (Ibid. [Translator: Exod. 13:11–16].)

Before putting on these phylacteries one is accustomed to say the preparatory prayer:

לשם יחוד קב"ה ושכינתיה בדחילו ורחימו, בשם כל ישרא', וגו'.

which in translation runs thus:

"Out of reverence and love for God, the One Alone, [p. 111] Eternal and Most Holy, and in the name of the whole house of Israel, I am ready in body and soul to put on the phylacteries, with the intention of fulfilling the commandment of my Creator as it stands in the Book of the Law: 'Thou shalt bind them upon thy hand, and they shall be to thee as a frontlet between thine eyes.' [p. 112] These phylacteries contain the *four* sections which begin with the words: '*Hear, O Israel — If thou wilt obey — Sanctify! — When He shall bring thee*' — because in them mention is made both of the unity of God and of the great wonders that took place when He led us out of Egypt. For His is the dominion, in heaven as on earth, to act everywhere according to His good pleasure. In accordance with the divine command I place these phylacteries upon the arm, and think thereby of the word: 'With an outstretched *arm* the Eternal led thee out of Egypt!' And upon this very spot, opposite the *heart*, because I hereby subordinate all the desires and wishes of my heart to the holy will of God. The phylacteries of the head I fasten where the brain lies, where the organs of the higher powers of the soul meet together: in order likewise to signify that I dedicate my senses and thoughts, all of them, to the service of the Eternal.

"Through the performance of this commandment may God grant me the strength to keep my thoughts ever pure and my heart in innocence, so that no evil desire may ever master it or lead me astray. So that I may always, as I heartily wish, live according to the precepts of God. Amen."

The further verses and benedictions belonging here are, like all the daily prayers, to be found in any prayer book.

12. But among these, special note should be taken of:

קריאת שמע [*the reading of the Shema*] and תפלת שמנה עשרה [*the prayer of the Eighteen*]

The *reading of the Shema* is reckoned among the *Mosaic* commandments. Every *morning* and every *evening*, namely, the [p. 113] above-mentioned sections שמע ישרא' and והיה אם שמוע, together with the last five verses of the 15th chapter of the 4th Book of Moses [Numbers] (containing the commandment of the fringes), are to be read with the greatest possible devotion, either in Hebrew or *in any other language*; only one must take care to be exactly correct in the language used.

קורא אדם את שמע בכל לשון שיהיה מבינה. ויזהר מדברי שבוש שבאותה הלשון. וידקדק בה כמו שמדקדק בלשון הקדש. רמב"ם פ"ב מהלכ' ק"ש. וש"ע א"ח סי' ס"ב. (ועמש"כ מגן אברהם שם).

> "A person may recite the Shema in any language he understands; but he must guard against corrupt expressions in that language and be as exact in it as he would be in the holy tongue."

(Maimonides, *Hilkhot Keri'at Shema* 2; *Shulḥan ʿArukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* §62; and see what the *Magen Avraham* writes there)[110]

This *reading of the Shema* is regarded by the rabbis as our confession of faith; they call it קבלת עול מלכות שמים: acknowledgment of the kingdom of God, i.e. doing Him homage and submitting oneself to His guidance and His laws; and they make it a chief condition that one *understand* well what one says.[111]

13. The שמנה עשרה (18 benedictions) prayer is a rabbinic ordinance. *Maimonides* (פ"א מהלכו' תפל') says the following about it: The Jewish people that returned from the Babylonian captivity (about the year of the world 3410) had so corrupted its language among the Persians, Greeks and other peoples that they were able to express themselves in *none* of them either clearly or correctly and precisely — as Nehemiah also complained of it (13:24): "Their children speak half Ashdodite; they understand neither the Jewish language nor any of the languages of the other nations; I rebuked them for it." — Therefore these prayer formulas were composed for them by Ezra and his college (before this point they had no fixed prayers at all), which contain, in compressed brevity, thanksgivings and petitions for the most important [p. 114] needs, so that they might at least present their chief concerns in a pure and refined language. The *three* first divisions contain praise of God; the rest are petitions for health, sustenance, peace, and so on.

14. In accordance with the well-known verse (Ps. 55:18):

ערב ובקר וצהרים אשיחה ואהמה וישמע קולי.

"Evening, morning and noon I lament and wail, and He hears my voice,"

this prayer is said *three times* daily, namely as the (שחרית) morning, (מנחה) vesper and (ערבית) evening prayer. These times of day were also chosen especially because it was just then that the sacrificial service took place in the Temple, and the prayers are now to take its place, according to the saying of the prophet (Hos. 14:3):

ונשלמה פרים שפתינו.

"With our lips (i.e. with our prayers) we will make good the bullocks (the sacrifices)."

Hence also the מוסף (extraordinary, or additional) prayer for Sabbaths, festivals and New Moons; because on these days, besides the daily regular offering (מלבד עולת התמיד ומנחתה), a special sacrifice was also offered, as is described in detail in the 28th and 29th chapters of the 4th Book of Moses [Numbers].

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[110]Translator: The Hebrew is printed without a German rendering; the English is the translator's.

[111]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English adds here a paragraph not in the 1814 text, urging that since Hebrew is the established language of worship one should acquire enough of it, where possible, to pray in it.

15. What was said above about the *reading of the Shema*, that it may be done in any language one pleases, holds also both for this prayer and for all other prayers and benedictions; and the Talmud teaches expressly in many places, (יוכל להתפלל בכל לשון שירצה (ש"ע א"ח סי' ק"ב [one may pray in any language one wishes (*Shulḥan ʿArukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* §102)], that he who understands no Hebrew [p. 115] does better to pray in another language that he understands: מוטב להתפלל בלשון שמבין אם אינו מבין לה"ק. (מגן אברהם שם, וסי' ס"ב). [it is better to pray in a language one understands if one does not understand the holy tongue (*Magen Avraham* there, and §62)].[112]

16. Three times a week, namely on Monday, Thursday and Saturday, there is reading from the scroll of the Law (ספר תורה). For this purpose the Pentateuch was divided into 54 readings (סדרות [*sedarot*]), and each of these again into 7 sections (פרשות [*parashiyyot*]). On the Sabbath, in the *morning*, a whole סדרה is read (which is indicated in the Jewish calendar); but at the *vesper prayer*, as on Monday and Thursday mornings, only the first פרשה of the following סדרה, that of the next Sabbath. The readings for festivals and New Moons consist of those passages of the Pentateuch which relate to the particular celebration of the day and to the sacrifices offered on it, and which therefore belong by their content to the order of the day.

The number of men to be called up to these readings (קרואים) is fixed as follows: on Monday, Thursday and Saturday afternoon, as also on Purim and the days of Dedication [Hanukkah], *three*; on New Moons and half-holidays, *four*; on the high festivals, *five*; on the Day of Atonement, *six*; and on an ordinary Saturday, *seven* — besides the one (מפטיר) who reads a chapter from the Prophets *in conclusion* (הפטרה), the content of which usually stands in some connection with the order of the day. All the other listeners who do not know the passages read by heart should follow them very quietly in a printed Bible; and formerly [p. 116] the *translation* was also delivered aloud and distinctly by another person after each verse — a custom that surely deserves, more than any other, to be reintroduced.

17. Concerning the Jewish *reckoning of time*, the following is to be noted.

We count from the creation of the world, and begin the year in *September*. (Thus, for example, from 25 September 1813 to 14 September 1814 we have the year of the world 5574.) An ordinary year (שנה פשוטה) has *twelve* months, each of which begins with the *new light* and numbers either 29 or 30 days. The 30th day of a month, however, is also kept in the synagogue as a New Moon day, so that *two* New Moon days are reckoned to the month immediately following. For properly there is from one new light to the next only a period of 29 days, 12 hours and 793 parts (of which 1080 go to an hour). But twelve such months make only a *lunar year* of about 354 days, which thus contains more than 11 days less than a solar year. In order, then, to stay close to the solar year

[112]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English adds a parenthesis not in the 1814 text, noting that prayers intended for women have always been composed in the vernacular.

— so that the Passover festival, in accordance with the precept of the Bible, may always be celebrated in the first *month of spring*[113] — in 2 or 3 [p. 117] years a further month of 29 days is intercalated (before the Passover month), which is called ואדר or אדר שני. Such a year of 13 months is then called a *leap year* (שנה מעוברת); and in a period of nineteen years (מחזור) there are always seven such leap years.

18. We have no proper names for the days of the week; for Sunday, Monday, etc. we say simply the *first*, the *second*, the *third* day of the week. And before the Babylonian captivity the same was true of the *months*; for we find only very few of them called by particular names before that time. Otherwise one always said the first, second, third month, etc. Now, in order to distinguish especially the month in which the Israelites went out of Egypt, and thereby to perpetuate the memory of that remarkable event in every way, this month is counted as the first among the months,[114] although the year itself properly begins only in autumn, as appears clearly enough from several passages (especially Exod. 23:16 and 34:22). Others are of the opinion that we had a twofold reckoning of time: with autumn, namely, the *civil* year began (i.e. for all matters arising in civil life); but the ecclesiastical [p. 118] year, or insofar as it concerns worship and the ceremonial laws, we counted from spring.

19. Here now follow the months according to their present names and as they are ordered in Holy Scripture, together with the festivals and other days to be noted in each of them.

ניסן [Nisan] (in the earlier writings חדש האביב, month of ripening ears) has always 30 days (roughly from 20 March to 18 April). It is indeed the 7th month in the year and the 8th in a leap year, but for the reason given above it is called the *first* in rank. On the 14th of this month (ערב פסח) all leavened bread, and whatever belongs to it or is made from it, must be removed from the house; and on the evening of that day our *Passover* begins, or חג המצות, the festival of unleavened cakes, which lasts with us *eight* days, during which nothing leavened made of wheat, rye, barley, spelt or oats may be eaten.

In the times of the Temple, on this (14th) day, in the afternoon, amid songs of thanksgiving and joy, the Passover lamb — קרבן פסח, the offering of passing-over or of sparing — was slaughtered, and it had to be eaten entirely in each family that same evening. And it is still the custom throughout Israel that on this night every father of a household relates the story of the deliverance

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[113] שמור את חדש האביב ועשית פסח לה' אלהיך כי בחדש האביב הוציאך ה' אלהיך ממצרים לילה. "Observe the month of ripening ears, that thou offer in it the Passover sacrifice in honour of the Eternal thy God; for in the month of ripening ears the Eternal led thee out of Egypt by night." (Deut. 16:1.) This is explained thus in the tradition: Give heed to the month of ripening ears (the spring month): arrange thy calendar beforehand so that the month in which thou offerest the Passover lamb is indeed the month of ripening ears.

[114] החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה. "This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the *first* of all the months of the year." (Exod. 12:2.)

from Egyptian slavery to the members of his household, gathered joyfully over wine and unleavened cakes.

On everything concerning the celebration, origin, duties and customs of this festival, the 12th and 13th chapters of the 2nd Book of Moses [Exodus], among other passages, give information; [p. 119] these are therefore also read in the synagogue on the first day of Passover (the 15th of the month).

20. Of these *eight* days during which we celebrate the festival of unleavened cakes, only the first two (the 15th and 16th of the month) and the last two (the 21st and 22nd of the month) are strictly kept as a holy convocation (מקרא קדש). The four intervening days, however, are called half-holidays or intermediate days (חול המועד), and they differ from those full festival days chiefly in this, that on them it is permitted to pursue one's livelihood and to perform such tasks as cannot well be postponed.

21. The *second* month is called by us איר [Iyyar], in the older writings זיו (month of brightness or splendour); it has always only 29 days, roughly from 19 April to 17 May. The 18th of the month is known by the name ל"ג בעומר [Lag ba-Omer], i.e. the 33rd day since one brought (formerly in the Temple, on the second day of Passover) the first meal offering, or an *Omer* (a certain measure), of the very first-cut grain. An epidemic disease which once carried off many of the disciples of Rabbi Akiba is said to have ceased entirely on this day, whence comes the name *Scholars' Festival*.

22. The *third* month, סיון [Sivan], has *always* 30 days, roughly from 18 May to 16 June. [p. 120] On the 6th and 7th of the month we celebrate *Pentecost*. In Holy Scripture it is called חג השבעות, Feast of Weeks, because of the number of seven weeks which one has to count from the second day of Passover until then; also חג הקציר, Harvest Festival; for, as appears from many passages, in that land the harvest probably began immediately after Passover and was completed in the various districts during these seven weeks.[115] It is further called יום הבכורים, the day of the first fruits, because on it one used to offer the first fruits of all produce. In the synagogue this festival is celebrated especially in memory of the revelation of the laws (זמן מתן תורתנו), which on this day were proclaimed in an extraordinary manner at Mount Sinai. (See Exod. ch. 19.)

[p. 121] **23.** The *fourth* month, תמוז [Tammuz], has always 29 days, roughly from 17 June to 15 July. The 17th of the month (שבעה עשר בתמוז) is a general day of fasting and repentance. Zechariah (8:19) calls it צום הרביעי, the fast of the fourth month. For on this day Nebuchadnezzar, king of

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[115] כי תבאו אל הארץ אשר אני נתן לכם וקצרתם את קצירה והבאתם את עמר ראשית קצירכם אל הכהן וגו'. וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את עמר התנופה שבע שבתות תמימת תהיינה... והקרבתם מנחה חדשה לה'. ממושבתיכם תביאו לחם תנופה שתים שני עשרנים וגו'. "When you come into the land which I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring an *Omer*, the first fruits of your harvest, to the priest, etc. You then count from the day after the (Passover) festival, from the day on which you brought the *Omer* of the waving, seven full weeks... then you bring a new meal offering in honour of the Eternal, namely two loaves of the finest flour as first fruits, etc." (Lev. 23:10–22.) שבעה שבעת תספר לך מהחל חרמש בקמה תחל לספר שבעה שבעות. ועשית חג שבעות לה' אלהיך. "Seven weeks shalt thou count, from the day when *the sickle is first put to the standing grain*; then shalt thou keep the *Feast of Weeks* in honour of the Eternal thy God." (Deut. 16:9 [Translator: 16:9–10].)

Babylon, conquered (after an eighteen-month siege) the capital of the Jewish kingdom, *Jerusalem* (about the year of the world 3340).

According to *Jeremiah* 39:2, this would indeed already have happened on the 9th of this month; the fast day was nevertheless fixed on the 17th, because on that day Jerusalem was taken by the Romans in the times of the Second Temple (about the year of the world 3830), and because several other events unfortunate for the nation occurred on that day, which are enumerated in the Mishnah (Tractate *Taanit*, ch. 4). Some even hold that in that passage (Jer. 39:2) the day is not quite correctly given, since in fact the city was then also taken on the 17th.[116]

24. The *fifth* month, אב [Av], has always 30 days, roughly from 16 July to 14 August. The 9th of the month (תשעה באב) is marked by many calamities that befell the nation on it (on which see the Talmud, Tractate *Rosh ha-Shanah* fol. 18, *Taanit* fol. 27, and several other places), but chiefly by the destruction of the First and the Second Temple and the complete dissolution of the Jewish [p. 122] state (2 Kings 25:8 and Jer. 52:12). It is therefore a day of fasting and mourning of the first rank; indeed the fast begins already on the evening before, when the Lamentations of Jeremiah (איכה) are chanted in the synagogue. In Zechariah (8:19) this day is called צום החמישי, the fast of the *fifth* (month).

The 15th of the month (חמשה עשר באב) was formerly dedicated to rustic merriment. The maidens of Israel celebrated on it, with dancing and festive adornment, the memory of that reconciliation, brought about through them, of all the tribes of Israel with the tribe of *Benjamin*, which had been weakened and almost wholly destroyed by a most bloody civil war (see the last chapter of the Book of Judges). The labourers gave themselves up to amusement because with this day the felling of wood for the service of the altar was concluded each year (Neh. 10:34);[117] for which reason they also called it יום תבר מגל (the day on which the axe is broken). Talmud, Tractate *Taanit* fol. 30 f.

25. The *sixth* month, אלול [Elul], has always only 29 days, roughly from 15 August to 12 September. In the usual reckoning (from the creation of the world) this is the *last* month of the civil year; and its last days are called ימי הסליחה [days of forgiveness], because special penitential prayers are then held in the synagogue even before daybreak, and the people are called upon to turn back to God. Many people also fast voluntarily on these days, in order to close the year with penitence, devotion and the practice of good works. The same is done with the *first* 10 days of the year, which are therefore called עשרת ימי התשובה, the *ten days of repentance*. [p. 123] The rabbis describe them as a time of review and judgment of the world, in which the events of the coming

[116]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English omits this last sentence and instead adds that the Roman conquest is "more immediately calamitous to us" than Nebuchadnezzar's.

[117]Translator: Neh. 10:35 in Hebrew verse numbering (10:34 in English Bibles).

year are determined, for the whole as for the individual. (See the Talmud, Tractate *Rosh ha-Shanah* and Tractate *Yoma*.)

26. The *seventh* — and in the civil year the *first* — month is תשרי [Tishri]; it has *always* 30 days, roughly from 13 September to 12 October. In the older writings it is called ירח האתנים: the month of the *gathering in* of all the remaining produce of the fields. (According to some: *the first month of the ancients*, i.e. of those who lived before Moses.)

The first two days of this month are strictly kept and are celebrated in the synagogue with many special prayers and hymns, but above all, most solemnly, with the *blowing of the shofar* (תקיעת שופר). This festival we call ראש השנה, the beginning of the year; in Holy Scripture it is called יום הזכרון, the day of remembrance, or day of recollection; also יום תרועה, the day of sounding, or festival of trumpets (Lev. 23:24 and Num. 29:1); and the rabbis also refer to it the 81st Psalm, where it says:[118]

תקעו בחדש שופר / בכסה ליום חגנו / כי חק לישראל הוא / משפט לאלהי יעקב.

> Sound the shofar at the new moon!
> On the holiday of our festival!
> It is a law in Israel,
> An ordinance of Jacob's God.

The blowing of the shofar on New Year's Day is meant partly as a sign of homage, by which one acknowledges the sovereignty of God — while at the same time recalling the sound of the shofar which the people heard at the giving of the Law [p. 124] at Mount Sinai; partly, too, it is meant as an earnest admonition to the people, a call to repentance and conversion,[119] in the words of the prophet (Amos 3:6):

אם יתקע שופר בעיר ועם לא יחרדו.

> "Does the shofar sound in the city, and should the people not rouse themselves trembling?"

Incidentally, this blowing is one of those Mosaic commandments from which, according to §4, women are exempt.

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[118] Translator: Ps. 81:4–5.

[119] אף על פי שתקיעת שופר בר"ה גזירת הכתוב, רמז יש בו, כלומר עורו ישינים משנתכם, ונרדמים הקיצו מתרדמתכם! וחפשו מעשיכם וחזרו בתשובה, וזכרו בוראכם. אלו השוכחים את האמת בהבלי הזמן ושוגים כל שנתם בהבל וריק אשר לא יועיל ולא יציל, הביטו לנפשותיכם, והטיבו דרכיכם ומעלליכם ויעזוב כל אחד מכם דרכו הרעה ומחשבתו אשר לא טובה וגו'. (רמב"ם פ"ג מהלכות תשובה) "It is indeed a law — a command of God — to blow the shofar on this day; but it nonetheless also has the meaning of calling out to us, as it were: Awake, you sleepers! Rouse yourselves at last from your slumber! Remember your Creator, examine your deeds and — turn back! O you who lose sight of the lofty goal of truth, who spend the precious time, the whole year, in useless trifles and chase only after vanity, have regard at last for the welfare of your souls, mend your doings and dealings! Let each one forsake his evil way and suppress every impure inclination, etc." (Maimonides, *Hilkhot Teshuvah* 3.)

27. The *third* day of this month is a general fast day, צום גדליהו [the Fast of Gedaliah], on account of the murder of a very noble man, *Gedaliah son of Ahikam*, whom Nebuchadnezzar had set as head over the people left behind in the land of Israel, and who, together with very many [p. 125] others, was treacherously murdered on this day, whereby the people of Israel sank into the deepest misery. (Jer. ch. 41 and 2 Kings 25:25.) In Zechariah 8:19 this day is called צום השביעי, the fast of the seventh (month).

28. The *tenth* day of the month is called יום הכפורים, *Day of Atonement*; it is kept as the holiest day of the year and is wholly devoted to fasting, devotion and repentance.

אך בעשור לחדש השביעי הזה יום הכפרים הוא מקרא קדש יהיה לכם ועניתם את נפשתיכם... וכל מלאכה לא תעשו בעצם היום הזה כי יום כפרים הוא לכפר עליכם לפני ה' אלהיכם... שבת שבתון הוא לכם ועניתם את נפשתיכם בתשעה לחדש בערב מערב עד ערב תשבתו שבתכם.

> "The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement; on it you shall hold a holy convocation and a fast... No work of any kind shall you do on it; it is a day of atonement, on which you are reconciled before the Eternal your God... Let it be to you a great day of rest, and you shall fast: on the ninth of the month you shall begin in the evening, and from evening to evening keep your day of rest." (Lev. 23:26–32)

In the times of the Temple this day was distinguished by a quite special sacrificial service, which had to be performed solely by the *high* priest — to whom on this one occasion in the year entry into the *Holy of Holies* (קדש הקדשים) was permitted. On this, read the whole 16th chapter of the 3rd Book of Moses [Leviticus], which is then also the reading of the day in the synagogue. —

[p. 126] Whoever on this day confesses his sins before God with a contrite heart and promises amendment, who also renounces all resentment against his fellow men and seeks to give satisfaction to those whom he has deceived or offended: to him complete remission and forgiveness from God is promised. The purpose of the Day of Atonement is at the same time the reconciliation of human beings with one another, as our teachers of the law remind us in many places. Thus they also explain (in the last Mishnah of *Yoma*)[120] the verse (Lev. 16:30):

כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני ה' תטהרו — עבירות שבין אדם למקום יה"כ מכפר, עבירות שבין אדם לחבירו אין יה"כ מכפר עד שירצה את חברו.

> "For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins before *the Eternal* you shall be clean. Only for sins against the Eternal alone does the Day of Atonement avail; but not for those by which one has transgressed against one's fellow man, so long as one has not first asked him for forgiveness and given him satisfaction." (Mishnah *Yoma*, end)

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[120]Translator: Mishnah *Yoma* 8:9.

29. The 15th of this month is the first day of the *Feast of Tabernacles*, חג הסכות, and חג האסיף, the Feast of Ingathering, or Autumn Festival.

The first two and the last two days are kept among us as holy festivals (מקרא קדש), but the five middle days are — as at Passover — half-holidays (ימי חול המועד). On the commandments of this festival see Lev. 23:33–44. Among other things it says there:

ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר כפת תמרים וענף עץ עבת וערבי נחל ושמחתם לפני ה' אלהיכם שבעת ימים.

> On the first day you shall take fruit of the tree *Hadar* (אתרוג), palm branches, a bough of the tree *Aboth* (myrtle), and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God seven days.[121]

בסכת תשבו שבעת ימים . . . למען ידעו דרתיכם כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציאי אותם מארץ מצרים אני ה' אלהיכם.

> Seven days you shall dwell in booths . . . so that your descendants may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of Egypt; I, the Eternal, your God!

30. The last two days of this festival (the 22nd and the 23rd of the month) — on which neither of the two commandments mentioned above applies — we celebrate under the name שמיני עצרת, Feast of Conclusion, after the expression of Holy Scripture (Num. 29:35):

ביום השמיני עצרת תהיה לכם כל מלאכת עבדה לא תעשו.

> On the eighth day you shall keep the Feast of Conclusion, and do no manner of servile work.

And since on the last day the 54th reading (וזאת הברכה) is read, and with it the annual reading of the whole Pentateuch is [p. 128] concluded, this gives occasion for a special rejoicing, which is called שמחת תורה, *Rejoicing of the Law*, and which in many places is celebrated with much warmth and convivial cheer.

31. The *eighth* month, מרחשון [Marḥeshvan], in the older writings ירח בול,[122] the rain month, has sometimes 29, sometimes 30 days; approximately from 13 October to 12 November.

32. The *ninth* month, כסלו [Kislev], likewise has sometimes 29, sometimes 30 days; approximately from 13 November to 11 December.

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[121] As to the probable meaning of this bunch, some scholars believe it to be a symbol of concord and of peaceableness, and at the same time a reminder that we should esteem no creature too lowly: the common brook willow and the most beautiful, fragrant fruit of the most splendid tree — thus the lowly as well as the *noble* are equal before the Eternal. — According to others, these four kinds of plant refer to the members of the human being: the heart, the backbone together with the ribs, the eyes and the lips — all are to be consecrated to the service of the Eternal.

[122] Translator: 1 Kings 6:38.

With the 25th of this month the eight *Days of Dedication* begin (שמונת ימי חנוכה), during which the Pentateuch is read in the synagogue every day, the הלל [Hallel] (Ps. 113–118) is sung, and the special prayer of thanksgiving על הנסים [*Al ha-nissim*] is added to the Eighteen Benedictions (as also to the grace after meals); this prayer contains the occasion of this religious festival. It is, namely, in remembrance of a great victory which the Israelites (around the year of the world 3630), under the leadership of the high priest Mattathias and his sons, the *Maccabees*, won over the army of Antiochus Epiphanes; in consequence of which the Temple at Jerusalem, which the Greeks had desecrated, was purified again, and the altar was rebuilt and *rededicated*.

These days of joy are celebrated above all by the kindling of *lights* every evening, both in the synagogue and in every home, to songs of thanksgiving and praise.

The number of these *dedication lights* is increased by *one* each day, [p. 129] so that on the 24th of the month, as the first evening, one light is kindled; on the following, *two*, and so on, until finally on the last evening *eight* lights are kindled.

33. The *tenth* month, טבת [Tevet], never has more than 29 days; approximately from 12 December to 9 January.

The 10th of this month (עשרה בטבת) is a fast day, because the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, began on this day (2 Kings 25:1 and Jer. 39:1). In *Zechariah* (8:19) this day is called צום העשירי, the fast of the *tenth* (month):

כה אמר ה' צבאות צום הרביעי וצום החמישי וצום השביעי וצום העשירי יהיה לבית יהודה לששון ולשמחה ולמעדים טובים והאמת והשלום אהבו.

> "Thus says the Lord of Hosts: Let the fast of the fourth, fifth, seventh and *tenth* (month) indeed be turned for the house of Judah into gladness and joy and into festivals: only *love truth, only love peace!*" (Zech. 8:19)

Compare with this the 7th chapter of this prophet, where he also refers to the earlier prophets (Isaiah 58, Jeremiah 22:15 and elsewhere), who teach what a fast truly pleasing to God really is.

34. The *eleventh* month, שבט [Shevat], always has 30 days; approximately from 10 January to 8 February.

The *twelfth* month, אדר [Adar], has in an ordinary year (פשוטה) only 29 days, but in a leap year (מעוברת) it has 30 days; approximately from 9 February to 10 March. The month which in a leap year [p. 130] is added here is called ואדר or אדר שני [Second Adar] and has only 29 days.

35. The 13th of the *last* month אדר is called תענית אסתר [the Fast of Esther] and is meant to remind us of the fast which Queen *Esther* once imposed on herself and on the Israelite inhabitants of *Shushan* (Esth. 4:16). The day following it (the 14th of the month) is a day of joy called *Purim*

(פורים), in remembrance of the wondrous deliverance of the Israelites, accomplished through *Mordecai* and *Esther*, from the wicked schemes of *Haman*, a cruel minister at the court of the Persian king Ahasuerus (around the year of the world 3400).

The Book of Esther (מגלת אסתר), which contains this story, is then read with great solemnity in the synagogue, in the evening and in the morning, and the special prayer of thanksgiving על הנסים is inserted both into the Eighteen Benedictions and into the grace after meals.

Family feasts and other festivities, but above all *almsgiving* and acts of kindness, are to grace the celebration of this day.

לעשות אותם ימי משתה ושמחה ומשלח מנות איש לרעהו ומתנות לאביונים.

> "One shall keep them as days of good cheer and of joy, so that each shall send gifts to his friend and give charitable gifts to the poor." (Esth. 9:22)

36. For days of rest and festivals, as also in general in each and every respect, we always count the night with the day that follows it; as is evident from many passages of Holy Scripture, and as it is already said in [p. 131] the story of creation: "And there was *evening*, and there was *morning*: one day."

37. The *full holy days* of the festival seasons listed in § 80 differ from the Sabbath day in this, that on them (except for the Day of Atonement, which is entirely equal to the Sabbath) one may kindle light and fire, cook, bake and do everything that is required for the immediate preparation of food.

כל מלאכה לא יעשה בהם אך אשר יאכל לכל נפש הוא לבדו יעשה לכם.

> No work shall be done on them; only what every person must eat, that alone may be prepared for you. (Exod. 12:16)

38. But that the Israelites *outside Palestine* always extend the prescribed duration of each festival by one day has its reason in this: in ancient times, when there was as yet no fixed reckoning of time and no established calendar, one could not know whether a month was to have 29 or 30 days until a formal decree of the senate (the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem) ruled on it each time; and this decree was determined only by the appearance of the new moon, and was then made known in the provinces by express messengers, so that they too might know how to arrange the festival days accordingly. Now those Israelites who lived so far from Jerusalem that they could receive no news of it within the first 14 days had, in their uncertainty about the actual date on which the festival began, to [p. 132] keep two days for one, so as not to miss the true festival day. And the *second holy day of those far away* that arose from this (י"ט שני של גליות), sanctioned by the Talmudists, had to be retained among the Israelites living outside Palestine even after our reckoning of time had been

fixed by established rules and calendars had been introduced everywhere. (רמב"ם פ"ה מהל' קדוש החדש)[123]

39. The three festival seasons, *Passover*, Pentecost and *Tabernacles*, besides the remembrance of particular national events connected with them, also bore at the same time on *agriculture*, that chief occupation and proper calling of the Israelites (§ 170). This is shown both by the offerings especially prescribed for them — e.g. the *Omer* of the first-cut grain at Passover; the *two loaves* at Pentecost, as the festival of the completed harvest — and also by the very names with which Holy Scripture designates these festivals.

וחג הקציר בכורי מעשיך אשר תזרע בשדה וחג האסף בצאת השנה באספך את מעשיך מן השדה.

> (Pentecost): the *harvest festival* at the first fruits of your field labour, namely of what you sow in the field; (Tabernacles): the festival at the *ingathering* of the fruits, at the going out of the year, when you have fully gathered in the fruits of your labour from the field. (Exod. 23:16; also Deut. 16:9–13)

40. These same festivals (פסח, שבעות, סכות) are commonly called שלש רגלים, i.e. the three *pilgrimage seasons*, because in the time of the Temple people used to go on pilgrimage to [p. 133] Jerusalem at them. See Exod. 23:14 and 34:23 — especially Deut. 16:16. Through these pilgrimages the hearts of the people were to be warmed for virtue and religion and filled with holy reverence for God, Temple, priests and teachers. This also gave occasion to settle family quarrels, to make peace, and to form friendships.

With regard to religious instruction, the autumn pilgrimage of the *seventh* (release) year was especially remarkable. Since no field work was done in this year, everyone found time and leisure enough to attend the great assembly in which, on the 2nd day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the king or the head of the people read a large part of the Book of the Law with the greatest possible solemnity to the Israelites *of both sexes*.

מקץ שבע שנים במעד שנת השמטה בחג הסכות . . . תקרא את התורה הזאת נגד כל ישראל באזניהם.
הקהל את העם האנשים והנשים והטף . . . למען ישמעו ולמען ילמדו ויראו את ה' אלהיכם ושמרו לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת.

> At the end of seven years, at the time of the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, . . . you shall read this teaching aloud in the presence of all Israel. You shall have the whole people come together there: men, women and children . . . so that they may hear and learn, have reverence for the Eternal your God, and carefully observe all the words of this teaching. (Deut. 31:10–13)

[123]Translator: Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Sanctification of the New Moon, ch. 5.

Here, then, women too are expressly commanded to take part in religious instruction; and from this one might fittingly derive the lawfulness of *confirmation for both sexes*.[124]

[p. 134] ## Supplement[125]

Some School Prayers

at the daily opening of instruction
in the upper classes of our school

ברכי נפשי את ה' וכל קרבי את שם קדשו. ברכי נפשי את ה' ואל תשכחי כל גמוליו.

> Bless the Lord, O my soul!
> All that is within me, praise his holy name.
> O my soul, bless the Lord!
> And forget not all his benefits.[126]

All-good Father, who heapest upon us so many benefits, who givest to all thy creatures so many proofs of thy fatherly love and grace, Thee we worship with reverence. We thank thee, great God, for thy boundless goodness, with which Thou didst grant to man, above all other creatures, such glorious advantages, and didst destine him for eternal happiness, which he can attain by a virtuous life. Help us, O Father, to reach this great goal! Strengthen us in our good resolutions, and give us strength and courage to overcome all hindrances and difficulties and ever to fulfil thy holy will with joy. Thou willest, All-good One, that man, mindful of his high destiny, should show himself to be thine image by practising love of his fellow men and spreading joy about him. Let this, then, be our sincere endeavour; this, together with our own perfection, is indeed the thanks that thy fatherly faithfulness asks of us, and by which we can also thank our parents and teachers and give them joy. — Merciful Father! keep our hearts in innocence, and guard us from evil desires, from ambition and vanity; so that we may do good only from a pure intention, because it is good and in accordance with thy divine, holy will.

יהיה לרצון אמרי פינו והגיון לבנו לפניך ה' צורנו וגאלנו.

> May the words of our mouth and the meditations of our heart be pleasing to thee, Eternal, our Protection and Redeemer! *Amen.*[127]

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[124]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English does not draw this conclusion about confirmation; in its place he says the law is obeyed only when all members of the nation, women included, are given religious instruction.

[125]Translator: Leeser's 1830 English omits this entire supplement of school prayers; his translation ends with the preceding section.

[126]Translator: Ps. 103:1–2.

[127]Translator: Ps. 19:15, adapted to the plural ("our mouth ... our heart ... our Rock and our Redeemer").

לב טהור ברא לי אלהים ורוח נכון חדש בקרבי. אל תשליכני מלפניך ורוח קדשך אל תקח ממני.

Create in me, O God, a pure heart!
And give me a new, upright spirit;
Cast me not away from thy presence,
Take not thy holy spirit from me![128]

Eternal, unchangeable God! gracious Preserver and Ruler of the world! After a night's rest with which Thou didst refresh us, we begin this new day newly strengthened, and praise and thank thy holy name for the ever-new proofs of thy favour and grace.

O take us under thy almighty protection on this day too, and guide us by thy spirit, so that, in remembrance of Thee and of thy holy Law, we may walk in piety before Thee, the Omnipresent, and earnestly guard ourselves against sin.

Preserve for us further, gracious God, our dear parents and brothers and sisters, our benefactors and friends, and make them happy according to thy gracious will. Bless also our superiors and those set over us, and our beloved *fatherland*, for thy mercy's sake; and grant that we may live in peace and concord with all our fellow citizens and fellow men, as Thou thyself hast taught us (Zech. 8:16):

אלה הדברים אשר תעשו דברו אמת איש את רעהו אמת ומשפט שלום שפטו בשעריכם.

"This is what you shall do: let each speak sincerely with his neighbour; bring *truth, justice* and *peace* into your gates!"

אחת דבר אלהים, שתים זו שמעתי, כי עז לאלהים. ולך ה' חסד, כי אתה תשלם לאיש כמעשהו.

One word God has spoken,
This I have often perceived:
Power belongs to God alone.
Yet grace, O Lord, belongs to Thee as well.
Thou rewardest each according to his work.[129]

Almighty, gracious and holy God! To man Thou gavest reason and lofty powers of mind, and Thou willest that he should know and love Thee with his whole soul; that he should understand and become ever more convinced how Thou, Most Holy One, lovest the good and wilt reward it, but hatest evil and wilt punish it — Thee we humbly worship, and thank Thee for the many benefits that Thou showest us daily; for [p. 136] it is indeed thy grace that we have lived to see this day too. Let thy goodness continue to watch over us! and grant, O Father, that we may never forget that Thou, All-knowing One, art always near us and markest our deeds and thoughts. Teach us to mark our end, that we may be wise of heart, and learn to use and employ our time and powers well.

[128]Translator: Ps. 51:12–13.

[129]Translator: Ps. 62:12–13. Here the printed Hebrew writes ה' where the Masoretic text has the word Adonai ("Lord").

Remove from us, therefore, O God, all sinful distractions, and direct our thoughts and inclinations wholly to Thee and to the wholesome instruction which thy fatherly goodness has given us here.

כי עמך מקור חיים, באורך נראה אור. משך חסדך לידעיך, וצדקתך לישרי לב.

For with Thee is the very source of life;
In thy light we see light.
Let thy goodness stream forth upon those who revere Thee,
Thy beneficence upon those who are pure of heart.[130]

במה יזכה נער את ארחו לשמר כדברך. בלבי צפנתי אמרתך למען לא אחטא לך. ברוך אתה ה' למדני חקיך.

How can a young man be happy? —
If he keeps himself according to thy word.
Thy speech I impress upon my heart,
So that I may never sin against Thee.
Praised be Thou, O Eternal!
Teach me thy law![131]

All-good Father! look down graciously upon thy children, and bless these hours that are devoted to our instruction. Enlighten our understanding, and give us insight and an eager will rightly to grasp the teachings which are imparted to us here through thy wise ordering, and faithfully to put them into practice. Grant us, O Father, strength of mind and of heart, that we may live according to thy holy precepts, always virtuous, in concord and piety, and may bring honour and joy to our parents, teachers and friends; so that we may always enjoy the grace and favour of God and of men; and so we shall thank Thee for ever. Amen!

אחלי יכנו דרכי לשמר חקיך. אז לא אבוש בהביטי אל כל מצותיך.

Oh, that my striving might succeed, that I kept thy law!
If I look only to thy commandments, I shall never be put to shame.[132]

[130]Translator: Ps. 36:10–11.
[131]Translator: Ps. 119:9, 11, 12.
[132]Translator: Ps. 119:5–6.