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English translation by Claude of Judah Leib Ben-Ze'ev, Yesode ha-Dat (Foundations of Religion), third printing (Vienna: Anton Schmid, 1823), made from the digitized Harvard copy. From the main text onward, each Hebrew page (even-numbered) faces a German version printed in Hebrew characters (Judeo-German) on the odd-numbered page opposite. That version is a free parallel rendering of the same text, and only the Hebrew has been translated. The German pages are marked in grey as, e.g., [p. 13 (German)]. The German title page and table of contents are noted but not translated. Before the main text, pages have no printed numbers and are marked [p. —]. The Hebrew proof-texts are given in Hebrew with English. Notes beginning "Translator:" are the translator's; the other notes are Ben-Ze'ev's. Where Ben-Ze'ev's numbering of notes restarts, the notes have been renumbered consecutively.

[p. —] יסודי הדת

^*Yesode ha-Dat* [Foundations of Religion] ^comprising ^the Principles of Faith (עקרי האמונה, *'ikkare ha-emunah*) ^together with ^the Chief Commandments and the Duties of Man, ^for educating the youth of the Children of Israel at the beginning of their study.

^Composed by ^Judah Leib Ben-Ze'ev.

^Printed for the third time.

^Jesode Hadath.

^Vienna, ^printed by Anton Schmid. ^Wien, gedruckt bey Anton Schmid k. k. priv. Buchdrucker. 1823.

[p. —] First Introduction (הקדמה ראשונה)

It is a matter agreed upon, which no one disputes, that the study of the foundations of religion (יסודי הדת) is fit to be the first study the boy takes up, once he knows how to read the letters and words of the language correctly and has a little knowledge of translation, following the order that I laid out in the work *Mesillat ha-Limmud*.[1] For religion is a holy seed fit to be sown on the furrows of the heart of a tender young boy: while he is still like "a perennial stream in which no one has worked,"[2] and before alien notions, which bring up thorn and thistle, have been imprinted on him, let a fallow ground be broken up for him for righteousness in religion and faith, so that it may strike strong root in his heart downward and put forth branches of reverence and moral discipline, and these will yield fruit "desirable to make one wise"[3] and good for practice. And a thing that is implanted in the heart of a boy in his youth is cast into it like stone, and like a rock it will not be moved from its place.

But religion comprises two subjects: faith (האמונה, *ha-emunah*) and practice (המעשה, *ha-ma'aseh*). Faith lies in thought: what the adherent of religion must believe concerning God, His attributes

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[1]Translator: Ben-Ze'ev's primer for teaching children to read Hebrew, *Mesillat ha-Limmud* (Vienna, 1802).

[2]Translator: Deut. 21:4.

[3]Translator: Gen. 3:6.

and His qualities, and the hope that he is to hope for by it in his life and in his death. Practice lies in deed: what he must do and refrain from doing according to the commandments (מצות, *mitzvot*) of religion. And of these two subjects it is fitting that knowledge of faith should precede knowledge of practice, for several reasons. (a) Faith lies in thought and practice in action, and action follows from thought; and first one ought to know who the Lord is, whose voice one is to obey, and afterwards what the deeds are by which one is to serve Him. And so it is said: "Know the God of your father (and afterwards) serve Him with a whole heart and a willing soul."[4] And through faith he acquires clear knowledge of his religion as a whole, so as to be a son of the covenant of the true religion, not a mere transient adherent of it. (b) The teachings of faith are few, and they are easy for the heart of a boy to take in within a short time; but not so the teachings of practice, for the commandments are many, and much time is needed before a person can contain them. (c) Faith is one and the same measure for all adherents of the religion; it is not dependent on place, time, gender or family. Not so the commandments of practice, which depend on time, place, gender, family and circumstance. And it is self-evident that general study ought to precede particular study. (d) Knowledge of faith is necessary [p. —] in itself more than knowledge of practice, and lack of knowledge of one practical commandment of the Torah is not equal to lack of knowledge of one of the foundations of faith. Even if a person should transgress one of the practical commandments inadvertently, he has not ceased to be a son of the covenant of the religion. Not so if one of the foundations of religion is hidden from a man and he strays into a false opinion; for then he has ceased to be a son of the covenant of that religion. For one who does not believe in the unity [of God], or who makes his Creator corporeal, even if he were to perform all the commandments of the Torah, is not a son of the covenant of the Hebrew religion. For religion is a building founded upon the foundations of faith which the religion obliges one to believe (some of them are such as reason decrees, like those I have mentioned, and some are such as reason neither requires nor negates, like the existence of prophecy and divine revelation), and whoever uproots one of its foundations knocks down the whole building and tears it apart. It has thus become clear that the study of faith takes precedence, in time and in rank, over the study of practice.

After I had made known that the study of religion must be the beginning of the ways of educating a boy who knows how to read the language, and had clarified the two parts of religion, faith and practice, and had proved with clear proofs that of these two parts the part of faith ought to precede the part of practice, it follows of itself that it was necessary to produce a work devoted to this subject, to be ready in the hand of the teacher for instructing his pupils in it. And I, who have taken it upon myself to compose textbooks for Hebrew children in everything in which I found that they had a lack and a need, just as I composed a book devoted to the proper education of children in reading, which I called by the name *Mesillat ha-Limmud*, I was moved afterwards to compose this work as well, to educate children in the study of faith, adjoining it as a thing closely related to it;

[4]Translator: 1 Chron. 28:9; the parenthesis "(and afterwards)" is the author's gloss.

and I called it by the name *Yesode ha-Dat*. And this work too is a part adjoining the other parts of the works devoted to the benefit of the education of children, which are comprised under the name *Bet ha-Sefer*.[5]

There may be someone in whose heart it arises to ask: If the need for a work devoted to this subject is as great as you say, why has no one of all the men of the generations before us ventured to compose such a work? For this is the first question that people have grown accustomed to asking about every new work that has newly come forth, as though it remedied some long-standing fault which our fathers did not imagine, saying: "Had there been need of the thing, would not our fathers, who were wise, have understood to do it?" And indeed the multitude, which has no leisure to reflect, "this is their way, their folly," from time immemorial: a thing that was not found ready before them from of old, they hold that, were it necessary for what is beneficial, they would not have failed to know its lack and would not have felt its absence. And those who make themselves wise but are not wise, out of the jealousy of scribes[6] that has seized them, lift up their voice on high against works such as these, and not out of wisdom; they ask, saying: "The good things we have from our fathers; let us but walk in their footsteps — is it not enough for us, without setting [p. —] our heart to anything new?" — But in fact the remedy, in every matter, is a thing that has long been customary and is necessary in itself, since circumstances change from time to time and from place to place. Do we not find among the sages of the earliest generations that they changed a number of things and made many enactments according to place and time? Is it not said: "Hillel instituted the *prosbul*,"[7] and Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai made a number of enactments,[8] and so too many of the generations of these sages, who saw, considered and understood how to arrange orders and to set matters right according to the change of place and time. And even the writing down of the Mishnah was a necessity, which our holy Rabbi[9] was brought to do on the basis of "It is time to act for the Lord; they have made void Your Torah."[10] For this is the way of the sages: to arrange matters according to the thinking of the generation, and to make enactments at every hour of time in the course of the days. And it is impossible, within the law of man, to arrange for him a thing that will remain in its state without change or amendment for all the days of the world.

How much more so we, the Children of Israel, whose religion is the oldest and most ancient of all the religions known to us; there is no nation over which changes have passed and which has wandered and been cast about as we have. Is it any wonder, then, that many faults and corruptions

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[5]Translator: *Bet ha-Sefer* ("The School"), Ben-Ze'ev's collective title for his series of school texts, of which *Mesillat ha-Limmud* formed the first part.

[6]Translator: "The jealousy of scribes increases wisdom" (BT Bava Batra 21a), here turned against the envious critics.

[7]Translator: Mishnah Shevi'it 10:3; BT Gittin 36a. The *prosbul* allowed debts to be collected despite the Sabbatical-year release.

[8]Translator: the enactments (*takkanot*) of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai after the destruction of the Temple (Mishnah Rosh ha-Shanah 4:1-4; BT Rosh ha-Shanah 31b).

[9]Translator: Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, redactor of the Mishnah.

[10]Translator: Ps. 119:126, the verse by which the Talmud justifies the writing down of the Oral Law (BT Gittin 60a; Temurah 14b).

have become entwined and come up upon us, which require great repair; and as a building grows old, so its breaches and cracks multiply, and so it needs repair and strengthening. And of all the many faults, behold, the education of the children is the very greatest fault, which needs great repair, for the lack of supervision over a proper education, and a corrupted order of study, draw many corruptions after them. And I shall bring the words of a sage who composed a special work called by the name *Mitzref ha-Dat*;[11] he wrote, of blessed memory: "There is no part among all the parts of the duties of man that has become so weak, so neglected and hidden from the eyes of the congregation of the Hebrews, as the duty of educating the children, to raise their sons in the culture of wisdom and moral discipline, and there is no one who goes before the people to lead them in the right way in this matter. But what did they do in order to fulfil the duty of 'and you shall teach them to your children'?[12] They fixed their sons in watches, rooted in the study of the Talmud and the books of sharp-witted dialectic (החדוד והפלפל, *ha-hiddud ve-ha-pilpul*). Would that they had done so while observing these four watches:

"(a) To test, first of all, whether the heart of the boy is fit, by natural disposition, for the study of the depth of investigation and sharp-wittedness in the study of the Talmud.

"(b) Whether the boy who is found fit for the study of the Talmud is one who directs all his aim and all his doings, and whose circumstances are such, that he will be able to persevere in it, and that worldly occupations will not cause him to turn aside from occupation with his Torah.

"(c) Even under these two conditions, to observe in it an order of before and after: to put before him the subjects which it is fitting for him to know, also as needed for the study of the Talmud.

"(d) To give [p. —] a share of place and time to the knowledge of the other subjects which a man of moral culture is obliged to know. Had they done thus, they would now be in the right. But to spend all the days of childhood and youth in the study of a single subject, without first testing the heart of the young man as to whether it is fit for it or not, without regard to what the boy is destined for when he comes to be a man, but all the fathers destining their sons to be, all of them, sages, all of them men of understanding, all of them knowing the Torah, all of them rabbis and judges — this is the thing of which I have spoken: that they have perverted their way in the education of their sons and missed the straight mark. And of ten or twenty children who are set to the Talmud before their time, only one or two are those in whom the sign of blessing is seen in their study. And it comes to pass, when the boy grows up and goes out from the school and turns away to the ways of the world, that the taste of the Torah fades and its scent is changed within a few days, so that he flees from it; for this is because his study overpowered him, since his belly had been filled with the delicacies of the Talmud, until they had loaded on his stomach more than it could digest, on

[11] Translator: *Mitzref ha-Dat* ("The Crucible of Religion"), an anonymous Hebrew tract on religious reform published in the 1790s (attributed to Saul Berlin or Judah Leib Margolioth); the long quotations below are from it.

[12] Translator: Deut. 6:7.

his brain more than was hard for it to contain, and on his spirit more than it could sustain. And this one — even if they had made him fit with natural breadth of heart — the yoke of worldly occupation (דרך ארץ, *derekh eretz*) distracts him from repeating the Talmud. And the Talmud, when one does not persevere in repeating it, quickly fades; 'and he who does not increase [his learning] decreases'[13] — that is to say, it will waste away, and even what he has already learned will cease." And he went on at length about this subject there. I will not anticipate the reader by pronouncing judgment on how far the words of that book are right; but the root of the matter is true. And because of this we lack books that guide the people in the right way in the study of religion and faith, and there is not one among us who knows the number of the foundations of religion. Be pleased, now, to try, and I will show you: take one of the pupils who come out of the school and ask him how many branches there must be on a willow (ערבה, *'aravah*), and how many leaves on each and every branch — how quickly he will give his answer! Then ask him again: how many are the foundations of religion? And how many are the teachings of faith? — he has no answer in his mouth. And all the days that the order of study and the ways of education were not in need of [new] knowledge, no one was roused to compose a work on that subject.

But since the Name poured a different spirit into the heart of His people,[14] and the eyes of the Hebrews were opened and they knew that they were naked[15] in the order of education and study, and they began to think thoughts as to how the ways of educating the children might be improved, then the need for works on the right paths of study became a felt want, and all the people lamented after them, and the heart of the investigators was aroused to the hidden fault, in works alluding to education and study; and I too was roused to compose this work.

Another may perhaps ask: And what need is there of a work devoted to the teachings of faith? Will not the boy learn the Torah in order, and from it find all the teachings of faith and of practice? To him I would reply, saying that he does not ask wisely, for it is impossible that the boy should attain a firm possession of the knowledge of the foundations of religion from the study of the Torah alone, for two reasons. (a) The intention of the Torah is not to teach beliefs and opinions, but to direct man aright in the commandments [p. —] of practice; and the commandment does not come upon matters that depend on the investigation of reason. The Torah did not say, "Believe that I am the Lord, Creator of heaven and earth," but rather, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out,"[16] which obliges the acceptance of the commandments by reason of gratitude for the benefit received; and likewise it did not say, "Know, O Israel, that the Lord is our God, etc.," but "Hear,"[17] in the sense of acceptance. (b) The Torah was not given to those "weaned from milk,"[18] nor was it

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[13]Translator: Mishnah Avot 1:13 (Hillel).

[14]Translator: cf. Num. 14:24, "because he had a different spirit with him."

[15]Translator: Gen. 3:7.

[16]Translator: Exod. 20:2.

[17]Translator: Deut. 6:4.

[18]Translator: Isa. 28:9.

set down in a book composed for tender children; for the Torah is a book for the upright of the people, for grown men, and it comprises matters to which a child has as yet no access. There come into it the events of the world, the generations of the fathers and the chronicles of their sons; and it comprises commandments, testimonies, statutes and ordinances — whether laws of property, which fall under liability and exemption; or laws of foods, which fall under forbidden and permitted; or laws of plagues and leprosy, of the menstruant, the woman with a flux and the woman after childbirth, which fall under unclean and clean; or laws of sacrifices, which fall under fit and unfit; whereas what comes into it of the duties of man is but little. And how should that small child extract, from the multitude of these diverse matters that are still far beyond his comprehension, what it is fitting for him to know from that study, in the order and manner fitting for him, unless a special work is produced, arranged for this purpose alone? But when these notions of faith and of the duties of man have been grasped as a possession of his heart, and he afterwards draws near to the study of the Torah, his study will be in a way much closer to the purpose intended in studying it.

And what one who is engaged in the work of educating children must take very much to heart is to inculcate love of one's fellows, the duties of man, and the laws of citizenship (חקי אזרח הארץ) in the hearts of the young. And the reversal of the circumstances of the time in our favor these fifty years[19] obliges us to keep watch over that study. For when a man attains a higher rank, he needs a surplus of capacities that will make his soul fit to merit that rank by right. For from the exile of the nation until that time we were reckoned as aliens among the peoples, and as strangers from another land; we had no right of share or claim in the inheritance of the land, and we were excluded from all the rights of citizen and resident; and every favor granted us was to give us a dwelling in the land, and the ransom of that dwelling was very costly. And in that lowliness we forgot all the splendor of a free people and all the duties of a citizen of the land, and our ways and our qualities too were corrupted by it; for the spirit of a people is like the spirit of a man: just as a man who is despised and oppressed, the shame that afflicts him blunts the feeling in him, so that he corrupts his ways and his qualities and does not feel the distinction and glory of the children of men — so it is with a people despised and abased in the midst of its inhabitants: all love of honor and of glorious deeds by which a people would vie for the possession of distinction is removed from its eyes. We did not set our hearts to learn the language and literature of the people in whose midst we dwell, nor to perfect ourselves in the sciences and branches of knowledge that make a man fit to rise to great positions and to be given offices and appointments in the affairs of the state. For since we were consigned to shame and debarred from every occupation and capacity for the affairs of the state, all these sciences would not benefit us, but would only arouse our hearts the more to the very [p. —] contempt, and make us feel our abasement more keenly and more strongly than what we [already] endured. And if our neighbors scorned us for our stammering tongue with which

[19]Translator: i.e. since Joseph II's Edict of Toleration for the Jews of Lower Austria (1782) and the related reforms of the 1780s.

we speak, they wronged us, for it was not they who took the cause to heart, nor that it was our circumstances in which we found ourselves that turned these things against us. And likewise when they reproached us, saying, "The Jews are a slack people, who despise the tilling of the soil and every work of the craftsman and the artisan; only in commerce and trade do they find pleasure, and in practicing deceit and extortion" — in this too they blamed us for nothing. For who confined us to occupying ourselves only with commerce and trade? Was it not they who shut us out from the tilling of the soil and bound our hands from the work of the craftsman and the artisan, and left us no other livelihood but commerce, and "a trader, the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loves to oppress"?[20] And there is yet a third thing in it which they made a stumbling-block for us, saying: "The Jews are a faint-hearted people, unfit to go out and come in for war"; and they did not take to heart that it was they who made our hearts melt, by not gathering us into the midst of their camps when they went out to the battle line.

But since, fifty years ago, the Lord stirred up the spirit of the kings and princes in whose shadow we live to set their eyes upon us for good, to break the bars of our yoke and make us walk upright,[21] to remove all the bars of iron and every screen dividing between them and us in human society, and to gather us in their midst to the enjoyment of every right of citizen and resident of the land, so that we should no longer be as exiles and strangers in a foreign land — on condition that we take upon ourselves all the law of the citizen and all his duties: to keep the laws of the state and to perform the ordinances of the king in everything that is not contrary to our religion; and with that condition they laid upon us the duty of furnishing men of valor from among us to go out and come in for war, and they set the way open for every man to make his soul fit to rise in the degrees of office and appointment in the state. And if such is our situation, we are obliged to devise how our young people may make their ways fit for the good gifts that have fallen to our portion from the princes of many lands; and that which hinders us from remaining any longer with our customs, to which we were accustomed before we were gathered into the society of the congregation of the peoples. And how could we see the kings and princes come to meet us with great and good gifts, proclaiming liberty to us, gathering us into their society, giving us the law of citizenship of the land and all its rights, while we keep silent and hide our hands in the dish, and do not hasten to go out to meet them at the crossroads and to stretch out our arms to them, when they too hold out to us the scepter of their grace to receive us? Would not iniquity be found in us, whether we wished it or not? Therefore we are compelled to devise how our affairs may be ordered according to the thinking of the generation and the time and the situation in which we find ourselves; and no excuse will avail, and no refusal or reluctance will delay the matter or annul it; for "it is the finger of God";[22] He decrees a thing, and it is established. [p. —]

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[20]Translator: Hos. 12:8 (Eng. 12:7).

[21]Translator: Lev. 26:13.

[22]Translator: Exod. 8:15 (Eng. 8:19).

And the surest and most proper way to repair the faults which our fathers perverted and in which we have sunk — on the side of laxity on the one hand, and on the side of oppression and exclusion on the other — is the reform of the education of the children; for only through education will the generations be set right, and the children who grow up in a proper education will be made fit to attain these distinctions. And this way is the way first taken by the mighty emperor, lover of mankind and of those who honor him, the Roman Emperor **Joseph II**, of blessed memory. It was he who first raised the horn of Israel from the dunghill, to seat them with the nobles of his people;[23] he rolled away from us the reproach of his people who counted against us that we were a slothful people; in taking from our sons men of valor for war, so as not to pass over us the spirit of jealousy of his people, saying, "The good he gives to us and the evil he does not give to us"; he established houses of education and of letters to teach the young every matter of wisdom, to make them fit for every capacity of wisdom and craft that is needed to increase the profit of land and people. And from this good thought which Joseph began, many princes, perfect and good, were stirred to do as he did; and as a result, the Jews too were stirred of themselves to show gratitude for the goodness of their kings, and established in their communities houses of education for the young. And the most celebrated of them are the schools in the city of **Berlin**, and in **Breslau**, in **Frankfurt am Main** and in **Dessau**;[24] and the most excellent is the one which was established by a man of valor and great deeds, the noble and leader, our teacher the Rabbi Jacob[25] **Jacobson**, may his light shine (Geheim- und Finanzrat und Präsident des königlichen westfälischen Konsistoriums), great in goodness, generous and kind. That noble acted for his people, for he lavished much gold from his purse and established a house of education in the city of **Seesen**, which became a name and a praise for the excellence of its organization and order, for the most useful purpose for children: to make them fit for every desirable thing, both in divine religion and in the society of the state — besides the other benefits which that noble has done for his people. May God remember it to him for good!

In accordance with these things I set my eyes and my heart, in the practical part of this work, on placing the teachings of the duties of society in the mouth of the boy. And with this I shall say, by way of a general statement, in what manner and arrangement I have ordered that work. First, I divided the foundations of faith — its roots and its branches — according to the arrangement that will become clear to you in the Second Introduction; and I joined to it the practical part. And in that part I took up only the chief commandments, which are a sign of the covenant of the religion, and they are: worship, that is, prayer; circumcision; the reading of the *Shema'*; fringes (*tzitzit*); phylacteries (*tefillin*); the doorpost scroll (*mezuzah*); and the festivals. And on the subject of prayer I have dealt at length, because of what I saw in the aforementioned book *Mitzref ha-Dat*, that it

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[23]Translator: 1 Sam. 2:8; Ps. 113:7-8.

[24]Translator: the Jüdische Freischule in Berlin (founded 1778), the Königliche Wilhelmsschule in Breslau (1791), the Philanthropin in Frankfurt am Main (1804) and the Herzogliche Franzschule in Dessau (1799).

[25]Translator: so printed (יעקב, "Jacob"); the reference is to Israel Jacobson (1768-1828), court financier and president of the Westphalian Jewish Consistory, who founded the Jacobson School at Seesen in 1801. The titles in parentheses are given in German in Hebrew letters.

greatly shakes [the foundations of] the practices of prayer of the Ashkenazim and of their leaders; he wrote, of blessed memory: "It is known that the essence of prayer is not the speech of the lips, but rather the intention (כוונה, *kavvanah*) of the heart — these are the very words. And for the intention of the heart there must be a preparation and arrangement of the body for prayer, as it is said: 'Prepare to meet your God, O Israel';[26] and it is said: 'In the morning I will set it in order for You';[27] and with understanding and arrangement one prepares, so that one is [p. —] to stand in bodily posture with meekness and submission, as befits one who seeks something from his master. And since prayer also includes praises and thanksgivings, and praises and thanksgivings are not pleasant either to the one praising or to the one praised except in melody and song and in a congregation of people, for this matter the melodies must be arranged with equality of measure in speaking and in pausing, so that there be one measure for all the people assembled in raising and lowering the voice, and a single fixed measure for beginning, continuing and pausing; for in a confusion of words the intention is lost. If a man from among us, who is used to [this practice] from his youth, were to strip off the habit, and imagine himself as though new, just arrived, coming for the first time into the synagogue of the Ashkenazim, he would see a crowd gathered in a great building, this one swaying hither and that one swaying thither, this one saying thus and that one saying thus, this one roaring and that one shouting, this one singing one melody and that one singing another melody; this one snatches ten words in one breath and swallows half of every word in his nose, and another drags out his words; and no one hears his own words for the words of his fellow. And this custom greatly lowers the holy service in the eyes of those who pray and in the eyes of those who see them, and causes them to behave with levity in this holy place. And if they would see and take instruction from their brethren who dwell in the land of Italy and follow the Sephardic custom — as I have seen in the synagogue in the glorious city of Livorno: the order of their prayer, the arrangement of the melodies, and their custom of honor and awe in the holy place — the Ashkenazic Jews would learn from them and do likewise. For these circumstances, even if they seem of small worth, behold, it is they that give splendor and preciousness to prayer and exalt its rank, so that the one who prays and He to whom one prays may be glorified by it. And what is needed besides, for the reform of the customs of the Ashkenazic synagogue, is to appoint a wise teacher, of a clear tongue, who will preach every Sabbath on its Sabbath and on every festival in its season a homily of moral instruction on the subject of the day, on the service of God and on the paths of uprightness — not like those preachers and itinerant *maggidim* (מגידים) who go about the towns, who have no share in the rules of the language and no knowledge of lucid eloquence. The preacher treads upon the high places of the pulpit, begins with a prophet, raises difficulties and splits hairs; and, for want of his knowledge of the rules of the language and of rhetoric, he finds difficulty with the words of the prophet — why he spoke in this language and not in another, whether to add or to subtract — turning the rules of the language into wormwood; he seeks

[26] Translator: Amos 4:12.

[27] Translator: Ps. 5:4 (Eng. 5:3).

confusion and makes crooked what is straight.[28] And his question being of such a sort, his answers are not according to the rule. He heaps up legends (*aggadot*) and *midrashim*, and weaves into them fox fables, plays with words of jest and a matter of humor, and draws them out into existences and subjects; he builds a house of cards and weaves spider's webs, and gives an interpretation of Scripture not in accordance with the rules of the language; and not to help the hearers in virtues, nor to profit them in moral instruction, but only to show his power in sharp-wittedness and acuteness, and for the sake of gain upon gain. And about it he will say, 'Is a homily then an art? It is but: preach and receive a reward!' Will such a one be a homily acceptable before the Omnipresent? Is not this the acceptable homily [p. —] — to preach to the people on the virtues and on moral instruction in clear and pure language, which the people will understand and which will enter their ears, after the manner of the prophets in their days, 'to declare to the people their transgression and to the house of Jacob their sins'?"[29] And this is what stirred my heart to touch a little on the order of prayer and its arrangement, as it ought to be and not as it is.

And from the order of prayer I turned my heart to setting out the duties of man according to the distinction of their classes and their degrees, and among them the duties of a man as citizen and as one who has knowledge of mankind. And after that I undertook to explain the Ten Words (עשרת הדברים, the Decalogue), which are the very body of the Torah, and on which God made a covenant with His people; and I derived from them branches of commandments that issue from them in virtues and in morals. For these matters need extensive treatment and great inculcation to engrave them in the heart of Hebrew children, because of the paucity of the books and works found among us on these subjects. For the majority of books are essentially an elaboration of the practical commandments, of customs, fences and safeguards, enactments and stringencies in outward deeds, and not of the duties of the hearts, such as the Rabbi, Rabbenu Bahya of blessed memory, treated at length in his book.[30] And the author of the book *Mitzref ha-Dat* also dwelt at length, for his purpose, in his work there, on the multitude of corporeal customs and deeds, how great they are in his eyes, and on the paucity of virtues and moral instruction, how little; and he wrote, of blessed memory: "In customs and laws there is no lack — quite the contrary: they are too many. There is no nation or tongue so laden with customs, laws and ordinances as we are; for from when a man rises in the morning until he closes his eyelids at night, he has heaps upon heaps of customs and laws, and there is no sense among his senses and no movement of a limb among his limbs for which there is not an injunction of prohibition or permission. If it is not a commandment of the Torah, it is a rabbinic stringency, or an enactment of the Geonim, or a fence or a safeguard, or a custom of the pious and men of deeds, or a decree, or a 'suspicion upon suspicion'; and all of them rely on the dictum 'He who is stringent — may a blessing come upon him.' And so the laws and

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[28] Translator: cf. Eccl. 1:15; Mic. 3:9.

[29] Translator: Isa. 58:1.

[30] Translator: Bahya ibn Paquda, *Hovot ha-Levavot* ("Duties of the Hearts"), 11th century.

customs spread and multiplied beyond measure, and in their multitude the virtues, moral instruction and paths of uprightness and of *derekh eretz* that are proper for the conduct of the world and the settlement of the state — to find grace and good understanding in the sight of God and man[31] — grew weak and were neglected. Would that they had lessened those things which they loaded on until they became too heavy to bear, and had increased in their stead those things in which they are lacking in every respect." And as for what I myself have seen and taken to heart: I have seen that the people began to listen to the counsel of that author in its first part, and removed from their necks somewhat of the burden of the many customs that had been to them a yoke and a load; but in its last part nothing has yet been done. Therefore I hear, in response, the outcry of the man who holds fast to his integrity in the old customs ("for it is great"), and who is agitated over the enlightening of the eyes of the generation, saying: "What good have these sages done us, who pluck of the fruit of the tree of knowledge to give us to eat of it, to open [p. —] our eyes to the faults of our ways and to shed light on our thoughts? For since they came to speak in the name of wisdom, they have done evil to this people, and they have not delivered at all. Did not our fathers eat and drink and do justice and righteousness in the land, and it was well with them?[32] Were they not good and upright men — if not on account of the dwelling-place of moral instruction and reason, then surely on account of religion and faith? And if they prayed not in the proper order, did they not pray out of the fear of the Name? And their prayer did them no harm, for they prayed, and their heart was whole with God and with men. And their ways and their conduct were reckoned according to the thinking of the generation and the time; and their sons walked in the footsteps of their fathers without hypocrisy and without change or alteration; for with closed eyes they walked after their fathers, like a blind man leaning on a blind man up to the head, their leader, the shepherd. But since these sages came and made themselves wise to meditate on our ways and our customs according to the thinking of the generation and the time, behold, they have begun to break apart the old and decrepit building, for it is full of breaches, cracks and fissures; but a new building they have not raised up in its place. They have revealed, as it were today, to the eyes of the children, that the custom of prayer is not in proper order; but have they set before him a more proper and correct order? The boy knows how to find fault with the multitude of customs laid upon us needlessly; but when they took from his hand the staff of a broken reed,[33] did they leave him in its place a strong staff, a rod of moral instruction and a scepter of virtues, which would stand by him to strengthen his heart in reverence and in moral discipline? No! The old building they demolished, and a new building they did not raise in its place. The child knows how to despise the old custom, and does not know how to amend his ways and his doings; and he is a wayward son, one who throws off moral discipline, more than he was before. There is a son who is a hypocrite toward our fathers, and there are fathers who conceal their doings from the sons; and there is no truth and no

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[31] Translator: Prov. 3:4.

[32] Translator: Jer. 22:15.

[33] Translator: Isa. 36:6.

faithfulness. Of this it is said: 'There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, and yet is not washed from its filth.'"[34] And as I live, that complainant too is very much in the right in his words; but by [mere] words the evil will not be corrected. True it is that the old building can no longer stand because of its age and the many breaches in it, and they have already begun to break apart its foundation. But every upright man in whose heart the fear of God has touched, and whose hand finds great strength, should strive to repair the breach of the house, and each one should bring the stone that he has with him to repair the breach and to put it in good order; and as stone is gathered to stone the building will be completed. And as a stone for the wall, or as a beam for the timber,[35] I reckoned this work of mine. And O that my request might come, and the many and perfect builders would labor to set up a strong building in place of the ruin; for without this, we are all lost.

And with this the practical part is completed. And with the explanation I have given of it, the objection of one who might object is removed from me: why I took up only these few commandments in the practical part — of worship, the reading of the *Shema'*, *tefillin*, *tzitzit*, *mezuzah* and the commandments of the festivals. For the intention of the book was not to be a *Shulhan 'Arukh* in laws and customs, but its intention was to be a guide for beginning children and a little one starting to learn, like a convert who comes to be converted; and I have fulfilled, in the study of children, the saying which Hillel fulfilled with the convert who came to learn the whole Torah from him. He said to him: [p. —] מה דעלך סאני לחברך לא תעביד, זהו עקר התורה, ואידך פירושא, זיל גמור — "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the essence of the Torah, and the rest is its commentary; go and learn it."[36] So the child need not know more than the things I have mentioned to him, and the rest, when he grows up, he will learn. And this is the very reason that I did not mention anything from the Talmud and the words of the scribes; for had I brought these subjects into it, I would have departed from the purpose I intended in it, which was nothing but to establish a book for the education of children in the foundations of religion and faith. And in these there are no disputes in the Talmud, and it has no business with them, since the beliefs are not matters into which doubt or divided opinions may fall. And also the little that I wrote of the practical part is such that no adherent of the religion can escape doing it and still be reckoned an adherent of the religion. And the laws with which the Talmud occupies itself have no place at the beginning of children's study. Therefore I called the work which comprises all the teachings of faith and the practical commandments that come into it by the name *Yesode ha-Dat*, for all of them are great and strong foundations upon which the divine religion is built.

And now I have a word for the instructor and teacher into whose hand this book will come, to teach his pupils by it. Let him know well that this work is not like other works, in which the author

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[34]Translator: Prov. 30:12.

[35]Translator: cf. Hab. 2:11.

[36]Translator: BT Shabbat 31a, Hillel's reply to the would-be convert (Aramaic).

arranges his words in an ordering of all the things needed for that subject, so that there is nothing to add and nothing to take away. Not so this work and its subject; for the author has only to arrange his words and his teachings in the order that the subject will bear, from the point of view of the logic of the soul, in question and answer, in headings. And the teacher must be wise and understanding of his own knowledge, and must examine the boy who is before him, so as to explain to him the subject of every answer in a broad explanation, according to what the boy's knowledge can bear. For example, if mention is made in some answer of the wisdom of God and His ordering, and of the arrangement and the capacity revealed in His works, the teacher must clarify these subjects by parables and proofs from the order of the creatures, until the pupil understands them. And the words of the book do nothing but awaken and stir the teacher to the subjects, in chapter headings; and he must enlarge on each and every matter according to its subject, until he has completed the subject for his pupil, after the manner of "Give to a wise man, and he will become yet wiser."[37] And it may be compared to the design of a figure that a painter has outlined in external lines — the place of the head, the body, the hands and feet and the rest of the limbs — and the pupil must fill in these empty places sketched by lines with various hues and colors, to produce a complete picture. And likewise, it may happen that the pupil asks another question after the preceding answer, among the questions not mentioned in the book; his teacher must know how to answer him on the subject from his own mind. And one who does not know how to use that work in this way will miss the proper mark at which it was aimed.

And I composed that work in the Hebrew language first, for in my opinion — and every person of upright understanding will agree with me — every subject of the matters of religion and faith ought to be written in the language in which the religion is written, and especially in the Hebrew religion, whose religion [p. —] is bound up with the language, and its concepts are tied to its words like a flame to the wick; and there is no need of proof or demonstration for this, other than feeling; and whoever does not feel this, in vain are proofs spoken to him.

And with this I have revealed the reason that caused me to compose this work, and the intention with which I intended to benefit by it. Whoever will receive it, my heart too will rejoice; and whoever will not be willing to receive it — behold, I have done him no harm by it whatsoever. And I trust that, if some despise it, will not days yet come when others will find pleasure in it? For "the refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold,"[38] and time weighs books. And how many works, upon whose coming forth to the light it was said, "Bring them out and let them be burned,"[39] were after many days remembered again and became an everlasting light! And let the author trust — he who has not made gold his hope in his work, nor silver his confidence — that his work will

[37] Translator: Prov. 9:9.

[38] Translator: Prov. 17:3; 27:21.

[39] Translator: Gen. 38:24.

not be despised. And let those who meditate meditate as they will; I hold fast to my integrity, to speak the truth in my heart, and to write what I have found to be correct and useful.

[p. —] Second Introduction (הקדמה שנייה)

Since in this work I have departed from the number of principles (עקרים, *'ikkarim*) held among us, and have made a new division between the foundations of religion (יסודי הדת, *yesode ha-dat*) and the teachings of faith (למודי האמונה, *limmude ha-emunah*), it is fitting that I explain on what I relied in adopting a number other than the customary one, and what my view is of the distinction between the foundations of religion and the teachings of faith.

I have seen men of distinction — and they are few — who set their hearts to fix a definite number for the principles of faith. And of all the great sages of the later authorities, Maimonides (הרמב"ם, *ha-Rambam*) of blessed memory alone — he, the chief of those who speak on every matter of wisdom and knowledge — began to count a number for the principles of faith; and in the Commentary on the Mishnah, tractate *Helek*,[40] he there set a statute and an ordinance of thirteen principles, and they are: (a) the existence of the Name; (b) the removal of corporeality; (c) unity; (d) eternity [*a parte ante*]; (e) that He alone is fit to be prayed to; (f) prophecy; (g) the superiority of the rank of Moses; (h) Torah from Heaven; (i) that it will not be changed; (j) God's knowledge; (k) reward and punishment; (l) the coming of the Messiah; (m) the resurrection of the dead. And the number of these principles afterwards spread through the nation and became for them a statute. And though indeed these beliefs are all established, such that every adherent of the Hebrew religion is obliged to believe them, yet to take them under the name of foundations of religion [p. —] and principles of faith, and to assign to all those enumerated one and the same value — this is a matter that requires investigation. For among these principles there are some that are foundations of religion, such that if one doubts one of them, the existence of religion as a whole is annulled; and there are among these principles some that are teachings of faith, on which the existence of a divine religion as a whole does not depend. And if so, then if Maimonides' intention was the foundations of religion, he added to their number; and if his intention was the teachings of faith, he diminished their number — as will be made clear below.

And the first who raised a hand against the number of Maimonides' principles is the perfect sage Rabbi Joseph Albo of blessed memory, in his *Sefer ha-'Ikkarim*, devoted to explaining this subject; and I will bring his words as he gave them and in his language — his objections and his difficulties, and the conclusion of his opinion — and afterwards I will explain my own decision, in what I agree with him and in what I diverge from him. He wrote in chapter 3 of the First Treatise, and these are his words:[41] "Now Maimonides of blessed memory set them as thirteen principles, etc.

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[40] Translator: Maimonides' Commentary on the Mishnah, introduction to Sanhedrin chapter 10 (*Perek Helek*).

[41] Translator: Joseph Albo (c. 1380-1444), *Sefer ha-'Ikkarim*, I, 3; the following quotations are from I, 1; III, 14; III, 17 (printed "17" for the chapter of this treatise); I, 4; I, 15; and I, 23.

And we ask first, concerning these principles which he laid down: why did he set them at that number? For according to the meaning of the term 'principle' (*'ikkar*), the principles ought to be laid down as: the existence of the Name, prophecy, and Torah from Heaven; knowledge and providence; and reward and punishment. And why does he count unity and the removal of corporeality among the principles? For although they are true beliefs, among the principles they have no place! Since the existence of a divine religion does not depend on them. And still more difficult than these is the principle that it is fitting to worship Him and no other; for although it is one of the commandments, as it is written, 'You shall have no [other gods],' etc.,[42] nevertheless it is not a principle on which the religion as a whole depends." And before this, in chapter 1 of that Treatise, he wrote, and these are his words: "And likewise the coming of the Messiah, which Maimonides of blessed memory counted as one of the principles of the Torah of Moses — and this is a very astonishing thing, etc." See his words there. Again he wrote in chapter 14 of the Third Treatise, and these are his words: "Maimonides of blessed memory set as one of the principles that the Torah will not be abrogated or changed, and he based this on what is mentioned in the Torah, 'You shall not add to it nor take away from it.'[43] And his words in this require great investigation: whence did our Rabbi derive this root? For the verse only warns that *we* shall not add or take away from the commandments; but what proof is there that He, may He be blessed, will not add or take away when His supreme wisdom so decrees? And if so, even if the divine religion as a whole will not be abrogated, it is possible that it may change in part, from the forbidden to the permitted and the reverse." And in chapter 17 of this [Treatise] he wrote, and these are his words: "In brief, I see no proof and no necessity that it should be a root by itself, either for divine religion in general or for the Torah of Moses in particular, that the Torah will not be abrogated or changed."

[p. —] And this is his view on matters of faith. He said in chapter 4 of the First Treatise, and these are his words: "The principles that are general and necessary for a divine religion are three: (a) the existence of the Name; (b) Torah from Heaven; (c) reward and punishment. And from these three principles branches and boughs will issue." And in chapter 15 of it he wrote, and these are his words: "The roots (השרשים, *ha-shorashim*) that branch out from the three principles which we have mentioned are eight. From the first principle, the existence of the Name, all the boughs dependent on it will branch out, and they are four: (a) unity; (b) that He is neither a body nor a power in a body; (c) that He has no dependence on time; (d) that He is removed from deficiencies. From the second principle three boughs will branch out, and they are: (a) the knowledge of the Name; (b) prophecy; (c) the mission of the messenger. And from the third principle one bough will branch out: individual providence." And after he had set out the principles of faith and their boughs, he further added other matters of faith, but these are not included under the aforementioned, being accepted beliefs. And he wrote in chapter 23 of it: "The beliefs which every

[42]Translator: Exod. 20:3.

[43]Translator: Deut. 13:1 (Eng. 12:32).

adherent of the religion of Moses ought to believe are: (a) the creation of the world *ex nihilo*; (b) the superiority of the degrees of the prophecy of Moses our master, peace be upon him, over all the prophets; (c) that the Torah as a whole will not be abrogated unless with the revelation of the light of the Lord, in a great public manner, as at the first, and that He may add and take away matters according to the time and the recipient; (d) that the perfection of man is possible to attain through a single commandment of the commandments of the Torah; (e) the coming of the Messiah; (f) the resurrection of the dead. And the difference between these beliefs and those that preceded is that these are dependent only on the religion of Moses alone, whereas those that preceded are obligatory for every believer in a divine religion, according to his view."

And after I have testified for you that the number of Maimonides' principles is not a necessary number and not a precise number, and have made known to you faithfully the view of the author of the *'Ikkarim* of blessed memory and the division of the principles and the boughs according to his view, I will declare my own view too.[44] And I say that, though the author of the *'Ikkarim* was right in what he raised against Maimonides of blessed memory, and his division is more correct, I have nevertheless found it right to divide the principles in a division that is more distinct, an arrangement that is more upright, and in terms that sit better upon the concepts. For every technical term is a fixed general rule: every word and every expression ought not to comprise less nor more than the concept that is denoted by it; and with the mention of the word or the expression, the understanding will quickly grasp the concept, in such a way that it points to it — and all the more must one be careful in this in matters for tender children young in days.

In accordance with these words, I have laid it down as a foundation that the principles (העקרים) are roots (שרשים); and in every root I have counted the branches (סעיפי האמונה) and the teachings (הלמודים) that issue from them. Three are the roots of faith: (a) [p. —] existence of God; 2) the existence of prophecy; 3) the eternity of the human soul. These are called the roots of faith, for they are the foundations of religion, and without them no divine religion can be conceived: for where there is no God there is no religion of God; and where there is no prophecy, through which God revealed Himself to human beings, there is no one through whom the religion of God could reach them; and where there is no survival of the human soul after death, a religion of God is superfluous to man, for a political religion suffices him for temporal well-being, as will be explained in the Entrance. And these are the branches of each root, and the teachings that issue from them. From the first root branch out six teachings of faith: 1) God is the Creator of all; 2) God is infinite; 3) He is not a body; 4) He is one; 5) He is unique; 6) He is perfect. From the second root branch out three teachings of faith: 1) God gave the Torah through Moses His prophet; 2) the prophet Moses is the chosen of the prophets; 3) the Torah that is in our hands has not been altered. From the third root branches out the belief in temporal and eternal reward and punishment, and from it divide three teachings: 1) God alone rules the world; 2) He exercises providence over

[44]Translator: the phrase echoes Job 32:10, 17.

individuals; 3) man possesses free choice in his actions. For without these three teachings the existence of reward of body and soul, or of material and spiritual, temporal and eternal reward, cannot be conceived: for if you remove the sole rule of God in the world, it is not possible for you to ascribe to Him the good and evil things that befall a man in his temporal life as coming from Him; and if you remove individual providence, how is it possible that a man should be rewarded and punished according to his deeds, if all that happens to him is according to chance? And if you remove free choice from man, it would not be just that he be rewarded or punished for deeds that he was compelled to do. After these come two teachings of faith that do not branch out from the three roots set out above, but are received from the Torah and the Prophets, namely: 1) the coming of the Messiah; 2) the resurrection of the dead.[45]

[p. —] Entrance

I. The Three Kinds of Religion

Dat דת [religion, law] is a name applied to every command and right ordering that embraces many people: whether it be a single command, as in "and a decree [*dat*] was issued";[46] or many commands, as in "all who knew law [*dat*] and judgment";[47] whether they be the statutes of the state, as in "among the laws [*datei*] of Persia and Media";[48] or the statutes of God, as in "from His right hand a fiery law [*esh dat*] unto them."[49] And religions in general are of three kinds: **natural religion** [*dat sikhli*, religion of reason], **political religion** [*dat medini*], **divine religion** [*dat elohi*]. Natural religion is implanted in man from birth, in the rational soul that he possesses. Political religion is ordained by wise lawgivers for the governance of the kingdom and the nation, for temporal well-being. Divine religion is that which is given to a people through God's revelation to the prophet of the generation, to guide the nation to eternal felicity.

II. Natural Religion in Particular

Natural religion makes known to man: 1) the existence of God, a perfect and eternal Being, Creator of all, to whom honor and greatness are due; 2) the love of a man for his fellow as himself. The first knowledge he attains by inquiry: for all existing things have not existed from eternity, but came forth from things like them that preceded them, and those preceding ones came forth from things like them before them; and so things go on as cause and effect, until they arrive at one head who is the cause of them all, and He is a First that has no beginning, since it is impossible

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[45]Translator: The scheme of three roots (שרשים) with derived teachings follows Joseph Albo, *Sefer ha-'Ikkarim* (15th c.), whose three principles are the existence of God, revelation (Torah from Heaven), and reward and punishment; Ben-Ze'ev's arrangement accounts for all of Maimonides' Thirteen Principles (the Messiah and the resurrection being treated as received tradition rather than derived teachings).

[46]Translator: Esth. 9:14.

[47]Translator: Esth. 1:13.

[48]Translator: Esth. 1:19.

[49]Translator: Deut. 33:2 (מימינו אשדת למו, traditionally read *esh dat*, "a fiery law").

that a thing should make itself. Therefore there must be an eternal Being, without beginning or end, who brought all these into existence out of nothing. And when the thinking person sees that all created things, though they differ in species, are all directed toward one end, he will judge that there is one Maker of them all; and when he sees the great and wonderful wisdom revealed in all created things, and the good purpose intended in them, he will judge that their Creator is wise, good and perfect, and to one who is such, honor and greatness are fitting. The second knowledge he attains through the natural desire, present in the heart of every person, for self-preservation; and his self-preservation is not possible without the help of his fellow, [p. —] for a man alone could not obtain the least part of his wants and his many needs. And if so, if he desires his own preservation, he is obliged to desire the preservation of his fellow: to do for his fellow all that he would wish his fellow to do for him, and to withhold from him all that would harm him were his fellow to do it to him.

III. Political Religion in Particular

Political religion makes known to man the duties and acts that it is incumbent on him to do and to refrain from in the covenant of society, toward the people, the land and the kingdom in which he dwells. It regulates the laws of mine and thine, and determines reward and punishment: for those who keep the charges of society, for the maintenance of the covenant of peace and tranquillity and the prosperity of the state; and for those who transgress them and break the tranquillity of society and the prosperity of the state.

IV. Divine Religion in Particular

Divine religion determines the true opinions and beliefs that a man is to believe, and the praiseworthy deeds to be done according to the will of God and for the perfection of his soul, by which he will merit eternal happiness.

V. The Need for Natural Religion and Its Benefit

The religion of reason is first, and prior by nature to all religions. It gives one guidance to all the families of the earth, for it embraces them all; and upon the two pillars of its knowledge, which teaches the recognition of God and the love of one's neighbors, the covenant of society rests. The other religions cannot suffice without these two chief teachings.

VI. The Need for Political Religion and Its Benefit

Political religion establishes peace and unity among the inhabitants of the land, and orders the affairs of human beings so that they may reach their desired haven,[50] and it makes level the ways by which they may draw near, help and benefit one another, since it is hard for a man to attain all his needs alone without the help of his fellow. For his nature compels him to dwell in society; not

[50]Translator: Ps. 107:30.

like the beast and the animal, which, as soon as it is born, stands on its feet and walks by itself, and some suckle at their mother's breasts for a few days and afterwards leave her and dwell alone, having no need of or help from their like. But man, when he comes forth from the womb, cannot move hither and thither, and is cast upon his parents to carry him, to lay him down and lift him up, to feed him and give him drink and clean him, until he is weaned and stands on his feet and begins [p. —] to speak; and still he cannot leave his parents, who feed and clothe him and teach him the way of wisdom and of a craft.

And just as he cannot leave his parents while he is a youth, so he cannot leave people when he is grown, to dwell alone, because of the many preparations he needs before he arrives at what he requires in food, clothing and dwelling: ploughing, sowing, reaping, gathering, threshing, grinding, kneading, baking and sifting, washing, spinning, weaving, cutting and sewing, hewing wood and quarrying stone, digging and building, and all the many and various tools needed for these crafts. For this reason people must gather together in villages and towns.

And when people gather together, quarrels and contentions arise over their possessions, over mine and thine; and if each man did what was right in his own eyes,[51] the strong would overpower the weak and say, "Everything is mine." So people agreed to choose for themselves wise and upright men, and these would enact just statutes to order their affairs in every matter of dispute and judgment; and the men who had a case would bring the cause of both before the judges, and he whom they condemned would pay his neighbor.[52] Yet even these statutes would not be kept without a ruling hand that has the power to compel people to uphold these statutes; and that is the king. Into his hand are committed all the duties of government and the care for its needs and for the keeping of its statutes. He chooses counselors with whom he takes sweet counsel[53] to oversee the affairs of the state, and whatever is agreed upon among them is issued as a decree in all the provinces of the kingdom to be carried out. He appoints judges and officials in every district, who see to it that the statutes are kept, and officers who coerce the recalcitrant by force. It is further the duty of the government to make provisions for the needs of the public, such as the paving of roads and the building of ferries and bridges, the post for letters and dispatches, houses of education and learning and academies of the wise, and all works of art, and to increase diligence and skill in every kind of trade and commerce. To all these matters the statutes of the state are directed, to establish the prosperity of the land and the tranquillity of its inhabitants; as [the Sages] said: "Pray for the welfare of the kingdom, for were it not for the fear of it, men would swallow one another alive";[54] and in this connection they also said: "The law of the kingdom is law."[55]

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[51]Translator: Cf. Judg. 17:6; 21:25.

[52]Translator: Echoing Exod. 22:8, with "judges" (פלילים, cf. Exod. 21:22) in place of the verse's *elohim*.

[53]Translator: Cf. Ps. 55:15.

[54]Translator: Mishnah Avot 3:2 (R. Ḥanina, deputy of the priests).

[55]Translator: Aramaic דינא דמלכותא דינא (*dina de-malkhuta dina*), the talmudic principle of Samuel (BT Nedarim 28a; Gittin 10b; Bava Kamma 113a; Bava Batra 54b).

VII. The Need for Divine Religion and Its Benefit

Everything that God has revealed through a prophet, concerning knowledge of His essence, His attributes and His qualities, and His commandments, above the way of nature, is called the religion of God; these are written in the Torah and in the books of the Prophets, and together they are called by the name Holy Scriptures מקראי קדש [*mikra'ei kodesh*]. [p. —] The purpose of divine religion is to make it easier for man to guide his soul aright in moral qualities and to attain his end in the perfection of the soul; and for this purpose it has revealed to us clearly the things by means of which perfection is acquired.

Divine religion in no way annuls anything of the opinions and moral qualities that are required by the religion of reason; rather, it widens and completes their content, in matters that the hand of reason cannot reach to attain. For although the rational soul in man understands much of the true opinions and beliefs and the acceptable deeds, yet without a religion ordained by God, human understanding alone does not suffice to reach perfection in all these matters, for three reasons:

a) No man is wise when he is born, nor intelligent when he comes forth from the womb, for "man is born a wild ass's colt," and "a hollow man" gains understanding[56] by study, which brings his intellect from potentiality to actuality. And the hindrances by which a man is kept from studying in his youth are many: there is one whose parents could not afford to support him with teachers and instructors; there is one whose evil inclination overpowered him, and the heat of his youthful nature kept him from studying and perfecting himself; or weakness of body, or illness, or some other cause prevented him from acquiring understanding and knowledge in his youth; and when he grows up his affairs keep him too busy to gain insight. And there is one whose nature God has deprived of wisdom, and has not given him a share in understanding.[57] Therefore divine religion is needed, to guide people aright, the learned as well as the one who has ceased to learn, the wise as well as the ignorant.

b) The opinions of human beings are many and various; even the wise do not agree in opinions and beliefs, and the controversy among them increases. Divine religion measures out everything and removes the controversies and the divisions of opinion, so that there may be one agreement among those who keep the religion, and doubt and perplexity may be removed concerning any opinion and any act.

c) There are commandments and acts in divine religion that His supreme wisdom has decreed, and human reason has no entry into them, to affirm or deny them; and these commandments are called *ḥukkim* חקים [statutes]. Likewise religion obliges us to acts and customs that are a sign and a remembrance of the surpassing benefits God has bestowed on us, which human reason likewise is

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[56]Translator: Job 11:12, ואיש נבוב ילבב ועיר פרא אדם יולד, "but a hollow man will get understanding when a wild ass's colt is born a man."

[57]Translator: Cf. Job 39:17.

insufficient to measure; and these are called *'edot* עדות [testimonies]. For this reason the commandments of the Torah are divided into these divisions: *'edot*, *ḥukkim* and *mishpatim* משפטים [ordinances].[58] *'Edot* and *ḥukkim* I have explained; *mishpatim* are the laws of property, fines and death penalties, such as flogging, monetary punishment, death by the court, and *karet* [extirpation].

[p. —] The aim of divine religion is to make man prosper, both in what is temporal and in what is eternal. No one will deny that a perfect faith in a divine religion and the keeping of its commandments bring a man to the life of the world to come. But not everyone knows how it will also make him prosper with temporal prosperity in the life of this world;[59] and this is the knowledge that I shall now set forth.[60] The good doctrine contained in it, that God exercises providence over individual human beings and orders the affairs of each and every man and directs what befalls him — this teaching by itself would suffice to give a man's heart rest throughout his life: whatever his lot may be, good or bad, he will be at rest and quiet, he will not rage or complain, since he knows that it is God who directs what befalls him, and that all that happens to him is by His will, and His will is very good. And even apart from that great foundation, divine religion is a wall to protect him and all that is his from another's laying hands on him. For in the fifth Word of the Ten Words it commands that the younger obey the elder, and that the recipient of a kindness recognize the kindness of his benefactor; and just as "a son honors his father," so a servant [honors] his master,[61] and a people its king, its princes, its judges and its officials; and where the lesser listen to the greater and to those wiser than they, there is order, peace and tranquillity in the land. In the sixth Word of the Ten Words it commands the safeguarding of a man's life and body, and of the life and body of his fellow, from a mortal blow. In the seventh Word it commands the safeguarding of one's neighbor's wife from being seduced to betray the faith of her husband, and the safeguarding of one's own body from the lewdness that brings many diseases, want and poverty. The eighth Word sets a guard over a man's wealth, his possessions, his goods and his riches, against violence, fraud and cunning, so that another may not lay his hand on anything of his by force or by cunning. The ninth Word sets a guard over a man's name and honor, that it be not profaned nor scorched by vain and false words, by talebearing and slander, by spreading an evil report and the like. The tenth Word curbs a man's coveting and desire, that he not long for superfluities, and puts a bridle on his craving; for unbridled coveting and the mastery of desire, envy and jealousy of others — these are the springs of the great evils by which the calamity of men, their ruin and the destruction of the covenant of society grow great.

And from all that I have said you will see that each of the three religions has a special virtue, and each is good in itself, and in combination they complete man's condition. For although the religion

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[58]Translator: The triad of Deut. 6:20.

[59]Translator: חלד, "this world, lifetime" (Ps. 39:6; 89:48).

[60]Translator: Cf. Job 15:17.

[61]Translator: Mal. 1:6, בן יכבד אב ועבד אדניו, "a son honors his father, and a servant his master."

of reason is engraved on the tablet of man's heart with the stylus of nature — **do not do to your fellow anything that would be evil in your eyes were it done to you**[62] — yet there is one whose heart is a heart of stone, who murders and steals and deceives and commits every iniquity; therefore divine religion supports that religion, saying: "You shall not steal," etc. And there is one who spurns the commandments of God, "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily";[63] and if so, the tranquillity of society would cease; therefore the eye of political justice keeps watch over the thief and the wrongdoer, to chastise him through the judges. And there is one who sins [p. —] in secret, where the eye of the judges of the land cannot reach him to punish him; upon him falls the judgment of God, "whose eyes are open upon all the ways of men,"[64] the revealed and the hidden, and He renders him his work and his reward before Him.[65]

VIII. The Need for the Tradition of the Scribes and Its Benefit

Divine religion and the commandments contained in it could not have specified all its laws and matters in all their particulars according to place and time; and there was need for Scribes and Sages to explain and particularize the laws in all their aspects, such as the laws of the kinds of work forbidden and permitted on the Sabbath and on the festivals, the laws of betrothal and divorce, the laws of property, holiness and impurity, the forbidden and the permitted, and the like. But it has befallen these matters, as it befalls every matter that depends on the weighing of human opinion, that perplexities, controversies and doubts have multiplied in them; and it is impossible to arrange them as one can arrange the commandments made clear in the Torah, for their details are many, and they are unsuitable to be set before tender children in their studies.

IX. Of God's Revelation to Human Beings

From the days of old God appeared to men in generation after generation and spoke with them. In the beginning He appeared to Adam, the creature of His hands, and placed him in the Garden of Eden, and commanded him not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, and appointed to him his punishment upon his transgressing His command. And when men multiplied and corrupted their way exceedingly, and God decreed to bring a flood to destroy all flesh, He revealed Himself to Noah, a righteous and blameless man, and commanded him to build himself an ark, and to bring into it two of every living thing, to keep them alive from the waters of the Flood. At the end of many days there arose Abraham, the friend of God, who knew Him and made His name known in the world; to him God promised great benefits: to raise up from his descendants a people, to give them a religion and the inheritance of a land; and He fulfilled His promise after him to his son Isaac and to his grandson Jacob. The sons of Jacob were twelve; they begot many sons and became

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[62] Translator: Cf. Hillel's dictum, BT Shabbat 31a: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow."

[63] Translator: Eccl. 8:11.

[64] Translator: Jer. 32:19.

[65] Translator: Cf. Isa. 40:10; 62:11.

twelve tribes, and they sojourned in Egypt many years, and the Egyptians treated them very badly with hard labor, until God appeared to Moses and made him a messenger to redeem the children of Israel from Egypt. When they went out of Egypt, in the third month, there took place the great vision in which the glory of God was revealed before the eyes of all the people on Mount Sinai, and He spoke the Ten Words, and gave Moses the rest of the commandments, which are written in the Book of the Torah. From the days of Moses, prophets almost never ceased from Israel until the end of the Babylonian exile; and these are their names: Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi — apart from other prophets the words of whose prophecies have not become known to us. [p. —]

X. The Contents of the Holy Scriptures

All the books included under the name Holy Scriptures are twenty-four, and they are divided into Torah, Prophets and Writings. The Torah Moses wrote; the books of the Prophets were written by prophecy from God; and the Writings were written by holy men. In the Torah there are five books. The first book:[66]

Genesis בראשית contains the account of the creation of heaven and earth; the formation of Adam and Eve and their sin with the Tree of Knowledge; the order of the generations down to the deluge of the Flood; the building of a new world, down to the building of the Tower of Babel and their dispersion and the confusion of tongues; the calling of Abraham and the promise to him; and the generations of Jacob and his sons and what befell them until their going down to Egypt, and Joseph's greatness in the land of Egypt and his death. The second book:

Exodus שמות, the continuation, is the account of what befell the children of Israel, their servitude and their liberation and their journeying in the wilderness, the splitting of the Red Sea and the giving of the Torah, the descent of the manna and the flowing of water from the rock, the sin of the Calf, and the making of the Tabernacle. The third book:

Leviticus ויקרא contains the laws of the sacrifices, the priests and the Levites, and among them commandments concerning holiness of the body, and the duties of man and love of one's neighbors, and the laws of the Sabbatical year and Jubilees, and the festivals, and admonitions. The fourth book:

Numbers במדבר contains the numbering of the people and their division into standards, and the people's complaining on the way, Meribah and murmuring, the evil report of the spies and the rebellion of Korah, the wars against Midian and the conquest of the kings Sihon and Og across the

[66]Translator: Throughout this list the ordinal "the Nth book" is printed at the end of each paragraph and refers to the book described in the paragraph that follows.

Jordan, the laws of vows, the order of the people's journeys up to the Jordan, and the appointment of Joshua as commander of the host. The fifth book:

Deuteronomy דברים is called *Mishneh Torah* [Repetition of the Law], for many commandments are repeated in it and new commandments are added in it; it contains Moses' admonitions to his people before his death, and a prophecy concerning the future, in song. The order of the Former Prophets. The sixth book:

Joshua יהושע: the account of the crossing of the Jordan, the conquest of the land and its division by lot among the twelve tribes, and Joshua's admonition and his death. The seventh book:

Judges שופטים: the account of thirty-one[67] judges who saved Israel time after time when they were oppressed by their enemies, until a king reigned over them. The eighth book:

Ruth רות: the account of what happened to a family of upright stock from the tribe of Judah, from which the kingdom of the House of David descended. The ninth book:

Samuel שמואל contains the account of the kings of Israel. It begins with the account of two judges, Eli and Samuel; and in Samuel's old age he made king over the people the first king, Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin; and the account of his wars against the Philistines and his mighty deeds; and when he transgressed the command of the prophet in the war [p. —] against Amalek, David was chosen to be king in his place; and David's deeds while he was Saul's commander, and Saul's pursuit of him until Saul's death. And the book of Second Samuel contains the account of David's reign, his wars, his mighty deeds and his experiences with his sons, over a period of forty years. The tenth book:

First Kings מלכים א׳ contains the [last] year of David's reign and his death, the anointing of Solomon and his reign, the building of the Temple, his deeds, his wisdom and his death; the rending of the kingdom of Israel into two royal houses, the kingdom of the House of David with Judah and Benjamin, and the kingdom of Israel over the ten tribes; and the account of four kings of Judah and eight kings of Israel and their wars. *Second Kings* מלכים ב׳ contains the continued account of sixteen kings of Judah and twelve kings of Israel; the exile of the ten tribes to Assyria with Hoshea their last king; and afterwards the exile of Judah and Benjamin with their king to Babylon, the overthrow of the people's government, the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple. With this book the chronicles of the House of Israel are complete, from the time they became a nation until their interruption in the Babylonian exile. The eleventh book:

Isaiah ישעיה contains prophecies and words of admonition, promises of good and of evil, and the tidings of redemption from the Babylonian exile. The twelfth book:

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[67] Translator: Thus printed (ל״א); the Bible's judges are usually counted as twelve or thirteen, and the numeral is probably a misprint.

Jeremiah ירמיה contains words of admonition to the people, and warnings of the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the nation, both of which came to pass in his days, and he lamented over them. The thirteenth book:

Lamentations איכה: a poetic lament over the destruction of Jerusalem, the burning of the house of our God, and the exile of the people to Babylon. The fourteenth book:

Ezekiel יחזקאל: prophecies, likewise, concerning the evils destined to come upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; he prophesied in Babylon, for he had been exiled in the first [deportation] with Jeconiah. The fifteenth book:

The Twelve Prophets תרי עשר, whose prophecies are few, so that none of them would make a book by itself; they were joined together to be counted as the fifteenth book. **Hosea** rebuked the ten tribes for idolatry and corruption through lusts. **Joel**, whose time is not known, prophesied about a plague of heavy locusts, and roused the people to repentance. **Amos** likewise prophesied words of admonition to the ten tribes, and their exile to Assyria. **Obadiah** contains one prophecy, about the downfall of Edom. **Jonah** was sent to chastise the people of Nineveh, that they might turn from their evil. **Micah** rebuked the kings of Judah for their evil. **Nahum** prophesied the downfall of Assyria and the destruction of Nineveh. **Habakkuk** prophesied about the evils that the Chaldeans would do to Israel in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and the redemption of the people through the Persians. **Zephaniah** warns the people to turn from their evil, and likewise foretells the evils of Nebuchadnezzar and the redemption from Babylon. **Haggai** prophesied at the beginning of the building of the Second Temple, and roused the heart of the people to complete it. **Zechariah** also strengthens the hand of the builders of the Second Temple, and admonishes the people not to return to their former sins.

[p. —] *Malachi* מלאכי, the seal of the prophets, rebukes the despising of the commandments of the Lord and of the priestly gifts, and those who deny providence, and announces the coming of Elijah the prophet. After the Twelve begin the books of the Writings. The sixteenth book:

Daniel דניאל contains miracles and wonders that he performed and that were performed for him: his rescue from the lions' den, and the rescue of his three companions from the fiery furnace; and prophecies, in the manner of riddles, concerning four kingdoms and the wars of the Hasmonean house. The eighteenth book:[68]

Ezra עזרא contains the account of the history of those who came up from the Babylonian exile, and the building of the Second Temple and its completion.

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[68] Translator: Thus printed; the numbering of the books in this part of the list is irregular (no number follows Ezra or Proverbs, and "eighteenth" follows Daniel where "seventeenth" is expected).

Nehemiah נחמיה: in the account of the rest of those who came up from the exile, the building of the walls of Jerusalem, and the resettlement of the cities of Judah. The nineteenth book:

Esther אסתר: the account of what happened to the Jews at the beginning of the building of the Second Temple, in the days of King Ahasuerus, on account of which event [we hold] the Purim feast. The twentieth book:

Chronicles דברי הימים: Ezra began it, and the Sages after him completed it. It begins with the genealogy of the tribes, and records the order of the generations written in the Torah from Adam down to the tribes; it traces the genealogy of each and every tribe, some down to his own time and some far from his time; but its chief aim is the genealogy of the tribe of Judah, for the sake of the kingdom of the House of David, and it traces his generations down to the tenth generation after Jeconiah, which was many days after Ezra, as I have made clear in the Introduction that I composed to the Prophets and Writings.[69] It repeats the history of the kings of Judah and Israel from Saul to the destruction of the First Temple, with some change of details from what is narrated in the books of Samuel and Kings. After this come the poetical books. The twenty-first book:

Job איוב: its chief subject is to clarify the opinions of human beings concerning providence. It is clothed in the parable of a man named Job, who was righteous, blameless and God-fearing, and perfect in all three perfections — in body, in possessions, in soul — and suddenly all his good things were lost to him in an evil venture,[70] and he was smitten with many pains, though he had done no violence;[71] and he bore all this with trust and with faith in his God; and when he had stood the test, the Lord did good to him in his latter end — to teach from this that one should trust in the Lord and stand firm in His trial. The twenty-second book:

Psalms תהלים contains songs and praises, prayers and thanksgivings, fit for every person to praise and glorify with them. The twenty-third book:

Proverbs משלי contains moral teachings and good instruction, in praise of wisdom and in condemnation of folly.

Ecclesiastes קהלת contains rational inquiries into the affairs of the world and its vanities, and [teaches that] all a man's toil in his affairs is [vanity] unless his delight be in the fear of the Lord. The twenty-fourth book:

Song of Songs שיר השירים: a song containing man's love for God,[72] in the words of a lover and his beloved. There is also one more book that is not counted among the twenty-four holy books, because its author lived after the closing of Scripture; and it too is precious: [p. —] *Ben Sira* בן סירא

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[69]Translator: Ben-Ze'ev's *Mavo el Mikra'ei Kodesh* (Vienna, 1810), his introduction to the Prophets and Writings.

[70]Translator: Eccl. 5:13.

[71]Translator: Cf. Job 16:17; Isa. 53:9.

[72]Translator: המקום, *ha-Makom*, "the Omnipresent," a rabbinic name of God.

contains moral proverbs and good instruction, reproofs of life,[73] the praise of wisdom, and the praise of the righteous men of every generation.

XI. How a Person Is to Fulfill His Religion

Since divine religion was given so that through it man might attain true knowledge of God and of His will — how he is to honor Him and with what he is to serve Him — I shall now make known that man ought to fulfill his religion in thought and in deed:

a) He who loves the honored Name, and honors Him and His words in his heart, and believes in them and in their interpretations; who remembers God in all his ways, and sets Him before him[74] in all his deeds, and gives his soul over to His will; who trusts in Him, and hopes for His goodness, and waits for His lovingkindness — he fulfills his religion in thought.

b) He who studies the Torah to know its commandments, and does what he knows he is to do, and refrains from what it has warned him not to do; who listens to the wise and the upright to receive good instruction from them, and teaches others the good and upright way — he practices his religion in deed.

XII. How a Person Is to Merit Eternal Life Through His Religion

Man merits eternal life through his religion when all that he does of it he does with devotion of the heart (*kavvanat ha-lev* כוונת הלב) and for the sake of Him for whom he does it. Not the multitude of commandments, nor the adding of deed to deed[75] without pure thought, nor a mass of great prayers, long, doubled and tripled in words, without understanding of the heart — not by these does a man merit eternal life, but by the perfection of the thing he does, even if it be little; for "these very things follow the intention of the heart,"[76] and through them a man merits eternal life. And what surpasses all is the love of man, the keeping of the covenant of society, and the bestowing of kindness, benefit and charity upon every person; and especially in a matter on which the saving of a life (*pikku'aḥ nefesh* פקוח נפש) depends: nothing stands before the saving of a single life and the rescue of a human life, before which all the commandments of the Torah are set aside.[77] This is what [the Sages] based in the Talmud on the saying of the prophet, "For they have forsaken Me and have not kept My Torah" — "Would that they had forsaken Me and kept My Torah!"[78] And this is a great principle in religion. Let no man imagine in his soul, when his way is pleasing to his God, that He will show him favor despite the corruption of his deeds and his qualities toward

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[73]Translator: Prov. 6:23.

[74]Translator: Cf. Ps. 16:8.

[75]Translator: Cf. Deut. 29:18; Isa. 30:1.

[76]Translator: A rabbinic dictum on the primacy of intention; cf. BT Sanhedrin 106b ("The Merciful One desires the heart") and BT Berakhot 17a.

[77]Translator: Cf. BT Yoma 82a, 85a–b.

[78]Translator: Jer. 16:11; the rabbinic comment is in JT Ḥagigah 1:7 and Lamentations Rabbah, Petiḥta 2.

human beings: all his prayers, the matters of the fasts, and his cry will not clear him of iniquity unless he purify his heart and his deeds toward man. Happy is he who is blameless with God and with men.

[p. —] *[Title page of the German part, printed in Hebrew letters (Judeo-German): "Religionslehrbuch für die jüdische Jugend beiderlei Geschlechts ..." by Jehuda Löb ben Seeb; not translated.]*

[p. —] *[German table of contents, printed in Hebrew letters (Judeo-German); not translated.]*

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[p. —] *[German table of contents (continued), printed in Hebrew letters; not translated.]*

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III. Of the Feast of Weeks.

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[79]Translator: The contents pages are in German printed in Hebrew characters (Judeo-German); the heading "Contents" (Inhalt) recurs at the head of each contents page. No page numbers are printed on these pages, and the entries carry none.

[80]Translator: The added second festival day observed outside the Land of Israel.

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V. Explanation of the ninth commandment.

VI. Explanation of the tenth commandment.

[p. 2] # Part One

Opening פתיחה

I. The purpose of beings in general

What is purpose (יעוד, yi'ud)?

Answer. Purpose means that in every thing there is to be found a design and an end (תכלית, *takhlit*) for the sake of which it was created.

By what can it be made clear that every thing has an end for the sake of which it was created?

Answer. Because God is a wise Maker, and the wise one does not make a thing for nothing; therefore we conclude that all things, from the topmost height of the stars down to the fine dust that is on the earth, have their appointed place in creation and an end for the sake of which they were created.[81]

Do all created things have one purpose?

Answer. No! For just as they differ in their constitution and in their rank, so they differ in their purposes and their ends. The purpose of the stone is not like the purpose of the tree, nor is the purpose of the tree like the purpose of the animal; and according to the superiority of a thing, so is the superiority of its end.

Can we know the purpose of each and every thing as it is?

Answer. There are things whose purposes and ends we know; but more numerous than they are those whose purposes and ends are hidden from us.

[p. 3 (German)] [p. 4] II. The purpose of man and his end

Which purpose is most precious for us to know above all?

Answer. The purpose most precious for us to know above all is the purpose of man.

Why is the purpose of man more precious for us to know than any other?

Answer. Because when we know what our purpose and our end are, we will seek to do all the deeds by which we may attain them.

Does the purpose of man differ from the purpose of every animal?

Answer. Yes! For the purpose of man is great and more precious than that of any animal, and his end is greater than their end.

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[81] כל פעל יהוה למענהו — "The LORD has made every thing for its purpose" (Prov. 16:4).

By what can this be made clear?

Answer. By the superiority of the rank of man over every living thing on the face of the earth; and we have said that according to the superiority of a thing, so is the superiority of its end.

In what does man excel the animal?

Answer. Man excels in understanding, in recognition and in skill. For he is intelligent and endowed with speech; he recognizes his Creator and contemplates all His works, and from them he understands the wisdom of God and His goodnesses; and he knows how to distinguish between good and evil, for which reason he is called the image of God.[82] And he has skill for the work of crafts, and by it he has become lord of the earth and rules over everything in it.[83]

[p. 5 (German)] [p. 6] ***What difference is there to be set between the purpose of man and the purpose of all other living creatures?***

Answer. Every beast and every wild creature and all in whose nostrils is the breath of life:[84] the life that they live on earth is their purpose and their end, and at their death every remnant of them ceases. But man: the life that he lives on earth is not his purpose and his end, but only a way and a passage towards an end more precious and greater than this life.

By what are these things made clear?

Answer. For every animal, from which wisdom, understanding and knowledge are withheld, knows nothing in its soul and comprehends nothing at all; it does not understand that it will die, nor is there within it a desire to remain after its death; and with the end of its life its purpose is finished. But man, whom God has graced with wisdom, understanding and knowledge, knows in his soul and comprehends many things and understands them, and many of them his thought is too short to know; and he knows beforehand that he is mortal, and finds within himself a desire to have a remnant after him. And were his purpose like the purpose of the animal, what need would he have of all these great things? Would it not have been better that he too be like one of them, were he not hoping for a future and for an eternal remnant after his death? And that is his end.

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[82] ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו בצלם אלהים ברא אתו — "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him" (Gen. 1:27); ויאמר יהוה אלהים הן האדם היה כאחד ממנו לדעת טוב ורע — "And the LORD God said: Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil" (ibid. 3:22).

[83] פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ וכבשה ורדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובכל חיה הרמשת על הארץ — "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that creeps upon the earth" (ibid. 1:28); ותחסרהו מעט מאלהים וכבוד והדר תעטרהו תמשילהו במעשי ידיך כל שתה תחת רגליו צנה ואלפים כלם ... צפור שמים ודגי הים — "Yet You have made him little less than divine and crowned him with glory and honour; You have made him rule over the works of Your hands, You have put all things under his feet: sheep and oxen, all of them … the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea" (Ps. 8:6, 7, 8). [Translator: the last words quoted, "the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea," are from Ps. 8:9.]

[84] Translator: An echo of Gen. 7:22.

If so, where then is the purpose of man in the world, and what must he do to come to his end?

Answer. The purpose of man in this world is to do that which God has given him the power and the skill to do; for on account of this God placed understanding within him: (a) by it he comprehends His works and His deeds, and understands in them His wisdom and His power, His mighty acts and His wonders; and when he understands and knows all these, he acknowledges God and His attributes, and praises Him for His greatness and thanks Him for His goodnesses; (b) by it he knows how to distinguish between the good deeds, in order to do them, and between [p. 7 (German)] [p. 8] the evil deeds, which he shall forsake. And these things are what lead a person to eternal life and to his happiness.

III. Man's need of a divine religion

Does the understanding of man attain to know of itself by what he may acquire his happiness?

Answer. The understanding of man does not attain to know of itself the truth in every matter, and what is right in all the deeds which he must do in order to merit his happiness.

By what, then, are all these things made known to him?

Answer. By the religion of God (דת אלוה, *dat Eloah*).

What is the religion of God?

Answer. It is a whole made up of teachings in matters of faith (אמונה, *emunah*) and in the laws of deeds which God has set before man, according to which he is to conduct himself all the days of his life, in order to attain by them to his end forever.

Why is it called the religion of God?

Answer. Because God revealed Himself in His glory and spoke with men and gave them the teaching of this religion.

IV. The divisions of the teachings of religion

What parts are comprised in the teachings of religion?

Answer. The religion of God is divided into two kinds of teachings: (a) the kind of teachings of faith; (b) the kind of teachings of practice (מעשה, *ma'aseh*).

What is comprised in the kind of teachings of faith?

Answer. In the kind of teachings of faith is comprised (a) that which man must believe concerning God and His attributes, (b) and that which he is to hope for from Him.

[p. 9 (German)] [p. 10] ***What is comprised in the kind of teachings of practice?***

Answer. In the kind of teachings of practice is comprised all that a man must do or refrain from according to the commandment of God.

First Discourse מאמר ראשון

Of the kind of teachings of faith.

Division 1 תכן א: What a man must believe[85]

Chapter 1: Explanation of the existence of God and His attributes

I. Explanation of the three chief foundations of the religion of God

What are the chief foundations of faith in the religion of God?

Answer. The chief foundations of faith in the religion of God are three:

(a) There is a God;
(b) There is divine prophecy;
(c) The soul of man is immortal.

II. Explanation of the existence of God in particular

What is comprised in the statement "There is a God"?

Answer. In the statement "There is a God" six teachings are comprised:

(a) God is the Creator of all;
(b) God is without end;
(c) God is not a body;
(d) God is one;
(e) God is unique;
(f) God is perfect.

[p. 11 (German)] [p. 12] ***What is to be understood in the teaching "God is the Creator of all"?***

Answer. By it is to be understood that God alone is the Creator of the world: He arranges it, He governs it and He sustains it. He created all existence out of nothing;[86] He arranged all their many

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[85] Translator: תכן (*tokhen*, "measured portion, arrangement") is the author's term for a subdivision of the Discourse; the German facing page has no equivalent heading.

[86] אנכי יהוה עשה כל נטה שמים לבדי רקע הארץ מאתי — "I am the LORD who makes all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by Myself" (Isa. 44:24). [Translator: the book prints the first word as אני.]

kinds in orders;[87] He gives life to them and governs them all according to His will;[88] and He sustains them all the days of the world,[89] and not a thing of His creatures perishes.

What is to be understood in the teaching "God is without end"?

Answer. By it is to be understood that God is a being living eternally and existing of Himself;[90] He was, is and will be, from everlasting to everlasting.[91] He has no [p. 13 (German)] [p. 14] beginning, for He was not created by another[92]; and He has no end, for He will not cease[93].

What is to be understood in the statement: God is not a body?[94]

Answer. In it one should understand that God has no likeness and no resemblance to a body[95], nor to anything that befalls a body. For every body has form and shape, is bounded in place, and is measurable in length, breadth and height; it is known through one of the five senses: by the sight of the eye, by the hearing of the ear, by the smell of the nose, by the taste of the tongue and palate, and by the touch of the hand; and it changes and passes away. But God, who is not a body, cannot be likened in form or shape[96]; no place contains Him[97]; He is not measured in length, breadth or

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[87] מי מנה חול ים ומי ספר אגלי מטר ומי שם צבא לימי עולם: מי תכן גבהי שמים מי מדד אפסי ארץ ומי כל תהום לעמק: אחד הוא אל, יחיד נורא ואדיר תקיף ושליט בכל: הוא אזן וחקר ותכן הכל על מכונו — "Who has counted the sand of the sea, and who has numbered the drops of rain, and who has fixed the host of the days of eternity? Who has gauged the heights of heaven, who has measured the ends of the earth, and who all the deep to its depth? One is God, unique, awesome and majestic, mighty and ruling over all; He weighed and searched out and established all things in their place" (Ben Sira 1:2, 6). [Translator: Ben Sira was then known only in Greek; the Hebrew here appears to be Ben-Ze'ev's own Hebrew rendering of the book, published in 1798. The German page cites the passage as 1:2, 7.]

[88] שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה המוציא במספר צבאם לכלם בשם יקרא — "Lift up your eyes on high and see who created these, who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name" (Isa. 40:26); אתה הוא יהוה לבדך אתה עשית את השמים שמי השמים וכל צבאם הארץ וכל אשר עליה הימים וכל אשר בהם ואתה מחיה את כלם וצבא השמים לך משתחוים — "You alone are the LORD; You made the heavens, the heaven of heavens and all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You give life to them all, and the host of heaven bows down to You" (Neh. 9:6).

[89] כי הוא צוה ונבראו ויעמידם לעד לעולם חק נתן ולא יעבור — "For He commanded and they were created; He established them for ever and ever; He gave a decree which shall not pass away" (Ps. 148:5). [Translator: the second half of the quotation is Ps. 148:6.]

[90] כי אשא אל שמים ידי ואמרתי חי אנכי לעלם — "For I lift up My hand to heaven and say: As I live for ever" (Deut. 32:40).

[91] יהוה מעון אתה היית לנו בדר ודר בטרם הרים ילדו ותחולל ארץ ותבל ומעולם עד עולם אתה אל — "LORD, You have been our dwelling place in every generation; before the mountains were born, or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God" (Ps. 90:1, 2). [Translator: in verse 1 the Masoretic text reads אדני, not יהוה as printed.]

[92] אני ראשון ואני אחרון ומבלעדי אין אלהים — "I am the first and I am the last, and besides Me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6); לפני לא נוצר אל ואחרי לא יהיה — "Before Me no god was formed, and after Me there shall be none" (ibid. 43:10).

[93] לפנים הארץ יסדת ומעשה ידיך שמים המה יאבדו ואתה תעמד וכלם כבגד יבלו כלבוש תחליפם ויחלפו ואתה הוא ושנותיך לא יתמו — "Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They shall perish, but You shall endure; all of them shall wear out like a garment; like clothing You shall change them and they shall pass away; but You are the same, and Your years shall have no end" (Ps. 102:26–28).

[94] Translator: the word rendered "statement" is printed בְּלִמּוּר (*be-limmur*?), here and on p. 16; it is evidently a misprint or unusual form for בְּמַאֲמָר ("in the statement"), the wording used on p. 22.

[95] ואל מי תדמיון אל ומה דמות תערכו לו — "To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness will you compare to Him?" (Isa. 40:18).

[96] ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם כי לא ראיתם כל תמונה — "Take great care for yourselves, for you saw no form of any kind" (Deut. 4:15).

[97] הנה השמים ושמי השמים לא יכלכלוך — "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You" (1 Kings 8:27).

height; He is not known through any one of the five senses[98]; and neither change nor alteration befalls Him[99].

What is to be understood in the statement: God is one?

Answer. In it one should understand that He is not composed of different parts, nor joined together out of many pieces[100].

[p. 15 (German)] [p. 16] ***What is to be understood in the statement: God is unique?***

Answer. In it one should understand that He is alone and there is no God besides Him[101]. Every king is unique in his own land, while in another land there is another king; but God is unique in the world[102], and there is no God like Him[103].

What is to be understood in the statement: God is perfect?

Answer. In it one should understand that all that is a perfection for existence is found in God, and all of them are united in Him, and without end, as befits Him.

III. Of the honored attributes of perfection

Which are the honored attributes of perfection that we are to know?

Answer. The honored attributes of God's perfection that we are to know are six:

a) God is the wisest of the wise;
b) God knows all who know;
c) God is the most powerful of the powerful;
d) God is the best of the good;
e) God is the most righteous of the righteous;
f) God is the holiest of the holy.

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[98] כי לא יראני האדם וחי — "For no man shall see Me and live" (Exod. 33:20).

[99] אני יהוה לא שניתי — "I the Lord do not change" (Mal. 3:6).

[100] שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד — "Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4).

[101] וידעת היום והשבת אל לבבך כי יהוה הוא האלהים בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת אין עוד — "Know therefore this day and take it to your heart that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other" (Deut. 4:39).

[102] יהוה בדד ינחנו ואין עמו אל נכר — "The Lord alone guided him, and there was no foreign god with Him" (ibid. 32:12); ראו עתה כי אני אני הוא ואין אלהים עמדי — "See now that I, I am He, and there is no god beside Me" (ibid. 32:39).

[103] אני יהוה ואין עוד אלהים מבלעדי — "I am the Lord, and there is no other god besides Me" (Isa. 45:21); כי מי אלוה מבלעדי יהוה ומי צור זולתי אלהינו — "For who is God except the Lord, and who is a rock except our God?" (Ps. 18:32). [Translator: the printed reference "Isa. 45:21" covers the sense of that verse; the exact words ואין עוד אלהים מבלעדי stand in Isa. 45:21, while אני יהוה ואין עוד opens several verses of that chapter (45:5, 18).]

By what do we recognize the wisdom of God?

Answer. The wisdom of God is revealed in all His creatures, which are made [p. 17 (German)] [p. 18] with knowledge and wondrous understanding[104], all arranged in the choicest order[105], and all directed together toward the purpose that was set for them[106]. And He who makes all His works with wisdom, and sets for them a fitting purpose, and they are directed toward the purpose He desires — He is wise.

What is to be understood by the knowledge of God?

Answer. In it one should understand that God knows all the works of the world, the general and the particular, the revealed and the hidden[107], and no purpose is too wondrous for Him. He knows from the beginning all that is done, before it is done, and declares all that will be done until the end of all generations[108].

By what is the knowledge of God to be made clear?

Answer. This is to be made clear thus: a) Since He is the Creator of all things, cause of every action and purpose of every desire, and the one who brings all deeds into being, and apart from His will nothing whatever is done — how then could anything be too wondrous for Him[109]? Can anything be too wondrous for the craftsman in his vessels and his works? Does he not [p. 19 (German)] [p. 20] know the working of each of its parts and the purpose of each of its pieces? b) Since He is present in all, and He who is present in all knows all.

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[104] מה רבו מעשיך יהוה כלם בחכמה עשית מלאה הארץ קנינך — "How manifold are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your creatures" (ibid. 104:24); עשה ארץ בכחו מכין תבל בחכמתו ובתבונתו נטה שמים — "He made the earth by His power, established the world by His wisdom, and by His understanding stretched out the heavens" (Jer. 51:15); יהוה בחכמה יסד ארץ כונן שמים בתבונה — "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens" (Prov. 3:19).

[105] לך שמים אף לך ארץ תבל ומלאה אתה יסדתם — "The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all that fills it, You founded them" (Ps. 89:12); לך יום אף לך לילה אתה הכינות מאור ושמש אתה הצבת כל גבולות ארץ קיץ וחרף אתה יצרתם — "Yours is the day, Yours also the night; You established the luminary and the sun. You set all the boundaries of the earth; summer and winter, You formed them" (ibid. 74:16–17).

[106] הידעת חקות שמים אם תשים משטרו בארץ — "Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth?" (Job 38:33). [Translator: the book prints the verse in a slightly abbreviated form, הידעת חקות השמים מי שם משטרו בארץ; the Masoretic text is given above.]

[107] כי אל דעות יהוה ולו נתכנו עללות — "For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed" (1 Sam. 2:3).

[108] מגיד מראשית אחרית ומקדם אשר לא נעשו אמר עצתי תקום וכל חפצי אעשה — "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from of old things not yet done, saying: My counsel shall stand, and all My purpose I will accomplish" (Isa. 46:10); מי פעל ועשה קרא הדרות מראש אני יהוה — "Who has wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord" (ibid. 41:4).

[109] אני יהוה אלהי כל בשר הממני יפלא כל דבר — "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too wondrous for Me?" (Jer. 32:27).

By what do we know that God is present in all?

Answer. That God is present in all we know: a) Since He is not a body, no place contains Him, and His glory fills all, in the heavens above and on the earth below[110], and there is no place where He is not. b) Since He is continually active in all creatures, and He who is active in all is present in all, and watches over and knows all[111].

By what do we recognize the power of God?

Answer. This thought alone — God created all that exists — suffices for us to know His power. For He who created all these creatures from nothing[112], without toil and without weariness[113], but by the breath of His mouth — He spoke: Let there be, and it was[114] — and who sustains [p. 21 (German)] [p. 22] them forever — the Mighty One of all these is He, great in power, beyond searching out, and no purpose is withheld from Him[115].

By what do we recognize the goodness of God?

Answer. The goodness of God is manifest in all creatures, and above all in the species of living things. For He created them with will and with desire for many things, and prepared for them those things which they would want and desire, and they have joy and delight in them[116]. And He who created all these for no purpose other than to do good to them and to bring them joy and delight in their lives — He is the best of the good.

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[110] קדוש קדוש קדוש יהוה צבאות מלא כל הארץ כבודו — "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa. 6:3); כה אמר יהוה השמים כסאי והארץ הדם רגלי אי זה בית אשר תבנו לי ואי זה מקום מנוחתי — "Thus says the Lord: The heaven is My throne and the earth My footstool; where is the house that you would build for Me, and where is the place of My rest?" (ibid. 66:1); הלוא את השמים ואת הארץ אני מלא — "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" (Jer. 23:24).

[111] 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 — "Where can I go from Your spirit, or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn and dwell at the farthest end of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will hold me" (Ps. 139:7–10).

[112] אף ידי יסדה ארץ וימיני טפחה שמים קרא אני אליהם יעמדו יחדו — "My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand up together" (Isa. 48:13). [Translator: the book prints the verse without its opening word אף and with slight variants (קורא, ארץ).]

[113] הלוא ידעת אם לא שמעת אלהי עולם יהוה בורא קצות הארץ לא ייעף ולא ייגע אין חקר לתבונתו — "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, Creator of the ends of the earth, does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable" (ibid. 40:28).

[114] בדבר יהוה שמים נעשו וברוח פיו כל צבאם — "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 33:6); כי הוא אמר ויהי הוא צוה ויעמד — "For He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood" (ibid. ibid. 9).

[115] ידעת כי כל תוכל ולא יבצר ממך מזמה — "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2); גדול אתה וגדול שמך בגבורה — "You are great, and Your name is great in might" (Jer. 10:6); אשר מי אל בשמים ובארץ אשר יעשה כמעשיך וכגבורתך — "For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do according to Your works and Your mighty deeds?" (Deut. 3:24).

[116] טוב יהוה לכל ורחמיו על כל מעשיו — "The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works" (Ps. 145:9); עיני כל אליך ישברו ואתה נותן להם את אכלם בעתו פותח את ידך ומשביע לכל חי רצון — "The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in its season; You open Your hand and satisfy every living thing with favor" (ibid. ibid. 15, 16).

What do we understand by the statement: God is the most righteous of the righteous?

Answer. In it one should understand that God is a righteous judge, who judges all the deeds of man with righteous judgment[117] and requites them[118].

What do we understand by the holiness of God?

Answer. We understand by it that God is exalted and raised above all His honored creatures[119], for all the attributes of perfection are [p. 23 (German)] [p. 24] complete in Him, and He is pure and clean of all deficiencies, and all evil and wrong are far from Him[120]; therefore He loves righteousness in man and hates wickedness[121].

Chapter 2. Explanation of the existence of prophecy

I. The nature of prophecy and its purpose

What is the second of the foundations of faith (*האמונה**, ha-emunah*)?

Answer. The second foundation: there is prophecy (נבואה, *nevu'ah*) from God.

What is included in that statement?

Answer. It includes this: that God appears to righteous and upright men whom He has chosen, speaks with them, and reveals to them things that other men do not know; that appearance is called a vision of prophecy, and the man to whom God appears is called a prophet.

Does God appear to a human being, when He is not a body?

Answer. God does not appear to the prophet as a man appears to his fellow, in body and form, but rather through His holy spirit, which He bestows upon the prophet, whether waking or in a dream; by it He reveals His secret to him and puts in his mouth the words that he is to speak to the people.

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[117] והוא ישפט תבל בצדק ידין לאמים במישרים — "He will judge the world in righteousness; He will judge the peoples with equity" (Ps. 9:9); צדיק יהוה בכל דרכיו וחסיד בכל מעשיו — "The Lord is righteous in all His ways and gracious in all His works" (ibid. 145:17).

[118] הצור תמים פעלו כי כל דרכיו משפט אל אמונה ואין עול צדיק וישר הוא — "The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice; a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He" (Deut. 32:4).

[119] לך יהוה הגדלה והגבורה והתפארת והנצח וההוד כי כל בשמים ובארץ לך יהוה הממלכה והמתנשא לכל לראש — "Yours, O Lord, are the greatness and the power, the glory, the victory and the majesty, for all that is in heaven and on earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head above all" (1 Chr. 29:11); כי אתה יהוה עליון על כל הארץ מאד נעלית על כל אלהים — "For You, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods" (Ps. 97:9); כי מי בשחק יערך ליהוה ידמה ליהוה בבני אלים אל נערץ בסוד קדשים רבה ונורא על כל סביביו — "For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord, who among the sons of the mighty is like the Lord — a God greatly dreaded in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around Him?" (ibid. 89:7–8).

[120] כי צדיק יהוה צדקות אהב — "For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteous deeds" (ibid. 11:7); טהור עינים מראות רע והביט אל עמל לא תוכל — "You are of eyes too pure to behold evil, and You cannot look upon wrong" (Hab. 1:13).

[121] דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת אלהם קדשים תהיו כי קדוש אני יהוה אלהיכם — "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2). [Translator: the book quotes the verse in shortened form, דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם קדשים תהיו כי קדש אני יהוה אלהיכם.]

[p. 25 (German)] [p. 26] ***What does God desire in revealing Himself to the prophet?***

Answer. a) To make known the deeds that are good in His eyes, for man to do them; b) to rouse the sinners with words of reproof to turn back from their evil way, and to comfort the people oppressed in its iniquity and strengthen it in time of trouble with the promise of future good things.

II. The degrees of prophecy, and the superiority of Moses over all the prophets

Did God appear to the prophets many times?

Answer. God appeared to many prophets and many times, whenever His wisdom saw fit to make things known to the people; He raised up for them a prophet in whose mouth He put the words, and he would speak to the people in His name.

Were the prophets equal in the degree of prophecy?

Answer. The prophets were not equal in the degree of prophecy; one prophet had superiority over another. There was a prophet with whom God spoke many times, and there was one with whom He spoke only once or twice; and there were those by whose hand signs and wonders were done, to confirm a matter or to save the people, and there were those by whose hands no signs and wonders were done.

Who is the chosen one of all the prophets?

Answer. The chosen one of all the prophets is our master Moses, the man of God, the first prophet since Israel became a nation; for he had superiority in his prophecy and in the benefits he performed for his people over all the prophets.

[p. 27 (German)] [p. 28] ***What is his superiority in prophecy?***

Answer. That there is no prophet besides him with whom God spoke at all times[122], and no prophet has arisen who performed great and awesome signs and wonders as Moses did before the eyes of all the people[123].

And what is his superiority in his benefits?

Answer. That he is our deliverer, he is our founder, and he is our lawgiver. He is our deliverer, for by his hand God brought our fathers out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, where they had

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[122] אם יהיה נביאכם יהוה במראה אליו אתודע בחלום אדבר בו לא כן עבדי משה בכל ביתי נאמן הוא פה אל פה אדבר בו ומראה ולא בחידת — "If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make Myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so My servant Moses; he is trusted in all My house. Mouth to mouth I speak with him, plainly and not in riddles" (Num. 12:6–7). [Translator: the quotation runs on into verse 8 (פה אל פה אדבר בו ומראה ולא בחידת); the printed reference "12:6, 7" should read 12:6–8. The book prints במראה … ולא בחידות, with a small variant.]

[123] ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה אשר ידעו יהוה פנים אל פנים לכל האתות והמופתים אשר שלחו יהוה לעשות בארץ מצרים לפרעה ולכל עבדיו ולכל ארצו ולכל היד החזקה ולכל המורא הגדול אשר עשה משה לעיני כל ישראל — "There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and in all the mighty hand and all the great awe which Moses performed before the eyes of all Israel" (Deut. 34:10–12).

served four hundred years. He is our founder, for by his hand Israel was established as a people possessing land and dominion. And he is our lawgiver, for by his hand God gave us the Torah.

III. Explanation of the great vision at the giving of the Torah

Which vision of God is the most precious and honored of all the visions of prophecy?

Answer. That vision in which God gave the Torah, and therefore it is called the great vision[124].

What is the superiority of this vision, and why is it called the great vision?

Answer. Because there was no vision like it, before it or after it, in which was revealed [p. 29 (German)] [p. 30] God's glory was revealed before the eyes of all the people, and all of them heard His voice speaking on the day He gave His Torah (2).

When and where did God give the Torah?

Answer. In the third month after the children of Israel went out of Egypt[125], they came to Mount Sinai, which is in the wilderness of Arabia. There God charged Moses [to go down] to the people, and they sanctified themselves and were ready for three days; and on the third day the glory of God appeared on Mount Sinai and He spoke to the people.

How did the event come about on that day?

Answer. When it was morning, Moses brought all the people who were in the camp out of their tents, and they stationed themselves at the foot of the mountain, while he went up to the top of the mountain. The appearance of the glory of God, like a devouring fire, descended there; there were thunders and lightnings and a very heavy cloud upon the mountain, and the sound of a mighty shofar; and all the people heard a voice speaking out of the midst of the fire the Ten Words (עשרת הדברים, *aseret ha-devarim*) that are known to us.[126]

Why did God appear on that day before the eyes of all the people and speak in their hearing?

Answer. So that all the people should see that God spoke with Moses and from His mouth gave the Torah, and should believe him in everything that he would tell them in His name; as it is written: "that the people may hear [p. 31 (German)] [p. 32] when I speak with you, and may also believe in you forever" (Exod. 19).[127]

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[124] מן השמים השמיעך את קלו ליסרך ועל הארץ הראך את אשו הגדולה ודבריו שמעת מתוך האש — "Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, to instruct you; and on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire" (Deut. 4:36). [Translator: the numbering of the notes restarts here with a second "1)" at the beginning of section III; it is labelled separately in this translation.]

[125] According to the chroniclers of the Hebrew generations, the giving of the Torah took place in the year two thousand four hundred and forty-eight of the creation of the world.

[126] Translator: The description of the theophany follows Exod. 19:16–19 and 20:1.

[127] Translator: Exod. 19:9. The proof-text note (2) and the asterisk note belong to the foot of p. 30.

(2)

כי שאל נא לימים ראשנים אשר היו לפניך למן היום אשר ברא אלהים אדם על הארץ ולמקצה השמים ועד קצה השמים הנהיה כדבר הגדול הזה או הנשמע כמהו השמע עם קול אלהים מדבר מתוך האש כאשר שמעת אתה ויחי

> "For ask now of the days past, which were before you, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from one end of heaven to the other: has there been any such great thing as this, or has anything like it been heard? Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live?" (Deut. 4:32, 34)[128]

פנים בפנים דבר יהוה עמכם בהר מתוך האש

> "Face to face the LORD spoke with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire" (ibid. 5:4).

What is to be understood from the words "and may also believe in you forever"?

Answer. That we shall not depart from the Torah of Moses to another Torah, unless there should arise a prophet like him, to whom God appears before the eyes of all the people and speaks with him in their hearing.

IV. The manner in which the remaining commandments of the Torah were given

When were the remaining commandments (*מצות**, mitzvot**) of the Torah given?

Answer. After God had finished speaking the Ten Words, the people returned to their tents, and Moses alone stood on the mountain forty days and forty nights. There God taught him all the commandments, the statutes and the ordinances, to teach them to the children of Israel. At the end of forty days Moses came down from the mountain with the two tablets of stone in his hand, on which the Ten Words were written; and afterwards Moses wrote them in a book, together with all the words of the Torah and the commandment, and gave that book to Israel. It is the book of the Torah of Moses that is in our hands to this day.

V. Of the perfection of the religion of God

What are the doctrines of faith (*למודי האמונה**, limmude ha-emunah**) contained in the principle "There is a prophecy of God"?

Answer. The doctrines of faith contained in that principle are three:

a) God gave us the Torah through His prophet Moses.

b) That prophet Moses is the choicest of the prophets.

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[128] Translator: The printed reference reads "Deut. 4:32, 34" (לב, לד); the verses quoted are Deut. 4:32–33.

c) The Torah that is in our hands is the one that was given through him.

What is to be understood from this last doctrine?

Answer. That from the time the Torah was given until now not a thing in it has been changed.

[p. 33 (German)] [p. 34] ***May we add anything to the Torah of Moses or take anything away from it?***

Answer. We may not add anything to the Torah of Moses nor take anything away from it (1).

Do we today still keep all the commandments of the Torah in their full number, according to their ordinance?

Answer. We cannot keep all the commandments of the Torah in their full number according to their ordinance; for the sabbatical rest of the land and its dues, and the service of the sacrifices and the priestly gifts, cannot be observed except in the land of Israel's possession; and there are many more like these.

Is not this inability a hindrance to a person in his happiness?

Answer. This inability takes nothing away from a person's happiness; for the Torah does not demand of a person deeds that are not in his power to do, but only that he do in truth and wholeheartedness what is in his power to do, whether much or little; and that is his happiness.

Treatise 2 (תכן ב): What a Person Has to Hope For[129]

Chapter 3: Explanation of the Immortality of the Soul

I. Explanation of the third principle

What is the third of the principles of faith (*יסודי האמונה**, yesode ha-emunah**)?

Answer. The third principle: The soul of man is immortal (אל־מות, *al-mavet*).

(1)

לא תספו על הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם ולא תגרעו ממנו

"You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take away from it" (Deut. 4:2).

[p. 35 (German)] [p. 36] ***How is this statement to be explained?***

Answer. This statement is to be explained thus: a human being, who is composed of body and soul, lives a measure of days and dies. At his death nothing comes to an end but his body, whose

[129]Translator: תכן (*tokhen*, "measure, division") is the author's term for the major divisions of the book; the facing German page renders it *Abhandlung*, "treatise". The chapter numbering (Chapter 3) runs continuously through the treatises.

foundation is in the dust:[130] it wastes away, rots and dissolves. But his soul (נשמה, *neshamah*), which is a thing that has nothing in common with the body, will neither waste away nor rot nor dissolve; rather, it goes forth from its body, and an eternal survival is hers.

Whence is the soul (נפש,* nefesh*) that is in man?

Answer. The soul that is in man is the breath of the spirit of God, which He placed within him; through it man becomes a living soul, speaking and understanding, and through it he performs all his deeds.

And where does it go when it departs from its body?

Answer. When the soul departs from the body it returns to God, its source, from which it was hewn, and lives there forever (1).

What is to be imagined of the soul in eternal life?

Answer. There it will merit to know God and His attributes with perfect knowledge, together with everything that was hidden from it while it was still enclosed in clay; and with these knowings it will behold the pleasantness of God in eternal delight (2).

(1)

וישב העפר על הארץ כשהיה והרוח תשוב אל האלהים אשר נתנה

"And the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7).[131]

(2)

אני בצדק אחזה פניך אשבעה בהקיץ תמונתך

"As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness" (Ps. 17:15).

שבע שמחות את פניך נעמות בימינך נצח

"In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (ibid. 16:11).

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[130]Translator: Cf. Job 4:19, "those whose foundation is in the dust."

[131]Translator: The book prints כאשר היה and אל אלהים for the Masoretic כשהיה and אל האלהים.

[p. 37 (German)] [p. 38] **II. Of the belief in reward and punishment**

What doctrine of faith is included in the principle "The soul of man is immortal"?

Answer. That God watches over human beings, judges their deeds (1) and requites them[132].

When does God judge a person, and when does He requite him?

Answer. The living and the dead God judges, and He requites them in their life and in their death.

What is the recompense (*גמול**, gemul) in temporal life?***

Answer. The recompense in temporal life: a life that is healthy, long and pleasant, as reward for those who do good; and an evil life of pains, poverty and want, as punishment for those who do evil.

What is the recompense in everlasting life?

Answer. The soul of the righteous shines in the light of God in everlasting pleasantness, and the soul of the sinner shall be for contempt and abhorrence.[133]

III. The remaining doctrines of faith included in that principle

What is to be known in the doctrine of reward and punishment?

Answer. In the doctrine of the belief in reward and punishment three things are to be known:

(1)

אלהים שופט צדיק ואל זעם בכל יום

"God is a righteous judge, and a God who is indignant every day" (Ps. 7:12).

כי פעל אדם ישלם לו וכארח איש ימצאנו

"For a man's work He repays him, and according to each one's ways He causes it to befall him" (Job 34:11).

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

"Great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open upon all the ways of mankind, to give each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds" (Jer. 32:19).

[p. 39 (German)] [p. 40] **a)** God alone rules in the world.

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[132]This must be made clear: if there were no recompense for deeds, what need would he have of statute and commandment? And if there were no statute and commandment, what need would he have of knowledge and understanding? And without a soul that knows and understands there is no eternal hereafter. Now, since the soul has an eternal hereafter, it follows that it has knowledge and understanding; and since it has knowledge and understanding, there is room for statute and commandment; and one who is commanded concerning a matter deserves to be given a good reward when he performs the commandment, and punishment when he transgresses it.

[133]Translator: Cf. Dan. 12:2.

b) God watches over every person, each person individually.

c) Man has free choice in his deeds.

IV. Explanation of God's dominion in the world

What is to be understood from the statement "God alone rules in the world"?

Answer. Thus it is to be understood: that besides God's beholding all and knowing all, He alone watches over all and commands all, and without His will nothing is done.

How does God rule in the world?

Answer. God rules in the world like a great craftsman in his work, like a wise king among his people, like a merciful father among his children, and like a righteous judge among his people.

In what respect is God's dominion to be likened to a craftsman?

Answer. For since all creatures are the work of God's hands (1), He is accordingly their maker. He has set them in their order and knows the purpose of every thing and its function, as the craftsman knows the working of the tools that he has fashioned for himself. And as a craftsman He loves His work and takes care that it not be lost and that nothing among His creatures be spoiled; for they are all bound together and intertwined with one another, and if one thing among them were missing, the whole would be ruined.

(1)

אנחנו החמר ואתה יצרנו ומעשה ידך כלנו

"We are the clay, and You are our potter, and we all are the work of Your hand" (Isa. 64:7).

הלוא הוא אביך קנך הוא עשך ויכוננך

"Is He not your father who created you? He made you and established you" (Deut. 32:6).

[p. 41 (German)] [p. 42] ***In what respect is God's dominion to be likened to a king?***

Answer. For He is like a king who governs his people by good statutes (2), through which every people and nation, and every individual person, flourishes; to whom belong the power and the dominion to appoint and to command all, and as he commands and enjoins, so it is done (3); and to whom belong the honor and the greatness, and all bend the knee and bow down before him (4), praising and giving thanks to the name of his glory (5).

In what respect is God's dominion to be likened to a merciful father?

Answer. For God loves human beings as a merciful father loves his children (6); He sustains them and gives them all that they lack, pities them and has compassion on them (7), and forgives their

iniquities; and so too He desires that they love one another as brothers, the children of one father, love each other (8).

(2)

מלכותך מלכות כל עלמים וממשלתך בכל דור ודר

"Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations" (Ps. 145:13).

כי יהוה עליון נורא מלך גדול על כל הארץ

"For the LORD Most High is awesome, a great King over all the earth" (ibid. 47:3).

(3)

יהוה בשמים הכין כסאו ומלכותו בכל משלה

"The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all" (ibid. 103:19).

(4)

כבוד מלכותך יאמרו וגבורתך ידברו

"They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and tell of Your might" (ibid. 145:11).

(5)

ברכו יהוה מלאכיו גברי כח עשי דברו לשמע בקול דברו ברכו יהוה כל צבאיו משרתיו עשי רצונו ברכו יהוה כל מעשיו בכל מקמות ממשלתו

"Bless the LORD, you His angels, mighty in strength, who do His word, hearkening to the voice of His word. Bless the LORD, all His hosts, His ministers who do His will. Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion" (ibid. 103:20–22).

השמים מספרים כבוד אל ומעשה ידיו מגיד הרקיע יום ליום יביע אמר ולילה ללילה יחוה דעת אין אמר ואין דברים בלי נשמע קולם בכל הארץ יצא קום ובקצה תבל מליהם לשמש שם אהל בהם

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech and there are no words, their voice is not heard; yet their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world; in them He has set a tent for the sun" (ibid. 19:2–5).

(6)

בנים אתם ליהוה אלהיכם

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

(7)

כרחם אב על בנים רחם יהוה על יראיו

"As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him" (Ps. 103:13).

(8)

הלוא אב אחד לכלנו הלוא אל אחד בראנו מדוע נבגד איש באחיו לחלל ברית אבתינו

"Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then do we deal treacherously each against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Mal. 2:10).

[p. 43 (German)] [p. 44] ***In what respect is God's dominion to be likened to a righteous judge?***

Answer. For God is a righteous judge and executes justice for every person (9); He acquits the righteous and condemns the wicked, and stills strife and contention, oppression and violence; He rescues the robbed from the hand of his robber and the oppressed from the hand of his oppressor, to establish peace in the midst of the earth.

What is the difference between the judgment of God and the judgment of man?

Answer. The judgment of God is far more righteous and true than the judgment of man. For in a human judge one must fear lest he show partiality in judgment, whereas God is a righteous judge who neither shows favor nor perverts judgment (10). Man, moreover, even if he be very righteous and inquire and investigate much — does he not judge by what his eyes see and reprove by what his ears hear?[134] He does not know another's thoughts or the hidden things of his heart, and so he may be led astray into perverting judgment on the word of a false witness. God knows the thoughts (11) and the secrets of the heart, and everything that a man does in secret places (12); therefore His judgment [p. 45 (German)]

(9)

מלפניך משפטי יצא עיניך תחזינה מישרים

"Let my judgment come forth from Your presence; let Your eyes behold what is upright" (Ps. 17:2).[135]

כי יהוה שפטנו יהוה מחקקנו יהוה מלכנו הוא יושיענו

"For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us" (Isa. 33:22).

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[134]Translator: Cf. Isa. 11:3; "a false witness" below echoes Deut. 19:18.

[135]Translator: The book prints משפטינו ("our judgment") for the Masoretic משפטי.

יהוה ידין אפסי ארץ

"The LORD will judge the ends of the earth" (1 Sam. 2:10).

והוא ישפט תבל בצדק ידין לאמים במישרים

"And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will judge the peoples with equity" (Ps. 9:9).

(10)

כי יהוה אלהיכם הוא אלהי האלהים ואדני האדנים האל הגדל הגבר והנורא אשר לא ישא פנים ולא יקח שחד

"For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awesome God, who shows no favor and takes no bribe" (Deut. 10:17).

אשר לא נשא פני שרים ולא נכר שוע לפני דל כי מעשה ידיו כלם

"Who shows no favor to princes, nor regards the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of His hands" (Job 34:19).

(11)

כי לא אשר יראה האדם כי האדם יראה לעינים ויהוה יראה ללבב

"For not as man sees [does God see]: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).[136]

(12)

האלהי מקרב אני ולא אלהי מרחק אם יסתר איש במסתרים ואני לא אראנו נאם יהוה

"Am I a God near at hand, and not a God far off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him? says the LORD" (Jer. 23:23–24).[137] [p. 46] a true judgment, for He knows with certainty whom to acquit and whom to condemn.[138]

By what can it be proved that God knows the secrets of the heart?

Answer. God, who formed man and gave him an eye to see and an ear to hear, a mouth to speak and a heart to think — does He not know what he sees and what he hears, what he speaks and what

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[136]Translator: The chapter number of this reference is poorly printed (it looks like יו); the verse is 1 Sam. 16:7.

[137]Translator: The book omits נאם יהוה after מקרב אני in v. 23.

[138]אני יהוה חקר לב בחן כליות ולתת לאיש כדרכו כפרי מעלליו "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings" (ibid. 17:10). [Translator: i.e. Jer. 17:10; Ben-Ze'ev's printed text omits "the LORD".]

he thinks?[139] Does He not survey everything in a single glance,[140] and all the secrets of the world lie open before Him like the sun? Indeed, even a man's thoughts and his intentions, all his designs, He knows before they arise in his mind.[141]

V. Explanation of particular providence

What is to be understood from the teaching: God watches over every single person individually?

Answer. By it one is to understand: (a) that His eyes are open upon the ways of each [p. 47 (German)] [p. 48] and every man and upon his deeds; (b) and that the fate of every person is in His hand.[142] And whatever befalls a man, whether good or evil, success or disaster, does not come to him by chance, but only through God's providential oversight of him;[143] and He in His exalted wisdom determines whether a man shall prosper in his ways, and whether to grant him his requests or to withhold them from him;[144] and all the thoughts and schemes of a man alter nothing of what He has appointed for him.[145]

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[139] יהוה ידע מחשבות אדם כי המה הבל … הנטע אזן הלא ישמע אם יצר עין הלא יביט "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? … The LORD knows the thoughts of man, that they are vanity" (Ps. 94:9–11 [printed "9–1"; Translator: read 9–11]); היצר יחד לבם המבין אל כל מעשיהם "He who fashions the hearts of them all, who considers all their deeds" (ibid. 33:15).

[140] כי רם יהוה ושפל יראה וגבה ממרחק יידע "For though the LORD is exalted, He sees the lowly, and the haughty He knows from afar" (ibid. 138:6); כי הוא לקצות הארץ יביט תחת כל השמים יראה "For He looks to the ends of the earth, and sees under the whole heaven" (Job 28:24); בכל מקום עיני יהוה צפות רעים וטובים "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3).

[141] יהוה חקרתני ותדע אתה ידעת שבתי וקומי בנתה לרעי מרחוק ארחי ורבעי זרית וכל דרכי הסכנתה כי אין מלה בלשוני הן יהוה ידעת כלה "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought from afar. You measure my going about and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue but, lo, O LORD, You know it altogether" … כי אתה קנית כליתי תסכני בבטן אמי "For You have formed my reins; You knit me together in my mother's womb" (Ps. 139:1–5, 13); וכגבינה תקפיאני עור ובשר תלבישני … כחמר עשיתני … ידיך עצבוני ויעשוני ובעצמות וגידים תסככני חיים וחסד עשית עמדי ופקדתך שמרה רוחי "Your hands fashioned me and made me … You made me as clay … and curdled me like cheese; You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews; You granted me life and favor, and Your providence has preserved my spirit" (Job 10:8–12).

[142] בידך עתתי "My times are in Your hand" (Ps. 31:16); כי עיניו על דרכי איש וכל צעדיו יראה "For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, and He sees all his steps" (Job 34:21); מיהוה מצעדי גבר ואדם מה יבין דרכו "A man's steps are from the LORD; how then can a man understand his own way?" (Prov. 20:24).

[143] יהוה ממית ומחיה מוריד שאול ויעל יהוה מוריש ומעשיר משפיל אף מרומם "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and brings up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low, He also lifts up" (1 Sam. 2:6–7).

[144] לב אדם יחשב דרכו ויהוה יכין צעדו "A man's heart devises his way, but the LORD directs his steps" (Prov. 16:9); ידעתי יהוה כי לא לאדם דרכו לא לאיש הלך והכין את צעדו "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not his own; it is not in man who walks to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

[145] רבות מחשבות בלב איש ועצת יהוה היא תקום "Many are the devices in a man's heart, but the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand" (Prov. 19:21); אם יהוה לא יבנה בית שוא עמלו בוניו בו אם יהוה לא ישמר עיר שוא שקד שומר שוא לכם משכימי קום מאחרי שבת אכלי לחם העצבים כן יתן לידידו שנא "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman wakes in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, eating the bread of toil; for so He gives to His beloved in sleep" (Ps. 127:1–2).

What is the fruit of learning the faith in divine providence?

Answer. Through the faith that God observes the ways of each and every man, we will set our hearts aright and strive to make our deeds upright; and through the faith that the fate of every person is in His hand, we will have trust (בטחון, *bittaḥon*) in God.[146]

What is included in trust?

Answer. Trust includes three things: faith (אמונה, *emunah*), hope (תקוה, *tiqvah*) and consolation (נחמה, *neḥamah*).

[p. 49 (German)] [p. 50] ***What is included in faith?***

Answer. Faith includes reliance of the heart and peace of mind, and the abandoning of anxiety and sorrow, and contentment with sufficiency. For he relies in his heart on God, trusting that He is the One who watches and looks down upon him and who knows his needs and his wants: He will provide him with all he requires, and he will not lack.[147] And peace of mind and contentment mean this: he rejoices in the portion allotted to him, given him by God, and is at rest;[148] he does not rush after great wealth and abundant luxuries, which bring anxiety and sorrow, but leans upon God, for He alone knows what is good and profitable for us and what is evil and harmful to us.

What is included in hope?

Answer. Hope is that the one who trusts places all his expectation in God;[149] every good thing he seeks only from Him, and in every misfortune he seeks only His salvation; and his heart is firm within him that the Good One will give to him and will remove evil from him.[150]

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[146] ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח ביהוה והיה יהוה מבטחו "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust the LORD is" (Jer. 17:7); השלך על יהוה יהבך והוא יכלכלך "Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He will sustain you" (Ps. 55:23); יהוה רעי לא אחסר "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" (ibid. 23:1); כפירים רשו ורעבו ודרשי יהוה לא יחסרו כל טוב "Young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing" (ibid. 34:11).

[147] יהוה מנת חלקי וכוסי אתה תומיך גורלי "The LORD is my allotted portion and my cup; You maintain my lot" (ibid. 16:5). [Translator: i.e. Ps. 16:5.]

[148] ראש ועשר אל תתן לי הטריפני לחם חקי "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with my allotted bread" (Prov. 30:8).

[149] בך יהוה חסיתי אל אבושה לעולם "In You, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame" (Ps. 71:1); יהוה עזי ומגני בו בטח לבי ונעזרתי "The LORD is my strength and my shield; in Him my heart trusted, and I was helped" (ibid. 28:7).

[150] יהוה אורי וישעי ממי אירא יהוה מעוז חיי ממי אפחד "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (ibid. 27:1); אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבא עזרי עזרי מעם יהוה עשה שמים … וארץ אל יתן למוט רגלך אל ינום שמרך יהוה שמרך יהוה צלך על יד ימינך "I lift up my eyes to the mountains: from where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; your keeper will not slumber … The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand" (ibid. 121:1–4, 5); אל יהוה בצרתה לי קראתי ויענני "In my distress I called to the LORD, and He answered me" (ibid. 120:1); בצר לי אקרא יהוה ואל אלהי אשוע ישמע מהיכלו קולי ושועתי לפניו תבוא באזניו "In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry before Him came into His ears" (ibid. 18:7); יהוה לי לא אירא מה יעשה לי אדם יהוה לי בעזרי ואני אראה בשנאי טוב לחסות ביהוה מבטח באדם טוב לחסות ביהוה מבטח בנדיבים "The LORD is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me? The LORD is for me among my helpers, and I shall see my desire upon those who hate me. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man; it is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes" (ibid. 118:6–9).

[p. 51 (German)] [p. 52] ***What is included in consolation?***

Answer. By consolation is to be understood: even if a man stands for many days in the midst of trouble, in his great grief his spirit does not grow weary and his heart does not fail in his trust in God;[151] rather he submits himself to the will of God, bears and endures it with a good heart,[152] and is consoled in knowing that His will is only good, and that even when He chastises a man, it is in order to do him good at his latter end.[153]

VI. One who trusts must work and exert himself

May one who trusts in God let his hands go slack from work, relying on his God that He will provide all his needs?

Answer. Trust does not exempt a man from work; only one who works and toils to provide his food[154] may truly trust in God[155] that He will bless the work of his hands and prosper all his labor; but the slothful has no ground to hope for anything from God.

Does God desire that man should work?

Answer. Yes! For that very reason He gave him aptitude for every kind of work. Also every [p. 53 (German)] [p. 54] living creature seeks its food, but the preparing and processing of it they do not know; whereas man alone can derive no benefit from any of the produce of the soil until he prepares and processes it by the work of his hands.[156] When he seeks bread to eat, must he not first plough and harrow the field and sow it? The earth brings forth its growth, the rain makes it grow, and the sun with its heat ripens the fruit; and when the standing grain has ripened, the man comes near to reap its yield; the reaper gathers it to the threshing floor; he threshes it to winnow out the grain; the grain is ground into flour, the flour is kneaded into dough, and the dough is baked —

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[151] הן יקטלני לו איחל "Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him" (Job 13:15). [Translator: Ben-Ze'ev prints the *qere* לו; the consonantal text has לא.]

[152] זעף יהוה אשא כי חטאתי לו "I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against Him" (Mic. 7:9); טוב ויחיל ישב בדד וידם כי נטל עליו … ודומם לתשועת יהוה "It is good that a man should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD … Let him sit alone and keep silent, because He has laid it upon him" (Lam. 3:26–28).

[153] מוסר יהוה בני אל תמאס ואל תקץ בתוכחתו כי את אשר יאהב יהוה יוכיח וכאב את בן ירצה "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor loathe His reproof; for whom the LORD loves He reproves, as a father the son in whom he delights" (Prov. 3:11–12); בני בגשתך לעבודת יי הכן נפשך למסות כל אשר יעבור עליך תשא וכלכל רוחך בצרה כי זהב באש יבחן ובן אדם בכור עני "My son, when you come to serve the LORD, prepare your soul for trials; whatever comes upon you, bear it, and hold your spirit steady in distress; for gold is tested in fire, and man in the furnace of affliction" (Ben Sira 2:1–4); כי כאשר ייסר איש את בנו יהוה אלהיך מיסרך "For as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you" (Deut. 8:5); למען ענתך ולמען נסתך להיטבך באחריתך "that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good at your latter end" (ibid. 8:16). [Translator: the Ben Sira passages here and below are given in Hebrew, presumably from Ben-Ze'ev's own Hebrew version of the book (Breslau, 1798), since the Hebrew original was then unknown.]

[154] בני אם לא תרוץ לא תשיג ואם לא תבקש לא תמצא "My son, if you do not run, you will not overtake; and if you do not seek, you will not find" (Ben Sira 11:13). [Translator: cf. Ben Sira 11:10 in modern editions.]

[155] למען יברכך יהוה אלהיך בכל מעשה ידך אשר תעשה "that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do" (Deut. 14:29).

[156] בזעת אפיך תאכל לחם "In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread" (Gen. 3:19).

and then it becomes bread for him to eat.[157] And in the same way he attains the rest of his needs only through work and toil.

Why did God appoint man to work and toil?

Answer. Work and toil are very good for man;[158] for without labor and activity all his strength and all the skill of his hands would be of no use; and indolence and idleness are a grievous sickness for man, for through them his body and soul become confused and desolate, and anger, irritation and grief are their portion. Only through work and toil is a man strengthened and his heart made glad. And in work each man is a helper to his fellow (cf. Gen. 2:18), for they support one another in the work of their hands and together make up what they lack, and thereby the bond of their fellowship is strengthened in love.

[p. 55 (German)] [p. 56] **VII. On the free choice of man**

How is the saying to be explained: Man has free choice in his actions?

Answer. It is to be explained thus: that God placed the power of choice (בחירה, *beḥirah*) in the soul of man, to choose good or evil according to the desire of his soul, and the ability to do what he has chosen;[159] only the outcome of the actions — for success or disaster, for life or death — is fixed by the decree of God;[160] but the actions themselves are given into man's hand: no one compels him to them and no one hinders him from them.[161]

Why did God place free choice in man's soul, so that he is able even to do wickedly?

Answer. Free choice is a precious possession for man; for were he not free in his actions, there would be no reward for his deeds. For no deed that a man is compelled to do is reckoned to him as righteousness or as wickedness; only for what he was able to do willingly and by the desire of his soul does he justly earn his recompense for that deed.

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[157] עבד אדמתו ישבע לחם ומרדף רקים ישבע ריש "He who tills his land shall have plenty of bread, but he who follows after vain things shall have poverty enough" (Prov. 28:19).

[158] יגיע כפיך כי תאכל אשריך וטוב לך "When you eat the labor of your hands, happy shall you be, and it shall be well with you" (Ps. 128:1). [Translator: the verse is Ps. 128:2.]

[159] החיים והמות נתתי לפניך הברכה והקללה ובחרת בחיים "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life" (Deut. 30:19); אלהים ברא את האדם מראש ועזבו ביד יצרו אם תאבה תנצר פקודיו ואם תבטח בו תמצא חסן אש ומים הצג לפניך שלח ידך באשר תרצה חיים ומות נתן לבני אדם לבחר בחיים ולסור ממות "God created man from the beginning and left him in the hand of his own inclination. If you will, you shall keep His precepts, and if you trust in Him you shall find strength. He has set fire and water before you; stretch out your hand to whichever you wish. Life and death He has given to the sons of men, to choose life and to turn from death" (Ben Sira 15:14–17).

[160] הצלחה ואסון חיים ומות עשר ועני מיד יהוה חכמה ומדע ודעת תורה מתת אלהים רשע וארחות יושר מאדם יהיו "Success and disaster, life and death, wealth and poverty are from the hand of the LORD; wisdom, knowledge and understanding of the Torah are the gift of God; wickedness and upright paths come from man" (ibid. 11:17–18).

[161] אל תאמר מאת יהוה חטא ועון כי אשר שנא לא עשה אל תאמר הוא הכשילני כי אין לו חפץ כבן עולה "Do not say, 'Sin and iniquity are from the LORD,' for what He hates He does not do. Do not say, 'He caused me to stumble,' for He has no need of a wicked man" (ibid. 15:11–12).

What witness has God set in man to instruct him in the good?

Answer. Reason (שכל, *sekhel*) and the Torah: by reason he knows how to discern between good and [p. 57 (German)] [p. 58] evil, and by the Torah he learns the will of God and the deeds which He commanded him to do for his own good.

What witness has God set in man to restrain him from evil?

Answer. His own soul and the punishment of the Torah. For the deed of the wicked chastises the one who does it, and his sin pursues him,[162] and his soul is not upright within him.[163] For before he commits it, the soul of the wicked man sets the evil before his eyes in a filthy and polluted guise (cf. Zeph. 3:1), and after he has done evil his heart is filled with grief and remorse.[164] And as for one who has shut his heart and whose ear is uncircumcised (cf. Jer. 6:10), so that he no longer heeds the voice of his own spirit's crying out — shall he not dread the wrath of judgment and the fury of the punishment which the Torah has specified for his sin?

VIII. On the order of temporal reward and punishment

Does recompense always come soon upon every deed, whether good or evil?

Answer. Recompense for a good deed, and sentence against an evil deed, are not executed speedily (cf. Eccl. 8:11).

Why does the recompense of good not come soon upon a good deed?

Answer. A good recompense for a good deed is not executed speedily, lest it appear that man is God's hireling, serving Him in return for wages;[165] and God is not one who hires men,[166] nor would their service be of any profit [p. 59 (German)] [p. 60] to Him;[167] and man is bound to serve God in truth

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[162] חטאים תרדף רעה ואת צדיקים ישלם טוב "Evil pursues sinners, but the righteous shall be rewarded with good" (Prov. 13:21).

[163] הנה עפלה לא ישרה נפשו בו וצדיק באמונתו יחיה "Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4).

[164] תיסרך רעתך ומשובותיך תוכחך "Your own wickedness shall chastise you, and your backslidings shall reprove you" (Jer. 2:19).

[165] אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשים את הרב על מנת לקבל פרס אלא הוו כעבדים המשמשים את הרב שלא על מנת לקבל פרס ויהי מורא שמים עליכם "Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward, but be like servants who serve their master not for the sake of receiving a reward; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you" (Avot, chapter 1). [Translator: Mishnah Avot 1:3, the saying of Antigonus of Sokho.]

[166] מי הקדימני ואשלם תחת כל השמים לי הוא "Who has given Me anything first, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine" (Job 41:2). [Translator: Job 41:3 in the standard Hebrew numbering.]

[167] הלאל יסכן גבר כי יסכן עליו משכיל "Can a man be of use to God? Surely a wise man is of use only to himself" (ibid. 22:2); החפץ לשדי כי תצדק ואם בצע כי תתם דרכיך "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous, or gain to Him that you make your ways blameless?" (ibid. 22:3); אם חטאת מה תפעל בו ורבו פשעיך מה תעשה לו אם צדקת מה תתן לו או מה מידך יקח לאיש כמוך רשעך ולבן אדם צדקתך "If you have sinned, what do you do against Him? If your transgressions are many, what do you do to Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him, or what does He receive from your hand? Your wickedness affects a man like yourself, and your righteousness a son of man" (ibid. 35:6–8). [Translator: i.e. Job.]

and wholeheartedness out of his love for Him, and to do the good for his own good;[168] and the reward that God bestows upon man is a free gift of grace.[169]

Why is sentence against an evil deed not executed speedily?

Answer. Sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, because God knows the inclination of the human heart, that it is but flesh, and in its haste its spirit is drawn toward desire: it sins quickly and soon after repents.[170] Therefore God is long-suffering toward man, to give him time to repent of his evil and to amend his ways, so as to be cleared of punishment.[171]

[p. 61 (German)] [p. 62] ***Are there not good and upright people all the days of whose lives are evil, while the wicked spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures?***[172] ***How can this be consistent with the justice of God?***

Answer. It is so: there are righteous people who fare ill and wicked people who fare well in this life of vanity;[173] and therefore many of the men of renown of old,[174] and the prophets as well, who saw this were astonished at it and also investigated it;[175] and all of them answered with one voice:

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[168] ועתה ישראל מה יהוה אלהיך שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה את יהוה אלהיך ללכת בכל דרכיו ולאהבה אתו ולעבד את יהוה אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך לשמר את מצות יהוה ואת חקתיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום לטוב לך הן ליהוה אלהיך השמים ושמי השמים הארץ וכל אשר בה רק באבתיך חשק יהוה לאהבה "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul; to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes, which I command you this day for your good? Behold, to the LORD your God belong the heavens and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all that is in it; yet the LORD set His heart on your fathers to love them" (Deut. 10:12–15).

[169] ולך אדני חסד כי אתה תשלם לאיש כמעשהו "Also to You, O Lord, belongs lovingkindness; for You render to every man according to his work" (Ps. 62:13).

[170] כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעריו כי הוא ידע יצרנו זכור כי עפר "For the inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21); אנחנו מה אנוש כי יזכה וכי יצדק ילוד אשה הן בקדשו לא "For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust" (Ps. 103:14); יאמין ושמים לא זכו בעיניו אף כי נתעב ונאלח איש שתה כמים עולה "What is man, that he should be clean, or one born of woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, and the heavens are not clean in His sight; how much less one who is abominable and corrupt, a man who drinks iniquity like water!" (Job 15:14–16); איך יזכה אנוש בן תמותה מה בהיר משמש וחשך ישופנו אף כי יצר לב אדם בשר ודם "How can mortal man be pure? What is brighter than the sun, yet darkness overtakes it; how much more the inclination of the heart of man, who is flesh and blood!" (Ben Sira 17:25–26).

[171] והוא רחום יכפר עון ולא ישחית והרבה להשיב אפו ולא יעיר כל חמתו ויזכר כי בשר המה "But He, being compassionate, forgives iniquity and does not destroy; many a time He turns His anger away and does not stir up all His wrath; for He remembers that they are but flesh" (Ps. 78:38–39); הן כל אלה יפעל אל פעמים שלש עם גבר להשיב נפשו מני שחת לאור באור החיים "Lo, God does all these things twice, three times, with a man, to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of the living" (Job 33:29–30).

[172] Translator: The phrasing echoes Job 36:11, יכלו ימיהם בטוב ושניהם בנעימים ("they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures"), and Job 21:13.

[173] את הכל ראיתי בימי הבלי יש צדיק אבד בצדקו ויש רשע מאריך ברעתו — "All this have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness" (Eccl. 7:15); יש הבל אשר נעשה על הארץ אשר יש צדיקים אשר מגיע אליהם כמעשה הרשעים ויש רשעים שמגיע אליהם כמעשה הצדיקים — "There is a vanity which is done upon the earth: that there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous" (ibid. 8:14).

[174] Translator: אנשי השם אשר מעולם, after Gen. 6:4.

[175] צדיק אתה יהוה כי אריב אליך אך משפטים אדבר אותך מדוע דרך רשעים צלחה שלו כל בגדי בגד — "Righteous are You, O Lord, when I contend with You; yet let me speak with You of judgments: why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are all they at ease who deal very treacherously?" (Jer. 12:1); הודעני נא את דרכך ואדעך למה תביט בוגדים תחריש בבלע רשע צדיק ממנו — "Why do You look upon the treacherous, and hold Your peace when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?" (Hab. 1:13); ועתה אנחנו מאשרים זדים גם נבנו עשי רשעה גם בחנו אלהים

that God is only good, and all [p. 63 (German)] [p. 64] His ways are justice, without iniquity,[176] and neither this case nor that comes about without justice.[177]

What then is the reason that the order of justice in the governance of the world is wondrous in our eyes?

Answer. The shortness of our understanding is the cause, for the thought of God is too lofty for it,[178] and it is too narrow to comprehend how God conducts the universe in His wisdom, which is beyond searching, and His righteousness, which is beyond compare. Therefore the ways of His judgments are hidden from us — how He requites each and every man according to his deeds, with reward or punishment. And our knowledge is likewise too short to determine whether the righteous man is the one who is righteous in our eyes, and whether the wicked man is the one who is wicked

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וימלטו — "And now we call the arrogant happy; yes, the workers of wickedness are built up; yes, they try God and escape" (Mal. 3:15); ואני כמעט נטוי רגלי כאין שפכה אשרי כי קנאתי בהוללים שלום רשעים אראה כי אין חרצבות למותם ובריא אולם בעמל אנוש אינמו ועם אדם לא ינגעו לכן ענקתמו גאוה יעטף שית חמס למו ימיקו וידברו ברע עשק ממרום ידברו שתו בשמים פיהם ולשונם תהלך בארץ ואמרו איכה ידע אל ויש דעה בעליון הנה אלה רשעים ושלוי עולם השגו חיל אך ריק זכיתי לבבי וארחץ בנקיון כפי ואחשבה לדעת זאת עמל היא בעיני עד אבוא אל מקדשי אל אבינה לאחריתם — "But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped; for I was envious of the boasters when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pangs at their death, and their body is sound. They are not in the trouble of men, nor are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride is as a chain about their neck; violence covers them as a garment. They scoff and speak wickedly of oppression; they speak from on high. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. And they say: How does God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, such are the wicked, and, always at ease, they increase in riches. Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart and washed my hands in innocency. And when I pondered how I might know this, it was wearisome in my eyes, until I entered into the sanctuary of God and considered their end" (Ps. 73:2–17) [the author omits vv. 7, 10, 14–15]; כי לא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם ולא דרכיכם דרכי כי גבהו שמים מארץ כן גבהו דרכי מדרכיכם ומחשבתי ממחשבתיכם — "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8, 9).

[176] Translator: After Deut. 32:4, כי כל דרכיו משפט אל אמונה ואין עול.

[177] חלילה האל יעות משפט ואם שדי יעות צדק — "Does God pervert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice?" (Job 8:3); לאל מרשע ושדי מעול כי פעל אדם ישלם לו וכארח איש ימצאנו אף אמנם אל לא ירשיע ושדי לא יעות משפט — "Far be it from God that He should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that He should commit iniquity. For the work of a man He will requite him, and cause every man to find according to his ways. Yea, surely, God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert justice" (ibid. 34:10–13) [the verses quoted are 10–12]; הן אל לא ימאס תם ולא יחזיק ביד מרעים — "Behold, God will not cast away a blameless man, nor will He uphold the evildoers" (ibid. 8:20); אשר חטא עשה רע מאת ומאריך לו כי גם יודע אני אשר יהיה טוב ליראי האלהים אשר ייראו מלפניו וטוב לא יהיה לרשע אשר איננו ירא מלפני אלהים — "Though a sinner do evil a hundred times and prolong his days, yet surely I know that it shall be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him; but it shall not be well with the wicked, because he fears not before God" (Eccl. 8:12, 13) [abridged by the author].

[178] מי תכן את רוח יהוה ואיש עצתו יודיענו את מי נועץ ויבינהו וילמדהו בארח משפט וילמדהו דעת ודרך תבונות יודיענו החקר אלוה תמצא אם עד תכלית שדי תמצא גבהי שמים מה תפעל עמקה משאול מה תדע ארכה מארץ מדה ורחבה מני ים אם יחלף ויסגיר ויקהיל ומי ישיבנו כי הוא ידע מתי שוא וירא און ולא יתבונן — "Who has meted out the spirit of the Lord, or who was His counsellor that he might instruct Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice, and taught Him knowledge, and made Him to know the way of discernment?" (Isa. 40:13, 14); "Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you attain to the purpose of the Almighty? It is as high as heaven — what can you do? deeper than the netherworld — what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If He pass by, or shut up, or gather together, who can hinder Him? For He knows base men, and He sees iniquity — will He not then consider it?" (Job 11:7–12) [the verses quoted are 7–11]; הלא כסופה אשר לא שזפתו עין כן דרכי אלוה ממעל מי מבשר משפטו מלפנים ומי יחיל יום באו קצר לב אנוש מהבין ומשטר ממשלתו מי יכיל — "Is it not like a storm-wind that no eye has glimpsed? So are the ways of God on high. Who announces His judgment beforehand, and who can await the day of its coming? The heart of man is too short to understand, and the order of His dominion — who can comprehend it?" (Ben Sira 15:26–29). [Translator: the Ben Sira quotations in these notes are given in Hebrew, evidently the author's own rendering, and their chapter and verse numbers do not match modern editions; the printed references are kept throughout.]

in our eyes;[179] how much less is it in our power to foresee in advance the outcome of actions — what will come [p. 65 (German)] [p. 66] of them, whether it be good or bad; for under the turning of circumstances[180] they change from good to bad and from bad to good, and how many deeds have we deemed bad whose outcome was very great good.[181]

What is the hope of the righteous man who fares ill all the days of his life, and with what shall he be comforted?

Answer. The hope of the righteous man who fares ill all the days of his life is the great good that is stored up for him in the future, in the life of eternity.[182]

And what is the dread of the wicked man who prospers all the days of his life?

Answer. The dread of the wicked man is the day of the judgment of souls, when he will have to give judgment and account for all his ways, and he shall bear his iniquity.

IX. Of Eternal Reward and Punishment

What is to be understood by the judgment of souls after a person's death?

Answer. By the judgment of souls is to be understood that the soul, when it departs from its body, will stand before the judgment of God, and all its deeds, whether good or bad, will be examined;[183] and it will bear its recompense there according to its deeds.[184]

Can we form a picture of the reward and punishment of the soul in the life of eternity?

Answer. No! For just as we cannot picture the soul in form and image, since it is not a body,[185] so we cannot picture what its [p. 67 (German)] [p. 68] reward is and what its punishment. It is enough for us to know that the soul of the righteous will merit perpetual delight,[186] and the soul of the wicked will be for reproaches and everlasting abhorrence;[187] and more than this we are not able to know of our soul while the thick clouds of matter still screen it.

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[179] כי לא אשר יראה האדם כי האדם יראה לעינים ויהוה יראה ללבב — "For it is not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

[180] Translator: מסבות מתהפכות, echoing Job 37:12.

[181] ואתם חשבתם עלי רעה אלהים חשבה לטבה למען עשה כיום הזה להחית עם רב — "And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20).

[182] מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך פעלת לחסים בך נגד בני אדם — "Oh how abundant is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, in the sight of the sons of men" (Ps. 31:20).

[183] כי את כל מעשה האלהים יבא במשפט על כל נעלם אם טוב ואם רע — "For God shall bring every work into judgment concerning every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14).

[184] את הצדיק ואת הרשע ישפט האלהים כי עת לכל חפץ ועל כל המעשה שם — "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work" (ibid. 3:17).

[185] See above, ch. 3, statement 18. [Translator: the Hebrew reads עיין לעיל פ"ג דבור יח; the facing German version refers instead to "Section 3, Dialogue XI."]

[186] לולא האמנתי לראות בטוב יהוה בארץ חיים — "Had I not believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!" (Ps. 27:13).

[187] Translator: לחרפות לדראון עולם, after Dan. 12:2.

X. Of the Definition of Repentance and Its Conditions

Is there no remedy for the sinner, to be cleansed of his sins and to be saved from punishment?

Answer. Even for the sinner there is a remedy, to be cleansed of iniquity and saved from punishment, when he amends his ways and his doings.[188]

By what does the sinner amend his ways and his doings?

Answer. By repentance, *teshuvah* (תשובה).

In what does repentance consist?

Answer. Repentance is in thought and in deed.

What is repentance in thought?

Answer. Repentance in thought is regret over the deeds that he has done, and the heart's resolve to love good deeds. Both of these will come to him when he brings back to his heart the exaltedness of God, against whom he sinned, and His holiness, His power and His goodness; then his heart will be humbled, and he will abhor his sins with all his heart, and will love what is good and right.

What is repentance in deed?

Answer. Repentance in deed: a) the penitent shall set right every wrong that he is able to set right, in the guilt by which he became guilty toward God and in the guilt by which he became guilty [p. 69 (German)] [p. 70] toward his fellow;[189] b) he shall set his eyes and his heart very much upon his ways and his deeds, to amend them continually, and not turn again to folly;[190] c) he shall turn to God and confess with his mouth all his sins, and entreat Him to forgive him.[191]

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[188] יעזב רשע דרכו ואיש און מחשבתיו וישב אל יהוה וירחמהו ואל אלהינו כי ירבה לסלוח — "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the man of iniquity his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7); אפס לשבים יתן יד ומחזיקים ברעתם יאבדו — "But to those who return He gives a hand, while those who hold fast to their wickedness perish" (Ben Sira 15:19).

[189] רחצו הזכו הסירו רע מעלליכם מנגד עיני חדלו הרע למדו היטב דרשו משפט אשרו חמוץ שפטו יתום ריבו אלמנה לכו נא ונוכחה יאמר יהוה אם יהיו חטאיכם כשנים כשלג ילבינו אם יאדימו כתולע כצמר יהיו — "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil. Learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:16–19) [the verses quoted are 16–18].

[190] בני חטאת חדל בקש על העוברות ויכפרו לך — "My son, have you sinned? Cease; pray concerning the former things, and they will be atoned for you" (Ben Sira 21:1); רוחץ ממת ונתפך אליו איך יטהר צם על חטאיו ושב אליהם שועו מי ישמע צומו מה יועיל — "One who washes after touching a corpse and turns back to it — how shall he be cleansed? One who fasts for his sins and returns to them — who will hear his cry? What will his fast avail?" (ibid. 34:26, 27).

[191] מכסה פשעיו לא יצליח ומודה ועזב ירחם — "He who covers his transgressions shall not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall obtain mercy" (Prov. 28:13); חטאתי אודיעך ועוני לא כסיתי אמרתי אודה עלי פשעי ליהוה ואתה נשאת עון חטאתי סלה — "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said: I will confess my transgressions to the Lord — and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah" (Ps. 32:5).

Has God promised forgiveness to sinners when they turn from their evil way?

Answer. Yes, God has promised forgiveness to the sinner when he returns to Him,[192] as it is said: יהוה אל רחום וחנון ארך אפים ורב חסד ואמת נשא עון ופשע וחטאה — "The Lord is a God merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exod. 34).[193]

What attributes are comprised in these names?

Answer. Two attributes are comprised in these names: a) God is merciful and [p. 71 (German)] [p. 72] gracious to sinners, not chastising them quickly for their iniquity, but rather long-suffering with them, to give them time to repent of their evil way and to return to Him; b) God is abundant in loving-kindness to forgive the iniquity of those who return to Him in truth, so as no longer to visit their sin upon them.

When is the appointed time for the sinner to repent?

Answer. There is no appointed time for the sinner to repent, and the sinner can never be early enough in his repentance; for much is his work before he sets right all that he has perverted and before he grows accustomed to walking in the good way; and he does not know how many are the days of his life and when he will die, and if he lingers, death may suddenly, in an instant, snatch him away, and he dies with his iniquities upon him. Therefore let him hasten and not delay his repentance.[194]

What is the portion of the soul of a sinner who died and did not merit to repent of his sins?

Answer. It shall bear its sin according to the measure of God's justice, until it is refined and cleansed of its iniquity; and afterward it shall be gathered in, through God's loving-kindness, among the holy souls.

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[192] שובו אל יהוה אלהיכם כי חנון ורחום הוא ארך אפים ורב חסד ונחם על הרעה — "Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, long-suffering and abundant in loving-kindness, and relents of the evil" (Joel 2:13); מה שגיאים רחמי אל נושא עון שבים כי לא כבן אדם אל ולא כעצת בני בשר עצתו מה אנוש מה חסרונו ומה יתרונו מה אשרו ומה אסונו ואם רבו ימיו מאה שנה כטפה מן הים וכגרגיר חל גם אלף שנים כאין המה כיום אחד מול הנצח על כן ארך אלוה רוחו לבני אדם ושפך רחמיו עליהם הוא ידע מה אחריתם על כן הוא מרבה לסלח — "How great is the mercy of God, who forgives the iniquity of those who return! For God is not like a son of man, nor is His counsel like the counsel of creatures of flesh. What is man? What is his lack, and what his advantage? What is his happiness, and what his misfortune? Even if his days be many — a hundred years — they are like a drop from the sea and a grain of sand; even a thousand years are as nothing, like a single day against eternity. Therefore God is patient with human beings and pours out His mercy upon them; He knows what their end is, therefore He forgives abundantly" (Ben Sira 17:24, 25–38).

[193] Translator: Exod. 34:6–7, quoted with omissions (the opening repetition of the divine name and "keeping mercy unto thousands" are left out).

[194] ולא ישא אלהים נפש וחשב מחשבות לבלתי ידח ממנו נדח — "God does not take away life, but devises means that he who is banished be not an outcast from Him" (2 Sam. 14:14); שוב יום אחד לפני מותך — "Repent one day before your death" (*Pirke Avot*); [Translator: Avot 2:10, where the saying is attributed to R. Eliezer.] לא תתמהמה לעשות חובך ולא תאחר לשוב עד שכבך על ערש דוי בעוד חילך לחטא היטיב דרכך אל תשים מועד לשוב זכור כי המות לא יאחר — "Do not tarry in doing your duty, and do not delay returning until you lie upon your sickbed; while you still have strength to sin, amend your way. Set no appointed time for returning; remember that death will not delay" (Ben Sira 18:13, 14).

XI. Of the Coming of the Messiah and the Resurrection of the Dead

What further doctrines of faith are there concerning the hope for which we are to hope?

Answer. There are two further doctrines of faith concerning the hope for which we hope: a) Behold, days are coming when God will send us the Messiah, son of David, to redeem the exiles and to bring them back to the land of their possession; b) and at the end of days God will revive the dead from their graves, and they will rise for judgment on the great and terrible day of judgment.[195]

[p. 73 (German)] [p. 74]

Part Two

On the Doctrines of Practice

Opening

I. Outline of the Subject of the Practical Commandments

What is there to learn after knowing the doctrines of faith?

Answer. After knowing the doctrines of faith one must learn the kind that comprises the doctrines of practice.

What is comprised in the doctrines of practice?

Answer. In the doctrines of practice are comprised the commandments (*mitzvot*, מצות) that the religion commands us to do and to refrain from.

How are the practical commandments in the religion to be divided?

Answer. The practical commandments in the religion are to be divided into two kinds of commandments:

a) commandments between man and God;

b) commandments between man and his fellow.

What is to be understood by the commandments between man and God?

Answer. By the commandments between man and God are to be understood the commandments that the religion commands us to do for the honor of God, to serve Him through them, inasmuch as He is our God, our Maker, who has set our soul in life[196] and does good to us, and from whom we hope for good both temporal and eternal.

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[195] Translator: "Behold, days are coming" echoes Jer. 23:5 and elsewhere; "the great and terrible day" echoes Mal. 3:23.

[196] Translator: After Ps. 66:9, השם נפשנו בחיים.

[p. 75 (German)] [p. 76] ***What is to be understood by the commandments between man and his fellow?***

Answer. By the commandments between man and his fellow are to be understood the commandments that the religion commands a person to do for good to himself and to his fellow, and those from which he must beware, doing harm to himself and to his fellow; and the duties that a man owes to his neighbor when they dwell together in the settled bond of society.

Division One: Of the Commandments between Man and God

Chapter One: Explanation of the Chief Commandments of Man toward God

I. Explanation of the Three Chief Commandments of the Torah in General

What are the chief commandments of the Torah between man and God?

Answer. The chief commandments of the Torah between man and God are three:

a) to know God;

b) to serve Him with all one's heart;

c) to perform the commandments that are a sign and a memorial of the benefits that God has bestowed on us in abundance through them.

II. Explanation of the Commandment to Know God

What is to be understood by the commandment to know God?

Answer. By the commandment to know God is to be understood that we are to set before our heart the greatness of God, His exaltedness, His might and His power, and to honor [p. 77 (German)] [p. 78] His name, and to fear Him always, so as not to transgress His commandments.[197]

By what can we recognize all these things?

Answer. We can recognize all these things by contemplating the works of God, His creatures in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, and in everything to which a person turns his eye to look; for in everything are revealed the exaltation of God, His wisdom, His power and His goodness.

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[197] דע את אלהי אביך ועבדהו בלב שלם ובנפש חפצה כי כל לבבות דורש יהוה וכל יצר מחשבות מבין "Know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and with a willing soul, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every inclination of the thoughts." (1 Chron. 28:9) — כה אמר יהוה אל יתהלל חכם בחכמתו ואל יתהלל הגבור בגבורתו אל יתהלל עשיר בעשרו כי אם בזאת יתהלל המתהלל השכל וידע אותי כי אני יהוה עשה חסד משפט וצדקה בארץ כי באלה חפצתי נאם יהוה "Thus says the LORD: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the LORD." (Jer. 9:22, 23)

III. Explanation of the commandment to serve God, and the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom

What is included in the commandment to serve Him with all the heart?

Answer. In the commandment to serve Him with all the heart is included: a) to take upon ourselves the kingdom of God and His commandments twice a day; b) to pray to God.

By what do we take upon ourselves the kingdom of God and His commandments?

Answer. We take upon ourselves the kingdom of God and His commandments by reading twice each day, morning and evening, the reading written in the Torah, as follows:

שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד ואהבת את יהוה אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך והיו הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על לבבך ושננתם לבניך ודברת בם בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך וקשרתם לאות על ידך והיו לטטפת בין עיניך וכתבתם על מזזות ביתך ובשעריך

> "Hear, O Israel: the LORD is our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates." (Deut. 6:4–9)

Which is the statement by which we take upon ourselves the kingdom of God?

Answer. The statement by which we take upon ourselves the kingdom of God is the first statement: שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד [Hear, O Israel: the LORD is our God, the LORD is one].

What is one to think when reading this statement?

Answer. When reading this statement the reader shall think that God is God Almighty (אל שדי), one and unique, the supreme King, Creator of all, who rules over the beings above and the beings below and in the four corners of the world.

Which is the statement by which we take upon ourselves the keeping of His commandments?

Answer. The statement by which we take upon ourselves the keeping of His commandments is the statement ואהבת את יהוה אלהיך [And you shall love the LORD your God] and what follows.

What is one to think when reading this statement?

Answer. When reading this statement the reader shall think that God chose us, charged us with His commandments, desires our keeping of them and takes satisfaction in our service — even though

He is sufficient unto Himself and has no need of our service, nor of our thanks, nor of our praise. Therefore we strengthen ourselves to love Him, to fulfil His will, and to guard against rebelling against His word in any matter whatsoever.

[p. 81 (German)] [p. 82] ***How is the love of God with all the heart to be explained?***

Answer. The love of God with all the heart is that the heart be wholehearted in the love of God, and that one's service of Him be neither for appearance in the eyes of men, nor out of love of reward, nor out of fear of punishment, but for the sake of His perfection, His greatness and His goodness. In this love the lover seeks nearness to the Beloved, to cleave to Him and to resemble Him in His deeds, and to fulfil His will without any hope of gain.

How is the love of God with all the soul to be explained?

Answer. The love of God with all the soul is to love Him more than everything that is dear to us; and if it comes to our very life, we must give ourselves up to die for the sanctification of His name, rather than profane Him or deny Him.

How is the love of God with all one's might to be explained?

Answer. The love of God with all one's might is that our possessions and all our property be always ready for whatever is to be done with them for the keeping of His commandments.

IV. Explanation of the other matters contained in the section of the *Shema*

What are the other matters contained in the statement* Shema*?

Answer. The other matters contained in the statement *Shema* are: a) to study and meditate in the Torah, to know its commandments written in it and to do them, to remember them by heart, and to teach it to the children; b) to write the account of the Exodus from Egypt on a scroll, to place it in a case, and to bind them as a sign upon the hand and as frontlets between the eyes; c) to write the statement *Shema* on a parchment and to place it on the doorposts of entrances and gates, so as to remember it in going out and in coming in.

[p. 83 (German)] [p. 84] ***What is the special excellence of the act of the Exodus from Egypt over the other acts that God did for us, that He commanded us to bind it as a sign always upon the hand and between the eyes?***

Answer. The excellence of the act of the Exodus from Egypt is that it is the first benefit, the great one, exalted above all.[198] For by it God separated Israel from the midst of the people among whom

[198]Translator: The print has והמתגוססת מכל, evidently a misprint for והמתנוססת מכל, "raised up [as a banner] above all" (cf. Zech. 9:16).

they were slaves[199] and made them a nation dwelling alone;[200] by it they began to be called by a name in the land;[201] by it He made known to them His greatness and His mighty hand, through the signs and wonders that He performed in Egypt before their eyes; and from the time that He brought them out of Egypt He revealed Himself to them in the great vision, gave them the Torah, sustained them all with manna forty years in the wilderness, and led them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night, until He brought them to a land of possession, for an inheritance and a resting place. Therefore God commanded us to write that act and to bind it as a sign upon the hand and as frontlets between the eyes, in order to remember that great act by which they began to be a people.

When are we to bind that sign upon the hand and between the eyes?

Answer. At the time of prayer, for that is the appointed time at which a person turns to God with all his heart.

[p. 85 (German)] [p. 86] Chapter 2. On the Matters of Prayer

I. What prayer is, and its divisions

What is prayer?

Answer. Prayer is to utter, in speech of the lips before God, all the thoughts of our heart: whether praise of the glory of His works, or thanksgiving for His benefits, or petition for our needs, or a plea for help in distress.

How many divisions are there in prayer?

Answer. There are four divisions in prayer: a) praise (תהלה, *tehillah*); b) thanksgiving (תודה, *todah*); c) petition (בקשה, *bakkashah*); d) blessing (ברכה, *berakhah*).

What is the prayer of praise?

Answer. The prayer of praise: when we contemplate the works of God, His creatures and their order, our heart is kindled with wonder upon wonder; and when our lips utter these wonders, we praise God.

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[199] או הנסה אלהים לבוא לקחת לו גוי מקרב גוי במסת באתת ובמופתים ובמלחמה וביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה ובמוראים גדלים ככל אשר עשה לכם יהוה אלהיכם במצרים לעיניך אתה הראת לדעת כי יהוה הוא האלהים אין עוד מלבדו "Or has a god ever attempted to go and take for himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is none else besides Him." (Deut. 4:34, 35)

[200] Translator: לאם לבדד, after Num. 23:9, "a people that dwells alone."

[201] וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם יהוה נקרא עליך ויראו ממך "And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you." (ibid. 28:10)

What is the prayer of thanksgiving?

Answer. The prayer of thanksgiving: when we set our heart upon the many kindnesses of God which He has bestowed upon us from our birth until this day, without any good deed of ours having preceded them[202] and without our being able to repay them,[203] a spirit is roused within us to make known our gratitude for these benefits; and when this spirit of desire pours itself out in speech of the lips, we give thanks to God.

What is the prayer of petition?

Answer. The prayer of petition: when we set our eyes upon the wants of our body and its many needs, and seek them in the cry of our mouth, we entreat God.

[p. 87 (German)] [p. 88] ***What is the prayer of blessing?***

Answer. The prayer of blessing: for everything that we eat or taste or perceive with one of the five senses, and in which we have pleasure and enjoyment, we bless God who created these things and appointed them for us to delight in.

II. The preparation of body and soul for prayer

How shall the one who prays prepare himself for prayer?

Answer. There are outward observances and there are inward observances by which the one who prays prepares himself for his prayer.

What is to be understood by the outward observances?

Answer. By the outward observances are to be understood the arrangement of the body, its posture and its clothing, and the manner of the voice.

What is to be observed in the arrangement of the body, its posture and its clothing?

Answer. In the arrangement of the body it is to be observed that the one who prays be clean and pure, his face and hands washed with water, and his clothing and garments free of dirt and filth. His posture: his stature upright, his head bowed, his hands clasped, still in his place, neither swaying nor moving.

What is to be observed in the manner of the voice?

Answer. In the manner of the voice it is to be observed that praise and thanksgiving be in joy of heart and gladness of soul, lifting up a voice of jubilation and song, with melody and with

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[202] מי הקדימני ואשלם תחת כל השמים לי הוא "Who has given to Me beforehand, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine." (Job 41:2) [Translator: 41:3 in the Masoretic numbering.]

[203] מה אשיב ליהוה כל תגמולוהי עלי "What shall I render to the LORD for all His bounties toward me?" (Ps. 116:1) [Translator: correctly Ps. 116:12.]

instruments of music,[204] for through them the exaltation of God [p. 89 (German)] [p. 90] and His thanksgiving are raised on high; whereas the prayer of petition shall be in submissiveness of spirit[205] and humility of soul,[206] in whispering only, the lips moving and the words not heard.[207]

What is to be understood by the inward observances?

Answer. By the inward observances are to be understood: a) the meditation of the heart; b) trust and firmness of faith (אמונה, *emunah*); c) the surrender of the soul to the will of God.

What is to be observed in the meditation of the heart?

Answer. In the meditation of the heart one must observe[208] to set all our thoughts and all our attention upon the prayer, and to understand the words that go forth from our mouth in our prayer; and before prayer we lay to heart before whom we approach to pray: before God, great and awesome, who knows all the thoughts of our heart. Thereby the soul is purified of all extraneous thoughts, so as to direct all our thoughts to prayer.

What is to be observed in trust and firmness of faith?

Answer. The one who prays shall trust in God that He will hear his prayer and grant him his petition, if what he seeks is for his good; and even if his request is delayed, his heart shall not grow faint, nor shall he waver in faith in God;[209] rather, with firmness of heart and courage of spirit he shall continue to entreat Him and hope in Him.

[p. 91 (German)] [p. 92] ***What is to be observed in the surrender of the soul to the will of God?***

Answer. The one who prays shall not press upon God, nor urge Him to give him only that which he awaits from Him in his prayer; rather he shall direct his desire to the will of God and to His exalted counsel, saying: "My God, into Your hand I commit my spirit;[210] not what my soul desires

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[204] אהללה שם אלהים בשיר ואגדלנו בתודה "I will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify Him with thanksgiving." (Ps. 69:31) — לכו נרננה ליהוה נריעה לצור ישענו נקדמה פניו בתודה בזמרות נריע לו "O come, let us sing to the LORD, let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation; let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, let us shout for joy to Him with psalms." (ibid. 35:1) [Translator: in the first verse the print reads שם יהוה and אגדלנו for the Masoretic שם אלהים and ואגדלנו; the second reference should be Ps. 95:1–2.]

[205] תפלה לעני כי יעטף ולפני יהוה ישפך שיחו "A prayer of the afflicted, when he faints and pours out his complaint before the LORD." (ibid. 102:1)

[206] אין עומדין להתפלל אלא מתוך כבד ראש "One may stand up to pray only in a serious frame of mind." (Berakhot, ch. 5, mishnah 1) [Translator: Mishnah Berakhot 5:1.]

[207] וחנה היא מדברת על לבה רק שפתיה נעות וקולה לא ישמע "Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." (1 Sam. 1:13)

[208] חסידים הראשונים היו שוהים שעה אחת ומתפללים כדי שיכוונו את לבם למקום "The pious men of old used to wait one hour and then pray, so that they might direct their heart to the Omnipresent." (Berakhot, ch. 5, mishnah 1) [Translator: Mishnah Berakhot 5:1.]

[209] הכון נפשך לפני תפלתך ולא תהיה כאיש מנסה אלוה "Prepare your soul before your prayer, and do not be like a man who tempts God." (Ben Sira 18:15) [Translator: Ben Sira 18:23 in the usual Greek numbering; the Hebrew is evidently Ben-Ze'ev's own rendering, from his Hebrew version of Ben Sira (1798).]

[210] Translator: Ps. 31:6.

in my petition give me, for my understanding is too short to foresee what will do me good and what will do me harm; prepare my lot, for You alone know."

III. Of the time, the place and the order of prayer

When is the time to pray?

Answer. The time of prayer is of three kinds: perpetual prayer (תפלת תמיד); occasional prayer (תפלת סבה, prayer prompted by an occasion); appointed prayer (תפלת מערכה, the fixed order of prayer).

Is it in our power to pray perpetually in actual fact?

Answer. It is not in our power to pray perpetually in actual fact, for the thought of our heart is not prepared for prayer at every moment; and perpetual prayer would leave us too little time to do the work of our affairs and our other duties.

What, then, is intended by perpetual prayer?

Answer. What is intended by perpetual prayer is, in the thought of the heart, to set the exaltation of God and His greatness before us always,[211] to remember His kindness and His goodness at all times, and to direct our ways and all our deeds to His name.[212]

[p. 93 (German)] [p. 94] ***What is* tefillat ha-sibbah תפלת הסבה *[occasioned prayer]?***

Answer. Occasioned prayer is of three kinds:

a) Whenever our heart is lifted up in meditating on the works of God, His mighty deeds, His majesty and His splendor, then our mouth is filled with song and our tongue with a ringing cry, to utter the mighty deeds of God and to make His praise heard.[213]

b) Whenever God's lovingkindness has prevailed over us[214] by a miracle, to deliver us from a distress that was near, with none to help, or to show us grace with abundant good for which we

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[211] אברכה את יהוה בכל עת תמיד תהלתו בפי "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (Ps. 34:2)

[212] כל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים "Let all your deeds be for the sake of Heaven." (Pirkei Avot 3:5) — שויתי יהוה לנגדי תמיד "I have set the LORD always before me." (Ps. 16:8) — בכל דרכיך דעה יהוה כי בו תצר עדותו "In all your ways know the LORD, for thereby you keep His testimony." (Ben Sira 32:26) [Translator: the Avot saying is at 2:12 in the standard numbering; the Ben Sira verse is 32:23 in the Greek ("In every work trust your own soul, for this too is the keeping of the commandments"), here in Ben-Ze'ev's Hebrew rendering, which echoes Prov. 3:6. The last word, עדותו, is slightly blurred in the scan.]

[213] Translator: The phrasing echoes Ps. 126:2 ("then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with a ringing cry") and Ps. 106:2 ("who can utter the mighty deeds of the Lord, make all His praise heard?").

[214] Translator: Ps. 117:2, "for His lovingkindness has prevailed over us."

had not hoped, our heart is stirred[215] to give thanks to God for His lovingkindness and His grace toward the children of men.[216]

c) In every time of trouble and grief, in every plague and in every sickness,[217] out of the straits we call upon God[218] and lift up our eyes to Him, that He may have compassion on us and release us from our affliction.

What is* tefillat ma'arekhet תפלת מערכת *[set prayer]?

Answer. Set prayer is the prayer for which an appointed time has been fixed by the teachers of religion, who appointed it three times a day: in the morning, and this is the morning prayer (*shaḥarit*); at the declining of the day, and this is the afternoon prayer (*minḥah*); in the evening, and this is the evening prayer (*'arvit*).

Is there an appointed place for prayer?

Answer. There is! For special buildings have been prepared, in which to assemble in congregations of people to pray the set prayers together.

Are there ordered prayers to be prayed in the house of prayer?

Answer. There are ordered prayers which the teachers of religion, the Soferim,[219] founded and arranged in order in the prayer book.

[p. 95 (German)] [p. 96]

IV. The Reason for Fixing a Time, Place and Order for Prayer

What moved the Soferim to set an appointed time for prayer?[220]

Answer. Had the Soferim not set an appointed time for prayer, many in every nation would now be slack about praying. For not many are wise enough to contemplate the mighty deeds of God and His works, or to be stirred by God's kindnesses and benefits to give thanks for them, and it would never have entered their heart to pray of their own accord, since there is none to stir them to it; and they would forget every benefit of God toward them. Therefore the teachers of religion

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[215] Translator: Lit. "our heart will be astir," after Ps. 45:2.

[216] Translator: Cf. Ps. 107:8, "Let them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness, and His wonders to the children of men."

[217] Translator: Cf. 1 Kings 8:37–38.

[218] Translator: Ps. 118:5, "Out of the straits I called upon the Lord."

[219] Translator: *Soferim* (סופרים), "scribes," Ben-Ze'ev's term for the early rabbinic authorities (from Ezra and the Men of the Great Assembly onward) to whom the fixed liturgy is ascribed.

[220] The reason for these questions: the essential and proper prayer should have as its beginning a spontaneous arousal of the soul and the heart's own feeling, which desires to pray; hence fixing a place, a time or a wording does not apply to it. For the proper time is whenever the soul is aroused of itself by one of the three causes I mentioned; the place is wherever one is and finds one's soul ready for it; and the wording is the words that rise to one's lips from the feeling of the heart, comprising the matter sought in one's prayer. To this comes the answer: the reasoning for fixing prayer at a time, apart from occasioned prayer; and since necessity brought about the fixing of prayer, it was also necessary to fix a time, a place and an order. But occasioned prayer needs no time, place or order; only set prayer needs these three, as the reason for each of them will be given.

appointed a time for prayer day by day, so that every man, like his brother, the one who is diligent of his own heart as well as the one who is not diligent of his own heart, should set the fear of God before his face[221] and not forget His benefits.[222] Therefore let no man refrain from praying these appointed prayers, and all the more so on the holy days, on Sabbaths and festivals, which were established as a sign and a remembrance of great benefits that were done for us; then we turn our heart away from every thought of business[223] and look to prayer.

Why was an appointed place established for prayer?

Answer. An appointed place was established for prayer so that many people might assemble there to set forth their cry together in congregations with a great multitude.

[p. 97 (German)] [p. 98] ***Is there an advantage to prayer in a congregation of people?***

Answer. There is. For the prayer of a congregation of people stirs hearts and awakens thought to this idea; each man, together with his fellow, is strengthened by it and takes care to lift up his heart as the other does; and the praise of God is exalted and raised high in holy majesty when tens of thousands of hearts unite with one mouth to recount His greatness and to give thanks together for His kindnesses which they have received together.[224]

Why were ordered prayers established for praying?

Answer. The ordered prayers were established for two reasons:

a) Not every man has the arrangements of the heart[225] and a pure tongue to set forth his prayer as is fitting to God Most High, so that his discourse may be pleasing to Him;[226] and the Soferim, who knew the language, composed ordered prayers in clear language,[227] equally suited to every soul.

b) The ordered prayers direct the heart of those who pray in a congregation of people, so that there may be one language and the same words[228] for all the people assembled in the house of prayer to pray together.

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[221]Translator: Cf. Exod. 20:17 (Hebrew numbering), "that His fear may be before your faces."

[222]Translator: Ps. 103:2, "and forget not all His benefits."

[223]Translator: עשתנות חפץ, lit. "thoughts of affairs"; cf. Isa. 58:13 and Ps. 146:4.

[224]אודך בקהל רב בעם עצום אהללך "I will give You thanks in the great congregation; I will praise You among a mighty people" (Ps. 35:18). במקהלות ברכו אלהים יהוה ממקור ישראל "In the congregations bless God, the Lord, you that are from the fountain of Israel" (ibid. 68:26). [Translator: Ps. 68:27 in the standard numbering.]

[225]Translator: Prov. 16:1, "The arrangements of the heart belong to man."

[226]Translator: Ps. 104:34, "May my discourse be pleasing to Him."

[227]Translator: Cf. Isa. 32:4, "the tongue of the stammerers shall speak clearly."

[228]Translator: Gen. 11:1, "one language and the same words."

What is the duty of one who prays in the place appointed for prayer?

Answer. The duty of one who prays in the place appointed for prayer is to honor it, for it is a holy place; to refrain in it from talk of business and idle words, from laughter and levity, and from any acts that are not fitting in a holy place.

V. The Purpose of Prayer and Its Aim

Why are we obligated to pray?

Answer. We are obligated to pray because God desires that we pray.

[p. 99 (German)] [p. 100] ***What is God's desire in our prayer?***

Answer. God's desire in our prayer is not for His own sake: not to stir Him to our wants, for He knows them better than we do, nor to rouse His kindness toward us, for He bestows good upon us before we entreat Him for it. Rather, we pray for our own sake: to be awakened to what we lack and to who it is that gives it to us, so that we may remember this always, humble ourselves before Him and give thanks to Him for it. Prayer reminds us of our duties, what we have done of them and what we have neglected to do, so that we may correct our perversities and make all our ways straight. Through prayer the stricken one binds up his wound. If his misfortune was brought upon him by his own hands,[229] he will confess his sins in his prayer and strengthen his heart against the remnant of his iniquity; and if he suffers for no transgression, will not his prayer lift up his spirit in his trust in God? So prayer produces its many effects and reinforcements only in the heart of the one who prays: it strengthens him in the fear of God; it awakens him to the greatness of His wisdom, His power and His goodness; it confirms his heart in faith in God's lovingkindness and His providence; it stirs him to his duties; it comforts him in his trouble and sustains his spirit in his prosperity, so that his heart may not be lifted up and he may not kick.[230]

[p. 101 (German)] [p. 102] Chapter 2: The Commandments of Sign and Remembrance

I. The Principal Commandments of Sign and Remembrance

What are the principal commandments of the acts whose performance is a sign and a remembrance?

Answer. The principal commandments of the acts in which there is a sign and a remembrance are: a) circumcision (*milah*); b) the fringes (*tzitzit*); c) the doorpost inscription (*mezuzah*); d) the frontlets (*totafot*, i.e., *tefillin*); e) the observance of the holy festivals.

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[229] Translator: The wording recalls Prov. 14:32, "The wicked man is thrust down by his own evil."

[230] Translator: Cf. Deut. 8:14 ("and your heart be lifted up") and Deut. 32:15 ("Jeshurun grew fat and kicked").

Of what are these acts commanded as a sign and a remembrance?

Answer. Some of these acts are reminders of religion and its commandments, and some of them are reminders of great benefits that God has bestowed upon us through them.

Which are the commanded acts that are reminders of the religion of God and His commandments?

Answer. The acts that are reminders of the religion of God and His commandments are the commandments of circumcision, *tzitzit* and *mezuzah*.

And which acts are reminders of the benefits of God?

Answer. The acts that are reminders of the benefits of God are the binding of the *totafot* as a sign upon the hand and between the eyes,[231] and the holy festivals.

II. The Commandments of Circumcision, Tzitzit, Mezuzah and Totafot

What is the sign in the commandment of circumcision?

Answer. The sign in the commandment of circumcision: God commanded that every male child born in Israel be circumcised at eight days old in the flesh of his foreskin, so that it may be a seal, a holy sign in his flesh, that he has entered into the covenant of God and His religion.

What is the sign in the commandment of* tzitzit*?

Answer. The sign in the commandment of *tzitzit*: for God commanded to tie [p. 103 (German)] [p. 104] fringes on the four corners of the garment, so that when the one who wears them sees them, he will remember the commandments of God and do them.[232]

What is the sign in the commandment of* mezuzah*?

Answer. The sign in the commandment of *mezuzah*: for God commanded to place the writing of the *Shema* on the doorposts of the entrance of every man's house, so that he may remember the acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God and the acceptance of His commandments in his going out and his coming in.

What is the sign in the commandment of binding the* totafot*?

Answer. The sign in the commandment of binding the *totafot*: for in them too the writing of the *Shema* is written, and they too are reminders of the sovereignty of God and His commandments; and added in them is the remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt, the first and most precious deed

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[231] Translator: Cf. Deut. 6:8, "and you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be frontlets (*totafot*) between your eyes."

[232] Translator: Cf. Num. 15:39.

that God did for Israel, through which they became a people, and the remembrance of the signs and wonders and the strong hand that God showed then.

III. On the Commandment of the Festivals

What is the sign in the commandment of the festivals?

Answer. The sign in the commandment of the festivals: for God set apart days in the year as holy for rest and delight, to celebrate them in remembrance of the deeds that were done on them, or to proclaim them holy convocations, on which to offer prayer and supplications and to seek the word of God.

What are the names of the holy convocations according to their kinds?

Answer. The names of the holy convocations according to their kinds are: Sabbath, festival (*ḥag*), the Day of Remembrance, and the Day of Atonement.

[p. 105 (German)] [p. 106] **IV. The Commandment of the Sabbath Day in Particular**

When is the Sabbath day?

Answer. The Sabbath day is the seventh day of every week, from evening to evening.

What is the commandment of the Sabbath day?

Answer. The commandment of the Sabbath day is to rest on it from all servile labor[233] and from all skilled work,[234] and from pursuing any business,[235] and from kindling fire to cook and to bake, and not to go out from one's place on a journey farther than two thousand cubits.

What is the sign and the remembrance in the Sabbath day?

Answer. The Sabbath day is a sign that in six days God made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and on the seventh day He rested; therefore God blessed the Sabbath day,[236] to make it a day of rest, a day of holiness and a day of delight, and to remember on it the creation of the world.

Why is the Sabbath day called a day of rest?

Answer. Because all six working days every man toils at the undertaking of his hands[237] and in the pursuit of his business, to provide food for his household and a portion for his sons and daughters;[238] and there are those whose hardships are great, in hard labors and heavy tasks, such

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[233]Translator: מלאכת עבודה, the phrase of Lev. 23:7 and elsewhere.

[234]Translator: מלאכת מחשבת, cf. Exod. 35:33.

[235]Translator: Isa. 58:13, "nor finding your own business."

[236]Translator: Exod. 20:11.

[237]Translator: משלח ידו, cf. Deut. 12:7.

[238]Translator: Cf. Prov. 31:15.

as the work of the tillers of the soil and the work of the craftsman and the designer,[239] until his strength fails and he grows faint and weary.[240] And when the Sabbath day comes, the one who works is refreshed[241] from his labor; he rests and has relief, new strength is with him, and with it in his hand he renews his strength[242] to return to his work in the coming weekdays.

For what is the Sabbath day appointed as a day of holiness?

Answer. All six working days a man's toil and his labor wear him down, and they do not allow him to set his heart to meditate on the Torah of his God [p. 107 (German)] [p. 108] and His commandments, and with all the devices of wisdom and knowledge to search into the words of the Sages and the Soferim. But on the Sabbath day, when he rests from work as is fitting and his thoughts are drawn away from thoughts of business, then he will set his heart to meditate on the Torah of God and to raise his thoughts wondrously to His exaltedness and the wonders of His mighty deeds. Therefore that day is holy, for gathering the congregation of the people in holy majesty to song and to prayer in the house of God; and there they read one section in the book of the Torah of Moses, and the Sages and the Soferim explain the reading to the people[243] and pour forth instruction and good doctrine[244] to the multitude of people who come to hear the word of God from their mouths.

For what is the Sabbath day appointed as a day of delight?

Answer. All six working days a man bears his burden and his load[245] in the toil of his hands,[246] and the cares of his work keep his heart from turning to joy and delight. But on the Sabbath day he forgets his toil and his affliction, and his hand's labor rests; he removes all care and sorrow from his heart, and he too becomes glad and takes delight in it in good foods and dainties and in garments of honor,[247] each man according to the means of his hand, according to the blessing of God which He has given him.[248]

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[239]Translator: Cf. Exod. 35:35.

[240]Translator: Cf. Isa. 40:28–30.

[241]Translator: Cf. Exod. 23:12, "and the son of your handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed."

[242]Translator: Lit. "he will renew," after Isa. 40:31, "they shall renew their strength."

[243]Translator: Cf. Neh. 8:7–8.

[244]Translator: Cf. Prov. 1:23 ("I will pour out my spirit") and Prov. 4:2 ("for I give you good doctrine").

[245]Translator: Cf. Deut. 1:12.

[246]Translator: Cf. Gen. 5:29.

[247] אם תשיב משבת רגלך עשות חפצך ביום קדשי וקראת לשבת ענג לקדוש יהוה מכבד וכבדתו מעשות דרכיך ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר אז תתענג על יהוה "If you turn back your foot because of the Sabbath, from pursuing your business on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honored, and honor it by not doing your own ways, nor finding your own business, nor speaking words, then you shall delight in the Lord" (Isa. 58:13–14).

[248]But a person should not multiply pleasures beyond his means, nor consume in the delight of one day the earnings of all six days.

[p. 109 (German)] [p. 110] # Chapter 3. The Laws of the Festivals in General

I. The Number of the Festivals and Their Law

What is the purpose of the festival days חגים [ḥaggim] in general?

Answer. The purpose of the festival days is to remind us of a great benefit that God bestowed on us on those days.

How many festivals are there in the year?

Answer. The festivals of the year are three, and they are called the three pilgrimage festivals שלש רגלים [*shalosh regalim*]: the Festival of Matzot, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Booths.

What is the law of the festival?

Answer. The law of the festival is that one does no servile work מלאכת עבודה [*melekhet 'avodah*] on it, and that one makes it a day of joy and delight for each man and his household.

Is the rest of the festival equal to the rest of the Sabbath?

Answer. The rest of the festival is not like the rest of the Sabbath, for whatever is done for every person to eat[249] — to cook, to bake and to prepare all food — may be done on the festival day, which may not be done on the Sabbath day.

II. The Commandment of the Festival of Matzot

When is the Festival of Matzot?

Answer. The Festival of Matzot is on the fifteenth day of the first month, which is the month of Nisan.

How many are the days of the festival?

Answer. Seven full days, from the fourteenth day of the first month in the evening until the twenty-first day of it in the evening.

What is the commandment of the festival?

Answer. The commandment of the festival is to remove all leaven and everything leavened חמץ [*ḥametz*] from the houses, and during all seven days no leavened bread may be eaten, but only cakes of matzot whose dough has not become leavened by any leavening.

[249] Translator: Exod. 12:16, "only that which every person must eat, that alone may be done by you."

[p. 111 (German)] [p. 112] ***What is the sign and the memorial in this festival and in the matzot that are eaten on it?***

Answer. When God remembered the children of Israel to bring them out of the land of Egypt from being slaves there, He sent Moses His prophet to Pharaoh king of Egypt to send the people out of his land, and the king would not hearken to the voice of the LORD. And the LORD sent ten great plagues upon the king and upon his land, and with the last plague every firstborn in the land of Egypt died; and that was in the night of the fourteenth day of the first month, at midnight. Then the Egyptians hastened to drive the children of Israel altogether out of their land in that night, and the children of Israel took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs bound up in their garments upon their shoulders, and they went out and baked their dough on the way into cakes of matzot, for it was not leavened, because they went out in haste and could not tarry in the land; for the Egyptians urged them, out of their fear lest they all die.[250] Therefore the children of Israel eat matzot on this festival as a memorial for their generations.

What else is the name of this festival?

Answer. The Festival of Pesach פסח [Passover].

Why is it called the Festival of Pesach?

Answer. When Israel was on its own soil and offered the sacrifices, they used to take on the fourteenth day of this month each man a lamb for a father's house, a lamb for a household, according to the number of souls, each man according to his eating,[251] and they brought it to the entrance of the Sanctuary and slaughtered it at twilight, a sacrifice of the Festival of Pesach, because God passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, passing over and delivering[252] when He smote [p. 113 (German)] [p. 114] the firstborn of Egypt, and of the children of Israel not one died.

What is the memorial on the seventh day of this festival?

Answer. On the third day after the children of Israel went out of the land of Egypt, the heart of Pharaoh and his people was turned against Israel, and they repented that they had sent them away from their service, when they saw that there was respite.[253] And the king pursued, he and his people, after the children of Israel a journey of three days, and overtook them on the seventh day encamped by the Sea of Reeds. And the LORD split the waters of the Sea of Reeds before the children of Israel, and they passed through its midst on dry ground, with the Egyptians marching after them into the midst of the sea. And when all the people had finished passing over, the sea

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[250]Translator: The narrative is woven from Exod. 12:29–39 (esp. 12:33, 34, 39).

[251]Translator: Exod. 12:3–4; cf. 12:27, "It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt."

[252]Translator: Isa. 31:5, "protecting and delivering, passing over and rescuing."

[253]Translator: Exod. 8:11; cf. Exod. 14:5, "the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people."

returned to its strength, and the Egyptians sank in the Sea of Reeds, and not one of them remained,[254] because they had stiffened their neck against all the signs and wonders that God had wrought among them.

III. The Commandment of the Festival of Weeks

When is the Festival of Weeks?

Answer. The Festival of Weeks שבועות [*Shavu'ot*] is on the sixth of the third month, which is the month of Sivan, one day, from the fifth of the month in the evening until its morrow in the evening.

What is the commandment of this festival?

Answer. The commandment of the festival: when Israel dwelt in their land and offered the meal-offerings and the sacrifices, they used to bring two loaves of fine wheat flour to the Sanctuary and offer them as a new meal-offering, a meal-offering of first fruits, of the first fruits of the wheat harvest.[255]

Why is it called the Festival of Weeks?

Answer. On account of the weeks, for they used to count from the second day of the Festival of Matzot seven complete weeks, forty-nine days, [p. 115 (German)] [p. 116] and the fiftieth day was the Festival of Weeks. For in the month of Aviv is the beginning of the barley harvest, and on the sixteenth of that month they used to bring a sheaf עמר [*'omer*] of barley, the first of the harvest, to the priest,[256] and they counted from the day of bringing the omer until the day they brought the meal-offering of the first fruits of wheat, seven weeks.

What is the sign and the memorial in that festival?

Answer. There is no sign in this festival, but only a memorial that on it God revealed Himself in the great vision on Mount Sinai before the eyes of all the people,[257] and spoke on it the Ten Words; therefore it is called the Day of the Giving of the Torah יום מתן תורה [*yom mattan torah*].

IV. The Commandment of the Festival of Booths

When is the Festival of Booths?

Answer. The Festival of Booths סכות [*Sukkot*] is on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, which is the month of Tishri.

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[254]Translator: Exod. 14:21–28 (14:27, "the sea returned to its strength"; 14:28, "there remained not so much as one of them").

[255]Translator: Lev. 23:16–17; Exod. 34:22.

[256]Translator: Lev. 23:10–11, 15–16.

[257]Translator: Exod. 19:11.

How many are the days of the festival?

Answer. Seven days is the Festival of Booths, from the fourteenth day of the month in the evening until the twenty-first of it in the evening; and the eighth day is the Festival of the Solemn Assembly עצרת [*'atzeret*].

What is the commandment of that festival?

Answer. The commandment of the festival is to dwell in a booth סכה [*sukkah*] all seven days.

What is the sign and the memorial in the booth?

Answer. For in booths the children of Israel dwelt when they went out of the land of Egypt and walked in the wilderness forty years, in a land not sown, no place of figs or pomegranates, and no place of a city of habitation, without a house for a refuge from the heat and a shelter from storm and rain,[258] but only [p. 117 (German)] [p. 118] in tents like the tents of Kedar,[259] and God spread a pillar of cloud over them for a covering. Therefore He commanded them, when they came into the land of their possession and dwelt in paneled houses full of all good things,[260] to leave their houses and dwell seven days in booths, so that they would remember all the days of the world the booths in which they dwelt when they went out of Egypt, and the benefits that were done for them in the wilderness.

What else is the name of this festival?

Answer. The Festival of Ingathering חג האסיף [*ḥag ha-asif*], for it is the time when each man gathers in the fruit of his labors from the field to the threshing floor and to the winepress: grain, oil and new wine.[261]

What is the commandment, the sign and the memorial of the Festival of Ingathering?

Answer. Therefore God commanded to take on the first day four species of plants: the fruit of a goodly tree, branches of palm trees, boughs of thick trees and willows of the brook,[262] and they are to form one bundle, so as to wave them and to rejoice with them before God in the house of prayer with blessing, with praise הלל [*hallel*] and thanksgiving; for the joy of the festive praises is to bless God and to praise Him and give thanks to Him for having blessed the work of our hands and filled our barns with grain, new wine and oil.[263]

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[258]Translator: Phrases from Jer. 2:2; Num. 20:5; Ps. 107:4; Isa. 4:6.

[259]Translator: Song 1:5; then Ps. 105:39, "He spread a cloud for a covering."

[260]Translator: Hag. 1:4; Deut. 6:11.

[261]Translator: Exod. 23:16; Deut. 16:13.

[262]Translator: Lev. 23:40.

[263]Translator: Cf. Deut. 16:15; Joel 2:24; Prov. 3:10.

What is the sign and the memorial in the Solemn Assembly of the eighth day?

Answer. On the eighth day there is no sign or memorial other than a day of assembly עצרת, only to refrain from all servile work and to increase the joy of the day and to make great its gladness, for it is the gathering-up of all three pilgrimage festivals.[264]

[p. 119 (German)] [p. 120] **V. The Number of the Festival Days according to the Way We Celebrate Them**

Do we too today celebrate these festivals according to the number of days of their law?

Answer. We do not today celebrate the festivals according to the number of days as their law is written in the Torah, for we add one day to every festival: instead of the seven days of the Festival of Matzot we celebrate eight days, instead of one day of the Festival of Weeks two days, and instead of the eight days of the Festival of Booths nine days.

What is the last day of the days of the Festival of Ingathering called?

Answer. Rejoicing of the Torah שמחת תורה [*Simḥat Torah*], for on it the reading of the Book of the Torah of [p. 121 (German)] [p. 122] Moses is completed, which is divided into fifty-two sections; on each Sabbath one section of it is read, until they are completed at the end of the year.

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[264]Here the Torah teacher should point out to his pupils, concerning the arrangement of the festivals, why all three festivals were established in the last six months of the year, while in the first six months there is no festival and no rejoicing; and God's intention was that He combined in each and every festival a remembrance of the season of the fruit of the land, its harvest and its ingathering. For by this God revealed His thought and His will, that He founded the happiness of the people Israel upon the tilling of the soil, in ploughing and sowing, and that by the produce of the fruit of the land they should live. And as with the arrangement of the Sabbath day, on the seventh of the week — six days he shall labor and do all his work, and on the seventh day he shall rest and rejoice in the fruit of his toil — so is the arrangement of the festivals. The first six months, from the beginning of the year until the spring equinox, are the months of work, for in them he opens and harrows his soil, ploughs and sows; in them the grain sprouts, grows and comes into ear. And in the six months from the month of Aviv until the end of the month of Ingathering, which is the time of the beginning of the harvest and of gathering the fruit from the field, in them the festivals were fixed, on days distinguished by the outstanding benefits that were done on them: the Exodus from Egypt, the Giving of the Torah, and the dwelling in booths in the wilderness. And into each festival was woven a sign and memorial of the blessing of the land. Into Pesach, the festival of the Exodus from Egypt, was woven the commandment of bringing the omer, the first of the harvest, to bless God who brings down dew and rain to make the grain grow and gives the light of the sun to ripen it for harvest. Into the Festival of Weeks, the time of the Giving of the Torah, was woven the sign of bringing the meal-offering of first fruits, to remember that the harvest season has been completed with no adversary and no mischance [cf. 1 Kings 5:18]. Into the Festival of Booths, the memorial of Israel's dwelling in the wilderness forty years without roof or shelter, was woven the sign and memorial of the fruit of the goodly tree, to remember the time of the ingathering of all the fruit of the field to the threshing floor and to the winepress, and to bless God and rejoice in Him for having blessed the fruit of each and every man and gathered it into a store to eat from all the days of winter. And after that, Shemini Atzeret, which is the seal of the year and the culmination of the festivals, includes the rejoicing of all three festivals together; on it one rejoices in remembrance of all the benefits as a whole. And for this reason God commanded that on the festival days the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow be made to rejoice, and with them all the poor and the needy, for these have no inheritance of field and vineyard, and how shall they support themselves? Therefore God commanded that these afflicted ones be made to rejoice, each man with the fruit of his labor with which God blessed him in the produce of the land, in the days of the harvest and the ingathering of the produce; for in them a man knows by himself what his wealth is and what his good is, and how far God has blessed him. And it is not by trade and dealing, usury and interest that a man grows mighty according to God's will, but only by the labor of his hands. [Translator: the note runs from p. 118 onto p. 120; in the last line the print appears to read "the reverse (*hefekh*) of God," evidently a misprint for *ḥefetz*, "will."]

Why do we make every day of holy convocation twofold today?

Answer. So the teachers of religion and the scribes established in their days (since Israel went into exile from its soil and dwelt in lands far from their land and could not know the day of the appointed holy convocation correctly): to make two days instead of one.[265]

Is the law the same for the eight days of the Festival of Matzot and the nine days of the Festival of Booths?

Answer. No; only the first two days and the last two days are festival days of holy convocation, on which no work is done except what each person eats; and the days between them are workday-and-festival days חול ומועד [*ḥol ha-mo'ed*], and every undertaking and business affair that cannot be postponed until after the festival may be done on them.

VI. The Commandment of the Day of Remembrance

When is the appointed Day of Remembrance?

Answer. On the first day of the seventh month, which is the month of Tishri, one day [p. 123 (German)] [p. 124] according to the law of the Torah, and we make this appointed festival too two days by the institution of the scribes.

What is the commandment of the Day of Remembrance?

Answer. To sound the shofar of blasting שופר תרועה [*shofar teru'ah*], for that is why its name is the Day of Blasting יום תרועה [*yom teru'ah*].[266]

What is the sign and the memorial on that day?

Answer. There is no sign on that day in the Torah; but according to the tradition קבלה [*kabbalah*] of the scribes, that day is a day of judgment and justice for all who come into the world, on which God visits all His creatures. On it He decrees the allotted portion and the hard service of peoples and kingdoms, for good or for ill, for the sword or for peace, for famine or for plenty; on it He examines the deeds of each man and the doings of a man's steps,[267] to determine for every living being its destiny and for every man his appointed lot, for death or for life, for calamity or for success.

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[265]Here the teacher should explain to his pupils that before the festivals were fixed by a calculation of the years and a fixing of full and defective months, they used to sanctify the months on the testimony of witnesses who had seen the new moon, and according to it they made the festivals; and they used to send messengers from the beginning of the month until the fifteenth of it to make known when the fifteenth of the month fell, so as to hold the festival. And the distant provinces, which the messengers could not reach within fifteen days, were in doubt whether the preceding month had been full or defective, and had to make two days of holy convocation out of doubt. But in our days, when the months are fixed by calculation of the lunar conjunctions, that doubt falls away, and the matter depends only on the sages of the generation to abolish the custom once its cause has ceased, and to restore the festivals to their law as written in the Torah, as our brethren in the lands of the East, in the Land of Israel and in Jerusalem, do. [Translator: the first word of the note is unclear in the print; "explain" is the evident sense.]

[266]Translator: Lev. 25:9; Num. 29:1.

[267]Translator: Cf. Ps. 37:23, "the steps of a man are established by the LORD."

What is the practice of the Day of Remembrance?

Answer. Every man shall lay to heart the holiness of the day, consider his ways and his deeds, and rouse his spirit to turn back from his sins; and he multiplies on it prayers in remembrance of the day of judgment, and petitions to God, the Judge of all the earth,[268] that He deal with us in righteousness and lovingkindness and determine good decrees for us.

What else do we mention in prayer on the Day of Remembrance?

Answer. The remembrance of God's kingship מלכות [*malkhut*]; for according to the tradition of the scribes this day is the completion of creation and the beginning of God's reign in His world from of old. Therefore on it we proclaim God King, in remembrance of the first day on which He was King over all His creatures. And this month, which is the seventh in the count of the months, is the first in the count of the years of

[p. 125 (German)] [p. 126] creation;[269] and for this reason the Day of Remembrance is called by the name *Rosh ha-Shanah* ראש השנה [New Year], and the sounding of the shofar is a remembrance of the beginning of the year.

What is the law of rest on this day?

Answer. Its law is the law of a festival in every respect: to rest on it from servile work, except for work needed to prepare food,[270] and to rejoice on it with food and drink and with fine clothing.

VII. The Commandment of the Day of Atonement

When is the Day of Atonement?

Answer. On the tenth of this seventh month;[271] a full day, from the evening of the ninth of the month until the following evening.

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[268] Translator: Gen. 18:25.

[269] Translator: From the opening of the catechism proper the book is printed as a bilingual edition: the even-numbered pages carry Ben-Ze'ev's Hebrew text and the odd-numbered pages a parallel German translation printed in Hebrew characters (each odd page rendering the Hebrew page before it, with the same questions and the same notes). In this range (pp. 126–141) the translation follows the continuous Hebrew text; the markers of the German pages (pp. 127, 129, … 141) are kept in sequence at the Hebrew page breaks, and their contents are not translated separately because they duplicate the Hebrew. Section headings there read "VII. Von dem Versöhnungstag", "VIII. Von den andern Festen", "IX. Von dem Fest der Tempelweihe", "X. Von den Fasttagen". The German has "eight sons" on p. 141 too.

[270] Translator: "servile work" (מלאכת עבודה, Lev. 23:7 etc.); "work needed to prepare food", literally "work for what every soul must eat" (אכל נפש, Exod. 12:16).

[271] Translator: Lev. 23:27; "from evening to evening", Lev. 23:32.

What is the commandment of the day?

Answer. To fast on it night and day and to afflict one's soul with regard to food and drink on that selfsame day, and to sanctify and purify one's soul; for on that day God makes atonement for us, to cleanse us from all our sins.[272]

What is done on this day?

Answer. To multiply prayers and supplications on it, and to confess on it the iniquities and trespasses of the whole year, so as to merit thereby atonement for sins.

Is the confession of the mouth on this day sufficient to obtain forgiveness for the iniquities that a person commits against God and against other people throughout the year?

Answer. Confession of the mouth on that day is not by itself enough for God to pardon thereby the iniquity of a person who has sinned against God and who has trespassed against his fellow; for confession is accepted only when it is preceded by repentance (*teshuvah* תשובה)[273] [p. 127 (German)] [p. 128] for the sins that a person has committed against God, and by making restitution for all the trespasses by which a man has trespassed against his fellow.

When should a man make restitution for the trespass by which he has trespassed against his fellow?

Answer. The days from the Day of Remembrance until the Day of Atonement: in them each man shall take to heart every guilt by which he has trespassed against his fellow, through oppression, robbery or deceit, or in any matter in which he has put forth his hand to his neighbor's goods,[274] and he shall restore the guilt to the one against whom he trespassed,[275] shaking his hands free of the wealth of oppression.[276] Or if he quarreled with his neighbor and struck him, or cursed or reviled him, or spread an evil report about him, or in anything that a person utters rashly with his lips[277] to distress his fellow — before the Day of Atonement comes he shall appease his neighbor's face,[278] to turn away his wrath and his hatred. And the one who was wronged, too, shall not harden his spirit nor stiffen his heart against being appeased,[279] but shall be reconciled to him, so that there may be peace, brotherhood and friendship between a man and his fellow, and so that they may be cleansed of their sins when they draw near before God on the Day of Atonement to confess their

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[272]Translator: Lev. 16:30; "afflict one's soul", Lev. 16:29, 23:27.

[273]The repentance mentioned above, Discourse I, chapter 3, section 9. [Translator: Hebrew מאמר א׳ פרק ג׳ דבור ט׳; the parallel Judeo-German note on p. 127 reads "I. Teil, III. Abschnitt, IX. Gespräch".]

[274]Translator: Lev. 5:21; Exod. 22:7.

[275]Translator: Num. 5:7.

[276]Translator: Cf. Isa. 33:15.

[277]Translator: Lev. 5:4.

[278]Translator: Cf. Gen. 32:21 ("I will appease him").

[279]Translator: Cf. Deut. 2:30; Deut. 15:7.

iniquity and to seek together His forgiveness; for then God will regard our prayer, to forgive us too, just as we have together forgiven each man the iniquity of his fellow.[280]

What is the law of rest on this day?

Answer. Its law is the law of the Sabbath day in every respect, for it is a Sabbath of solemn rest, and no work at all is done on it.[281]

VIII. Days of Feasting and Rejoicing: Purim and Hanukkah

Which are the days of feasting and rejoicing apart from the festivals and appointed seasons?

Answer. The days of feasting and rejoicing in the year are two: Purim and Hanukkah.

[p. 129 (German)] [p. 130] ***When is the feast of Purim?***

Answer. The day of the feast of Purim is on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

Of what is the feast of Purim a remembrance?

Answer. A remembrance of a great deliverance that was wrought for the Jews on that day; for all the Jews had been sold to be slain and destroyed,[282] and through a wondrous turn of events they were rescued.

How did this come about?

Answer. Ahasuerus, king of Persia, had a viceroy (*mishneh* משנה), greatly beloved in his eyes, whose name was Haman; and the viceroy was a proud and arrogant man, a scoundrel, and an enemy of the Jews of long standing. And when he clashed with a Jew, one of the king's servants who were in the king's gate, because he refrained from honoring him with the honor with which the rest of the king's servants honored him, he hated the Jews still more and devised schemes to destroy them all, and he slandered them to the king. And the king was enticed by his words to give him leave to do with the Jews as seemed good in his eyes; and Haman issued a written decree to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom of Persia on one day, on the thirteenth of the month of Adar, and to take their spoil as plunder.[283] But God turned things about,[284] frustrated his counsel and

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[280] שא לפשע רעך ויהוה יעבור על פשעיך: אנוש על אנוש פוקד עון ומיהוה בקש סליחה? הוא בן אדם ולא ישא ויהוה ישא לו? — "Forgive your neighbor's transgression, and the Lord will pass over your transgressions. Does a man visit iniquity upon a man, and seek forgiveness from the Lord? He is a human being and does not forgive, and will the Lord forgive him?" (Ben Sira 28:2, 3, 4). [Translator: printed "ב״ס כח ב, ג, ד"; the Hebrew is Ben-Ze'ev's own rendering of the Greek Sirach (cf. Sir. 28:2–5), not a quotation of a known Hebrew text.]

[281] Translator: Lev. 23:28, 32; 16:31.

[282] Translator: Esth. 7:4.

[283] Translator: Esth. 3:13.

[284] Translator: Esth. 9:1.

turned his scheme back upon his own head, for he and his sons were hanged;[285] and the Jews were given a written decree to stand up for their lives, to avenge themselves on those who sought their harm. And the Jews struck their enemies with a great blow on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and rested from their enemies on the fourteenth of it, and made it a remembrance, a day of feasting, every single year.

What is this name, Purim?

Answer. It is after the name of the lot, which is *pur* in the Persian language, which Haman cast for the appointed day on which the Jews were to be killed.[286]

[p. 131 (German)] [p. 132] ***What was this honor which the Jew refrained from paying Haman, and why did he refrain from doing it?***

Answer. It was the king's command that all the king's servants who were in the king's gate should bow down and prostrate themselves before Haman when he passed before them.[287] And among the king's servants was a man of the Jews who had been exiled to Babylon, whose name was Mordecai; and he would not bow down nor prostrate himself, for it would have been a criminal iniquity[288] in his eyes to give the honor due to God to a mortal man. And on account of this a fire was kindled in the heart of that proud and arrogant man,[289] and he devised schemes to take vengeance on all the Jews together with Mordecai.

By what means was the king's heart turned to hate Haman, his beloved, and to hang him, and to love the Jews?

Answer. Through the entreaty of Queen Esther, who was of the seed of the Jews, the daughter of Mordecai's uncle.

Why did the queen, his wife, not entreat the king at the outset, before he gave his viceroy leave to destroy her people? And how did Haman's heart dare to do so without taking to heart that it would end in bitterness?[290]

Answer. Neither the king nor his viceroy had known beforehand of Esther's kindred and her people. For when the king removed Vashti, his first wife, from being queen on account of an act of rebellion, he commanded that all the virgins of fair appearance in all the kingdom of Persia be gathered, and that the maiden who pleased him should be his wife. And Esther found favor in the

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[285] Translator: Esth. 9:25; what follows, Esth. 8:11, 9:16–19.

[286] Translator: Esth. 3:7; 9:24, 26.

[287] Translator: Esth. 3:2.

[288] Translator: Job 31:28.

[289] Translator: Prov. 21:24.

[290] Translator: 2 Sam. 2:26.

king's eyes above all the virgins who were gathered, and the king took her and made her queen in place of Vashti,[291] without knowing from what people she was, for she refused to tell him.[292]

And how did she make herself known to the king?

Answer. When Esther heard that a written decree had been issued against the Jews to destroy them, she invited the king and his viceroy to the feast [p. 133 (German)] [p. 134] that she had made. And the king asked Esther — for he saw that her soul was bitter — what her petition was and what her request, and it would be granted her. And the queen said: If it please the king, let the king and Haman come also tomorrow to the feast that I shall make for them, and tomorrow I will tell the king all that is in my heart.[293] And Haman went out on that day joyful and glad of heart; but when he passed through the king's gate before Mordecai, behold, he neither stood up nor stirred for him,[294] and his anger grew greater, for his heart had been lifted up even more than before by the honor of the queen, who had invited him alone with the king to the feast. And he came to his house sullen and angry,[295] and his men advised him to make a gallows fifty cubits high, and in the morning to ask the king to hang Mordecai on it; and he did so. That night the king's sleep fled, and he brought the book of records, and they were read before him; and it was found written that once two of the king's eunuchs had sought to lay hands on the king in secret, and no one knew of the matter except Mordecai alone, and he made it known to the king, and their plot was frustrated and the king's life was saved. And the king asked his servants what honor had been done to Mordecai for this, and they said: Nothing has been done for him.[296] And it came to pass in the morning that Haman came and stood before the king, intending to ask of him to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him; and the king's heart was set on knowing what honor to do for Mordecai. And he turned to Haman and asked him, saying: What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor? And Haman answered: The man whom the king delights to honor — let him be clothed in royal apparel, and let a royal crown be set upon his head, and let one of the king's princes mount him on the king's horse and proclaim before him: Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor. And the king said to Haman: Make haste and do so to Mordecai; and he did so. And the feast arrived, and the king's eunuchs hastened to bring Haman to Esther's feast. [p. 135 (German)] [p. 136] And the king again asked the queen what her request was. And the queen wept and said: My request is for my life and for the life of my people, who have been sold to die for no wrong. And the king's anger burned greatly against Haman, who had led him astray into this evil thing. And when Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, saw that evil had been

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[291] Translator: Esth. 1:19; 2:2–4, 17.

[292] Translator: Esth. 2:10, 20.

[293] Translator: Esth. 5:6–8; the narrative that follows paraphrases Esth. 5:9–6:14.

[294] Translator: Esth. 5:9.

[295] Translator: 1 Kgs. 20:43.

[296] Translator: Esth. 6:1–3; what follows, Esth. 6:4–14.

determined by the king against Haman,[297] and sought to add yet more to the fierce anger of the king,[298] he said: Behold, also, a gallows fifty cubits high stands in Haman's house, which Haman made to hang Mordecai on, who saved the king's life. And the king said: Hang him on it; and they hanged Haman. And the king set Mordecai as viceroy in place of Haman and gave him his house. And Mordecai wrote letters in all the king's provinces to revoke the written decree that Haman had issued against the Jews to destroy them; and to the Jews he wrote a decree to assemble and stand up for their lives, to avenge themselves on their enemies who sought their harm — those who said that a written decree issued in the king's name and sealed with his signet ring in the first place could not be revoked.[299] And the Jews assembled on the thirteenth of the month of Adar and struck their foes a great blow, and rested from their enemies on the fourteenth of it, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. And in Shushan they fought against their enemies also on the fourteenth, and rested on the fifteenth, and made it a day of feasting and gladness every single year: to send portions each man to his neighbor and gifts to the poor, to those for whom nothing is prepared,[300] and to read the Megillah.

When did this event take place?

Answer. About a hundred years after the return of the Babylonian exiles to Jerusalem, close to the completion of the building of the Temple.[301] Not all of them had yet returned to their land; many of the Babylonian exiles still remained, dwelling in other lands, [p. 137 (German)] [p. 138] and they were subjects of the kings of Persia, who reigned over many lands, and also in the land of Judah.

IX. The Days of Hanukkah

When is the feast of the days of Hanukkah?

Answer. On the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Kislev: eight days and eight nights. And we kindle lights on the nights of Hanukkah — on the first night one light, and we add a light each and every night, up to eight lights on the eighth night.

Of what is that feast a remembrance?

Answer. A remembrance of the great deliverance, when the Hasmoneans prevailed over Antiochus Epiphanes the Greek and cast off his yoke from upon their people, and redeemed them from the oppression with which the Greeks oppressed them.

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[297] Translator: Esth. 7:7; the passage paraphrases Esth. 7:3–10 and 8:2–9:22.

[298] Translator: Num. 32:14.

[299] Translator: Cf. Esth. 8:8.

[300] Translator: Esth. 9:22; Neh. 8:10.

[301] Translator: So the text; the Second Temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius (Ezra 6:15), about twenty years after the first return.

What is this name, Hanukkah?

Answer. It is after the name of the dedication of the altar (*hanukkat ha-mizbeah* חנכת המזבח) which the Hasmoneans dedicated in those days. For when the hand of the Greeks prevailed over Israel, they did much evil in Jerusalem, profaned the sanctuary and defiled the altar. And afterward, when the Hasmoneans struck them and drove them out of their land, they returned to purify the Temple, and they tore down the defiled altar and set up a new altar, which they completed on the twenty-fifth of the month of Kislev, and they dedicated it for eight days with thanksgiving and praise and with the kindling of lights in the courts of the sanctuary at night. And in remembrance of that we kindle lights on the nights of Hanukkah.

When did that event take place?

Answer. About three hundred years after the completion of the building of the Second Temple, and about one hundred and fifty years after Alexander of Macedon conquered the great kingdom of the land of Persia and all the land of India, and died; and after his death his great kingdom was divided [p. 139 (German)] [p. 140] among four of his generals, and the land of Aram and the land of Judah came under the hand of the general Antiochus, and the kings who reigned after him were called by his name. The Jews suffered much evil all the days of Greek rule over them, but in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes their evil grew greater than all that had been before; for he annulled the religion (*dat* דת), profaned circumcision and the Sabbath, defiled the sanctuary and made the altar an abomination, and compelled the people to worship his idols — until Mattathias son of Johanan, the high priest of the house of the Hasmoneans, arose; and in his zeal for his God and his land he stirred up the heart of his eight[302] mighty sons to fight for their land. And they went, and there gathered to them men whose hearts God had touched,[303] and they strengthened themselves to fight against the Greeks, with Judah the Maccabee at their head, the firstborn of the brothers,[304] a mighty man of valor. And they fought with few men against the army of the Greeks, numerous and mighty, and struck them blow after blow, and their hand prevailed over the Greeks, and they drove them out of their land and cast off their yoke from upon their people, and restored the religion and the service of God to its proper place.

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[302]Translator: So the Hebrew (שמונת בניו) and the parallel German; 1 Macc. 2:2–5 names five sons.

[303]Translator: 1 Sam. 10:26.

[304]Translator: According to 1 Macc. 2:2–4 Judah was the third son (John was the eldest).

X. The Fast Days

How many fast days are there in the year?

Answer. There are four fasts: the fast of the tenth [month], on the tenth of the month of Tevet; the fast of the fourth, on the seventeenth of the month of Tammuz; the fast of the fifth, on the ninth of the month of Av; and the fast of the seventh, on the third of the month of Tishri.[305]

Of what are these fast days a remembrance?

Answer. A remembrance of the troubles that befell our ancestors on these days, which were the causes of the destruction of our land and the burning of the house of our God [p. 141 (German)] [p. 142] and the cessation of our kingdom. For on the tenth of the month of Tevet Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem; and on the seventeenth of the month of Tammuz after it the walls of the city were breached; and on the ninth of the month after it the city was captured, and the enemies slew those who wield the sword, and burned the house of our God and the palaces of the princes, and plundered their wealth and carried them off into exile to Babylon. Only of the poorest of the people did the king leave in the land, as vinedressers and husbandmen, and he set Gedaliah son of Ahikam at their head in the land of Judah. And him too a man from among the lawless of our people smote, whose name was Ishmael son of Nethaniah, together with the poor of the people of the land; and the survivors fled to Egypt. And this is the fast that falls in the seventh month.[306]

What are the duties of the fast day?

Answer. The duties of the fast day are somewhat like the duties of a festival day. For on the fast day, too, one refrains from work and from pursuing one's business; on it, too, one reflects on the providence of God and on the deed that was done on that day; and on it, too, one increases prayer and contemplates the Torah of God, as on a festival day. Only that on a festival we eat and rejoice and take delight in remembrance of the great good that was done on it, while on a fast day we hunger and afflict ourselves and grieve over the evil and the calamity that befell on it. And just as the food and the delight are not that for whose sake the festival exists, so the hunger and the fasting are not that for whose sake the fast exists. For the chief duties of the day, both on a festival and on a fast, are to assemble in the house of God and to pray in the congregation of the people, to give much charity, and to seek moral instruction as each day requires.

[p. 143 (German)] [p. 144] ***Why, then, the fasting and the abstinence on the fast day?***

Answer. Because the duty of the day is much prayer and charity and the seeking of the good and of moral instruction, therefore a man is to go hungry on it and to refrain from all food, in order to

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[305] Translator: Zech. 8:19.

[306] Translator: Cf. 2 Kings 25 and Jer. 39–41; 52. The four fasts are those of the tenth of Tevet, the seventeenth of Tammuz, the ninth of Av and the Fast of Gedaliah in Tishri ("the fast of the seventh month," Zech. 8:19). Ben-Ze'ev's dating (the city taken "on the ninth of the month after it") follows the rabbinic calendar of the fasts rather than the biblical dates.

still the cravings of his soul. For when the body is kept from what it desires, the soul is made ready to clear its thoughts of all alien musings and to direct them solely to proper prayer; and this is also why he is to refrain on that day from pursuing his business and from all his ordinary ways.[307] But now one who places all the duties of the fast in hunger and fasting, imagining that by diminishing his fat and his blood he offers a sacrifice to God and that this suffices him, and does not refrain from his work and from pursuing any business, but goes the way of his heart and about his affairs in which he is occupied day by day — he troubles his own flesh for nothing;[308] he "sacrifices flesh and eats it."[309]

Who instituted these days of feasting and these days of fasting?

Answer. The prophets, and after them the Scribes (הסופרים, *ha-soferim*) who lived in those days.

[p. 145 (German)] [p. 146]

Second Treatise (תכן ב)

On the commandments between a person and his fellow

Chapter 1 (פרק א)

On a person's duties toward himself

I. The divisions of a person's duties

What is the second kind among the teachings of the practical commandments?

Answer. The second kind of the practical commandments is that which a person is to do for his own good and that of his fellow, and that from which he is to refrain doing to the harm of himself and of his fellow.

What is the name of the rules for these actions?

Answer. The name of the rules for these actions is "a person's duties" (חובות האדם, *hovot ha-adam*).

Into how many divisions are they divided?

Answer. They are in two divisions:

a) a person's duties toward himself;

b) a person's duties toward others.

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[307] Translator: The phrase "pursuing business" (ממצוא חפץ) echoes Isa. 58:13; the whole passage alludes to Isaiah 58 on the true fast.

[308] Translator: Cf. Prov. 11:17, ועכר שארו אכזרי, "but the cruel man troubles his own flesh."

[309] Translator: Hos. 8:13, of sacrifices that God does not accept.

II. Explanation of a person's duties toward himself

What is included in a person's duties toward himself?

Answer. In a person's duties toward himself are included the actions that he is obliged to perform for his own good, in order to attain through them his perfection and his happiness, and to refrain from doing anything by which he would harm himself.

[p. 147 (German)] [p. 148] ***What is a person's first duty toward himself?***

Answer. The preservation of his life (קיום נפשו).

What is included in the preservation of life?

Answer. A person is obliged to love his life, which is a gift of God to him; to do the deeds that strengthen his life and lengthen his days, and to cease from the deeds that shorten his years; and even when he is in distress he is not to loathe his life, nor to plead for death, until the day of his appointed term comes[310] and God, who has set his soul among the living,[311] requires it of him.

What is a person's duty that comes after the duty of preserving life?

Answer. To seek his perfection and his happiness.

What are the chief perfections that make a person happy in his life, and which he is obliged to attain?

Answer. The chief perfections of a person that make him happy in his life are three:

a) perfection of health;

b) perfection of possessions;

c) perfection of the soul.

III. A person's duties with respect to perfection of health

What is the strong safeguard that preserves our life and lengthens it?

Answer. The strong safeguard for length of life is soundness of body.[312]

How shall a person make his body sound?

Answer. A person will be sound of body when he conducts his affairs with judgment[313] in these three matters:

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[310]Translator: Cf. Job 14:14, "all the days of my appointed time (צבאי) will I wait."

[311]Translator: Ps. 66:9.

[312]Translator: בריאת אולם, after Ps. 73:4.

[313]Translator: Ps. 112:5, יכלכל דבריו במשפט.

a) Keeping order and measure in eating and drinking and sleeping, in movement and rest, and in the other needs of the body and its pleasures; [p. 149 (German)] [p. 150] that is, he is to satisfy the craving of his appetite for food and drink only as far as his body can bear, to the point of satiety,[314] and not eat much beyond his satiety nor drink more than quenches his thirst. Also in choosing his food one must distinguish the foods that are harmful in their nature, or that do not suit our stomach according to the temperament of one's body, and keep them from oneself.[315] And likewise he must know the requirement of sleep and of movement for maintaining the health of the body, and not wear out his strength by much waking or by the toil of hard labor, but set a limit and observe an alternation between sleep and waking and between movement and rest, so that he may return to his strength after work; for these "give power to the faint, and to him who has no might they increase strength."[316]

b) Keeping cleanliness, of the body, of one's dress and also of one's dwelling.

c) Keeping tranquillity of soul, a calm spirit and a glad heart; and let him scatter far away the burning heat of desire, which is the adversary of tranquillity and puts an end to joy — it and its companions that walk at its heels: worry, sorrow, grief and envy; for these dig in secret to lay health bare "to the very foundation";[317] and let him also utterly banish anger, for it is the harshest of them all.

What need is there of bodily health for a person's perfection and happiness?

Answer. Because health is among the delights of life that make the pleasures of the world pleasant to us, and it is the source of all joy and repose; by it [p. 151 (German)] [p. 152] all food and all drink become pleasant to us, and by it rest and sleep are agreeable to us; by it every delight and comfort is sweetened for us, and by it all our deeds are done with diligence, without sloth and slackness of hands. And it is also the wellspring of the works of the soul; for in a sound body the soul is ready for every work of thought — to meditate, to learn and to reflect with great diligence. And even the service of God and the works of righteousness and integrity cannot be accomplished without bodily health. Therefore he who does not guard his body from sickness, or who, if he falls sick, does not

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[314] צדיק אכל לשבע נפשו ובטן רשעים תחסר — "The righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul, but the belly of the wicked shall want" (Prov. 13:25).

[315] בני בחון נפשך בחייך והזר ממנה כל משחת כי לא כל מאכל יכון לכל נפש ולא כל נפש תרצה בכל — "My son, test your soul in your life and keep from it everything harmful, for not every food is suited to every soul, nor does every soul delight in everything" (Ben Sira 37:24 [Translator: the last letter of the verse number is unclear in the print, כד or כר; the passage is Sir. 37:27–28 in the usual numbering]). איש טעם יאכל במדה וישתה במשורה ושכב ושנתו ערבה עליו בקר יקום ולבו טוב: נדד שנה חלי כרש וקרס מעים למלא בטנו בקר יקום ולבו בל עמו — "A man of discernment eats in measure and drinks moderately; he lies down and his sleep is sweet to him; in the morning he rises with a cheerful heart. Sleeplessness, sickness of the belly and griping of the bowels are for him who fills his belly; in the morning he rises and his heart is not with him" (ibid. 31:25–27). [Translator: Ben Sira is quoted in Ben-Ze'ev's own Hebrew rendering; cf. Sir. 31:20 in the usual numbering.]

[316] Translator: Isa. 40:29.

[317] Translator: Ps. 137:7, ערו ערו עד היסוד בה.

have it healed, will not be happy in his life and will not prosper in any undertaking, and will be the author of his own trouble.

IV. A person's duties with respect to perfection of possessions

What things are reckoned as perfection of possessions?

Answer. To perfection of possessions are reckoned wealth, riches, splendor and honor, dominion and friends.

Of all these, which does a person need most?

Answer. The thing a person needs most is the acquisition of property; for his life depends on it — whoever does not neglect it shall live, for by it he acquires everything he lacks and provides for all his many needs. Therefore a person is obliged to acquire property and to obtain possessions for the preservation of his life.

What shall a person do to acquire property?

Answer. The first duty is to learn an occupation (משלח יד, *mishlah yad*), a craft or a trade, each according to the aptitude of his soul, by which he may provide his food and his needs; for work is a shield for those who practise it, to guard them from poverty and want. And if his circumstances are in his favor and his time is propitious for gathering wealth [p. 153 (German)] [p. 154] and riches, then it is a duty to hasten and exert oneself to attain riches as well, for they too are a cause of a person's perfection and happiness.

In what way is wealth a cause of a person's perfection and happiness?

Answer. For besides the pleasure and delight that wealth gives its owners, enabling a man to do himself every good and giving him ample means in all his affairs — in the food of his table, in his dress and in his dwellings — does it not also give him the means to act righteously and to do good to others as well, and to do what is good and right at all times: to raise his children in the culture of wisdom and moral discipline, to sustain his parents in their old age, to help his kinsmen whose hand has failed,[318] strengthening them, to be gracious to the poor and needy, to wipe away the tears of the oppressed,[319] and to give generously to every good and useful cause, according to the measure of his means.

[318]Translator: Lev. 25:35, ומטה ידו.

[319]Translator: Cf. Eccl. 4:1, "the tears of the oppressed."

What must one guard in acquiring property and wealth, and how is one to conduct oneself with it, so that it may be said of a person that he is one who prospers in his property and his riches?

Answer. The man who prospers in his wealth is he who acquires it in uprightness and honor, and knows the value of possessions — what they can do for their owners — and disposes of them with judgment.

Who is it that acquires his wealth in uprightness and honor?

Answer. The man who does not transgress a single one of the commandments of religion (הדת, *ha-dat*), nor a single statute of the laws of righteousness and equity, for the sake of increasing gain, and does not gather even one piece of silver without right[320] — he acquires his wealth in uprightness; and he who does not profane his name and does not lower his dignity by doing contemptible deeds for the sake of gathering wealth, but only [p. 155 (German)] [p. 156] by deeds befitting his dignity makes his riches — he acquires his wealth in honor.[321]

And what must one know concerning the value of possessions, and spending them with judgment?

Answer. Since wealth has no worth except according to what it can do for its owners, a person will therefore not prosper in it unless he knows its value and how to conduct himself with it. For the spendthrift who empties his purse to satisfy every craving and to fulfil every wish of his heart, and the miser who shuts his hand and deprives himself of every good — neither of them can prosper in their riches; but he who orders his ways and his deeds with judgment, whose expenditures are in proportion to his income, who sets his needs according to the measure of his earnings, and who gives generously to the poor and needy and to every good cause according to the measure of his possessions — he is the man whose prosperity endures.

V. Good and bad occupations

Which occupation agrees most with religion, righteousness and moral discipline, and which should a person choose?

Answer. The occupation by which a person chooses to provide his livelihood should be one he likes, or a trade in keeping with his station, his dignity and the skill of his hands. And among the many and various trades one should choose a trade that involves labor and diligence, and the skill of something that benefits human society, such as tilling the soil, the work of the craftsman and

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[320] Translator: אגורת כסף, after 1 Sam. 2:36; "without right" (בלא משפט) echoes Jer. 17:11.

[321] אשרי עשיר נקי כפים ואחרי בצעו לא נפתה לבו: איפה הוא ונהללנו כי פלא עשה בעמיו: מי זה נסה בהון וישלם ועשה לו שם תהלה: מי מצא ידו לעשק ולא עשק לעול ולא עול טובו יחיל לבטח ותהלתו יתנו בקהל — "Happy the rich man who is clean of hands, and whose heart has not been enticed after his gain. Where is he, that we may praise him? For he has done wonders among his people. Who is he that was tested by wealth and was found perfect, and made himself a name of praise? Who had the power to oppress and did not oppress, to do wrong and did not do wrong? His prosperity shall be established in security, and the assembly shall declare his praise" (Ben Sira 31:14–18). [Translator: Sir. 31:8–11 in the usual numbering.]

the designer,[322] and anything in which there is something worthwhile in that work to be of use; and every master of an occupation who by the labor of his hands

[p. 157 (German)] [p. 158] earns his wages by his work, and whose doing is of use to the prosperity of the land and its inhabitants — he increases the happiness of the state, and is beloved in the eyes of God and man.

And which occupation is not in accordance with law, righteousness and morality, so that a person should abhor it?

Answer. Everything whereby a man does not bring in his wages by the toil of his hand, nor seek his livelihood by the labor of his palms, but rather feeds on the sweat of other people's brow and fattens his soul on the wealth of strangers — that is what a person should abhor. Among these is reckoned increasing one's fortune by usury (נֶשֶׁךְ, *neshekh*), by deceit, by fraudulent gaming, and by anything like these. And of them all it is usury whose vileness is not evident to the eye, and it is the evil and abominable one. There are usurers who, like the leech, suck blood, and like the bird of prey upon carcasses, with cunning and villainy feed on the flesh of the oppressed and the crushed. For they lie in wait for the poor man at the time when his hand falters[323] and he seeks help, and, like saviors in distress, they stand ready to lend him money against a costly pledge and at the heavy interest that they lay upon him. The one labors and toils, and they eat the wages of his toil. These men, destroyers of society, who gnaw the bones of the poor and suck out the marrow of the needy man's bones, shall be an object of hatred to the kingdom and despised among the people.[324]

VI. Of man's duties with respect to the perfection of the soul

What is the perfection of man's soul?

Answer. The perfection of the soul is an upright intellect, so as to comprehend every matter with the eye of truth; a sound understanding, so as to judge correctly in all that it examines; and a feeling of the heart for the good and the right.

[p. 159 (German)] [p. 160] ***By what means does the soul acquire these three things that give it its perfection?***

Answer. a) By the study of three things: ethics (הַמִּדּוֹת, *ha-middot*), the sciences (הַמַּדָּעִים, *ha-madda'im*), and the Torah. Through ethics it acquires knowledge of upright conduct in human society, and comes to know the moral teaching and the principles of rectitude that incline the heart toward the good, toward righteousness and uprightness, and toward all the deeds that are a glory

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[322] Translator: מלאכת חרש וחשב, after Exod. 35:35.

[323] Translator: The phrase echoes Lev. 25:35, וְכִי יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ ("if your brother becomes poor and his hand falters"), the passage that introduces the biblical prohibition of interest (Lev. 25:36–37).

[324] The other matters pertaining to the perfection of possessions I have not brought here, because of the great length of the discussion, which would lead the subject on to another subject.

to those who do them, so as to love people and to be loved by them. Through the sciences the intellect learns to know, and to judge correctly in all that it examines, so as to distinguish between truth and falsehood. And through the Torah one learns which deeds are pleasing in the eyes of God, so that he does them, and which are not pleasing, so that he forsakes them.

b) Also, sitting in the company of the wise and attaching oneself to the society of men of understanding and good taste are very conducive to setting the human intellect on the right path.[325]

What precautions are to be observed in these studies?

Answer. Attentive listening, diligence, and repetition of the lessons until they are engraved in the soul of the learner and he remembers what he has learned. Nor is it enough to know things from hearsay alone; rather, he should test everything he learns by reflection, inquiry and investigation, and by comparing one thing with another, until he knows the knowledge with the understanding of his heart and grasps the whole matter thoroughly.

Chapter 2. Of man's duties toward his fellow

I. The divisions of man's duties toward his fellow

How many divisions are there in the duties of a person toward another person?

Answer. There are three divisions in these duties:

a) the duties of a man toward his kin;

[p. 161 (German)] [p. 162] b) the duties of a man toward his fellow;

c) the duties of a man toward the land of his possession.

II. Duties toward kin

What is included in the duties toward kin?

Answer. Included in the duties toward kin are: a) the duties between parents and children; b) and the duties between a man and his brothers, his relatives, and all the members of his family.

What are the duties of parents toward their children?

Answer. It is the duty of parents to love their children, to have compassion and pity on their tender little ones, and to bear the burden and toil of them from their birth until they grow up; to provide for them with food and clothing, and to bring them up in the cultivation of wisdom, morality and knowledge; to instruct them in the religion of God and in His Torah; and to teach them an occupation for their livelihood when they become adults.

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[325] הולך את חכמים יחכם ורעה כסילים ירוע — "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but the companion of fools comes to harm" (Prov. 13:20).

What are the duties of children toward their parents?

Answer. It is the duty of children to love their parents, to revere them, to honor them and to obey them; to do everything by which their parents may find contentment in them, and not to bring upon them any anger or any grief; to sustain them in their old age and to bear the burden and toil of them in their old age, just as their parents bore the toil of their youth with them.

What are the duties of a man toward his brother, his relatives and the members of his family?

Answer. A man shall love his brother, and they shall dwell together in tranquility;[326] the younger shall heed the voice of the one older than he and honor him. All the members of one family shall live in peace together. No one shall be ashamed of the poor and the impoverished among his kin; and the one whose means suffice shall strengthen and support with all his ability the one whose hand falters.

[p. 163 (German)] [p. 164] **III. Of man's duties toward his fellow**

How are man's duties toward his fellow to be divided?

Answer. Man's duties toward his fellow are of two kinds: a) duties of justice (חוֹבוֹת מִשְׁפָּט, *ḥovot mishpat*); b) duties of benevolence (חוֹבוֹת נְדָבָה, *ḥovot nedavah*).

What is comprised in the duties of justice?

Answer. Comprised in the duties of justice is refraining from doing any evil thing to our fellow, and from diminishing anything of his due in all that he possesses and has power over; and that we not assail him to do him harm in any one of these three: in his life, in his property, and in his good name. The entire observance of these duties is comprised in the saying: **"Whatever is evil in your eyes, do not do to your neighbor"** (כָּל אֲשֶׁר יֵרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְרֵעֶךָ).[327]

What is comprised in the duties of benevolence?

Answer. The duties of benevolence are deeds that a person is obliged to do for the good of his fellow, for his perfection and his happiness. What these duties require is that we do our fellow's will, just as it is our will that he should do for us were we in his place. The entire observance of these duties is comprised in the saying: **"Whatever is good in your eyes, do to your neighbor"** (כָּל אֲשֶׁר יִיטַב בְּעֵינֶיךָ עֲשֵׂה לְרֵעֶךָ).

What is the difference between the duties of justice and the duties of benevolence?

Answer. The duties that consist in refraining from doing evil to one's fellow are laid upon a person to observe by order of the judges of the state, and whoever transgresses one of them, that man shall

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[326]Translator: Cf. Ps. 133:1, "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together."

[327]Translator: A Hebrew formulation of the negative "golden rule" attributed to Hillel (BT Shabbat 31a: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow"). The positive counterpart below corresponds to the German version's "What you wish others to do to you, do also to them."

be punished by the judges when his fellow brings his case before them; therefore they are called duties of justice. But the duties of action are wholly given over to the goodwill of the soul, whether it wishes to do them; but [p. 165 (German)] [p. 166] no compulsion presses upon him concerning them;[328] therefore they are called duties of benevolence.

IV. Of the duties of justice in particular

What are a person's duties with respect to his fellow's life?

Answer. In these duties a person is commanded not to assail the person of his fellow so as to harm him in his body, in his health, or in his life: he shall not raise his hand against him to strike him, to inflict a blemish on him, or to cause him pain or sickness, or the taking of his life.

What are a person's duties concerning his fellow's property?

Answer. In these duties a person is commanded not to touch his fellow's possessions so as to diminish them, and not to disturb his repose while he rejoices in his portion and sees good in his toil.[329] He shall not hinder him in his work and his doings, in anything that is in his power to do. He shall not encroach upon his boundary, nor intrude into his occupation and make him cease from it; he shall not wrong him nor deceive him. He shall not withhold the hired laborer's wages nor diminish his pay. He shall not raise the price of what he sells, nor substitute his merchandise, giving bad for good, nor practice deceit in measure, in weight, or in money. He shall not lead him astray with falsehood, nor cause him to stumble by any lying word; he shall not make him wait with a vain hope, and he shall not alter for him what his lips have promised.

What are a person's duties with respect to his fellow's name?

Answer. In these duties a person is commanded not to speak against his fellow so as to spread an evil report about him, to cast a slur upon him, to make him odious and to debase his honor; not to disgrace his name by delivering him up before base men; not to put anyone to shame in the sight of the sun, so as to bring him into contempt in the midst of the congregation and assembly; and not to call him by an [p. 167 (German)] [p. 168] evil name. And whatever he is commanded not to do himself, he shall not do through the hand of another.

V. Of the duties of benevolence in particular

In what are the deeds of the duties of benevolence manifested?

Answer. In a person's love of his fellow, so as to deal with him in charity and lovingkindness, in grace and compassion.

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[328] Translator: אֹנֶס ("pressure, compulsion") is from Job 33:7.

[329] Translator: The language draws on Eccl. 2:24 and 3:13 ("sees good in all his toil"), Deut. 19:14 ("you shall not remove your neighbor's boundary"), Lev. 19:13 and Deut. 24:14–15 (the hired laborer's wages) and Lev. 19:35 ("you shall do no wrong in measure, in weight").

What are the chief works of human lovingkindness?

Answer. The chief works of human lovingkindness are:[330]

1. שׁוֹאֲלִים לְהַשְׁאִיל — to lend to those who ask to borrow;
2. דַּלִּים לְהַלְווֹת — to lend money to the poor;
3. אֲבְיוֹנִים לְחוֹנֵן — to be gracious to the needy;
4. רְעֵבִים לְהַאֲכִיל — to feed the hungry;
5. צְמֵאִים לְהַשְׁקוֹת — to give drink to the thirsty;
6. עֲרוּמִים לְכַסּוֹת — to clothe the naked;
7. אוֹרְחִים לְהָלִין — to lodge wayfarers;
8. גֵּרִים לְקָרֵב — to draw strangers near;
9. שְׁבוּיִים לִפְדּוֹת — to ransom captives;
10. חוֹלִים לְבַקֵּר — to visit the sick;
11. מֵתִים לְלַוּוֹת — to accompany the dead [to burial];
12. אֲבֵלִים לְנַחֵם — to comfort mourners;
13. חוֹטְאִים לְהוֹכִיחַ — to reprove sinners;
14. בּוֹעֲרִים לְלַמֵּד — to teach the ignorant;
15. תּוֹעִים לְיַשֵּׁר — to set the erring straight;
16. נוֹעָצִים לְיָעֵץ — to counsel those who seek advice;
17. נִלְחָצִים לְהוֹשִׁיעַ — to save the hard-pressed;
18. עֲשׁוּקִים לְהַצִּיל — to rescue the oppressed;
19. מַכְעִיסִים לִסְלֹחַ — to forgive those who provoke us;
20. וְלָדוּן כָּל אָדָם לִזְכוּת — and to judge every person favorably.

VI. How to conduct oneself with a member of another religious covenant

Who is called a man's neighbor and his fellow?

Answer. All human beings are neighbors to one another, and every man is the fellow of every man who, like himself, is in the image of His likeness.[331]

[p. 169 (German)] [p. 170] ***How shall we conduct ourselves with members of another religious covenant?***

Answer. Every duty that a person is obliged to perform toward his fellow who is a member of his own religious covenant, he is obliged to perform toward his fellow who is a member of another religious covenant. For faith and religion are an inheritance from the fathers, and the love of each man for his neighbor comes from God. It is the will of every religion that each of its members be faithful to the religion in which he was born, in which he grew up, and which his fathers taught

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[330] Translator: The list is printed in two columns (nos. 1–10 and 11–20). It expands traditional rabbinic enumerations of acts of lovingkindness (*gemilut ḥasadim*), e.g. BT Shabbat 127a; no. 20 is from Mishnah Avot 1:6.

[331] Translator: Cf. Gen. 1:27 and 5:1–3.

him. But in the society of the state, all members of the various religious covenants are equal together; there is no distinction.

VII. How to conduct oneself with wicked people and sinners, and with enemies

How shall we conduct ourselves with wicked people and sinners?

Answer. Even wicked people and sinners, though we do not love them, we also do not hate. Rather, we seek to reprove them and to admonish them privately, between ourselves and them, and to speak with them at length in order to turn them back from their wickedness. If they listen and turn back, have we not won their hearts, and have they not earned our love? And if they refuse and hold back, we leave them alone. We do not persecute the wicked, nor seek their life, and our hope of their amendment does not perish. For if they do not turn back today, perhaps they will turn back tomorrow or on another day. And in this hope we do not thrust them away from us; rather, we give them an opportunity to return, and renew our words of reproof at various times.

How shall we conduct ourselves with enemies who do us harm?

Answer. Even enemies who do us harm we love; we forgive them and repay them good for evil. And even if they do us much harm, we forgive them much. For we too sin much against God, [p. 171 (German)] [p. 172] and He forgives us much; and just as He is long-suffering toward us and passes over our transgressions, so He requires of us that we be long-suffering toward people who are like us, and pass over their transgressions. Let us further take to heart that there are those who do us harm, yet not from their heart do they injure us, nor out of malice: some have been led astray by their own spirit, and others have been incited against us by others. And how many evils have we brought upon ourselves, causing our enemies to do us harm! And there is one who in the haste of his anger does what he soon regrets; and for many reasons a man may hate his fellow and do him harm without wickedness of heart.[332] Therefore there is nothing better than to bear with the sins of our enemies, to forgive them, and to repay them good for evil, so as to leave them a way to turn into friends of ours.

Chapter 3. Of man's duties toward the land of his possession

I. The divisions of a man's duties toward the land of his possession in general

What is included in a man's duties toward the land of his possession?

Answer. Included in a man's duties toward the land of his possession are three things:

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[332] הוכח את עמיתך אולי לא עשה ואם עשה אל יוסיף: הוכח את עמיתך אולי לא דבר ואם דבר אל ישנה: הוכח את עמיתך כי הולכי רכיל רבים ואל יאמן לבך כל דבר: יש חוטא ולא מלבו ומעות ולא מדעתו — "Reprove your fellow — perhaps he did not do it; and if he did, that he may not do it again. Reprove your fellow — perhaps he did not say it; and if he said it, that he may not repeat it. Reprove your fellow, for there are many talebearers, and let your heart not believe every word. There is one who sins, yet not from his heart, and who errs, yet not knowingly" (Ben Sira 19:18–22). [Translator: Ben-Ze'ev's own Hebrew rendering of a passage extant only in Greek; in the standard modern numbering Sir. 19:13–16.]

a) to love the government (הַמַּלְכוּת, *ha-malkhut*);

b) to keep the laws of the state;

c) to be faithful to the land of his birth.

What is to be understood by the duty to love the government?

Answer. By the duty to love the government is to be understood: to love the [p. 173 (German)] [p. 174] the prince of the land and head of his peoples, whose eyes are open over the welfare of the land and of the people over whom he rules, and over those who dwell in it, like the eyes of a merciful father over the conduct of his household; and one must submit to his authority.[333] And [the same is owed] to all who stand over the appointed offices: his deputies, his counsellors, his princes and his officers, on whom the king leans[334] in the charge of bearing the burden of governing the land, each according to his rank; and we shall pray for their welfare, for in their welfare we shall have peace.[335]

What is to be understood by the obligation to keep the laws of the state (חקי המדינה)?

Answer. By the obligation to keep the laws of the state one is to understand that every inhabitant of the land must learn and know the statutes of his land and its laws, which are in force among its people, and keep them, and not transgress them either openly or in secret. For these statutes are the shelter and the shield of the inhabitants of the land: they define each man's right and his title in the land, within the bounds of his property and of his undertakings, and they fence about all that belongs to a man, so that no other may wrong him. They assess the burden, the tax and the excise which each man is to give, the one who has much and the one who has little, each according to the measure of his means and of the blessing [of his substance], as a contribution (תרומה, *terumah*) to the state, which goes toward its expenses and its public institutions, and toward the pay of the appointed officials: the judges and the officers, the teachers and the scribes, the priests and the ministers, and all who do the work and keep the charge of the government.

What are the chief observances among the laws of the state?

Answer. The chief observances among the laws of the state are:

a) Every person shall bring, with a willing heart, the contribution assessed on him and the burden laid upon him, to give it into the treasuries of the king and the state; for [p. 175 (German)] [p. 176] they are designated to go to the institutions and the expenses that serve the good of all the people of the land.

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[333] Translator: literally "turn aside to his bidding," echoing 1 Sam. 22:14.

[334] Translator: the phrase echoes 2 Kings 7:2, "the officer on whose hand the king leaned."

[335] "Pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for fear of it, men would swallow one another alive" (Avot ch. 2). [Translator: Mishnah Avot 3:2, a saying of R. Hanina, the deputy of the priests.]

b) He shall not evade the tax and the duty that are laid on every purchase and sale going out of and coming into the state.

c) He shall not trade in merchandise which the laws of the state have prohibited; for these [prohibitions] were enacted to increase the skill of the inhabitants of the land in every craft in the land, so that their silver and gold not go out to other lands. Nor shall he do anything in secret for which, had he done it openly, he would be punished by judicial penalty;[336] for the man who incurs guilt in secret also sins against God, and he betrays the covenant of society and breaks its laws, which were given to establish peace in the land.

What is to be understood by the obligation to be faithful to the land of one's birth?

Answer. By the obligation to be faithful to the land of one's birth one is to understand that the land in which a person was born, and in which he has settled to acquire property and to enjoy all its good, shall be his cherished land: he shall seek its welfare and pray for its tranquillity, and every man shall exert himself, according to his ability, to increase the prosperity of his land and of those who dwell in it. For the whole land is to be regarded in the likeness of a single man, and each and every man in it is a part of one complete body, each having his own work and deeds for the perfection of the land's excellence, like the members of the body for the perfection of the man. And as all the parts of the body join together against whatever rises up against it to harm it in any way, in order to rescue it, so all the inhabitants of a land shall join forces for the sake of the land of their birth against the foe and enemy who comes from another land to make war on it, to conquer it and to bring its inhabitants under his rule. He who is a man of valour shall arm himself and go forth with the army, in league with the rest of the men of war, to take his life in his hand and fight; and he who has not [p. 177 (German)] [p. 178] the strength to fight shall help according to his means to provide provisions and arms for the fortified cities and for those drawn up in the battle line.

II. How the Israelite man is fitted for the rights of a citizen of the land (אזרח הארץ)

Does the Israelite man too have a land that is his possession?

Answer. Yes! The land in which the Israelite man dwells and practises his religion freely, with none to compel him and no adversary; where the land lies wide open before him,[337] to dwell wherever seems good in his eyes and to enjoy all its good; where his hands are not bound from any work of the craftsman and the designer, nor from any acquisition of livestock and property, just like any citizen of the land; and where the laws of the state shelter him from every oppression and wrong against his person and his property: that land is the land of his possession, the king who

[336] Translator: Exod. 21:22, "he shall be punished … by judges."

[337] Translator: Gen. 34:21, "the land is wide enough before them"; the following phrases echo Deut. 23:17 ("wherever seems good to him") and Exod. 35:35 ("the work of the craftsman and the designer").

rules in it is his king, the laws of the state are his laws, and the duties of the citizen of the land are his duties.

Is the Israelite man fitted to be a citizen of the land even while he hopes to return to the land of his fathers of old, through the Messiah who is destined to come?

Answer. Yes! For so long as this Messiah has not come, the Israelite man is a citizen of the land of his birth, in which he was born and in which he dwells.

What is the proof of this matter?

Answer. The proof of this matter is as follows. When Israel was first exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon, God promised them through Jeremiah the prophet, saying:[338] "Thus says the LORD: when seventy years are completed for Babylon I will remember you — to bring you back to this place." And yet, even while they were in the land of their enemies, that same prophet commanded them to seek the peace of the land to which they had been exiled, as it is said:[339] "And these are the words of the letter [p. 179 (German)] [p. 180] which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders of the exile, whom Nebuchadnezzar had exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit; take wives and beget sons and daughters; take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there and do not diminish. And seek the peace of the city to which I have exiled you, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its peace you shall have peace." Behold, in an exile of seventy years God commanded them to seek the peace of the land and of the people to which they had been exiled; how much more so in these many days, now one thousand eight hundred years, when there is none among us who knows how long.[340]

Do the laws of the religion of the Israelite man hinder him from performing the duties of a citizen of the land?

Answer. The laws of the religion of the Israelite man do not hinder him from performing the duties of a citizen of the land; for when there is peace in the land, nothing infringes upon his religion. But in time of war there are laws whose observance is suspended, and such is the law of man.[341][342] Did not Israel, when they came into the land of Canaan, during all the years in which the land was being conquered before them, fail to observe the laws of the Torah in full?[343] And the Hasmoneans, when they fought against the kings of Greece, [p. 181 (German)] [p. 182] fought on the Sabbath day.[344]

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[338]Jer. 29:10.

[339]Ibid., 1–8. [Translator: the quotation combines Jer. 29:1 and 29:4–7.]

[340]Translator: Ps. 74:9, "there is none among us who knows how long."

[341]"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (דרכיה דרכי נעם וכל נתיבותיה שלום, Prov. 3:17).

[342]Translator: "and such is the law of man" (וזאת תורת האדם) borrows the phrase of 2 Sam. 7:19.

[343]For during all seven years of the conquest Israel ate *kadlei de-ḥazirei* [joints of pork], as is stated in Ḥullin (fol. 17a).

[344]See the books of the Hasmoneans (9:43–47). [Translator: 1 Macc. 9:43–47; cf. 1 Macc. 2:41.]

So too the Israelite man, on a day when he is in the field in the battle line, shall have no cause for stumbling or remorse[345] if he is prevented from doing all the commandments that are incumbent upon him to do when he is at home.

Chapter 4. Of the duties between a man and his wife, a master and his servant, a teacher and his pupils

I. Duties between man and wife

What are the duties between man and wife?

Answer. The duties between a man and his wife are: to bind their hearts in love and to strengthen it with faithfulness; to establish their household as a team of strength, and with one shoulder[346] the two of them shall bear their burden; to unite their toil and labour to supply their needs; to order all their expenses according to the measure of their income; and to watch together over the education of their children, in the cultivation of wisdom and discipline, so that they may be perfect in the fear of God and well-esteemed men in human society.

What is the duty of the man as a husband?

Answer. The duty of the man as a husband is: a) to acquire property, to bring food to his house and their allotted portion to his wife and children;[347] b) to give his wife adornment and finery in clothing of honour, according to his means; c) to show grace and kindness to his wife in words of pleasantness and love. If she errs inadvertently in some matter, he shall forgive her quickly; and if [she offends] with rebellious words of perversity, let him not assail her in the presence of a stranger, nor rebuke her in the sight of her children, nor slight her before the members of her household. He shall not rage at her, nor revile her, [p. 183 (German)] [p. 184] nor speak harshly with her, but with gentle words he shall set her wrongdoing before her, between him and her alone, and speak to her heart to bring her back to his will and to her duty.

What is the duty of the woman as a wife?

Answer. The duty of the woman is to love her husband faithfully; to honour him as master of the house; to hearken to his voice so as to fulfil his wishes, and to strive to do him good according to his will, so as not to grieve him, vex him, or embitter his spirit when he returns home from his work. b)[348] As the husband prepares his work outside, so shall she prepare her work in the house,[349] so that the man finds everything ready before him: his meal set out, his clothing ready, whole and

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[345]Translator: 1 Sam. 25:31, "this shall be no cause of stumbling (לפוקה ולמכשול) to you."

[346]Translator: Zeph. 3:9, "to serve Him with one shoulder" (שכם אחד).

[347]Translator: echoing Prov. 31:15, "she gives food to her household and a portion to her maidens."

[348]Translator: a "b)" is printed here, though no "a)" precedes it in this answer.

[349]Translator: cf. Prov. 24:27, "prepare your work outside."

clean. And she shall watch over the ways of her household,[350] to set order in all the affairs of the house, so that nothing is lost or ruined through sloth and slackness of hands;[351] for it is upon the husband to provide the money to bring in, and upon the wife to keep the household goods acquired with it, so that nothing is lacking and nothing is ruined.

II. Duties between master and servant

What is the duty of the master toward his servant?

Answer. The duty of the master is to lighten the labour of his servant, so as not to rule over him with rigour.[352] He shall not speak harshly to him, and shall not punish his offence with severe chastisement. He shall not let him go hungry, nor leave his soul empty; he shall give him in its season food to satisfy him and drink to quench his thirst, and his wage on its day. He shall grant him rest from his labour, and in his illness he shall have him healed; and a faithful servant he shall not forsake in the time of his old age, when he can no longer work.

What is the duty of the servant toward his master?

Answer. The duty of the servant is to serve his master faithfully, and to do all his work according to his will; not to deal deceitfully with him, not to ruin and not [p. 185 (German)] [p. 186] to waste, but to be as careful of his master's property as if it were his own; not to take anything without his knowledge; and to do all his work when his master is not with him just as he does it when his master is with him.

III. Duties between teacher and pupils

How many kinds of teachers are there?

Answer. Teachers are of two kinds: teachers of the people and teachers of pupils.

What is the duty of the teachers of the people toward their congregation?

Answer. The teachers of the people shall love their congregation as their children, and teach them the ways of righteousness, uprightness and equity;[353] they shall chasten them and rebuke them, warn them and comfort them. And they shall conduct themselves with good qualities and good deeds, so as to stir the heart of their congregation to act according to their deeds, and they shall guide them in all that is good.

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[350] Translator: Prov. 31:27.

[351] Translator: Eccl. 10:18.

[352] Translator: Lev. 25:43; the answer goes on to echo Isa. 32:6 ("to leave empty the soul of the hungry"), Ps. 145:15 ("their food in its season"), Deut. 24:15 ("his wage on its day"), Exod. 21:19 ("he shall have him healed") and Ps. 71:9 ("do not cast me off in the time of old age").

[353] Translator: Prov. 1:3.

What is the duty of the congregation toward their teachers and their prophets?[354]

Answer. Their teachers shall be in their eyes as their fathers, to love them and to honour them, to hearken to the voice of their reproof, and to give them their allotted portion, sufficient for their needs,[355] so that they may be delivered from anxiety over their livelihood and be able to keep the charge of their precious office with an open heart and with joy, and not with sorrow and sighing.

What is the duty of the teacher toward his pupils?

Answer. The duty of the teacher is to love his pupils as his sons; to put his teachings in their mouths with gentleness and good sense, and to repeat the matters to them until they understand them. Let him not cast great dread upon them, nor terrify them with rebuke; and when they go astray he shall not hasten to strike them in fierce anger, but he shall first rebuke them and set their wrongdoing before their faces. And if there be a rebellious one among them who will not be corrected by words [p. 187 (German)] [p. 188] but only by the rod, the teacher shall not chastise him in rage and in his anger; rather, let his anger first pass, and only then chastise him.

What is the duty of the pupils toward their teachers?

Answer. The duty of the pupils is to love their teacher, who gives them good doctrine, wisdom and discipline that will be to them for honour and glory, and who teaches them upright things in which they will find happiness all the days of their lives. Him they shall honour and to his voice they shall hearken; they shall incline their ear and open their heart when he opens his lips to set his teachings before them. They shall sit before him in humility and submission, and his fear shall be ever upon their faces, whether he is with them or has departed from them. Moreover, all the days of their lives they shall show honour to their teachers, and when they mention them they shall accord them honour. They shall likewise esteem all the sages and the authors from whose books they have sought Torah and knowledge, and all who stand in the charge of the service of God; and old age, too, they shall respect.

What is the sum of the duties of man?

Answer. The sum of the duties of man: Know your God and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing soul.[356] Believe in the religion of your fathers and hold fast to it until the day of your death. Learn its Torah and keep its commandments. Honour the king, the prince of the land. Seek the peace of the people and of the land in which you dwell. Do not transgress the laws of the state, and fulfil the duties of the citizen of the land. Walk before God in truth, be blameless with men, and

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[354]Translator: i.e. their preachers; the German version renders this "teachers and preachers" (*Lehrer und Prediger*).

[355]"Honour God who created you, and do not forsake His ministers; give thanks to Him and honour His priests, and give them their portion as you were commanded" (Ben Sira 7:28–29). [Translator: Ben-Ze'ev's Hebrew rendering of Sirach 7:29–31 in the usual numbering.]

[356]Translator: 1 Chron. 28:9, "know the God of your father and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing soul."

love your neighbour as yourself.[357] If you do thus, happy are you, and it shall be well with you;[358] you shall live a life of pleasantness, and come to your grave in ripe old age,[359] and die a death of rest; your righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of the LORD shall gather you in.[360]

[p. 189 (German)] [p. 190]

Treatise III

The Ten Commandments (עשרת הדברים, *aseret ha-dibberot*)

Entrance

I. The nature of the Ten Commandments and their divisions.

What are the Ten Commandments?

Answer. The Ten Commandments are those which God spoke on Mount Sinai in the great vision before the eyes of all Israel, and wrote on two tablets of stone, which Moses brought in his hand when he came down; and they are the Tablets of the Covenant.

Why are they called the Tablets of the Covenant?

Answer. Because on the basis of these Ten Commandments God made a covenant with the children of Israel, to be their God, and that they should be His people.

What is the special excellence of these Ten Commandments, on which God made a covenant with them?

Answer. That in these Ten Commandments are the chief heads of the commandments and the precious duties which a person is to perform.

How are these Ten Commandments divided according to their divisions?

Answer. These Ten Commandments are divided into commandments which a person is commanded to do toward God, and commandments between a man and his fellow.

[p. 191 (German)] [p. 192] ***How many of them belong to the first division, and how many to the second division?***

Answer. The first four commandments are among the commandments which a person is commanded to do toward God, and the six [other] commandments are among the commandments between a man and his fellow.

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[357] Translator: cf. Gen. 17:1 and Lev. 19:18.

[358] Translator: Ps. 128:2.

[359] Translator: Job 5:26.

[360] Translator: Isa. 58:8.

Chapter 1: On the Matters of the First Four Commandments

I. Explanation of the first commandment of the Ten Commandments.

What is the first commandment of the Ten Commandments?

Answer. The first commandment:

אנכי יהוה אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים

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

What is the substance of this first commandment?

Answer. The substance of this first commandment is to know that there is a God without end; He is the Creator of all, and it is He who exercises providence over all; in the treasured love that He bore our fathers He brought their children out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and multiplied great benefits upon them, so that they would accept His Torah and keep His commandments.

II. Explanation of the second commandment of the Ten Commandments.

What is the second commandment of the Ten Commandments?

Answer. The second commandment:

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

> You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. (Exod. 20:3–5)

Against what does this second commandment warn?

Answer. This second commandment warns against the worship of other gods (עבודת אלהים אחרים) and against superstition (אמונת הבלי אלילים, literally "belief in the vanities of idols").

Who is a worshipper of other gods?

Answer. A worshipper of other gods is: a) one who believes that there are many gods rather than one God, or who accords the honor due to God to one of the creatures;[361] one who calls upon the angels to be a help to him in distress, or to intercede between him and God;[362]

b) one who ascribes to God an image, likeness or form;

c) and one who ascribes to God attributes that He does not possess: for instance, one who imagines Him to be a cruel God, exalted above all, who wearies men with hard servitudes; who is angry at their sins, and they cannot appease Him except by afflicting their flesh with harsh self-mortifications. Whoever ascribes to God attributes that are not good and fitting for the One who is exalted above all and lives forever does not know God and does not worship Him, but other gods.

Who is called a believer in superstition?

Answer. A believer in superstition is: a) one who believes that the lot of every man is decreed by the stars, and who listens to the signs of the diviners[363] and to the astrologers, who say that in the vision of [p. 195 (German)] [p. 196] the stars they foresee from afar good or evil for a man;[364]

b) one who believes in the power of demons and evil angels, and that it lies in their hands to harm a man; and one who gives heed to the words of soothsayers, enchanters, sorcerers, diviners and interpreters of dreams,[365] and to all such as these, who commit a trespass against the greatness of God who is able to do all things, plant evil schemes in a man, teach him to do abominable deeds, and to fear where there is nothing to fear and to hope from what offers no hope.[366]

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[361] אני יהוה הוא שמי וכבודי לאחר לא אתן ותהלתי לפסילים "I am the LORD, that is My name; My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to graven images" (Isa. 42:8).

[362] זבח לאלהים יחרם בלתי ליהוה לבדו "Whoever sacrifices to the gods, save to the LORD alone, shall be utterly destroyed" (Exod. 22:19).

[363] Translator: "Signs of the diviners" (אותות הבדים) echoes Isa. 44:25, quoted in the author's note 3 below; "astrologers" renders הוברי השמים, "the dividers of the heavens" (Isa. 47:13).

[364] כה אמר יהוה אל דרך הגוים אל תלמדו ומאתות השמים אל תחתו כי יחתו הגוים מהמה כי חקות העמים הבל הוא "Thus says the LORD: Do not learn the way of the nations, and do not be dismayed at the signs of the heavens, for the nations are dismayed at them; for the customs of the peoples are vanity" (Jer. 10:2, 3). מפר אתות בדים וקסמים יהולל "who frustrates the signs of the diviners and makes fools of the soothsayers" (Isa. 44:25).

[365] אל תפנו אל האלילים "Do not turn to idols" (Lev. 19:4). אל תפנו אל האבת ואל הידענים "Do not turn to ghosts or to familiar spirits" (ibid. [19]:31). לא ימצא בך קסם קסמים מעונן ומנחש ומכשף וחבר חבר ושאל אוב וידעני ודרש אל המתים תמים תהיה עם יהוה אלהיך "There shall not be found among you one who practises divination, a soothsayer, an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or one who consults a ghost or a familiar spirit, or one who inquires of the dead. You shall be wholehearted with the LORD your God" (Deut. 18:10, 11, 13).

[366] אשרי הגבר אשר שם יהוה מבטחו ולא פנה אל רהבים ושטי כזב "Happy is the man who makes the LORD his trust, and does not turn to the arrogant or to those who go astray after falsehood" (Ps. 40:5).

What else is included in the worship of other gods?

Answer. Also included in it is hypocrisy in the worship of God. One who fasts, afflicts his soul, and multiplies prayer and charity in the sight of men, so that they will regard him as a blameless and upright man: is he not a worshipper of other gods?

What does this second commandment command?

Answer. To worship God, One, Unique, alone; to pray to Him; and to fear nothing apart from Him and hope for nothing apart from Him.[367]

[p. 197 (German)] [p. 198] **III. The third commandment.**

What is the third commandment of the Ten Commandments?

Answer. The third commandment:

לא תשא את שם יהוה אלהיך לשוא כי לא ינקה יהוה את אשר ישא את שמו לשוא

> You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold guiltless one who takes His name in vain. (Exod. 20:7)

Against what does this third commandment warn?

Answer. This commandment warns against doing anything that brings contempt on the name of God, so as to profane it.

By what does a man profane the name of God?

Answer. One who profanes the name of God is he who lays hold of His name and swears by it falsely, or who curses by it; and the liar and the deceiver.

What is an oath (*שבועה, shevu'ah)?***

Answer. To call upon God as witness that a thing is true, and as avenger of falsehood, in a matter which a man declares or promises.

Who profanes the name of God by an oath?

Answer. One who makes light of an oath and swears to affirm a matter that he does not know for certain;[368] or one who swears in villainy to uphold a matter while his heart is not with him.

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[367] פנו אלי והושעו כל אפסי ארץ כי אני אל ואין עוד לי תכרע כל ברך תשבע כל לשון "Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other ... to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isa. 45:22, 23).

[368] אל תסכן פיך לשבועה לשאת השם על שפתיך מרבה להשבע לא ינקה מענש ונושא אלה לא ינקה מחטא נמהר להשבע נמהר לחטא ונגע לא ימוש מביתו נשבע בשגגה חטא באחת נשבע ואשם ענשו כפלים "Do not accustom your mouth to oaths, to take the Name upon your lips. One who swears much will not go clear of punishment, and one who utters imprecations will not go clear of sin. One quick to swear is quick to sin, and affliction will not depart from his house. If he swears in error, he has sinned once; if he swears and is guilty, his punishment is double" (Ben Sira 23:10–14). [Translator: Ben Sira 23 does not survive in Hebrew, so this is evidently the author's own Hebrew rendering; in the usual numbering, Sir. 23:9–11.]

What is a man who swears falsely?

Answer. He is a man of lies and deceit, in whom no one will put trust; and he is despised [p. 199 (German)] [p. 200] and loathed in the society of men; and besides the punishment of God laid up for him, he is pursued by the courts of the land and chastised by them.

What oath may a person swear?

Answer. The oath that the judges and magistrates impose on him, in order to make known by it the certain truth of his words, or to confirm the fulfilment of a deed incumbent on him.

How does a man profane the name of God by cursing?

Answer. For it is an abomination to take the name of God upon one's mouth for evil, and for a curse which a man lays upon his fellow out of hatred for him and anger against him. One is to take up the name of God only for good and for blessing, for in these He delights.

How does a man profane the name of God by a word of falsehood and deceit?

Answer. a) One who plays the hypocrite with his words and presents himself as a blameless man, and who tells things in the name of God that are not true;

b) one who wrongs a member of the covenant of another religion[369] and does him injury by extortion, robbery, false denial, a false oath, or anything that would be accounted an iniquity if done to a member of the covenant of his own religion. For whoever does one of these things, besides the wickedness that he does, also gives occasion for contempt of the name of God, the Giver of the religion, and of the religion and those who observe it.

Who takes up the name of God for righteousness and sanctifies it?

Answer. a) One who swears by His name in truth and fulfils the word of the oath even when it turns to his own harm;[370]

[p. 201 (German)] [p. 202] b) the blameless man, faithful in spirit toward every man, both toward a member of the covenant of his own religion and toward a member of the covenant of another religion; for he gives honor to the name of God, who commands justice and righteousness toward every man.

IV. The fourth commandment.

What is the fourth commandment of the Ten Commandments?

Answer. The fourth commandment:

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[369] וגר לא תונה ולא תלחצנו כי גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים "You shall not wrong a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exod. 22:20).

[370] Translator: Cf. Ps. 15:4, "he swears to his own hurt and does not change."

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל מלאכתך ויום השביעי שבת ליהוה אלהיך לא תעשה כל מלאכה אתה ובנך ובתך עבדך ואמתך ובהמתך וגרך אשר בשעריך כי ששת ימים עשה יהוה את השמים ואת הארץ את הים ואת כל אשר בם וינח ביום השביעי על כן ברך יהוה את יום השבת ויקדשהו

> Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work, you, your son or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant, your cattle, or your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. (Exod. 20:8–11)

What does this fourth commandment command?

Answer. This commandment commands us to keep the Sabbath as is due and to sanctify it.

How is the Sabbath kept as is due?

Answer. One rests from all work and refrains from all weekday occupations; one leaves aside all thoughts of one's affairs, forgets one's worry and toil, and prepares one's soul for joy and delight. For the labour of the weekdays prepares for a person the rest of [p. 203 (German)] [p. 204] the Sabbath, and the rest of the Sabbath renews his strength[371] for the labour of the weekdays.

How is the Sabbath day sanctified?

Answer. By offering more prayer and thanksgiving on it than on the working days; by inquiring into the word of God and listening to the explanations of the Torah and the commandment; and by receiving good instruction from the mouths of the teachers of religion, and words of moral admonition from its sanctuaries.

Chapter 2: Explanation of the Last Six Commandments

I. The fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments.

What is the fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments?

Answer. The fifth commandment:

כבד את אביך ואת אמך למען יארכון ימיך על האדמה אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך

> Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you. (Exod. 20:12)

[371] Translator: Literally "strengthens his bones," after Isa. 58:11.

What does this fifth commandment command?

Answer. This commandment commands that a son honor his parents in words and in deeds.[372] This honor is incumbent on the son as repayment for the benefits of his parents, who bestowed kindness on him in that they begot him, raised him, and multiplied benefits toward him; and in all the days of his life the son will not be able to repay his parents' benefits.[373]

What is the reward of obedient children?

Answer. Children who listen to the voice of their parents: their own children too will listen

[p. 205 (German)] [p. 206] to their voice; and those who honor their fathers will be honored by their own children, and they will become a name and a praise, for they acknowledge the good done them and give thanks to their benefactors; and the blessing of God and of their fathers will rest upon all that they have.[374]

What is one warned against in this fifth commandment?

Answer. In this commandment one is warned that children shall not despise their fathers, nor slight their honor and their names, nor be ashamed of them in the company of people because of their poverty or because they are not as learned as themselves; also, they shall not expose a blemish of theirs, nor make their disgrace known, nor mock the obedience due to them[375] or the heaviness of their movements in old age.[376]

What is the portion of rebellious children?

Answer. As they rebelled and grieved their fathers' spirit, so their own children will rebel against them; and they will become a contempt and a reproach in the eyes of all who know them, because

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[372] בני באמר ובמעשה כבד הוריך למען תברך מברכתם ברכת אב בנתה בית בנים וקללת אם תהרסנו "My son, honor your parents in word and in deed, that you may be blessed with their blessing. A father's blessing builds the house of the children, and a mother's curse tears it down" (Ben Sira 3:6, 7). [Translator: The author's own Hebrew rendering; in the usual numbering, Sir. 3:8–9.]

[373] כבד את אביך בכל לבך ואם יולדתך אל תשח זכור עצבון אמך בלדתה אותך ובמה תגמל טרחה ועמלה "Honor your father with all your heart, and do not forget the mother who bore you. Remember your mother's pain when she bore you; and with what will you repay her trouble and toil?" (ibid. 7:26, 27). [Translator: In the usual numbering, Sir. 7:27–28.]

[374] מכבד אב יכבד מבניו יקרא ויהוה יענה: צדקת בן לאב לא תשכח לנצח מגן היא בעד חטאים — "He who honors his father will be honored by his children; he will call, and the LORD will answer. A son's righteousness toward his father will not be forgotten for ever; it is a shield on behalf of sins" (ibid. 3:6, 7). [Translator: "Ibid." here evidently refers to Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus), cited on the preceding page; the quotations are given in Ben-Ze'ev's own Hebrew rendering of the book (Vienna 1798), with his verse numbering, which differs from that of modern editions (here cf. Sir. 3:5–6, 3:10–11, 23:14, 3:12–13).]

[375] Translator: יקהת, "obedience," after Prov. 30:17 ("and despises to obey his mother").

[376] אל תבוז ליקהת אביך כי לא לכבוד הוא לך: כי כבוד אב כבוד בנים וקלון אם קלון בר בטנה — "Do not despise your father's [claim to] obedience, for that is no honor to you; for the honor of a father is the honor of the children, and a mother's disgrace is the disgrace of the son of her womb" (ibid. 7, 8). זכור אביך ואמך ולא תבוש לדבר מהם במושב גדולים: לא יקלו הוריך בעיניך ונהמת כי מהם נולדת — "Remember your father and your mother, and be not ashamed to speak of them in the assembly of the great; let your parents not be light in your eyes, lest you groan [and say] that you were born of them" (ibid. 23:15, 16). בכלל שיבת אביך ולא יהיה עמלו עליך לטרח שאהו כי פג טעמו ואל תדאיבו בימי כלהו ולא תתגדל עליו בכח בחורים — "Sustain your father in his old age, and let his toil not be a burden to you; bear him when his understanding fails, and do not grieve him in the days of his decline, nor exalt yourself over him in the strength of youth" (ibid. 3:13).

they forgot the kindnesses of their benefactors and repaid them evil in return for good; and the curse of God and of their fathers will rest upon all that they have.

Is the commandment of this utterance only the honoring of the father and mother from whom one was born?

Answer. Not father and mother alone shall a man honor, but all persons who stand toward him in the place of fathers and do him good as they do: these too he shall honor under the commandment of this utterance. And as one honors a father, so shall a servant honor his master, and a pupil his teacher, and a people its princes[377] [p. 207 (German)] [p. 208] and its judges, its officers and its elders;[378] and everyone who receives a kindness shall know to repay his benefactors the good, or to give thanks to them if it is not in his power[379] [to repay], and let him not be forgetful of good.

II. Explanation of the Sixth Commandment (באור הדבור הששי)

What is the sixth commandment of the Ten Commandments (*עשרת הדברים, 'aseret ha-devarim)?***

Answer. The sixth commandment:

לא תרצח

You shall not murder. (Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17)

Against what does this commandment warn?

Answer. This commandment warns:

(a) that a man shall not harm the life (נפש, *nefesh*) of any person, nor his own life, so as to shed blood by his own hand or on his account;

(b) and that he shall not bring about death, either to himself or to any person;

(c) and that he shall not embitter or shorten his own life or the lives of others.

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[377] אלהים לא תקלל ונשיא בעמך לא תאר — "You shall not revile God, nor curse a prince of your people" (Exod. 22:26). [Translator: Masoretic numbering Exod. 22:27.] ירא את יהוה בני ומלך — "My son, fear the LORD and the king" (Prov. 24:21).

[378] מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן — "You shall rise before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man" (Lev. 19:32). אל תלעג לזקן זכור כי גם אתה תזקן [printed: על הזקן כל תלעג זכור כי גם אתה תזקן] — "Do not mock the old man; remember that you too will grow old" (Ben Sira 8:7).

[379] Translator: באין לאל ידו, cf. Gen. 31:29; Deut. 28:32.

Why may a man not harm his own life so as to kill it?

Answer. Because we did not set our soul in life,[380] we may not kill it; rather, we must wait in patient hope,[381] and God, who gave us the soul, He will require it of us.[382]

By what does a man bring about his own death?

Answer. By every act he commits that transgresses against his body and his health, and by his neglecting to do the things that would keep him in health;[383][384] [p. 209 (German)] [p. 210] by indulgence in luxuries of food and drink, as a glutton and a drunkard;[385][386] by excessive pleasure or by excessive fasting and wakefulness and overly heavy labors, and by every self-affliction that he lacks the strength to bear; by his negligence in seeking a remedy for his wound when he is ill;[387] and by everything of that kind.

By what does a man bring about the death of his fellow?

Answer. When he incites his fellow and leads him astray to do any of the acts mentioned above;[388] and also the death of a person whom it was in our power to save and whom we did not save: the blood of that man's death will be reckoned to us, for so it is said:

לא תעמד על דם רעך

> You shall not stand by the blood of your neighbor. (Lev. 19:16)

By what do we embitter and shorten our own life and the lives of others?

Answer. Anxiety, grief, jealousy, sorrow and a broken spirit[389] embitter our lives;[390] anger, strife and hostility, persecution and vengeance embitter the lives of others as well and shorten them, and from them come much disaster and many of men's afflictions.

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[380] Translator: Cf. Ps. 66:9, "who has set our soul in life."

[381] Translator: Cf. Lam. 3:26.

[382] Translator: Cf. Gen. 9:5.

[383] Translator: יחלימהו, cf. Isa. 38:16.

[384] אל תפנק לבך למעדנים ולמטעמים אל תתן עיניך: כי ברב אכל רב מכאב ופושק לועו ירבה מחלתו: שנות זולל תקצרנה ומגלגל ארחתו יאריך ימים — "Do not pamper your heart with delicacies, and do not set your eyes on dainties; for with much eating comes much pain, and he who opens wide his gullet multiplies his sickness; the years of the glutton are shortened, but he who orders his meals prolongs his days" (Ben Sira 37:28–31).

[385] גמל נפשו איש חסד ועכר שארו אכזרי — "The merciful man does good to his own soul, but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh" (Prov. 11:17).

[386] Translator: זולל וסובא, Deut. 21:20; cf. Prov. 23:21.

[387] Translator: מזור, "remedy for a wound," cf. Hos. 5:13; Jer. 30:13.

[388] אל תחרש על רעך רעה והוא יושב לבטח אתך — "Do not devise evil against your neighbor, seeing he dwells securely beside you" (Prov. 3:28). [Translator: Masoretic numbering Prov. 3:29; the print begins לא תחריש.]

[389] Translator: רוח נכאה, Prov. 15:13; 17:22.

[390] לא תקלל חרש ולפני עור לא תתן מכשל — "You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind" (Lev. 9:14). [Translator: Misprint for Lev. 19:14.] איש חמס יפתה רעהו והוליכו בדרך לא טוב — "A violent man entices his neighbor, and leads

III. Explanation of the Seventh Commandment (באור הדבור השביעי)

What is the seventh commandment of the Ten Commandments?

Answer. The seventh commandment:

לא תנאף

> You shall not commit adultery. (Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17)

Against what is one warned in that commandment?

Answer. In that commandment a man is warned: (a) not to lead astray a married [p. 211 (German)] [p. 212] woman to betray her husband and to commit a trespass against him, for she is her husband's companion and the wife of his covenant;[391] (b) and the wife shall not betray her husband by going astray after strangers.

By what is the wife her husband's companion and the wife of his covenant?

Answer. By the bond of marriage (אסר הנשואים, *issar ha-nissu'im*).

What is this bond of marriage?

Answer. In the bond of marriage the man and the woman together make a covenant of love: to dwell together in a common household, to beget children and raise them, and to be a help to each other,[392] to provide for them all their needs, and both of them together to bear their burden and their trouble,[393] to lighten for each other the hardships of life, and to be bound in love all their days and upheld in faithfulness, until death parts them.[394]

Who, then, is the one who breaks the covenant of love and faithfulness?

Answer. He who breaks the covenant of love is a traitor and a base man (בליעל, *beliya'al*), who lies in his words and is false in his faithfulness, who sorely distresses the partner of his covenant, whose spirit was faithful to him.

By what do the husband and wife merit to prosper in their companionship?

Answer. When they unite their hearts in love and keep faith with each other, and are wholehearted, peaceable and quiet in their home, and direct their purposes together; for then they will prosper in

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him into a way that is not good" (Prov. 16:29). משגה ישרים בדרך רע בשחותו הוא יפול ותמימים ינחלו טוב — "Whoever leads the upright astray in an evil way, he himself shall fall into his own pit; but the blameless shall inherit good" (ibid. 28:10).

[391] ונשמרתם ברוחכם ובאשת נעוריך אל יבגד ... יהוה העיד בינך ובין אשת נעוריך אשר אתה בגדתה בה והיא חברתך ואשת בריתך — "The LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and the wife of your covenant ... Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth" (Mal. 2:14, 15).

[392] Translator: Cf. Gen. 2:18, עזר כנגדו.

[393] Translator: Cf. Deut. 1:12.

[394] Translator: Cf. Ruth 1:17.

all their deeds, their children will be established before them in the good and upright way, and the blessing of God will rest upon all that they have.

[p. 213 (German)] [p. 214] ***By what does the companionship of husband and wife go bad?***

Answer. When their hearts are not whole toward each other, and there is strife and contention between them; for then their calamity is great. For where there is no peace in the home, all joy and all gladness cease, and horror will be in all that they have: their children are wayward, the business of their deeds goes unrestrained and all their affairs are breached, and in the end they fall into the pits of poverty and want and become an abhorrence.[395]

And how shall a man conduct himself who is not a husband?

Answer. A man who is not a husband likewise shall not go about after his eyes and his heart[396] to multiply lewdness (זמה, *zimmah*); rather, he shall be modest and bashful in his heart, his lips and his deeds.

By what does a man strengthen himself in modesty and bashfulness?

Answer. When he keeps himself apart from the things that lead him astray to lewdness.

What are these things that lead to lewdness?

Answer. Idleness and laziness; gluttony and drunkenness;[397] the company of bad men; brazenness; and reading books of amorous passion.

What is the end of a lewd man?

Answer. He destroys his wealth, wastes his time and consumes his strength; contempt and reproach are his portion; his life is a life of pains and his death a death of diseases.[398]

By what is a man saved from evil thoughts?

Answer. When he sets his heart continually to be occupied with his affairs and to meditate on his duties; for a man's toil in his affairs makes him forget all iniquity.[399]

IV. Explanation of the Eighth Commandment (באור הדבור השמיני)

What is the eighth commandment of the Ten Commandments?

Answer. The eighth commandment:

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[395]Translator: The phrasing draws on Jer. 3:14 (שובבים), Ps. 140:11 (מהמרות, "pits") and Dan. 12:2 / Isa. 66:24 (דראון, "abhorrence").

[396]Translator: Cf. Num. 15:39.

[397]הבטלה ראשית כל חטאת — "Idleness is the beginning of all sin" (Ben Sira 33:26).

[398]Translator: Cf. Jer. 16:4.

[399]Translator: Cf. Mishnah Avot 2:2: "the toil of both of them makes one forget sin."

לא תגנב

You shall not steal. (Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17)

[p. 215 (German)] [p. 216] ***What is theft?***

Answer. Theft is when one stretches out his hand to take any thing of all that belongs to his fellow, without right, whether by force or by cunning.

What is included in stretching out a hand against one's fellow's property to take it without right?

Answer. In it is included every effort to increase one's own property by diminishing the property of one's fellow, in ways not of uprightness and not of righteousness; and the chief of these ways are:

(a) He who robs by force, he who steals in secret, he who denies a deposit,[400] he who moves a boundary,[401] and he who lays hold of what another has put his hand to.

(b) He who withholds the wages of a hired man,[402] and he who docks his pay, or disappoints him with "Go, and come back."[403]

(c) He who borrows and has nothing to repay, and he who borrows an article and does not return it.

(d) He who defrauds in selling,[404] he who overcharges, and he who does injustice in measure, in weight and in number.[405]

(e) He who conceals a theft, or the lost article he has found.

(f) He who goes to law over an unjust claim.

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[400] לא תגנבו ולא תכחשו ולא תשקרו איש בעמיתו — "You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another" (Lev. 19:11).

[401] לא תסיג גבול רעך — "You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark" (Deut. 19:14).

[402] לא תעשק שכיר עני ואביון — "You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy" (ibid. 24:14). לא תלין פעלת שכיר אתך עד בקר — "The wages of a hired man shall not remain with you all night until the morning" (Lev. 19:13). ביומו תתן שכרו ולא תבוא עליו השמש כי עני הוא ואליו הוא נשא את נפשו ולא יקרא עליך אל יהוה והיה בך חטא — "On his day you shall give him his wages, nor shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor and sets his heart upon it; lest he cry against you to the LORD, and it be sin in you" (Deut. 24:15).

[403] אל תאמר לרעיך לך ושוב ומחר אתן ויש אתך — "Do not say to your neighbor, Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give, when you have it with you" (Prov. 3:28).

[404] וכי תמכרו ממכר לעמיתך או קנה מיד עמיתך אל תונו איש את אחיו — "And if you sell anything to your neighbor, or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not wrong one another" (Lev. 25:14).

[405] לא תעשו עול במשפט במדה במשקל ובמשורה — "You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in measure, in weight or in quantity" (ibid. 19:35).

[p. 217 (German)] [p. 218] (g)[406] He who out of laziness seeks alms, and seizes the gifts of the needy because his hands refuse to work.[407]

Does ill-gotten wealth profit its owners?

Answer. No! For there is no success in ill-gotten wealth, and its good will not endure for its owners;[408] for it flies swiftly away, and he is left in want of everything, with none to pity him,[409] and an evil spirit pursues him.[410]

What brings a man to deceit, and to covet another's goods without right?

Answer. Laziness, miserliness, envy, pride and extravagance.

What shall a man do to be saved from wrongdoing?

Answer. He shall accustom himself all his days to work and to toil with his hands, to be diligent and to save, and to be content with his portion.[411]

V. Explanation of the Ninth Commandment (באור הדבור התשיעי)

What is the ninth commandment of the Ten Commandments?

Answer. The ninth commandment:

לא תענה ברעך עד שוא

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Deut. 5:17; cf. Exod. 20:13)[412]

Against what does that commandment warn?

Answer. That commandment warns that a man shall not testify against his fellow anything that is not the truth, whether before judges or not before judges.

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[406] Translator: The page is misnumbered 118 in the print.

[407] Translator: Cf. Prov. 21:25.

[408] Translator: Cf. Job 20:21.

[409] עשה עשר ולא במשפט בחצי ימו יעזבנו ובאחריתו יהיה נבל — "He who gets riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool" (Jer. 17:11). בונה ביתו בחיל זרים כונס אבנים לקברו — "He who builds his house with the wealth of strangers gathers stones for his own grave" (Ben Sira 21:9). אסף רשע עב בלול ממים גפרית ורוח: הגפרית בברק תעשן, המים נתך ארצה והרוח יעלה בתתו ויאבד — "The hoard of the wicked is a cloud compounded of water, sulphur and wind: the sulphur smokes away in the lightning, the water is poured out upon the earth, and the wind rises as it is released and is lost" (ibid. 41:11–14). [Translator: Ben-Ze'ev's free Hebrew rendering; cf. Sir. 40:13. Printed הגברית and חמים, evidently for הגפרית and המים.]

[410] לא יחרך רמיה צידו והון אדם יקר חרוץ — "The slothful man does not roast what he took in hunting, but the precious substance of a man is diligence" (Prov. 12:27).

[411] טוב מעט בצדקה מרב תבואות בלא משפט — "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right" (ibid. 16:8).

[412] Translator: Ben-Ze'ev quotes the Deuteronomy wording, עד שוא; Exodus reads עד שקר.

Who is called one who bears false witness before judges?

Answer. Everyone who speaks false words: the plaintiff as well as the defendant, the assessor, [p. 219 (German)] [p. 220] the witness, and also the judge. The plaintiff, when he accuses his fellow without cause and seeks something from him on false pretexts;[413] the defendant, when he denies the thing that he knows and is guilty of; the assessor, when he argues so as to justify wrong; the witness, when he testifies as a lying witness; and the judge, when he perverts justice so as to justify the wicked and condemn the righteous.[414]

How does a man sin against his fellow with false words not before judges?

Answer. By all the lying words that a man speaks to his fellow's harm: (a) if he promises him something and does not keep his word;[415] (b) or spreads an evil report about him, so as to put a blemish on him, to make him odious[416] and to disgrace his name;[417] (c) or goes about as a talebearer,[418] or reveals a secret so as to make his fellow stumble by it, to kindle strife[419] and to sow contention.[420]

Is it wrong to speak any false word to one's fellow?

Answer. Yes! For every false word, even a small one, does very great harm,[421] and one lie gives rise to many lies, like a small plague-spot that appears in the flesh and spreads over all the skin.[422]

[p. 221 (German)] [p. 222] ***By what is a man ensnared into speaking falsehoods?***

Answer. When he opens wide his lips to multiply words,[423] and does not hasten to discern in his words between truth and falsehood.

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[413] Translator: עלילות דברים, Deut. 22:14.

[414] Translator: Cf. Exod. 23:8; Deut. 25:1.

[415] מוצא שפתיך תשמר ... אשר דברת בפיך [printed: מוצא שפתיך תשמור כאשר דברת בפיך] — "That which has gone out of your lips you shall keep ... as you have spoken with your mouth" (Deut. 23:24).

[416] Translator: Lit. "to make his scent stink," cf. Exod. 5:21.

[417] מסכן פיו לנאצות לא יחכם כל ימיו — "He who accustoms his mouth to revilings will not become wise all his days" (Ben Sira 23:17).

[418] לא תלך רכיל בעמיך — "You shall not go up and down as a talebearer among your people" (Lev. 19:16).

[419] אדם בליעל איש און הולך עקשות פה: קרץ בעינו מלל ברגלו מרה באצבעתיו: תהפכות בלבו חרש רע בכל עת מדנים ישלח — "A base person, a wicked man, walks with a crooked mouth; he winks with his eyes, speaks with his feet, points with his fingers; perversity is in his heart, he devises evil continually, he sows discord" (Prov. 6:12–14).

[420] הולך רכיל מגלה סוד ונאמן רוח מכסה דבר — "A talebearer reveals secrets, but one of faithful spirit conceals a matter" (ibid. 11:13). מגלה סוד מאבד אמונתו ואוהב יבקש ולא ימצא — "He who reveals a secret destroys his credit, and will seek a friend and not find one" (Ben Sira 27:19).

[421] אין רע מאיש כזב ורבה היא בפי אוילים: אחרית פי כזב מארה בבוז וחרפה יאבד — "There is no evil like a lying man, and it is abundant in the mouth of fools ... The end of a lying mouth is a curse; in contempt and reproach it perishes" (ibid. 2[0]:29–31). [Translator: The chapter number is printed as ב (2), probably for כ (20); cf. Sir. 20:24–26.]

[422] Translator: Cf. the laws of the plague-spot (נגע) in Lev. 13.

[423] ברב דברים לא יחדל פשע וחשך שפתיו משכיל — "In the multitude of words there wants not transgression, but he who restrains his lips is wise" (Prov. 10:19). שמר פיו ולשונו שמר מצרות נפשו — "Whoever guards his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from troubles" (ibid. 21:23).

By what shall a man strengthen himself from his youth so as to be saved from falsehoods?

Answer. (a) He shall order his words with judgment, and guard his mouth and his tongue from a multitude of words.

(b) He shall inquire and search diligently[424] whether the thing he speaks, from his own heart or in the name of others, is true; and he shall love truth above all, for by truth faithfulness, righteousness and uprightness are firmly established in security, and it establishes the tranquility of the state and of society.[425]

By what is a man saved from the sin of evil report and slanderous words?[426]

Answer. When he accustoms himself from his youth not to suspect any man in his deeds whose good or evil he does not know, and to judge everyone favorably when others speak ill of him, and always to seek out his merit. For suspicion is a lying imagination: perhaps the man is not guilty in the matter of which he is accused, or his sin is not as great as it appears in the eyes of the beholder; and in these things we too are not free of sin, and it is better for us to set our heart on our own blemish, to remove it, than to go seeking out the blemishes of others.

[p. 223 (German)] [p. 224] **VI. Explanation of the Tenth Commandment (באור הדבור העשירי)**

What is the tenth commandment of the Ten Commandments?

Answer. The tenth commandment:

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

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

Against what does that commandment warn?

Answer. That commandment warns that a man's soul shall not long for anything that belongs to his fellow,[427] and that he shall not envy his fellow, nor let his eye be evil toward anything that is his.

Why shall a man not crave the wealth of others?

Answer. Because craving entices a man to evil. For his soul is not satisfied with the thought alone; rather, a fierce longing burns within his heart, and he devises schemes of cunning or deceit until

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[424] Translator: ודרשת וחקרת והיטבת, cf. Deut. 13:15.

[425] "On three things the world stands: on truth, on judgment and on peace, as it is said (Zech. 8:17): אמת ומשפט שלום שפטו בשעריכם, 'Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates'" (Avot, chapter 1). [Translator: Mishnah Avot 1:18; the verse is Zech. 8:16 in Masoretic numbering.]

[426] Translator: דפי, "slander," cf. Ps. 50:20.

[427] בני אחר משאלות לבך לא תלך ומתשוקתך חדל כי אם איפוא כל מאויך תמלא לבוז אויבך תהיה — "My son, do not go after the desires of your heart, and refrain from your longing; for if you fulfil all your cravings, you will become a scorn to your enemy" (Ben Sira 19:1, 2). [Translator: Cf. Sir. 18:30–31.]

he brings his design to pass;[428] and if he does not attain it by cunning stratagem, he will strengthen himself with a high hand to bring it into effect.

What is the end of a man who fills his soul's desires from his youth?

Answer. That man becomes one of evil deeds, in whose eyes nothing is counted a transgression; for when the fierce craving gains mastery within him, there is no sin so great that it will not make him commit it for gain. His evil eye drives him from one downfall to another, and in the end he goes down to the pit of destruction.[429]

Why shall a man not envy his fellow?

Answer. For envy is rottenness of the bones, a passion that devours its owner.[430] [p. 225 (German)] [p. 226] And what does the envious man gain, who consumes his flesh in vexation and in grief whenever the one he envies is glad[431] and rejoices in his portion and delights in his prosperity?

By what is a man saved from coveting wealth, from craving and from envy?

Answer. When he rules his spirit,[432] and does not hasten to fulfil every wish that rises in his heart before he has searched out well whether it is right or not; and even toward a right wish he does not let his craving and his desire grow fierce. And every sinful longing, whenever it rises upon his spirit, he hastens to withstand with all the forces of his strength, so as not to give it a foothold in his heart, and he keeps away from all the ways of its enticements and seductions.[433] And let him not magnify in his eyes the wealth of others, their glory and their advantages, so as to set his heart on all that they have; but let him toil for what is his own, and look kindly on others' happiness.

[p. 227 (German)]

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[428]Translator: Cf. Ps. 140:9.

[429]Translator: מדחי אל דחי, "from downfall to downfall," a rabbinic idiom; באר שחת, Ps. 55:24.

[430]חיי בשרים לב מרפא ורקב עצמות קנאה — "A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh, but envy is the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. 14:30).

[431]Translator: The print reads מְדֵי הַדָּז, apparently הדין, "who exults" (cf. Job 41:14); the German version on p. 227 has it that the envied man lives happily while the envious man perishes of grief and vexation.

[432]Translator: Cf. Prov. 16:32.

[433]Translator: מאמצי כח, Job 36:19; מדוחים, Lam. 2:14.