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Translated into English by Claude from the digitized copy (Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main) of Dr. [Michael] Creizenach, Confirmations-Feier für mehrere Schüler und Schülerinnen der Frankfurter israelitischen Realschule, gehalten im Lokale dieser Anstalt den 12. Januar 1828 (Frankfurt am Main: Jäger, 1828), printed in German Fraktur. Numbers in grey brackets mark the beginning of each printed page of the original. Footnotes are the author's own unless they begin "Translator:". Hymns are translated line by line, without rhyme.

[p. —] Confirmation Ceremony

for several

Boys and Girls

of the

Frankfurt Israelite Realschule, held in the premises of this institution on 12 January 1828,

by

Dr. Creizenach.

Frankfurt am Main.

Published by the Jäger Book, Paper and Map Shop.

[p. —] Preface

If proof were needed that purposeful innovations, aimed at the furtherance of true religiosity, can count on an encouraging reception among all classes of the local Israelite community, any unprejudiced observer could have convinced himself of it by the interest that the first Israelite confirmation ceremony held publicly here had the pleasure of enjoying. The good advances here with deliberate steps, under the guidance of enlightened men who preside over the public institutions, without giving rise to friction, discord or unpleasant scenes; it advances in quiet and therefore often remains quite unnoticed by the outside world. Only one [p. —] high-minded man[1][2] observes our course of development at close quarters, appreciating and encouraging every striving for the better, and the approval of this man is for us a sufficient reward.

The confirmation ceremony, too, which is here laid before experts for their judgment, would not have been made public had I not felt the need to ask for instruction both about the content and about the arrangement of the solemnity. May a great many knowledgeable men encourage me with corrective hints; they may count on my receiving them with due gratitude and, insofar as I need not thereby deny my inner convictions, making use of them in the future.

The Author.

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[1] I hardly need to name Senator *Ihm* to the Israelites of this city.

[2] Translator: Senator Ihm, a member of the Senate of the Free City of Frankfurt; evidently the civic official whose oversight of the Jewish community's institutions brought him into close contact with the school.

[p. 1] Hymn No. 128 in Johlson's hymn collection.[3]

Almighty Father in heaven, cast a favorable glance upon us all, who are gathered here to hear the fundamentals of Thy holy teaching from the mouths of these feeble children, and let the solemn act that we now perform be as pleasing to Thee as the purest sacrifices that human beings have ever offered Thee. Thy fatherly providence, which here below directs all things to the welfare of Thy creatures, has at last given to the bold upward flight of the human spirit, in which it strove to cast off the salutary fetters of religion, a direction that has led it out of the errors of unbelief onto the path of the fear of God and the veneration [p. 2] of Thy majesty. No one any longer boasts, with self-satisfied pride, of having withdrawn himself from Thy laws. All feel once again that there is no happiness on earth where Thy name is not revered; therefore every attempt to quicken pious sentiments among human beings is also sure to win their approval. May the attempt that we are now making—to strengthen our children in their religion through a loud confession of the truths of faith and a solemn assumption of all the duties of the human being and of the Israelite, and thereby to give the instruction they receive in this institution the necessary emphasis—also have the joy of Thine approval! Then we shall not fail of our intended purpose, and the memory of this solemn hour will long remain in the hearts of these children as a guardian of their innocence and their morality, and will stir them to devout veneration of Thy being and to the performance of Thy holy [p. 3] will; and so through us, too, the kingdom of light will be extended upon this earth, to the glorification of Thy name. *Amen.*

My much-beloved friends, who have hastened here in crowded throngs to attend the solemnity that is being held here today for the first time: it depends upon yourselves whether you go away from here satisfied or disappointed in your expectation. If you regard yourselves as idle spectators seeking an hour's entertainment here, you will not find what you expect. A few artless and unadorned answers from the mouths of these children are all that will distinguish today's hour of devotion; for our religion is too pure and too heavenly to be able to delight eye and ear when the soul is cold and unfeeling. But if you come not merely to hear and to see, but to think and to feel along with what [p. 4] is spoken here; if you come because you recognize the need for our outward worship of God gradually to receive a form that corresponds to the progress of the human spirit, to the conditions of our age, and to the purified views of our religion; if, finally, you come out of love and sympathy for these tender children, whose passage into a new period of life is being celebrated here: then every word they speak will gain significance in your eyes, and however weak our words may be, however imperfect this attempt may turn out for lack of earlier experience, your hearts will nonetheless receive that disposition in which the soul rises to God and is strengthened and ennobled in adoring Him. Would that it were possible for us always to maintain such a disposition within us! We should then, in the true sense of the word, enjoy heaven on earth, should

[3]Translator: Joseph Johlson (1777–1851), teacher of religion at the Philanthropin, who compiled a German hymnal for Jewish worship used at the school. The text of the hymn is not printed here. The page bears only the signature mark "1"; it is the first page of the numbered sequence (the next page is numbered 2).

already here below feel the bliss that God holds in store for the pious in the [p. 5] life to come, and our divine descent would shine forth from all our words, steps and actions! But the son of earth is not called to so heavenly a transfiguration. However high a flight his spirit may take upward, everyday life draws him down into the corporeal world, and a thousand petty cares and occupations remind him that his soul is wrapped in an animal body, which through its weakness, its frailty and its manifold needs lays claim to all the soul's powers and checks it in its upward flight. It is therefore all the more necessary that a person, at the important turning points of life, where he steps out of the accustomed track, settles accounts with a considerable stretch of the past, and goes to meet new circumstances, should not lose sight of the divine in his nature in the plan he draws up for the future; that he should call to mind all the duties which he [p. 6] must take upon himself through his new position in society, form all the resolutions that will make the fulfillment of his new duties easier and possible, and above all implore God to lead him onto the right path. And indeed a person is never more inclined to devotion and seriousness, his mind never more solemnly attuned, than on precisely those days when he passes from one period of life into another. Then his heart feels oppressed by a gloomy anxiety that seeks relief in tears; then all his words and his looks breathe an unaccustomed melancholy; he longs for a trusted friend into whose bosom he can pour out feelings he cannot explain to himself, and then flees from the friend's arms back into the quiet chamber; but everywhere restlessness and apprehension accompany him, until at last he calls God and his religion to his aid and transports his spirit out of confining space into the infinite, out of time into eternity. Only then do the world and life appear to him [p. 7] in their true form, and the apprehension with which he looked into the future gives way to quiet serenity, to the sweet awe of trust in God and His fatherly providence, and, accompanied by this feeling, he joyfully enters upon his new course. Truly, the religious forms that have developed out of our religion for entry into the various periods of life are no empty trickery. They would have to be introduced if they did not exist, and ought rather to be multiplied than diminished, for it is they that make the earthly divine and pour a divine radiance over it. Our pious forefathers understood this, and therefore celebrated with special solemnity the day on which the boy takes upon himself the whole of the Israelite religious duties; but however meaningful and substantial their ceremonies were for the time in which they were instituted, by the same measure they correspond but little to the manner in which nowadays [p. 8] the child must be treated and occupied until his thirteenth year, so little are they suited to connect with the religious instruction that the boy receives and thereby to work upon his mind and his heart. Neither in Holy Scripture nor in the Talmudic books is there any mention of what we call confirmation, and what is customary among us was brought into being gradually by a deeply felt religious need. Why should we not be permitted to reshape ceremonies that human beings have introduced, when they are no longer of such a kind as to be able to satisfy that religious need? If in any respect our views are the better ones, it is in what pertains to religious education, even if our own lukewarmness prevents the success of this education from fully corresponding to just expectations. By this it is by no means meant to be said that the present religious instruction is not capable of very considerable improvements; but that the [p. 9] instruction which many among

us still received was decidedly bad, and presupposed a complete unfamiliarity with the spirit of our holy teaching, is betrayed by this alone: that nothing whatsoever was done for the religious formation of daughters, as if woman did not also have a God to worship and duties to fulfil. Our descendants will scarcely believe it when they are told that there was a time when it was not thought necessary to acquaint the growing girl with the fundamental teachings of religion through regular instruction, when the married woman alone was held to attend, and admitted to, public divine worship, when female servants were often excluded from it for their whole lives; and in this alone they will find a satisfactory explanation of the sad phenomenon that a people to whom God gave such wise and rational laws could become more unhappy than all others. When we recall such [p. 10] perversities, we cannot thank God enough that he has at last opened our eyes to them, that through his assistance so many improvements have already been made possible, and that we look toward a future in which the untroubled light of his divine teaching will illuminate our eyes. The very ceremony that unites us here on this day, and the interest that you, my dear friends, show in it, is a most gratifying phenomenon. It shows that all of us, even if sluggish and slow in progressing toward the better, are nonetheless receptive to the better, and summon it, if not always through active cooperation, then at least through our wishes. Matter for wishes is still by no means lacking here. Small is the number of the children who now profess our holy faith and take upon themselves the duties of Israelites; we are indeed assembled in a holy place, one devoted to the education [p. 11] and formation of the young, but not in the house of God, where the presence of the holy scroll of the Law would lend our act a higher consecration; and in my place there ought to stand a venerable man of priestly standing, known for a pious way of life. We must consider, however, that what we do here is done only for the glory of God, and by no means to satisfy people's spirit of innovation; but God looks only at the inner stirrings of the heart and not at external forms, which are intended only to rouse the torpid mind of man from its slumber. If, therefore, we all feel ourselves penetrated by the thought that we are performing a solemn act that can be beneficial to the advancement of our religion in general, and to the religious formation of these children in particular; if you especially, my dear children, take it to heart that you are not sitting here in order to make a spectacle of yourselves, [p. 12] but in order to declare, out of inner conviction, in the presence of your parents, teachers and friends and under the eyes of our heavenly Father, who observes us, the knowledge of religion that has been imparted to you through instruction over many years, and to take it as the guiding rule for your whole life — then God will surely take pleasure in our act; and however incapable our witnesses[4] may be of exhausting his praise, however weak our mind may be to grasp his teaching in its immeasurable extent, we may be assured that our words and thoughts, more pleasing than the fragrance of incense that once rose from his altars, will ascend to his exalted throne; his blessing will reward us for our good will; and if, in the course of years, you should come into temptation to stain yourselves with an unworthy

[4]Translator: German *Zeugen* ("witnesses"), almost certainly a misprint for *Zungen* ("tongues"), which the sense requires: "however incapable our tongues may be of exhausting his praise."

deed, to surrender your innocence to seduction and to indulge in vice, then the remembrance of this [p. 13] day will step in between as a rescuing angel, snatch your soul from the claws of sin, and hold you fast on the path of virtue and the fear of God.

In the name of the Most High Being, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who through his faithful servant Moses revealed to us his holy Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, and who has promised us his presence and his blessing whenever we utter his name with due reverence, I open, my dear children, your confession of religion, and call upon you to accompany every word that you utter with heart and thought; and first, tell me:

1) Question. What is religion?

Answer. Religion is a rational knowledge of God and of his holy will. It leads us to holiness and to the ennobling of our spiritual and bodily faculties; it alone raises man far above the lowly standpoint of the other animal [p. 14] creatures, and forms him into a being that, through its fine moral perfection, appears on earth as a worthy image of God. It is for us a rich source of comfort and reassurance when earthly sufferings afflict us, and it shows us a happier life in an invisible world, where we are called to receive the reward for our upright conduct of life, if here below we have fulfilled all our duties with conscientious faithfulness.

2) Qu. What is the name of the religion in which we live?

Answer. It is the Mosaic religion, the holy, beatifying Law that God revealed to the descendants of Abraham on Mount Sinai amid thunder, lightning and the sound of the trumpet. It must serve us as our guiding rule throughout our whole life; the sacrifices that it imposes upon us we must bring patiently and without murmuring to him who demands them of us. Even if, during our earthly [p. 15] course, we must endure many a hardship and humiliation on its account, we may nevertheless never, even if it costs us our goods and our blood, depart from the firm resolve to live and to die faithful to it. Let it be our first thought on waking, our last on lying down, and may it one day accompany our last sigh at our passing into eternal bliss.

3) Qu. What is the name of the book in which the Mosaic religion is taught?

Answer. The Bible, or Holy Scripture. This book contains a rich treasure of teachings, ordinances and sayings that are clear and comprehensible even to the simplest person, and through which we are given enlightenment on all questions concerning our origin, our destiny and our future. These books are an abiding inheritance of the Israelite people; they have accompanied our ancestors everywhere they were cast in times of tribulation, and as [p. 16] often as religion was neglected, it has been raised again, through the use of these books, to new splendor and new life. These books contain no human statutes, but solely and exclusively the word of God; for their authors were animated by the divine spirit, and wrote down not a single word that God did not inspire in them.

4) Qu. Could man not, then, recognize through the mere use of reason the truths and the duties that are taught by religion?

Answer. Human reason certainly does not lack the power to recognize the truth and to find the way that leads mortals to happiness; but all too often it is blinded and led astray by man's sensual drives and his constant striving after pleasure and bodily well-being, and what man passionately desires he in the end also holds to be permitted. We may therefore count ourselves fortunate [p. 17] that the heavenly Father has placed his revealed Law at our side as a faithful guide through the labyrinths of life. This Law demands of us unconditional obedience, admits neither specious reasons nor excuses, and whenever we come into temptation to sin, it holds us back from our purpose with the fearful threat of divine wrath. In this sense the prophet, too, says in the name of God: As high as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so exalted are my thoughts above your thoughts, and my ways above your ways.[5]

5) Qu. What is the fundamental duty of the Israelites?

Answer. It is expressed in the following passage: *You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.*[6] Holy is everything that is pure, faultless and in accordance with the purposes of God. God himself is holy, that is, he is far removed from all evil; he is the epitome of all that is great, noble and exalted [p. 18] that the human mind can comprehend, and of what lies beyond the bounds of its power of comprehension; therefore he is also blameless in all his works, and all his ways are full of righteousness. The Israelite, too, shall be holy; he shall always labor so that the powers, aptitudes and faculties of his body and his soul are gradually cleansed and refined of the dross of lust, of pride, of selfishness and of all other vices, so that the divine will alone may guide him in all his steps, and his soul may be a worthy temple of sincere worship of God. He is then a worthy child of God, and glorifies the divine name through his life.

6) Qu. In what respects shall the Israelite be holy?

Answer. The true Israelite is holy in his convictions, holy in his feelings, holy in his will.

[p. 19] ***7) Qu. How does the Israelite become holy in his convictions?***

Answer. When he sincerely seeks the truth, summons all his intellectual gifts in order to attain knowledge of the truths that stand in close relation to the destiny and the duties of man, but at the same time sets the necessary limits to his reason in its inquiries, so that it does not give him harmful errors in place of instruction, and thereby keep him from attaining the goal set by God. He who is holy in his convictions reflects earnestly on everything, for that is why God gave him reason; at the same time, however, as an Israelite he clings faithfully and unshakably to the inherited faith.

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[5]Translator: Isa. 55:9. The print has *Cede*, a misprint for *Erde* ("earth").

[6]Translator: Lev. 19:2.

8) Qu. What is to be understood by the word "faith"?

Answer. The Israelite is in no way obliged to acknowledge anything that contradicts the testimony of his reason, [p. 20] for our religion contains no propositions of this kind at all, although it may contain much that is incomprehensible to human reason. When, therefore, it is said that the Israelite has duties of faith, all that is meant is that he should not lose sight of the lofty truths of religion, which man recognizes even with the simplest understanding, and should take them to heart in all important occasions of life.

It is fitting for us to give thanks to the Lord of all things, to pay homage to the Creator of the universe, that he has given us a teaching that is pure truth and suited to our power of comprehension. We do not kneel down before statues that the hand of man has fashioned; we worship neither heavenly bodies nor elements; but we kneel down in thanksgiving before the King of all kings, praised be he and his holy name. It is he who has vaulted the heavens above us, who holds the body of the earth in equilibrium; his exalted throne is in the heights of heaven, and the spaces of the universe cannot contain him.[7]

[p. 21] He is our God, no other being besides him, as is written in his holy Teaching: "And you shall know this day, and lay it well to heart, that God alone is the Lord, in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other being besides him."

9) What are the articles of faith of the Israelite religion?

Answer. Providence, retribution, revelation. *God is our King, God is our Judge, God is our Lawgiver.*

10) What conception does our religion give of the divine being?

Answer. God is a one, unique and simple being; neither time nor space limits his existence; we behold him with our spirit, but no human eye has ever seen him, for he is not a body and cannot be represented by any body; he is almighty, all-wise and all-good; indeed he [p. 22] is the source of all that is good, true, beautiful and sublime; his keen eye encompasses the past, the present and the future; our thoughts are no less known to him than our deeds; everything lies open before him, and nothing is forgotten before his glorious throne; he watches with fatherly care over all earthly things and directs everything according to his holy will. Blessed is the man who does not forget him, the son of earth who holds fast to him, for those who revere him will never stumble, and he is a shield to all who trust in him.

Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one, eternal being; praised be the name of his glorious kingdom for all eternity. We will love him with all our heart and all our soul and all our might.

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[7] Translator: This paragraph, which continues the answer, is a free German paraphrase of the *Aleinu* prayer ("It is our duty to praise the Lord of all..."), recast to exclude any suggestion of idolatry and to stress the rationality of Jewish teaching.

The hymn No. 132 from the Johlson hymn collection.[8]

11) What does our religion teach us about retribution?

[p. 23] *Answer.* God is a just judge; he leaves no good deed unrewarded, no unrepented sin unpunished. In the breast of the righteous there is peace, tranquility of soul and serenity. Though thousands fall at his right hand and myriads at his left, yet misfortune cannot come near him; for God commands his angels to guard him in all his ways; they bear him up on their hands, so that nothing may harm him. And even if sorrow and affliction befall the pious man in his earthly course, God nonetheless directs it to his good, and every tear that he sheds here below becomes for him a source of pure and untroubled bliss in the life to come; for though our body becomes food for worms, though every human being must return to the dust from which he was taken, yet our soul, as the image of God, is destined for immortality and for the beholding of the divine countenance in the venerable fields of eternity. Yes, O Lord, you will surely not abandon my soul to the grave; [p. 24] rather you will show me the path of life, and will satisfy me with joy in the eternal beholding of your exalted countenance.

Yes, God is my Lord; I shall never want; in green pastures he prepares a resting place for me; by pleasant springs he lets my head rest. My soul is refreshed on the path of virtue. And even if I must walk into the valley overshadowed by death, I fear no harm, so long as you are with me. Only well-being and bliss will then accompany me, and I shall rejoice in the house of God to the latest days.

The hymn No. 102 in the Johlson hymn collection.

12) What does the Israelite hope for from the more distant future.

Answer. The Israelite expects with confidence that God will one day have mercy on the human race and will free it from all the moral and physical [p. 25] ills from which it now suffers; then the kingdom of darkness will be destroyed, and there shall rest upon man the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of insight and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of God; then all human beings will be called Israel,[9] and every place Jerusalem; for on that day the Lord will be King over all the earth, and his name will be One, even as he is One. The dead, too, will then exult in the bosom of eternal bliss, for upon them also the heavenly Father will let his grace flow in rich measure.

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[8]Translator: Joseph Johlson (1777–1851), Creizenach's colleague as a teacher at the Frankfurt Philanthropin, compiled a hymnal for Jewish worship and instruction; the hymns are cited here by number but not printed.

[9]Translator: The original prints "Isral," an evident misprint for "Israel."

13) What does our religion teach us about revelation?

Answer. More than 3000 years ago God descended upon Mount Sinai, and there a voice resounded amid the fearful roar of thunder and of the trumpet, which was [p. 26] heard by the whole assembled people, and God spoke to them the following words:

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

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

3) You shall not misuse the name of the Eternal your God (neither utter it in vain nor in support of a falsehood); for the Eternal will not leave unpunished whoever misuses his name.

[p. 27] 4) Be ever mindful of the day of rest, to keep it holy. Six days you may labor and do all your business, but the seventh day is a day of rest in honor of the Eternal your God; on it you shall do no work: neither you yourself, nor your son or your daughter, your male slave, your female slave, nor through your cattle or through the stranger who dwells within your gates. For in six days the Eternal made heaven, earth and sea, with all that is in them, and on the seventh day he rested. Therefore the Eternal blessed the day of rest and declared it holy.

5) Honor your father and your mother! that you may live long upon the land which the Eternal your God gives you.

6) You shall not murder.

7) You shall not commit adultery.

8) You shall not steal.

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

[p. 28] 10) You shall not covet your neighbor's house, and you shall have no desire for your neighbor's wife, for his male slave, for his female slave, for his ox, for his ass, or for anything that your neighbor possesses.

> The spirit is free; therefore never by slaves
> Is the word of the Godhead discerned in its pure radiance.
> Freedom alone, with reflecting understanding, divides
> Deceptive glitter from genuine gold.
>
> Chorus: The spirit is free! The free people alone
> Can consecrate its whole soul to the Law.

No image gives knowledge of God's being;
Give up your striving to give him form;
Only in an hour consecrated to God can
The childlike, holy mind sense what the Godhead is.

Chorus: The image is dust, the symbol idle play;
Therefore I honor God in spirit and in feeling.

To God we swore to honor reason and right,
To carry out in truth their command alone:
Neither fear nor pleasure shall restrain our virtue
From striving for that which we have vowed. [p. 29]
Chorus: To the Eternal we swore it: therefore let the oath be loosed
By nothing earthly, not by circumstance, not by time.

The world with its clamor and tumult drives away
The soul's repose from its place of refuge;
The Sabbath comes: then heaven opens,
And rest dwells in the storm-free harbor.

Chorus: The Sabbath comes; it refreshes and delights,
Because God sends it to us as an angel of peace.

The name of Father teaches you to revere God;
Religion is a faithful mother's bosom;
Therefore resolve to belong wholly to your parents,
And even here below rich reward will be yours.

Chorus: He who scorns his parents, for him, despite all
His toil, no blessed fruit will blossom from his sowing.

Let insolence never murder, by deed or word,
The sense of innocence in the heart; more than blood,
Not unpunished does secret enmity destroy
The seed of virtue, humanity's highest good.

Chorus: Let man not murder what is human
And becomes divine after this life's span.

Ever clear and pure, like the water's mirror,
Let the human heart beat, in chastity alone;
Let it never break the holy seal of the Godhead
That eternal Nature granted it.

Chorus: The pure man sees the world in a pure light;
In a chaste breast God's countenance shines.

[p. 30] Not gold alone, not what diligence has won,
Does the accursed thief's hand slyly purloin;
A baser robbery it has often accomplished:
The robbing of peace, secret and unrecognized.

Chorus: Let honor and peace too be holy to us; may desire
For such a good never lead us astray.

Man gladly trusts the human countenance,
Gives himself to it with holy confidence;
More than from the brightest star there shines
From it the light of a higher destiny.

Chorus: O that we might never be a false witness
To the great purpose to which the better ones devote themselves.

If wisdom is to engrave all these teachings
Deep in the heart, to stand forever,
Then craving and desire must not hold sway;
They must fall by the hand of virtue.

Chorus: He who has won this victory is a hero;
He stands firm when all things totter and fall.

13)[10] ***How does the Israelite sanctify his feelings.***

Answer. When our soul is permeated by the great truths of faith, we thereby gradually come to the recognition that there is no other bliss for us than an unshakable holding fast to God and his commandments, and this conviction purifies our drives and inclinations of everything that [p. 31] is unworthy of our divine archetype; it draws our spirit away from worldly vanities and lets us see ever more clearly how empty, how transient and how deceptive all earthly joys are if we are not strengthened and uplifted by the consciousness of our personal worth; we then turn our gaze to God, the source of all true bliss, and our heart becomes full of warm, active love for him and his creatures. Our feelings are holy when they so guide us that we find comfort and satisfaction in the worship of God and in the spreading of happiness among human beings.

15) Which commandments in Holy Scripture relate to the holiness of our feelings?

Answer. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your might.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

You shall love the stranger, for you were yourselves strangers in Egypt.

[10]Translator: So printed; the preceding question (on revelation, p. 25) is also numbered 13, and no question 14 appears; the next question is numbered 15.

[p. 32] You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reprove him.

You shall not take vengeance and shall bear no one a grudge.

You shall revere the Lord your God, worship him, swear only by his name, and cleave to him with your whole soul.

16) What belongs to the holiness of the will?

Answer. Our will is sanctified when the wish to fulfill all our duties is the mainspring of all our actions and our guiding thread through the whole of life; when at every moment we are ready to sacrifice everything rather than deviate even a hair's breadth from our duties, and are always mindful that God is near us and constantly observes our doing and not-doing, so as all the more carefully to avoid every sinful deed.

17) How are our duties divided?

Answer. Into duties toward God, duties toward others, and duties toward ourselves.

[p. 33] ***18) What are our duties toward God?***

Answer. We must honor him, love him, worship him and obey him.

19) How do we revere God?

Answer. The Israelite who reveres God occupies his mind with the thought of the heavenly Father in all the circumstances of life. He is ever mindful of the divine omnipresence, and flees with holy awe from all that is sinful and indecent; he is mindful of the divine omnipotence, and this thought fills him with humility and modesty and lets him feel that he stands in God's power and has only him to look to for his happiness; he is mindful of the divine all-wisdom; this strengthens in him the conviction that God has ordered all things with the greatest possible perfection, and causes him to bear with steadfast patience the unavoidable ills that befall him in life, and to recognize in them a beneficent dispensation for the preservation of the whole; he is mindful of the divine all-goodness, and this [p. 34] fills his soul with a trust in God that holds him upright in times of tribulation and protects him against despair. Finally, he remembers the divine providence over all creatures, and when his heart is about to break under the burden of earthly sufferings, he turns to God in heartfelt prayer and thereby finds comfort and peace.

18) Which prayer do we find in Holy Scripture?

Answer. The Shema prayer. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one sole, eternal Being. (Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever.) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. The words which I command you this day you shall always have in your heart. You shall impress them upon your children and speak of them constantly, when you are at home and when you [p. 35] are on a journey, when you lie down

and when you rise up. Bear them as a sign upon your hand, bind them as a frontlet between your eyes, and write them upon the doorposts of your house and of your gates.*[11]

19) How does the Israelite express his love for God?

Answer. Whoever loves God sees in Him the Creator and Author of his well-being. When things go well with him, he recognizes in this the divine blessing and seeks to show his gratitude through prayers, through a faithful way of life, and above all through beneficence toward his fellow human beings. When things go badly with him, he recognizes in this too a fatherly correction, by which God wishes to lead him back to the right path, and he says with Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."[12] And when he recognizes that carrying out the divine will stands in the way of his earthly [p. 36] happiness, he does not let this hold him back, and the thought that through his sufferings he glorifies the name of God is for him sufficient recompense for every sacrifice he has to make.

What are our duties toward our fellow human beings?

Answer. They are set forth in the following psalm.

See Psalm 11[13] in Mendelssohn's translation.[14]

Whoever wishes to fulfill his duties toward others exactly does not confine himself to rendering to each person what the laws can compel him to render; rather, he is fair toward all people, without distinction of fatherland, faith, or descent; he does to no one what he would not wish to have done to himself, shows everyone every kindness that he wishes to receive from him, and so fulfills the great fundamental law of religion: you shall love your neighbor as yourself.[15] He lives with everyone [p. 37] in peace,[16] seeks to make peace between enemies, and forgives his own enemies without bearing them a grudge; he is obedient toward his superiors, gentle and kind toward his subordinates, obliging and affable toward everyone; he praises only the one who deserves praise, and speaks the truth without reserve and with candor whenever he can hope to do good by it; his heart is open to the poor and needy, and all his powers stand open to anyone who needs them; he loves his fatherland and is ready to sacrifice property and blood for its defense; he reveres the

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[11] Translator: Deut. 6:4–9, with the response "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever" (recited in the liturgy after the first verse) inserted in parentheses. The text of the answer is printed letter-spaced throughout. Note the rendering of 6:4 ("one sole, eternal Being"), which follows Mendelssohn's translation of the Tetragrammaton as "the Eternal".

[12] Translator: Job 1:21.

[13] Translator: So the print, apparently "11"; the psalm on duties toward one's fellows that answers this question is almost certainly Ps. 15 ("Lord, who shall sojourn in Your tent?"), and "11" is probably a misprint or damaged type for "15". The psalm was evidently recited at this point and is not printed.

[14] Translator: Moses Mendelssohn's German translation of the Psalms (*Die Psalmen*, Berlin, 1783).

[15] Translator: Lev. 19:18.

[16] Translator: The German "in Ewigkeit" ("forever") at the head of p. 37 appears to be a misprint for "in Einigkeit" ("in harmony/peace"), which the sense requires; translated accordingly.

authorities of his land and his princes, carries out with conscientious punctuality everything the laws require of him, and his given word is to him an inviolable sanctuary.

What particular duties do children have toward their parents?

(The children answered this question in compositions of their own, which were accompanied by short addresses to their parents.)

[p. 38] ***What duties does a person have toward himself?***

Answer. A person's duties toward himself are: self-preservation, self-respect, self-ennoblement, and the pursuit of his own happiness.[17]

22) What belongs to the duty of self-preservation?

Answer. Although the Israelite must not hesitate to sacrifice his life willingly where the preservation of his faith, the defense of his fatherland, and the welfare of his fellow human beings are at stake, he must nevertheless consider, on the other hand, that life is a precious gift of God, which one may not wantonly destroy or shorten. Everyone therefore has the duty to take care to preserve his health, to avoid every needless danger, to do his part to provide himself with the means necessary for meeting his natural needs, and to use what he already possesses with wise thrift, so as to protect himself against want and penury.

[p. 39] ***23) What belongs to self-respect?***

Answer. Although pride and arrogance arouse abhorrence in the eyes of God and are usually joined with an evil heart, a person nevertheless needs that noble sense of self which gives us worth in our own eyes and keeps us from base actions and attitudes; we ought to be modest and humble without thereby demeaning ourselves. We may not think ourselves higher than other people, but we must not forget that we are human beings, that is, beings whom God created in His image. We must be especially mindful of this when we are in danger of coming into contact with vicious or dishonorable people; then a rightful pride must tell us that such company degrades us and diminishes our worth. Whoever respects himself considers it beneath his dignity to speak an untruth; he does indeed do everything to further his interest, but only when what is asked of [p. 40] him is compatible with his honor; and in dealings with persons of higher station he shows the respect that is due, but he does not grovel and flatter; in general, he shows by his whole conduct that, while he is free of presumption and ridiculous pretensions, he nevertheless does not overlook his own worth, and he also demands from others the honor due to every person of unblemished character.

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[17] Translator: "Selbstbeglückung", literally "making oneself happy"; rendered here as "the pursuit of his own happiness". The question numbers 20 and 21 are not printed in this part of the examination; the numbering resumes with 22.

24) What belongs to self-ennoblement?

Answer. The cultivation of all the powers of body and soul, the struggle against all ignoble impulses, and the striving to know the truth insofar as it has some bearing on our destiny and the circumstances of our life.

25) What belongs to the pursuit of one's own happiness?

Answer. A person is permitted to put all the gifts of nature to his use and to enjoy all the pleasures that this earth offers him; but truly happy is only he who, with a tranquil conscience and an active way of life, spends cheerful days in the circle of [p. 41] his own. To strive after such happiness is the calling of every person; to attain it depends for the most part on our own will. But the God-fearing Israelite must never forget that all a person's efforts to further his happiness are fruitless if God does not assist him in them; the first and most necessary thing, then, that everyone must do in order to live happily and contentedly on earth is to implore divine grace through devout prayer. But if he nevertheless finds no happiness in his earthly life, the thought that an untroubled bliss awaits him in a better world must comfort him and hold him upright.

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What you have here declared and professed forms the outline of our holy religion. Much else besides the Israelite needs to know and to practice, and in your school years you have learned as much of it as is suited and profitable to your age. But mark well that, where religion is concerned, we [p. 42] remain pupils as long as we live; and resolve today that, whatever situation and whatever circumstances you may come into, you will often make religion the object of your reflection, and read diligently, especially on the days of rest and the solemn fast days, in the holy books, which will always be intelligible to you if you sincerely seek the truth in them. I believe I am convinced that none of you lacks religious feeling, and that your heart has assented to everything your lips have uttered. I can believe this all the more readily since the fundamental doctrines of our religion contain nothing that is not as agreeable to the understanding of a child as to the mature, cultivated reason of the educated man. Tell me, then, sincerely and from inner conviction, whether you believe and profess the fundamental doctrines of our religion as we have just set them forth?

I believe and profess them from inner conviction.

[p. 43] Believing is a matter of the faculty of thought and of reason; acting is a matter of free will. Faith costs no trouble, no exertion, and no sacrifice; but a virtuous and God-fearing life is only the fruit of an uninterrupted, continuous struggle against all the inner and outer impulses that drive us into the arms of vice. I do not now call upon you for any great and glittering promises, although I am convinced that you would sincerely and without feigned willingness vow and pledge to me everything that may fairly be demanded of an Israelite. But you still stand under the guidance and supervision of your parents and your teachers, who, as before, will not fail to hold you to diligence, to orderliness, to morality, and to the fear of God. Do you promise me to show yourselves obedient

and teachable, and to strive, by daily progress in all that is good and noble and that adorns a human being, to give them joy?

[p. 44] That I promise.

So look down, then, O heavenly Father, from Your exalted dwelling place, and strengthen the hearts of these dear children in their pious resolutions; remove from their path of life everything that could lead them astray in their good dispositions; give them strength to bear the sufferings and hardships to which their steadfastness in Your holy teaching might expose them; and reward their good will, and especially every good deed for which they will find occasion, with a happy, cheerful life in the circle of their parents, relatives, and friends, and with the heavenly goods that You hold in store for Your pious ones:

God bless you and keep you.

God make His countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you.

God lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace in this life and in the life to come. Amen.[18]

Hymn no. 128 in Johlson's hymn collection.[19]

[18]Translator: The Priestly Blessing (Num. 6:24–26), adapted to address the confirmands in the plural, with an expanded final clause.

[19]Translator: Joseph Johlson (1777–1851), Creizenach's colleague as teacher at the Philanthropin, compiled a German hymnal for Jewish worship used at the school.