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*Transcribed from the HathiTrust scan (Harvard University copy) of J. Johlson, Instruction in the Mosaic Religion, translated by Isaac Leeser (Philadelphia: Adam Waldie, 5590/1830). The text follows the original's wording, spelling and punctuation; obvious broken type has been read silently. Printed page numbers appear in grey brackets, e.g. [p. 5]; [p. —] marks a printed page that carries no number. Hebrew is given unpointed. Library and digitization pages are omitted.*

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[p. —]

# INSTRUCTION

IN THE

# MOSAIC RELIGION.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

J. JOHLSON,

TEACHER OF AN ISRAELITISH SCHOOL AT FRANKFORD ON THE MAINE.

BY

ISAAC LEESER,

READER OF THE PORTUGUESE JEWISH CONGREGATION IN PHILADELPHIA.

יראת ה' ראשית דעת חכמה ומוסר אוילים בזו·

"Reverence for the Eternal is the first of knowledge,
And only fools despise wisdom and correction."—PROVERBS i. 7.

Philadelphia.
PRINTED BY ADAM WALDIE.
5590.

[p. —]

Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the second day of August, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1830, ISAAC LEESER, of the said district, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"Instruction in the Mosaic Religion. Translated from the German of J. Johlson, teacher of an Israelitish school at Frankford on the Maine. By Isaac Leeser, reader of the Portuguese Jewish congregation in Philadelphia.

יראת ה' ראשית דעת חכמה ומוסר אוילים בזו·

'Reverence for the Eternal is the first of knowledge, And only fools despise wisdom and correction.'—*Proverbs* i. 7."

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned."—And also to the act, entitled "An

Act supplementary to an act, entitled 'An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

D. CALDWELL,
*Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.*

## [p. —] Dedication.

TO HIS BELOVED UNCLE,
ZALMA REHINE,
*OF RICHMOND, VA.*
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY HIS AFFECTIONATE NEPHEW,
AND OBLIGED SERVANT,
THE TRANSLATOR.

## [p. —] CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. OF THE DIGNITY AND DESTINATION OF MAN, 1

CHAPTER II. OF RELIGION, 6

CHAPTER III. OF GOD AND HIS ATTRIBUTES, 13

CHAPTER IV. OF IMMORTALITY, 24

CHAPTER V. OF REVELATION, 30

CHAPTER VI. OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, 37

CHAPTER VII. OF THE TRADITION, 55

CHAPTER VIII. 1. OF THE DUTIES TOWARDS GOD, 64

CHAPTER IX. 2. OF THE DUTIES TOWARDS OURSELVES, 72

CHAPTER X. 3. OF THE DUTIES TOWARDS OUR FELLOW-MEN, 80

CHAPTER XI. OF THE DUTIES TOWARDS THE STATE, 94

CHAPTER XII. OF MEANS TO BECOME PIOUS, 102

APPENDIX. 109

## [p. —] PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR.

IN an age, when science of every kind is pursued with avidity, no astonishment can be manifested at the attempt of an Israelite to give his brethren a clear knowledge of the religion which they have inherited from their ancestors; since, if it is of any importance whatever to any portion of the human family to profess a certain creed, it is also highly necessary, that the principal features at least of this creed should be familiar to all who profess the same. I claim no great literary merit on account of the present performance; for, although the labour bestowed on it has been very great, and considerable additions and alterations made (particularly to the *tenth* and *eleventh* chapters), yet, the road was already so clearly pointed out by the very learned author of the original, that I had nothing more to do, than to make as good a use of the materials, as my limited abilities and inexperience would permit. How I have succeeded, I leave others to judge; and claim no particular indulgence, because it is my first literary performance of any note. But at the same time I beg leave to state, that I shall not hold myself responsible for any difference of opinion, which may happen to exist between myself and any of my readers; and I hope, that this difference will not, as in justice it should not, deprive me of as candid and impartial a judgment, as though we agreed upon every point. If I have not obtained the good opinion of the public, I have endeavoured to deserve it. For in the first place, I

[p. vi] have spared no application to render the work, though small in size, as perfect as I could possibly make it; and next, I flatter myself, that the typographical execution is of such general correctness as will strike every one as worthy of commendation. I can safely aver, that the Hebrew, which is distributed throughout these pages, will be found to be as free from errors as can well be expected, for every passage has been carefully revised with the best editions of the Bible. That some small errors may nevertheless have escaped both in the English and Hebrew, despite of the care bestowed upon both, I cannot doubt; but no one can demand perfection, when perfection is beyond the reach of man, and literary labours must share the fate of every other human undertaking.

The design of this work is the instruction of the younger part of Israelites, of both sexes, who have previously acquired some knowledge of the fundamental part, in the principal topics of their religion. As to the manner of using it to advantage, I would recommend its introduction into schools, wherever these are established, or to be used as a book of instruction in families. Let the scholars learn several paragraphs, both the Hebrew and the English, by heart; but care should be taken, that the task given them should be no more than they can conveniently get through, as I conceive it highly absurd to give children such long lessons, that they must leave them unattended to, or at best study them but very imperfectly. It would also be very adviseable to explain the lesson in general terms, when first given out, and more at length when the scholars recite; and, if possible, the construction of the Hebrew sentences, and the mode of reading this language without points, should at the same time be taught, and children might thus easily become acquainted with a number

of elegant extracts from the Bible, whilst they at the same time acquire a thorough knowledge of the principal articles of their religion. Those, who do not understand Hebrew, and have no means of becoming acquainted with it, can also make good use of this book,

[p. vii] as almost every word has been carefully rendered into English. In these translations I have been guided by Jewish commentators and versions, chiefly those of the great Rabbi Moses Mendelsohn, to whose genius, guided by God's providence, we are indebted for many benefits, and in particular to the light of science which we now enjoy. I also would recommend to my readers, the younger portion especially, not to be satisfied with a mere casual perusal of this, but to give it now and then a *share* of their attention; and I trust, that the advantage they will derive from the reading of this little work, will compensate them for the time spent in its perusal. The indulgent reader, I hope, will not accuse me of presumption, for offering these remarks to his consideration; since it is but fair, that I, having some experience in this matter, and the welfare of our community deeply at heart, should be permitted to make a few observations on the use of a book, on which I have bestowed my undivided attention for several months.

It is universally acknowledged, that there is a great scarcity of elementary books of this kind amongst us; and this is, therefore, the first of a series, which is attempted, to remedy this defect; as I intend to present more works of this kind to the consideration of the public, if the encouragement held out for this will warrant me in the undertaking. The patrons of this will no doubt recollect, that I last winter issued proposals for this and another work; but the assistance, hitherto promised, is far from sufficient to pay the expenses of the publication even of this alone, and I was obliged to assume the publication myself, as no bookseller was willing to undertake it. I hope, that this will be a sufficient apology to those, who have subscribed for both, for the appearance of one only at the present, as it cannot be expected that I should run the risk of too great a loss. But they may rest assured, that I shall put the said work to press as soon as possible, and the execution shall fully equal that of the present, if the Almighty blesses me with sufficient strength and health to attend to it. From the specimen here offered,

[p. viii] the public can judge of my claims to its patronage; and those who judge favourably, it is hoped, will extend their assistance to the proposed publication. I would add, that the price will be raised, immediately after publication, to those who may not have previously subscribed. Persons wishing to subscribe may apply to me personally, or to the following gentlemen, who have kindly promised to act as agents:—the Rev. Mr. Seixas and Mr. J. B. Kursheedt, New York; Mr. Jacob Mordecai, and the Editors of the Whig, Richmond, Va.; Mr. Jacob I. Cohen, Baltimore; Mr. Eleazer Block, Cincinnati, Ohio; Mr. Nathan Hart and Dr. Jacob De La Motta, Charleston, S. C.; Mr. Moses Sarfaty, Kingston, Jamaica; and Messrs. Lewis Allen and J. L. Hackenburg, Philadelphia. To the patrons of this undertaking I return my sincerest thanks, and those of other persuasions may rest assured, that I feel their kindness very sensibly, and that it shall be my constant endeavour to prove to *all*, that their confidence has not been misplaced.

Some persons may perhaps wish to know, why I should undertake this task? To this I simply answer: Having been appointed lately a fellow-labourer in the vineyard of the Lord, I thought it best to transplant this foreign shoot into that part of the vineyard entrusted to my care. May then its branches spread over a wide surface, to shade and shelter the weary, and may its good fruit be plentiful, and refresh many a hungry traveller in the path of life. This is the sincere wish and the only reason of the humble servant of his brethren,

ISAAC LEESER.

PHILADELPHIA,

August 5th, Menachem 16th, 5590.

# [p. —] INSTRUCTION IN THE MOSAIC RELIGION.

## CHAPTER I.

### OF THE DIGNITY AND DESTINATION OF MAN.

**1. Which is the noblest creature known to us?**

Man; for he is not alone superior to the other creatures of this earth, on account of the beauty and wonderful construction of his *body*, and his upright posture; but also, on account of the noble powers and capacity of his *soul*, his reason, and freedom of will, which make him a rational being, and exalt him, in an eminent degree, above all other animals.

כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם" ·

For after his own image did God make man." (Gen. 9 ch. 6 v.)

**2. What do we call REASON?**

The power or capacity of the human soul to judge and to decide; to discover the connection between causes and effects; and to distinguish between the true and the false; and between that, which is right and good, and the wrong and evil.

[p. 2] **3. What is meant by FREEDOM OF WILL?**

Man, of his own free accord, can determine to do certain actions, or omit doing them, just as he may deem them right and useful, or wrong and injurious. The animal obeys merely its instinct, and strives solely to satisfy its natural impulses; but man has the power to govern his desires (that is to say, his inclination for that which pleases his senses, and his aversion for those things which may happen to be disagreeable to them) through the force of his reason. Reason, therefore, teaches him to satisfy his inclinations no farther than he may deem them necessary for his preservation, and conducive to his spiritual and moral improvement. It is thus expressed in the Bible:

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

Behold! I lay before thee this day: life and the good; death and the evil." (Deut. 30 ch. 15 v.)

אל תהיו כסוס כפרד אין הבין במתג ורסן עדיו לבלום בל קרוב אליך" ·

Be not like the horse and mule, which have no reason; whose mouth must be governed by bridle and bit, lest they injure thee." (Psalm 32, v. 9.)

**4. Is this freedom of will of any importance to man?**

Certainly; for this alone it is, which gives moral worth to man and his deeds; because his actions and omissions can only in so far deserve praise or censure, reward or punishment, as he is at liberty to act after testing and reflection.

The application of this mental power in ruling his desires—*the government of himself*—is of the utmost necessity to man; for it is his duty to take the utmost care that his inclinations may not degenerate into passions,[1] and lead him to the com-

[p. 3] mission of criminal and vicious actions; and the reasonable exercise of this moral freedom causes the purest delight of the soul, and confers upon us the blessing of an easy and tranquil conscience.

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

Behold! If thou actest well, thou canst raise thy eyes; but if thou dost not act well, sin will rest at the door; to thee is its desire, but thou canst rule over it." (Gen. 4 ch. 7 v.)

**5. What is called CONSCIENCE?**

That inward consciousness or knowledge of our having done right or wrong; the voice of God within us, which judges our words and actions. There is, namely, a law impressed in the hearts of all men, to approve of, and to exercise what is good, and to disapprove of, and to shun what is evil.[2] If then we are conscious of having acted properly, we shall experience comfort, joy, and contentment, and we have then a good and peaceful conscience. If we do wrong, the consciousness of our having done so, will occasion us anxiety and disquietude, for we have in this case a bad conscience. This disturbed feeling of the wicked is beautifully expressed by the prophet:

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

[1] *Passions* are such desires, as have become so strong and lasting, that they disturb our peace of mind, and place our soul in a *passive* state, as she cannot any longer act from a free choice and with deliberation. *Vice* is the habitual inclination to transgress the divine precepts.

[2] We call him *conscientious*, who is ever mindful of the warning voice within, and accustoms himself to do nothing, without the consciousness of its being right.

The wicked are like the agitated sea, which cannot rest. There is no peace for the wicked, speaks my God." (Isaiah, 57 ch. 20 v.)

חטאים תרדף רעה ואת צדיקים ישלם טוב" ·

Even vice itself pursues

[p. 4] the sinners, and virtue already rewards the righteous." (Prov. 13 ch. 21 v.)

**6. Does man possess these advantages immediately upon his entrance in the world?**

No; for he is, at his birth, the weakest of all creatures; his childhood is of the longest duration, and his faculties are but gradually developed. The Almighty rendered man's infancy thus feeble, that he might feel his weakness and dependence, and learn to improve the powers of his mind through instruction, education, and practice. But even this very weakness of man's childhood, proves the more strongly his superiority over other animals, since he is capable of an ever progressive perfectibility.

**7. As it is proper to infer the destination of any thing—that is, the ulterior object of its creation—from its organization and qualities: how are we to judge in this respect from the great endowments and advantages of man?**

The pre-eminent mental endowments, wherewith man is so peculiarly gifted; as also his reason, freedom of will, conscience, and the ever active impulse which spurs him on to reach higher perfections and greater happiness, clearly prove to us, though even there were no other indications of the fact, that he is destined to advance continually in perfection, wisdom, and virtue. It behoves us, therefore, as rational beings, to improve our mind, and employ all the knowledge we have acquired, to become virtuous, and to reach, through the practice of virtue, both temporal and endless happiness.

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

Then only canst thou know virtue, right and justice, the road to the really

[p. 5] good: when wisdom has entered thy heart, and knowledge has become agreeable to thy soul." (Prov. 2 ch. 9 v.)

**8. What do you call VIRTUE?**

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

We call him virtuous, who, from pure love of the good, seriously endeavours to overcome his evil propensities, and to live always conformably to the expressed will of God.

**9. But what gives to man the power and the knowledge of knowing the will of God, and of acting accordingly?**

*Religion*, and the law, which was revealed by God. These give us a clear, lively, and impressive knowledge of the will of God, and confers upon virtue the power to achieve a victory over the passions. This knowledge of religion is necessary to enable us to become really virtuous.

כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעריו" ·

For the desire of the human heart is evil from his youth." (Gen. 8 ch. 21 v.)

Sensuality blinds a man to such a degree, that he may be led to consider the *apparent*, as a *real* and *permanent* good, and to fly an inconvenience of but short duration, as a real evil; so that he inconsiderately grasps only at the shadow of good, and thereby incurs real evil.

יראת ה׳ מקור חיים לסור ממקשי מות" ·

Religion only is the source of life, she teaches to escape from the snares of destruction [death]." (Prov. 14 ch. 27 v.)

אל תהי חכם בעיניך ירא ה׳ וסור מרע" ·

Be not wise in thine own estimation! fear God and shun the evil." (Prov. 3 ch. 7 v.)

באין חזון יפרע עם ושמר תורה אשרהו" ·

Without a revelation does a people grope in darkness (become wild); but if it lives according to the law, it is happy." (Prov. 29 ch. 18 v.)

## [p. —] CHAPTER II.

### OF RELIGION.

**10. What is Religion?**

To acknowledge God and to adore him, by contemplating his almighty power, wisdom, and goodness, and by a careful observance of his precepts. It is also the chief duty of man, and the true object of his existence, so to cultivate his powers, as to reach this all-desirable end.

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

The concluding principle is: Fear God, and observe his precepts, for this is the whole duty of man!" (Eccles. 12 ch. 13 v.)

ראשית חכמה יראת ה׳ שכל טוב לכל עשיהם תהלתו עומדת לעד" .

The chief aim of wisdom is the fear of God; it is wise conduct to act accordingly, and causes imperishable praise." (Psalm 111, 10 v.)

ויאמר לאדם: הן יראת ה׳ היא חכמה וסור מרע בינה" .

And he said to man: Let fear of God be wisdom to thee, and call it reason to shun evil." (Job, 28 ch. 28 v.)

And we can, therefore, only then be said to be *truly religious*, when we acknowledge God, our Almighty Creator and Lord, as the most perfect and holiest of all beings; and think, act, and live so, as this acknowledgement and the doctrines of holy writ demand of us; when we are ever animated by love and adoration of the Eternal, and when we prove ourselves in possession of these pious feelings, by an entire reliance upon his wise providence, and a filial resignation to his holy will.

הולך בישרו ירא ה׳ ונלוז דרכיו בוזהו" .

He who lives uprightly adores the Eternal; but he who walks in crooked paths dishonours him." (Prov. 14 ch. 2 v.)

לאהבה את ה׳ אלהיך לשמע בקלו ולדבקה בו. כי הוא חייך וארך ימיך" .[p. 7]

Love the Eternal thy God, obey his voice, and adhere to him; for on this depends thy preservation and happiness (length of days)." (Deut. 30 ch. 20 v.)

**11. What effect has Religion upon Man?**

Religion renders man good and happy. Those really pious thoughts which our fathers called התהלך את האלהים (to walk with God), and קרבת אלהים (the approach to God), bestow on man a lasting inward comfort, continual contentment and joy of soul, and incite and strengthen him to the practice of virtue. The joyful feeling of his deserving the love and approbation of his God, gives to man the enjoyment of the purest pleasure, and of that true *felicity*, which elevates the pious man, whose inheritance it is (ותמימים ינחלו טוב, משלי כח׳), above all earthly sufferings, and enables him willingly to dispense with the pleasure, which the evanescent riches of this world can afford.

ואני תמיד עמך

And I remain with thee for ever;

אחזת ביד ימיני

Thou supportest me by my right hand;

בעצתך תנחני

Thy council leadeth me rightly;

ואחר כבוד תקחני

And thou receivest me at last in honour.

מי לי בשמים

Whom could I wish beside thee in heaven?

ועמך לא חפצתי בארץ

Whom near thee on earth?

כלה שארי ולבבי

Though my soul and heart should languish,

צור לבבי וחלקי אלהים לעלם

Yet would God always be the comfort of my heart, and my portion.

כי הנה רחקיך יאבדו

For lost are they, who are far from thee,

הצמתה כל זונה ממך

Lost they, who forsake thy worship.

ואני קרבת אלהים לי טוב

But *to adhere to God* is to me the greatest good!

שתי באדני ה׳ מחסי,

In thee, my Lord and God! do I place my trust,

לספר כל מלאכותיך.

And I will proclaim thy wonderful deeds! (Psalm 73.)

[p. 8] **12. In what light ought we then to consider the religion which was revealed to us?**

We ought to regard it as the greatest of all blessings. For, as a loving father is solicitous about the education and real prosperity of his children: thus has God, the Lord, made his will known to us, and taught us, how we are to adore him and become happy. And whereas this wholesome law, which makes us acquainted with our relation to God, and our appointment on earth, was communicated to us through the agency of *Moses* (son of Amram of the tribe of Levy), we call the religion, which we profess, the *Mosaic Religion.*

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

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, to whom I commanded on Horeb laws and ordinances for all Israel." (Mala. 3 ch. 22 v.)

**13. Do not then all men profess the same Religion?**

No; mankind are not of one opinion concerning the mode of worshipping God. There are accordingly various religions, but they all, nevertheless, acknowledge a God and Creator, who desires but the welfare of his creatures. Our wise men, therefore, teach us:

חסידי אומות העולם יש להם חלק לעולם הבא" .

That the pious of all nations have a share of the world to come," i. e. may enjoy everlasting beatitude.

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

For, from the going up to the setting of the sun, is my name great among the nations; every where are offerings and incense burnt to my name, and with pure devotion are sacrifices brought; for my name is great among nations, speaketh the Eternal Zebaoth." (Mala. 1 ch. 11 v.)

[p. 9] **14. Is it then a matter of indifference to what religion we profess ourselves?**

No; it is the most sacred duty of every Israelite to remain faithful to that religion, which our ancestors accepted for themselves and their posterity, and which to observe they most solemnly swore.

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

Not with you alone do I make this covenant and this oath of confirmation; but with those, who are this day with us, before the Eternal our God, and with those, who are not here with us this day." (Deut. 29 ch. 13 and 14 v.)

We can, therefore, in no manner whatever renounce the religion of our ancestors, without infringing the covenant, and thereby drawing upon ourselves the curses which the whole nation pronounced before the Eternal. (Deut. 27 ch. 26 v.) We must, therefore, be steadfast in the religion in which we were born, and exclaim with the pious psalmist:

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

Thou, O Eternal, hast chosen the lot for me! My share was appointed in the most lovely part, and my inheritance also is agreeable to me; and I thank thee, O God, that thou hast counselled me."[3] (Ps. 16, v. 5.)

[3]The chief Rabbi, *H. Hurwitz*, pointed out to me the following verse and its interpretation, as a further elucidation of this passage: שמע בני מוסר אביך ואל תטש תורת אמך. "My son, be attentive to the advice of thy father, and neglect not the instruction of thy mother." (Prov. 1 ch. 8 v.) "The advice of thy father"—in Heaven (say our Rabbins), which he communicated to Moses, both

[p. 10] **15. Which are the commandments we are bound to observe?**

Partly those laws, which God has inscribed in the hearts of all men, and the infraction of which produces inevitable punishment even in this life; and partly those precepts, which God, out of peculiar grace, has communicated to us, the descendants of his first true adorers, (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,) through Moses and the prophets, and the infraction of which is avenged already in this, or only in the future life.

**16. What is the name of the book, in which the history of our ancestors, as well as the precepts and commandments, which lead us to happiness, are recorded?**

We call it the Bible—the book of books—the Holy writ; it is divided in three parts: תורה נביאים וכתובים, the Pentateuch, or the five books of Moses; the Prophets; and the Hagiography, or Holy Writings.

**17. Does the Bible promise us an exemption from all worldly sufferings and cares?**

By no means; but the religious man, who endeavours to live according to the precepts, which this book contains, has the comfort of knowing, that nothing can happen to him without the wise and paternal will of God; so that even the sufferings and disappointments of life must be beneficial in their consequences, and that the ever kind Father can and will compensate him in the land of perfection (future life) for every earthly evil.

לולי תורתך שעשעי אז אבדתי בעניי" .

Were not thy law my comfort, I should long since have perished in my affliction." (Ps. 119, 92 v.)

[p. 11]תורת ה' תמימה משיבת נפש פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב" .

The law of the Eternal is perfect, it refreshes the soul; the precepts of the Lord are just, they gladden the heart." (Ps. 19, 8 and 9 v.)

**18. Which, however, are the fundamental articles in the Mosaic religion?**

The principal points of faith, upon which our holy religion is founded, are of two kinds. Namely, first, those truths which we can already discover through our reason alone, and are comprehensible from the nature of things; and secondly, historical facts and doctrines, which are neither discoverable through the means of reason solely, nor deducible from our every day experience.

**19. Which are the truths of the FIRST KIND?**

*a*) There exists *one Eternal God;* that is to say, a Supreme Being, who is almighty, all-wise, and all-good; the creator, preserver, and ruler of all things.

---

written and orally; "the instruction of thy mother"—of the church (כנסת ישראל), namely, those precepts which have been adopted as a safeguard to the law.

*b*) Our soul is *immortal;* her existence, therefore, does in no wise terminate at the death of the body; but

*c*) She will surely receive from the hands of the all-just God, in the future and eternal life, reward or punishment for her actions whilst here.

**20. Which are the doctrines of the SECOND KIND, which are founded on historical truths?**

*a*) That God revealed himself, in a supernatural manner, to our ancestors, and in particular to our teacher Moses—the greatest of all prophets, who ever lived or will live—and that he communicated to us laws and doctrines for our happiness, [p. 12] which are contained in the book of the law, now actually in our possession.

*b*) That Moses taught and wrote nothing voluntarily or from his own fancy; but every thing from divine inspiration. That, therefore, every promise made to us by God, through Moses and the prophets, will be eventually accomplished, as soon as his all-seeing wisdom and goodness shall deem us worthy thereof.

*c*) That also the more particular explanations and definitions of the written precepts, were likewise communicated and orally delivered to Moses by God; so that these traditions (which were afterwards delivered by Moses to the elders and rulers of the people by word of mouth solely, and thus handed down from generation to generation) constitute a prominent and essential part of the law.

## [p. —] CHAPTER III.

### OF GOD AND HIS ATTRIBUTES.

**21. How does reason alone already point out to us the existence of God?**

Reason teaches, that one thing is always produced by another; therefore, that the world could not have sprung into existence of itself, but *that it* must have had a wise author and creator; and this *first cause*, this wise and mighty creator of all things, I call GOD. And thus we read:

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

Do but ask the cattle, and they will teach thee; and the birds of heaven, and they will tell it thee; or view the earth, and she will instruct thee; and the fish of the sea will make it known to thee: Who discovers not in all these, that the hand of the Eternal has created them all?" (Job, 12 ch. 7—9 v.)

**22. What convinces us, that God is not alone the creator, but also the ruler and supporter of the universe?**

This we discover already in the preservation and continuance of all beings and creatures on earth; but chiefly in the regular course of the sun, moon, and stars. For they retain the same proportion and relative situation to one another, which they had thousands of years ago: the seasons change always in their due order, and the constellations pursue their course—even in the most distant orbits—and re-appear regularly and with the utmost punctuality at the place from whence they commenced their course. And says Isaiah, (40 ch. 26 v.):

[p. 14]שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה המוציא במספר צבאם לכלם בשם יקרא מרב אונים ואמיץ כח איש לא נעדר" .

Raise your eyes to heaven and see; who created *these?* He bringeth out their host by number, calleth each by name (i. e. assigns to each its course and destination). None is hidden from Him, the Almighty and All-powerful."

השמים מספרים כבוד אל, ומעשה ידיו מגיד הרקיע וגו'" .

The heavens relate the glory of God, and the firmament tells of the work of his hands," &c. (Ps. 19.)

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

Every power is invisible; consequently, the Supreme Power must likewise be imperceptible to our eyes. A power appears only in its effects; and the effects of the Supreme Power we see every where, and in all directions, in the innumerable mass of creatures, from the greatest to the least. God is a spirit, an invisible being. We read, therefore, in the Bible:

כי לא ראיתם כל תמונה" .

For you saw no figure whatever of the Deity." (Deut. 4 ch. 15 v.)

**24. What do you mean to express by—God is a spirit?**

That God is the Supreme Power; an incorporeal being, to whom we cannot attribute, and who possesses not, the qualities, casualties, and nature of the body or of matter.

ואל מי תדמיוני ואשוה יאמר קדוש" .

And to whom will you compare me, that I could resemble him? speaks the Most Holy." (Is. 40 ch. 25 v.)

**25. But we read (*Numb.* 12 *ch.* 8 *v.*): "*He* (Moses) *saw the form of the Eternal;*" how shall we understand this and many other expressions of the Bible which speak of the HAND of God, the MOUTH of God, the EYE of God, &c.?**

[p. 15] All these and similar expressions must not be taken in their literal sense, that is, in their common acceptation, but ought only to be considered, as employed in a *figurative* meaning, to give to our senses some faint idea of the qualities and works of God, which would otherwise be altogether unintelligible to us. And whereas we are accustomed, to do all that we do, through the means of our limbs, we, therefore, find the operations of God presented to us in these *figurative expressions*, that they may be rendered more comprehensible and in a measure made visible to our mind. Thus the above adduced allegorical phrase is only intended, to express more emphatically the superiority of Moses above all other prophets, in so far, namely, as he had the greatest knowledge of God's attributes and providence; it is, therefore, merely a further explanation of the preceding sentence, which says in substance:

במראה ולא בחידות" .

God spoke with him in a perfectly plain manner, and not through riddles."

**26. Is that other expression of the Bible, which says: "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness," נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו (Gen. 1 ch. 26 v.) also to be taken in a figurative sense?**

This also is certainly nothing more than a figurative phrase, and is the less applicable to bodily form, as otherwise the words בתארנו כתמונתנו (in our form, in our shape) ought to have been used. The above words, however, convey no other idea, than that the *spirit* of man bears, in a certain degree, some resemblance to the Deity; since it renders man not only *immortal*, but is also the cause of his being endowed with such great and excellent mental powers; so that he is the *only one* of all living things, who acknowledges his Creator, and reflects upon his own being, and governs all animals: just as God is in truth *alone* the wisest and most mighty ruler of all things. This

[p. 16] is also the reason, why the verse under consideration continues: "That he may rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds, over the cattle, and over the whole earth." And the Psalmist says beautifully (8 Ps.):

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

And thou madest him but little less than angels, and crownedst him with honour and glory; thou gavest him dominion over the works of thy hands, and placedst all at his feet."

**27. What do you understand by—GOD IS ONE AND ALONE?**

That this spiritual, self-existent Being, is simple, and the only true Deity. *Simple*, without parts and members; *one*, of whom no plurality can be imagined; and *alone*, to whom no other being, however great, can bear any similitude. And

שמע ישראל ה׳ אלהינו ה׳ אחד" .

Hear, O Israel! the Eternal our God, is the only eternal being." (Deut. 6 ch. 4 v.)

**28. What is meant by—GOD IS ETERNAL?**

That this solely self-existent Being has been from eternity, and will ever remain like himself and unchanged for eternity. God is without beginning and without end; so that his not-being or ceasing to exist is an impossibility and inconceivable. Thus also *Isaiah:*

אני ראשון ואני אחרון ומבלעדי אין אלהים" .

I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there exists no God." (44 ch. 6 v.)

**29. What duty arises to us, from the acknowledgment of this truth, that the Eternal our God is one and alone, and that there is none besides him?**

That we are bound to *adore* this only God solely, and no other being besides him; that is, we ought ever to place before [p. 17] our mind, in the strongest and most impressive manner we are capable of, his infinite greatness, goodness, and mercy; and we should expect our temporal and permanent happiness from *him only*, and call upon *him alone* for blessing and prosperity, and for aid and assistance in our troubles.

זבח לאלהים יחרם בלתי לה׳ לבדו" .

He, who sacrifices to any idol, shall be condemned; to the Eternal only is this honour due." (Exo. 22 ch. 19 v.)

**30. What do we express by the word ALMIGHTY?**

God can do, make, and create all, that he wills, and requires not the assistance of any other being. Man, after exerting all his powers, can only give to already existing things an outward form, such as he may desire, but all creatures together are unable to *create* the slightest imaginable trifle, i. e. to produce something, without having previously the materials or matter to make the same. But God, on the contrary, has created and produced every thing we see, all creatures and beings, together with all their powers and inclinations—the whole system of nature—from nothing, without any previous matter, without any instrument; but solely and alone through his potent will. With the same goodness and almighty power he continues to maintain and to govern all his creatures, which he can utterly annihilate in a moment of time.

כי הוא אמר ויהי הוא צוה ויעמד" .

For he spoke, and it was: he commanded, and it stood." (Ps. 33, v. 9.)

תסתיר פניך יבהלון תוסף רוחם יגועון" .

Turnest thou thy face away, they become affrighted; thou takest their breath—they perish." (Ps. 104, v. 29.)

**31. To what must the remembrance of the great and mighty wonder of the creation lead us?**

[p. 18] To a belief in the possibility of miracles; that God, who instituted the laws of nature, can easily change them for a short period, and thereby produce *extraordinary occurrences*, whenever it pleases his wisdom, to produce any effect on many persons, and to impress doctrines upon their minds, which they could not have attained in *any other manner*. This, for instance, was the case with Pharaoh and the Egyptians; the Israelites and many others. We read also: (Ex. 9 ch. 29 v.)

למען תדע כי לה׳ הארץ" .

That thou mayest experience, that the earth belongs to the Eternal" (and can, therefore, do thereon whatever he pleases).

למען תדע כי אני ה׳ בקרב הארץ" .

That thou mayest know, that I, the Eternal, am in the midst of the land" (and extend my watchfulness to every man in particular). (Ex. 8 ch. 18 v.)

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

O Eternal God! Thou hast made the heavens and the earth, through thy great power and out-stretched arm; to thee nothing is impossible." (Jer. 32 ch. 17 v.)

**32. What is meant by—GOD IS ALL-KNOWING?**

God knows all that ever has been done; that which now happens, and all that can ever come to pass; nothing is hidden from him. For he is *omnipresent*, the whole world is full of his glory, and nothing escapes his all comprehending knowledge. He notices the actions and thoughts of his creatures, and nothing can be done without his sufferance.

היצר יחד לבם המבין אל כל מעשיהם" .

He, who formed the hearts of all, understands also all their actions." (Ps. 33, v. 15.)

הנטע אזן הלא ישמע אם יצר עין הלא יביט המלמד אדם דעת ה׳ ידע מחשבות אדם כי המה הבל. "Should *he* not hear, who fixeth the ear? Should he not see, who formeth the eye? He, who teaches man knowledge, the Eternal, [p. 19] knows the thoughts of man, though they be directed to vanity." (Ps. 94, v. 9.)

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

Thou, Lord! who art great in council, and mighty in execution! Whose eyes are fixed upon all the ways of the sons of man; to give to each according to his deeds, and the fruits of his actions." (Jer. 32 ch. 19 v.)

**33. What impression must this truth,—the omniscience and omnipresence of God—make upon us?**

That we ought to endeavour to lead an upright and a god-pleasing course of life, and to preserve our hands always clean of wrong, and our hearts free from guilt. That we should always maintain truth, and never sin, even in the most secret corner, and always place the all-seeing, most just and holy God before us as present, and reflect, that he will reward the good and punish the evil. And thus also spoke the pious David:

שויתי ה׳ לנגדי תמיד" .

I always place the Eternal as present before me." (Ps. 16. v. 8.)

הן אמת חפצת בטחות" .

Behold, thou desirest truth in secret even." (Ps. 51, 8 v.)

הלא הוא יראה דרכי וכל צעדי יספור" .

Behold, he sees my ways, and numbers all my steps." (Job. 31 ch. 4 v.)

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

If even a man conceal himself in a secret place, should I not see him there? speaks the Eternal; do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" (Jer. 23 ch. 24 v.)

אני ה׳ חקר לב בחן כליות" .

I, the Eternal, search the heart, and prove the kidneys" (that is—know the innermost thoughts of man). (Jer. 17 ch. 10 v.)

[p. 20] **34. What is understood by—GOD IS ALL-GOOD?**

God desires only the welfare of his creatures. He, in his wisdom, has organised them in such a manner, and given them such powers, inclinations and capacities, that all—each according to its kind and destination—should be perfectly happy. He also supports and preserves them through his grace and kindness; and when he punishes, he corrects us only from motives of pure love. Hatred, malice, and anger are *defects* of a weak mortal only, and they are therefore incompatible with the character of the most mighty and perfect of all beings.

חסדי ה׳ כי לא תמנו כי לא כלו רחמיו" .

The goodness of the Eternal has no end, for his mercy never ceases." (Lam. 3 ch. 23 v.)

טוב ה׳ לכל ורחמיו על כל מעשיו" .

The Eternal is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works." (Ps. 145, v. 9.)

טוב וישר ה׳ על כן יורה חטאים בדרך" .

Good and just is the Eternal, therefore he leads the sinners upon the right path." (Ps. 25, v. 8.)

**35. To what must the proper reflection upon the foregoing lead us?**

That we should always submit with cheerfulness to the holy will of this benignant God; to receive with filial resignation all his dispensations, although we may sorely feel their pressure, and not be able to discover their beneficial consequences; and it is our duty, to thank him, our Father, for whatever he may be pleased to mete out to us.

כי את אשר יאהב ה׳ יוכיח וכאב את בן ירצה" .

For the Eternal corrects him, whom he loves, like a father who will make his son better." (Prov. 3 ch. 12 v.)

וידעת עם לבבך כי כאשר ייסר איש את בנו ה׳ אלהיך מיסרך" .

And know in thy heart, that the Eternal has punished thee, as a father punishes his son." (Deut. 8 ch. 5 v.)

[p. 21] **36. How do our wise men express this?**

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

We must thank God for the misfortune, as well as for the good; for all, that the merciful God does, happens for the welfare of his creatures."

**37. Can you give me some examples, transmitted to us through holy writ, of resignation to the will of God?**

*Job* (1. ch. 21 v.) said; "The Eternal has given, the Eternal has taken away; praised be the name of the Lord." ה׳ נתן וה׳ לקח יהי שם ה׳ מברך.

*Ely* (1 Sam. 3 ch. 18 v.) said: "He is the Eternal; may he do, as seems best to him." ה׳ הוא הטוב בעיניו יעשה.

*David* (2 Sam. 15 ch. 26 v.) said: "Here I am! May he do unto me, as it may be pleasing to him." הנני יעשה לי כאשר טוב בעיניו.

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

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

The Eternal is unchangeably the Eternal Being; an almighty God, most merciful and gracious; withholding long his anger, and full of kindness and truth; who preserveth his kindness to the thousandth generation, and who pardoneth wickedness, transgressions, and sin, but who suffereth nothing to pass unnoticed" (i. e. without making the wicked feel the consequence of their sins, if they do not repent in time). (Ex. 34 ch. 6—7 v.)

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

He, the rock of protection! his deeds are perfect; for all his ways are just; he is the God of truth, and without evil, he is just and righteous." (Deut. 32 ch. 4 v.)

**39. How then do you reconcile the providence and justice of God, with the great mass of evil, which exists, and the number of wicked deeds, which are perpetrated in this world?**

[p. 22] God has imparted to man freedom of will—without which neither virtue nor vice could exist—therefore does he suffer even the evil to be done; but he punishes it, confines it within certain limits and bounds, and causes good to arise from it. And thus spoke Joseph to his brothers, when they came to offer themselves, as his servants:

ואתם חשבתם עלי רעה אלהים חשבה לטבה" .

Though you intended to do me evil, yet did God direct it to good." (Gen. 50 ch. 20 v.)

**40. But are not the good frequently afflicted with misfortunes, whilst the wicked prosper?**

At occurrences of this kind, we must be extremely cautious and circumspect in our judgment, because we can never know exactly the nature and connection of things. For even granted, that the happy man, whom we call bad, should not have a good heart, nor, that the pious, unhappy one, be at heart a villain: yet are the sufferings and mishaps, which he may endure, often very wholesome to the pious man; and the good luck of the wicked, is often only *apparent* and *of short duration.* And then again it must be borne in mind, that only in *the life to come*, will virtue receive its full reward, and vice its whole punishment.

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

Be not jealous about the happiness of the wicked, envy not those who practise evil. Trust in the Eternal, and do what is good; preserve thy innocence, for it (virtue) causes at last happiness to man." (Ps. 37.)

אשר אין נעשה פתגם מעשה הרעה מהרה על כן מלא לב בני האדם בהם לעשות רע: אשר חטא עשה רע מאת ומאריך לו כי גם יודע אני אשר יהיה טוב ליראי האלהים אשר ייראו מלפניו. "Because punishment does not follow evil deeds quickly, therefore becomes the heart of man careless, and practises [p. 23] wickedness. But let the sinner commit sins a hundred fold, and experience

indulgence; yet am I convinced, that true happiness will be the sure recompense of the pious, whilst they fear God." (Eccl. 8 ch. 11—12 v.)

**41. What does Scripture teach us further on this subject?**

That we should never presume to find fault with God's wise dispensations, as his ways are inscrutable to us. That it would be punishable temerity for a blind mortal to presume to penetrate into the mysterious decrees of the Deity.

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

Woe to him, who rebels against his Maker! let one fragment dispute with the other earthly fragment; but can the clay say to its potter: what doest thou? and thou provest not thy hands by thy work?" (Is. 45 ch. 9 v.)

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

I reflected concerning him, and sought truth; but all searching was only painful, till I came into the sanctuary of the Lord, and learned to know its object. Now I am willingly ignorant and will not search, am willingly before thee like the beast." (Ps. 73, 16—22 v.)

And thus say also our wise men:

אין בידינו לא משלות הרשעים ואף לא מיסורי הצדיקים" .

Our reason is not able to explain correctly the happiness of the wicked, nor the afflictions of the righteous." (Aboth iv.)

## [p. —] CHAPTER IV.

### OF IMMORTALITY.

**42. What are the consequences of our death?**

We lose all the earthly goods, which we may have possessed; our body will be given over to corruption; but our soul has the promise of a future life.

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

And the dust will return unto the earth whence it came, and the spirit will return unto God who gave it." (Eccl. 12 ch. 7 v.)

**43. What impression ought this to make upon us?**

We must never fix our minds too strongly upon the goods of this sensual world; never be proud of beauty and strength; but we should aim already at an early period of life to make ourselves acquainted with the real and noble object of our existence.

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

Thus speaketh the Eternal: Let not the wise boast of his wisdom, the strong man not of his strength, nor the rich man of his riches; but for this alone can a man praise himself, to understand, and know me, how I, the Eternal, exercise grace, justice, and righteousness on earth, how I find pleasure in these; speaks the Eternal." (Jer. 9 ch. 22 v.)

**44. What arguments does reason alone furnish us relative to the immortality of the soul?**

We see clearly, that nothing in the whole range of nature is [p. 25] entirely destroyed, and of *annihilation* we can form no idea. Only the forms are changed; the inherent powers continue nevertheless to operate; the fruit rises out of the annihilation, new, young, and manifold;—even animals change—as, for example, the butterfly. How can we then suppose, that the Most Merciful should annihilate the human soul, the masterwork of his creation, after having gifted it with so many noble endowments, which all tend to point out its being destined for the enjoyment of the highest felicity?

No; not to deceive me, did God implant in my bosom this eager desire for everlasting existence, this longing for unending bliss. I may therefore, relying on the faithfulness of his word and his kindness, confidently expect a happier and eternal life.

מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך" .

How great is that beatitude, which thou hast laid by for those who fear thee!" (Ps. 31, v. 20.)

והיתה נפש אדני צרורה בצרור החיים את ה׳ אלהיך" .

And may thy soul, my lord, be bound up in the bond of life, with the Eternal thy God!" (1 Sam. 25 ch. 29 v.)

**45. Does not the knowledge we possess of the attributes of God, already compel us, to believe in the immortality of our soul?**

Certainly. We know him, as an all-wise and all-just God; we see, that he has imparted to us desires and capacities (as, for instance, the ever active desire for the acquirement of truth, and the insatiable thirst for wisdom and higher knowledge,) which would be useless and even absolutely burdensome to us, were we to die away for everlasting and irrevocably, in the midst of our

endeavours, when our wishes are not yet satisfied, even in a slight degree, since, with all our toiling, we can only view the surface of truth and wisdom. Then again we often see the righteous oppressed and miserable, or dying prematurely; and many an evil minded man live long

[p. 26] and in superfluity. This must demonstrate, to a greater degree of certainty, that the wise and just God has not limited our being to this, no less short, than uncertain life; but that he has created us for something far more elevated and desirable, and destined us for an everlasting life, where we can attain that perfection, which is here beyond our reach.

העולם הזה דומה לפרוזדור בפני העולם הבא· התקן עצמך בפרוזדור כדי שתכנס לטרקלין·"

This life is but an out-court (school of preparation) to the life to come. Prepare thyself so in the court, that thou mayest be worthy to enter the palace." (Aboth, *Payreck* iv.)

**46. What is in the first place deducible from the doctrine of the immortality of the soul?**

That those, who have led here a godly course of life, and who have sedulously endeavoured to act conformably to the will of Heaven, will be rewarded by the God of mercy and eternal Father, with an inexpressibly great happiness, when they have finished their earthly existence; but that the wicked will be punished, who died in their obduracy, without repentance. So that only in a future life the real reward and punishment will take place, and there will be meted out to every man the just recompense of his deeds.

ולך ה׳ החסד כי אתה תשלם לאיש כמעשהו·"

And thou, O Eternal, art gracious, for thou wilt pay to each man, according to his deeds." (Ps. 62, v. 18.)

ויתהלך חנוך את האלהים ואיננו כי לקח אתו אלהים·"

And Hanoch walked with God, and he was no more to be found, for God had taken him away." (Gen. 5 ch. 24 v.)

**47. What did our wise men say on this subject?**

הילודים למות והמתים לחיות והחיים לדון לידע להודיע ולהודע שהוא אל"

They, who are born, must die, and the dead will live again,

[p. 27]הוא היוצר הוא הבורא הוא המבין הוא הדין הוא העד הוא בעל דין הוא עתיד לדון ברוך הוא שאין לפניו לא עולה ולא שכחה ולא משא פנים ולא מקח שחד ודע שהכל לפי החשבון ואל יבטיחך יצרך שהשאול בית מנוס לך שעל כרחך אתה נוצר ועל כרחך אתה נולד ועל כרחך אתה חי ועל כרחך אתה מת ועל כרחך אתה עתיד לתן דין וחשבון לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא·

and the revived are to be judged; that it may be known, experienced, and proved, that God, the almighty former and creator, is also the investigator, judge, witness, and accuser, praised be He!

for before him there is no injustice, no forgetfulness, no respect for persons, no receiving of bribes. Know, therefore, that *there* every thing will be strictly investigated and counted; and let not thy evil desires persuade thee, that the grave can be a place of refuge for thee; for without thy consent thou wast formed, without thy consent thou wast born, without thy consent thou livest; without thy consent also thou must die, and without thy consent thou must once render an account of thy deeds and stand to judgment, before the King of kings, the Holy One—praised be He." (Aboth, iv. 22.)

**48. What effect should THIS, and the uncertainty of the time of our death, have upon us?**

We ought never to calculate upon a long life on earth; and we should conduct ourselves every day in such a manner, as if it were the last of our life: so that our memory may be blest by posterity, and that we appear pure before the judgment-throne of the Almighty. We must, therefore, make the best use of our time and powers, and test ourselves daily with real sincerity, and amend whatever we may discover defective in ourselves.

שוב יום אחד לפני מיתתך׃"

Repent one day[4] before thy death!" (i. e. daily.) (Aboth, ii.)

[p. 28] **49. What else do we infer from the doctrine of the immortality of the soul?**

We believe, that God will revive man from death, and deal out to the pious an interminable beatitude.

ורבים מישני אדמת עפר יקיצו אלה לחיי עולם ואלה לחרפות לדראון עולם׃"

And many, who sleep in the dust, shall awake; some to everlasting life, others to everlasting shame and confusion." (Dan. 12 ch. 2 v.)

יחיו מתיך נבלתי יקומון הקיצו ורננו שכני עפר׃"

Yes, they shall live, thy dead, my corpses shall rise; awake and rejoice, ye who sleep in the dust." (Is. 26 ch. 19 v.)

**50. Have we any more particular accounts of the circumstances and the period of this great and wonderful occurrence?**

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

פליאה דעת ממני נשגבה לא אוכל לה׃"

Such knowledge is from me concealed; too high for my reach." (Ps. 139, v. 6.)

[4]When Rabbi *Eleazer* taught this rule to his scholars, they asked him, "how it were possible to act so literally, as our end is uncertain;" but he replied, "then it behoves you to live so, as if every day were the last but one of your career, so that you may always be prepared for death." (Transl.)

But we know, that the promises of God are infallible; the time of the fulfilment is revealed to *him alone*.

יבש חציר נבל ציץ ודבר אלהינו יקום לעולם."

Let grass wither, let blossoms fade; but the word of our God will stand for ever." (Is. 40 ch. 8 v.)

כי ישר דבר ה' וכל מעשהו באמונה·"

For the word of the Eternal is faultless, and all his doings are in truth." (Ps. 33, v. 4.)

**51. Have we a clear perception and knowledge of the state of the soul, after the death of the body, and of its reward and punishment?**

No; for as long as we are surrounded with this covering of clay, we can form no perfectly clear conception of the essence

[p. 29] of the soul itself, nor of its state after this life. We, however, suppose the reward to consist in a much more perfect aspect (i. e. knowledge) of God, his attributes and mode of governing the world; in short, in extension of its (the soul's) knowledge of things, which are here beyond the reach of its power of comprehension, and the acquisition of which will afford it the purest uninterrupted felicity; and in the same way we believe the punishment to consist in a state full of shame and compunction of the soul, which must be to it the most painful and afflicting state imaginable.

אני בצדק אחזה פניך אשבעה בהקיץ תמונתך·"

In righteousness shall I see thy face, and at awakening find intense pleasure in viewing thy countenance." (Ps. 17, v. 15.)

It is the opinion of our Rabbins, that Isaiah meant to express the same idea, when he (according to their interpretation) said: עין לא ראתה אלהים זולתך יעשה למחכה לו· "God alone, and no eye of man (the prophet's) can see that felicity, which the Lord has prepared for those, who place their trust in him." (Is. 64 ch. 3 v.)

## [p. —] CHAPTER V.

### OF REVELATION.

**52. What do we mean, when we say, we believe in revelation?**

We believe, that the Almighty God, actuated by love towards his creatures, imparts the gift of prophecy to some pious men, who are peculiarly pleasing to him. That is to say, that he lays open to them, through his divine instruction, such things as are unknown to other men; and also sends[5]

[5]The *manner in which* the eternal and invisible Being revealed himself to those, who revered him, appeared to them in their dreaming or waking state, and made secrets known to them, through the inspiration of his holy spirit, and placed words in their

them sometimes to others, to proclaim his divine will and precepts, which these are then bound to obey.

נביא מקרבך מאחיך כמני יקים לך ה׳ אלהיך אליו תשמעון׃"

A prophet from amidst thee, from thy brethren, like myself, will the Eternal, thy God, raise up unto thee; him ye shall obey." (Deut. 18 ch. 15 v.)

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

He used to make it manifest through miracles. But this the prophet is not obliged to do, except when he is compelled to suspend for a time any one of the Mosaic precepts (56), since in this case it might happen, that he would receive no credit,

[p. 31] without performing a miracle.[6] (But it must be observed, that in no case whatever can the temporary suspension of any precept be regarded, as a permanent abrogation of the same; on the contrary, such a measure is never known to have been resorted to, except in cases of extreme emergency, when for instance, it had become necessary, to produce a striking and convincing proof of the truth of the *whole law* upon the minds of the people, but to effect which, required, from the necessity and urgency of the case, an infringement of the precepts of the Mosaic religion. A remarkable instance of this kind is the sacrifice of Elijah on Mount Carmel. If therefore any prophet, or one pretending to be such, should teach the permanent abrogation of any precept, he is to be considered as a false prophet, and what follows of course, he is on no account to be obeyed. (58.) And whereas the *spirit of God* cannot err, since every thing is known and manifest to the Almighty: any prophet, who predicts any thing to take place for certain, or at a particular time, is to be considered as a false prophet, if the predicted event does not take place at all, or at the time specified; and a man so offending is to be punished as it is written:)

אשר ידבר הנביא בשם ה׳ ולא יהיה הדבר ולא יבא הוא הדבר אשר לא דברו ה׳ ׃ בזדון דברו הנביא לא תגור ממנו׃"

When the prophet speaks any thing, in the name of the Eternal, and it happen not, nor come to pass: then has the Eternal

[p. 32] not spoken this word; the prophet has invented it from wickedness, and thou must not be afraid of him." (Deut. 18 ch. 22 v.)

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mouth, which they were obliged to announce—can only be presented to us through such words and expressions, as are familiar to us; but they must be understood in an adopted and parabolical signification, since for the thing itself every language must of necessity be too poor and insufficient.

[6]Yet even in this case it is not always necessary, that the prophet should perform miracles; as it appears from Maimonides ה׳ יסודי התורה, and from the Talmud (Tractate סנהדרין). And say our wise men: If God permits wonders to be performed, we ought to view it with a thankful heart, as a particular and extraordinary favour, of which not every age can be worthy. But we are not permitted to ask for wonders, nor to found our faith upon them; because miracles alone can never be of sufficient value to constitute good grounds for argument, either for or against the truth of any doctrine.

**54. Did our teacher Moses ever work miracles?**

Yes, a great many; as we also read:

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

And there never again rose a prophet in Israel like Moses, to whom the Eternal appeared so clearly; also with respect to the signs and miracles, which God had sent him to do in the land of Egypt—and all those mighty and fearful deeds, which Moses performed before the eyes of all Israel." (Deut. 34 ch. 11—12 v.)

**55. But, is the promulgation of the law founded on miracles solely?**

No, the public legislation is an immediate fact, of which more than six hundred thousand persons were witnesses. Our ancestors themselves did hear and see,[7] at the foot of Mount Sinai, how the Eternal, in the most solemn manner, announced and enjoined the ten commandments.

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

These words the Eternal spoke to all your congregation, on the Mount, out of the fire, clouds and thick darkness, with a loud voice, and nothing more (meaning, that no figure of the speaker was visible); and he wrote them on two tables of stone, which he gave to me." (Deut. 5 ch. 19 v.)

[p. 33] **56. What need was there of this great and ever-memorable appearance, since Moses had already performed so many miracles, and was already fully accredited as the chosen messenger of God?**

Miracles and extraordinary signs are no arguments *for* or *against* everlasting truths. They can only confirm evidences, and support authorities, and only serve to induce us to do that, which the performer of the miracle may command us to do for *that period of time*, in so far, as this command of his in no other manner contradicts an irrevocable truth; for example, *Joshua*, when he commanded, to capture Jericho on the Sabbath; and *Elias*, when he ordered sacrifices to be brought on Carmel, (which was in fact against the precepts of the law contained in Deut. 12 ch. 13 v.), were thus obliged to confirm their mission by miracles. But, through the promulgation of the law, God intended to establish such doctrines and precepts, as should last permanently for all *coming generations*, and for this purpose mere miracles would have been insufficient. It was therefore necessary, that an immediate revelation of the Eternal to the people should take place. This also the Eternal said to Moses. (Exo. 19 ch. 9 v.)

בעבור ישמע העם בדברי עמך וגם בך יאמינו לעולם·"

[7] In the year of the world 2448.

That the people may hear, when I speak with thee, so that they may in thee also believe *for ever*."

**57. What follows out of this fundamental article of Judaism?**

That these holy doctrines and precepts, which were communicated in so solemn a manner, without a mediator, to the whole assembled nation, cannot be abrogated and set aside for us, (the Israelites,) in any other way, except by a similar and equally solemn and public communication of the divine will.

[p. 34] **58. But suppose a prophet were to prove his mission by publicly performing miracles, and at the same time declare, in the name of God, a part of the fundamental precepts abrogated; shall we not obey him then?**

No; for of such a prophet it is said: (Deut. 13 ch. 4 v.)

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

Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of such a prophet or such a dreamer; for the Eternal your God will but test you, (give you an opportunity,) to prove, that ye love the Eternal your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

**59. On what do we found the belief, that Moses added nothing of his own, and wrote down and taught nothing without having received the command of God to do so?**

This unlimited confidence in Moses is founded upon the historical fact, that the whole nation placed the most ample confidence in his truth and rectitude, and chose him themselves as their mediator, and spoke unanimously:

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

Behold, the Eternal our God has let us see his glory and greatness, and his voice we have heard from amidst the fire; this day we have seen, that man can live, when God speaks to him. Do *thou* approach now, and hear all, that the Eternal our God may yet say, and speak thou to us, all that the Eternal our God will speak to thee, and we will accept it and act accordingly." (Deut. 5 ch. 21—24 v.)

**60. Did God approve of this choice of a mediator?**

[p. 35] Yes; for he said:

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

I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to thee; they have spoken well. O, that their will might ever be so! to fear me, and to obey my commandments at all times; that they and their descendants might be happy for ever." (Deut. 5 ch. 26 v.)

**61. What does God himself say in another part of the law, relative to the credibility of Moses?**

עבדי משה בכל ביתי נאמן הוא·"

My servant Moses is trusty in all my house." (Num. 12 ch. 7 v.)

After this most exalted testimony, and after having seen the expression of the unanimous and universal confidence of the whole nation, we can no longer doubt, that all the precepts and doctrines of holy writ, as they are yet in our possession, are of divine origin.

**62. Is there then no material difference between the ten commandments, which God himself announced to the whole people, on Mount Sinai, and the other laws, which were communicated to us through Moses?**

No; for the latter, as well as the former, were commanded by God. The ten commandments, however, were only therefore made known with so much solemnity; because they comprehend in a measure the rest of the laws, and contain the foundation of all the others.

The Talmud (Tractate Berachoth, fol. 5) adduces, in illustration of this principle, the following verse, (Exo. 24 ch. 12 v.) which says:

ואתנה לך את לחת האבן והתורה והמצוה אשר כתבתי להורתם·"[p. 36]

I will give thee—the two tables of stone, the law, and the precepts, which I have written, and which thou shalt teach them."

"The tables of stone"—say our wise men—"mean the decalogue; the law—the pentateuch; the commandments—the Mishna; which I have written—the prophets and hagiography; which thou shalt teach them—through an oral tradition.—All this was taught and delivered to Moses on the Mount Sinai."

## [p. —] CHAPTER VI.

### OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

**63. Recite the ten commandments, which we heard proclaimed from Mount Sinai.**

אנכי ה׳ אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים·

I am the Eternal thy God, who have conducted thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.

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

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt make thyself no image, nor any likeness of aught in heaven above, or on earth below, or in the waters beneath the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them; for I, the Eternal thy God, am a watchful[8] God, who am visiting the sins of the fathers on the children, on the third generation and fourth generation, of those who hate me; but am doing mercy unto the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

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

Thou shalt not bear the name of the Eternal thy God in vain, (not use it without necessity, nor at an untruth) for the Eternal will not suffer him to remain unpunished, who beareth his name in vain.

[p. 38]זכור את יום השבת לקדשו ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל מלאכתך ויום השביעי שבת לה׳ אלהיך לא תעשה כל מלאכה אתה ובנך ובתך עבדך ואמתך ובהמתך וגרך אשר בשעריך כי ששת ימים עשה ה׳ את השמים ואת הארץ את הים ואת כל אשר בם וינח ביום השביעי על כן ברך ה׳ את יום השבת ויקדשהו׃

Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days thou mayst labour and do all thy work; but the seventh is a day of rest in honour of the Eternal thy God; then thou shalt not do any manner of work, neither thyself, nor thy son, thy daughter, thy man and thy maid-servant, not even thy cattle, and the stranger who is within thy gates. For in six days did the Eternal make heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and refrained from work on the seventh day; therefore did the Eternal bless the Sabbath-day, and declare it holy.

כבד את אביך ואת אמך למען יארכון ימיך על האדמה אשר ה׳ אלהיך נתן לך׃

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Eternal thy God giveth thee.

לא תרצח׃

Thou shalt not commit murder.

לא תנאף׃

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

[8]The word קנא (originally from the word קן to hatch or brood) signifies properly speaking, a determined will and purpose, to do and execute something with zeal, diligence, and activity.

לא תגנב׃

Thou shalt not steal.

לא תענה ברעך עד שקר׃

Thou shalt not answer as a false witness against thy neighbour.

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

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing else, which belongs to thy neighbour.

**64. How are the ten commandments usually divided?**

They are commonly divided in two principal classes; namely, the five first treat of such duties, as we owe to God; and the five last of those, we have to observe towards our fellow-men.

[p. 39] **65. What authorises us to make such a division?**

Both the intent and the form of these commandments: as in the five last the name of God is not mentioned, and then again they were thus written upon the two tables of the covenant.

**66. But why is the fifth commandment, "honour thy parents," also reckoned among the duties of the first class?**

Because the man, who has no respect for his parents—and loves not sincerely his father and mother, *the visible authors of his being on earth*, and is ungrateful enough, to forget all the benefits which they confer upon their child, with so many sacrifices and so much trouble—such a one can also to a certainty neither honour nor love his *heavenly Father* and *invisible Creator.*

We therefore find (Deut. 27 ch.) the curse against the disobedient child recorded after the one denounced against the idolater.

ארור מקלה אביו ואמו׃"

Cursed be he, who despises his father and mother."

**67. But why says the first commandment, "who have brought thee out from the land of Egypt," and not rather, "who have created the whole world, and all that is therein;" since the creation is certainly a much more wonderful event, than the redemption from Egypt?**

Because the miracle of the creation would not have made so deep an impression upon many, as those wonders which they themselves had experienced but so recently. It was also intended to indicate, by this expression of the Deity, that we Israelites alone are bound to observe the revealed laws; and this, from peculiar motives of gratitude for the redemption

[p. 40] from Egyptian slavery, which happened to us only. Even that part of the Decalogue, which speaks of the Sabbath—and in which we are here reminded of the history of the creation—says in another place: (Deut. 5 ch. 15. v.)

וזכרת כי עבד היית בארץ מצרים — על כן צוך ה׳ אלהיך לעשות את יום השבת׃"

And thou must remember, that thou wert a slave in the land of Egypt—therefore commands thee the Eternal, thy God, to observe the Sabbath-day."

**68. What lesson ought we to draw from this?**

Never to undertake to persuade persons, belonging to any other people whatsoever, to accept of our faith. Much less dare we hate or despise others, because they live not according to those laws, which were never prescribed to them. For all other nations are only obliged to observe the laws of nature and the seven precepts of the children of Noah; but

תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב׃"

The law, which Moses commanded us, is the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." (Deut. 33 ch. 4 v.)

**69. Which are the Noachite precepts, through the observance of which men of all nations can attain felicity?**

The following, and they are those, which were entrusted to Noah immediately after the flood, to be observed by him and all his descendants.

1 To abstain from idolatry.

2. Not to utter any blasphemy.

3. Not to wound nor to kill his fellow-man.

4. Not to steal nor commit fraud.

5. To exercise justice.

6. Not to commit adultery, nor be guilty of incest; and

[p. 41] 7. Not to eat of the meat of any animal, till its life be actually extinct. (Gen. 9 ch. 4—7 v.)

**70. What are we commanded by the SECOND precept?**

That we should place our hope and trust in the only and eternal God solely, and in no other being besides him; that we should not represent the Most High by any image, and under any form, much less clothe him with corporeal qualities and attributes. Again, that we dare not ascribe supernatural power to any other being; and, in fact, to guard ourselves carefully against all kinds of superstition.

תמים תהיה עם ה׳ אלהיך׃"

Thou must be entire with the Eternal thy God." (Deut. 18 ch. 13 v.)

**71. But why did God forbid idolatry so impressively, and even call himself a watchful God, to punish such a sin with peculiar severity; since He, the Eternal, can suffer no injury by our transgression, as we read in Job (35 ch. 6v.): "When thou sinnest, what effect canst thou have on him? and be thy derelictions ever so great, what injury canst thou do him?"**

All precepts of God are intended for the promotion of our own happiness only. It is well known to His omniscience, that nothing withdraws a man so easily from his duties, as idolatry and superstition. False conceptions of God, and his attributes, pervert the understanding, and corrupt the heart, in so far as they render it ungrateful towards our almighty and real benefactor, and induce it to surrender itself to every species of extravagance. Of this, history furnishes us with so many examples of horrible abominations, which were actually practised by the ancient idolatrous nations.

"לא תלמד לעשות כתועבת הגוים ההם לא ימצא בך מעביר בנו ובתו באש קסם קסמים

Thou shalt not learn to imitate the abominable

[p. 42]מעונן ומנחש ומכשף וגו׳ כי תועבת ה׳ כל עשה אלה וגו׳·

customs of these nations. No one shall be found among thee, who causeth his son or daughter to go through the fire, nor any one who is a fortune-teller, observer of clouds, augur, conjurer of snakes or wizard, for whoever does any of these, is an abomination to the Eternal." (Deut. 18 ch. 9 v.)

**72. But is it not incompatible with the justice of God, that he should visit the iniquity of fathers even on the children and children's children? Does he not teach us himself in other places, (Jer. 31 ch. 30 v. and Deut. 24 ch. 16 v.): That**

"לא יומתו אבות על בנים ובנים לא יומתו על אבות איש בחטאו יומתו·

Parents shall not die for the children, nor shall the children perish on account of the parents, but each shall die for his own sins?"

The very verse under consideration gives us the best answer, as it adds: "*Namely, those who hate me;*" i. e. if the children of a wicked man pursue the same course, and continue to persevere in the same sins, in despite of the admonition, by which it was shown to them that their parents acted wrong; excusing themselves by saying, they had seen it thus before them from their father. No such excuse, says God, can be of any avail; but they shall not flatter themselves with hopes of impunity; for man is bound to acquire a knowledge of the better, and act according to this knowledge. And if the descendants of a bad man do *this;* they have the promise of God (Ezek. 18 ch.), that they shall not suffer, even in the most distant degree, for the sins of their parent.

"בן לא ישא בעון האב ואב לא ישא בעון הבן—לכן איש כדרכיו אשפט·

The son shall not suffer for the sin of the father, nor the father for the sin of the son; surely I will judge every man according to his ways."

[p. 43] **73. When are we already guilty of a refined species of idolatry?**

Whenever we put greater confidence in the powers and possessions of others or our own, than in God, to whom we are indebted for all the good we enjoy; for is it not God, who loves all his creatures, from whom all benefits originally emanate?

וזכרת את ה׳ אלהיך כי הוא הנתן לך כח לעשות חיל·"

And thou must remember, that it is the Eternal thy God, who gives thee strength to acquire wealth." (Deut. 8 ch. 18 v.)

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

Thus speaketh the Eternal: Cursed be the man, who puts his trust in man, and places his strength on flesh; but whose heart is turned away from the Eternal. Blessed be the man, who trusts in the Eternal, for the Eternal will also be his support." (Jer. 17 ch. 5 v.)

**74. What does the THIRD commandment ask of us?**

Not to make a bad use of the divine name; never to use it unnecessarily, and never to utter it, but with a feeling of the deepest veneration. Therefore even a prayer is a sin, if unaccompanied with real devotion; how much more sinful must an unnecessary oath be, not to mention a false one, which is an unpardonable profanation and disregard of the holy name of God.

ולא תשבעו בשמי לשקר וחללת את שם אלהיך אני ה׳·"

And you shall not swear falsely by my name. Thou wouldst thus profane the name of thy God; I am the Eternal" (ready to punish such misconduct). (Lev. 19 ch. 12 v.)

**75. When does a man swear falsely?**

When he promises with an oath to do or not to do an act,

[p. 44] or he swears to discontinue any thing; and he afterwards does not that which he swore to do, or continues to do that which he has promised not to do; or if he fortifies any assertion with an oath, asseverating its truth, the untruth of which must be clearly apparent to him; in all these cases a man swears falsely.

**76. When does a man swear unnecessarily?**

If he in a careless manner and without sufficient cause, swears to *that*, where *yes* or *no* would be alone requisite to decide the matter.

**77. On what occasion is an oath, for the establishment of the truth, permitted?**

Only, when we are called upon to do so by a judge, and necessity demands it. But even in this case, we ought to prepare ourselves for such a solemn act, test our heart and do inward penance, that we may not be unworthy of pronouncing the holy name.

את ה׳ אלהיך תירא אתו תעבד ובו תדבק ובשמו תשבע׳"

The Eternal thy God thou must fear, him thou must worship, to him thou must adhere, and by his name thou shalt swear." (Deut. 6 ch. 13 v. and 10 ch. 20 v.)

**78. What does the FOURTH commandment enjoin on us?**

That we should consecrate the Sabbath and the festivals in honour of the Eternal, and declare by our thus doing, that we firmly believe, that the Most High produced, created and regulated the universe from nothing, and that He alone is the Lord and preserver of all things, and our benefactor, and that he will ever continue to be so, since his power and will must ever remain unaltered.

[p. 45] **79. How are we to consecrate a day in honour of the Eternal?**

We are bound to devote it chiefly to divine worship, rest from all worldly business, visit the public houses of prayer and schools, and think seriously about ourselves and our conduct, that we may be kept in the ways of virtue and the fear of God, through religious instruction and pious resolutions.

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

If thy feet rest on the Sabbath, and thy labours cease on my holy day; if thou callest the Sabbath a *delight of the soul,* consecrated wholly to the sanctification of the Eternal; and if thou honourest it by not following thy usual occupations, and if thou abstainest from vain desires and speaking of thy worldly affairs: then wilt thou surely find delight in the Eternal." (Is. 58 ch. 13 v.)

**80. How many festivals have we besides the Sabbath?**

FIVE. To wit:

1. The feast of Unleavened Bread חג המצות, commonly called פסח or Passover, the time of our going out of Egypt and of our redemption from slavery.

2. The feast of Weeks חג השבועות or Pentecost, so called from its being celebrated on the *fiftieth* day from the first day of Passover, and it is the day of the promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai. And as this was also the harvest feast, it is called יום הבכורים the day of the first fruits.

3. The New Year's feast, commonly called ראש השנה; but in holy writ it is called יום הזכרון׳ Day of Remembrance.

4. The Day of Atonement, or the day of universal penitence, for the repentance and forgiveness of our sins יום הכפורים; and lastly,

5. The feasts of Tabernacles and Conclusion, or the autumnal feast, חג הסכות and חג האסיף.[9]

[p. 46] **81.** ***When do children honour their parents, as the*** **FIFTH** ***precept demands?***

When they cherish esteem for them in their hearts, and show this on every occasion both by word and deed, and when they always remember, with due feelings of gratitude, the benefits which they have received, and are daily receiving from their parents.

שמע לאביך זה ילדך, ואל תבוז כי זקנה אמך ·"

Obey thy father, who begat thee; and despise not thy mother, though she be old." (Prov. 23 ch. 22 v.)

**82.** ***What does this esteem, which children owe their parents, demand of them?***

That they should speak in the presence of their parents with all marks of respect, and never contradict them; bear their correction and listen to their admonitions with meekness and submission; and upon the whole conduct themselves so, that the parents may be rendered happy by their children, and be honoured on their account.

גיל יגיל אבי צדיק ויולד חכם ישמח בו, ישמח אביך ואמך ותגל יולדתך ·"

O, how rejoiced is the father of the pious! How glad is the parent of a wise son! Strive, then, that thy father and mother may be glad; and that they who educated thee, may find pleasure." (Prov. 23 ch. 24 v.)

**83.** ***How must a child, that loves his parents sincerely, conduct himself, to convince them of his love?***

He must do every thing with the utmost readiness, which can afford his parents pleasure; he must endeavour to deserve every day their approbation in a greater degree, and strive to promote their welfare, and augment their prosperity, as much as lies within his power.

[p. 47]גוזל אביו ואמו ואמר אין פשע חבר הוא לאיש משחית ·"

But he, who robs his father or mother, and says, it is no sin, is an associate of the high-way robber." (Prov. 28 ch. 24 v.)

[9]For a more detailed account of these festivals see Appendix.

**84.** ***What can we learn from this passage, where God has promised us so expressly a reward for the fulfilment of this commandment?***

The express promise of a reward for the observance of such a duty, which is already inscribed in the hearts of us all, and which every good man exercises with pleasure—must impress us the more strongly with the consolatory assurance, that the All-merciful will the more certainly dispense sufficient and commensurate reward for the observance of those duties and precepts, which are less agreeable to man, and which cost him much trouble, exertion and self-conquest.[10]

**85.** ***What other doctrine can we draw from this precept, as in the repetition of the Decalogue,*** **(*Deut.* 5 ch. 16 v.)** ***we find added the words*** **כאשר צוך ה' אלהיך "*As the Eternal thy God has commanded thee?*"**

This expression will teach us the following: *first*, that in all

[p. 48] our actions we should always have a holy object and will. Even those laws, the observance of which is already demanded of us by our natural sensations and feelings of love, gratitude, &c., should not be observed by us, solely because they are agreeable, and in some measure necessary to our heart; but rather and chiefly because they are holy precepts of our God, whose will we should ever fulfil from so pure motives of love to him, that we may subject to it all the wishes and desires of our heart. *Secondly*, that nothing—yes, not even the love to our parents, and the respect which we owe them—should ever induce us to transgress any one of the divine precepts. Both these points are indicated in holy writ by the words: כאשר צוך ה' אלהיך "*Because*, and *in as much*, as the Eternal thy God has commanded it." The same thing is also alluded to in another ordinance, where it is said:

איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתתי תשמרו אני ה' אלהיכם ·"

Each man shall fear his mother and father, and observe my Sabbaths, I am the Eternal your God" (to whom both parent as well as child owe, more than to any other, thanks, love, and obedience). (Lev. 19 ch. 3 v.)

**86.** ***What conclusions are we to draw from the fact, that the following precepts are given with so much brevity and in so general terms, as: thou shalt not commit murder! thou shalt not steal! &c.?***

*Firstly*, that such actions are interdicted to us because of themselves, without regard to the person, on whom they are perpetrated; be he one of our faith or of any other; be it a fellow-citizen or a

[10] In the Mishna (Tractate Chulin, last section,) where our wise men treat about a found bird's nest (Deut. 22 ch. 6—7 v.) we read: ומה אם מצוה קלה שהיא כאיסר אמרה תורה למען ייטב לך והארכת ימים · קל וחומר על מצות החמורות שבתורה · "When it is said, by a precept, which is performed so easily and with so little expense: 'That thou mayest fare well, and live long,' how much more must the observance of those precepts be rewarded, which are much more difficult and burthensome to observe?" In the same passage is the expression of the Bible: "That thou mayest fare well and live long," explained in a manner no less true and beautiful, than just and appropriate: "That thou mayest be happy *there*, *where* thou wilt live long—for ever."

stranger; nay if even no other person, besides ourselves, could be injured thereby; in all these cases any criminal deed is prohibited, without the slightest distinction, solely because it is bad.

[p. 49] *Secondly*, that these actions are not only prohibited to us in the limited and literal meaning of the words employed here, but also in their most ample and extended signification; it is further intended to convey a prohibition of every thing which may lead to these abominable crimes, or whatever is in any manner similar to them.

**87.** ***What then is forbidden, according to this view, by the*** **SIXTH** ***commandment?***

That no man, neither ourselves nor any body else, should suffer any injury through our means, either in body, health, or honour, which could in the most remote manner tend to shorten that life, which has been given to us by the all-wise Father in heaven.

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

And your own blood will I require; be it spilt through your own person, through the hands of another man, or through any living being; in all cases I will require the life of man," (meaning will punish homicide); and add our wise men: "He, who makes his fellow-man ashamed in public, has committed a crime analogous to murder." (Genesis 9 ch. 5 v.)

**88.** ***And when does a man commit murder on his own person in some degree?***

When he injures himself purposely, or exposes himself, when there is no necessity for it, to a risk of losing his life; or undermines his constitution by a dissolute course of life.

**89.** ***What does the*** **SEVENTH** ***commandment interdict?***

It forbids us every species of incest; also such improper behaviour and words, through which others might be induced to

[p. 50] be guilty of incontinence. The consequences of a violation of this holy precept are peculiarly terrible, and take ample revenge on the soul and body of him who leads a dissolute life.

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

The end of dissoluteness is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword; its feet hurry to death, its steps lead to hell. In vain is then thy late sighing, when thy flesh and strength are destroyed! In vain wilt thou exclaim: why did I hate good morals, why did my heart contemn good advice! How soon have I sunk in deep distress, before the face of the whole world!" (Prov. 5 ch. 1—23; 6 ch. 24—35; 7 ch. 5—27 v.)

**90.** ***How can we best guard ourselves against the sin of incest?***

By carefully shunning every thing, which could possibly tempt us to a breach of good moral conduct, and by thinking God *as present* at each temptation which may present itself.

כי נכח עיני ה' דרכי איש וכל מעגלתיו מפלס ׃"

For the ways of man are always open before the eyes of the Eternal, who measures each of his steps." (Prov. 5 ch. 21 v.)

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

For his eyes are directed upon all the ways of man, and he observes all his steps. Neither darkness, nor the shadow of death, can hide from him the doers of evil." (Job, 34 ch. 21—22 v.)

**91.** ***What are we commanded by the*** **EIGHTH** ***precept?***

To let every man keep what is his, and give him what belongs to him, and we may happen to have in our possession, or owe him; that we should tell no man a lie, nor cheat him; and this is also explained and commanded in many passages of the Scriptures.

[p. 51]לא תגנבו ולא תכחשו ולא תשקרו איש בעמיתו ׃ לא תעשק את רעך ולא תגזל לא תלין פעלת שכיר אתך עד בקר ׃"

You shall not steal, nor deny another what is his, and not lie. Thou shalt keep nothing back of thy neighbour's property, and not rob; and thou shalt not keep the pay of a day-labourer by thee, till morning." (Lev. 19 ch. 11 v.)

**92.** ***What else is comprehended in this commandment?***

Every species of deception and falsehood, by which a man may deceive his neighbour even in thought only, and induce him to adopt a false opinion of any thing: as by such conduct a person shows himself different outwardly, from what he is and thinks at heart. Such a one is called in Holy Writ a *thief of the heart.*

כסף סיגים מצפה על חרש שפתים דלקים ולב רע ׃"

Just like an earthen vessel covered with silver-leaf, are lips burning with love, when the heart is bad." (Prov. 26 ch. 23 v.)

תועבת ה' שפתי שקר ועשי אמונה רצונו ׃"

False lips are an abomination to the Eternal; but those, who act uprightly, are pleasing to him." (Prov. 12 ch. 22 v.)

**93.** ***Who can be said to give false evidence, against doing which we are warned in the*** **NINTH** ***commandment?***

That man, who when questioned, and called upon to tell the truth conscientiously, yet speaks after all differently from what he knows to be true.

עד שקרים לא ינקה ויפיח כזבים יאבד ׃"

A lying witness will not escape unpunished, and he, who spreads fraudulent assertions, will be lost." (Prov. 19 ch. 9 v.)

**94.** ***What further is included in this precept?***

That we shall neither backbite our fellow-man nor speak ill of him.

לא תלך רכיל בעמך ׃"[p. 52]

Thou shalt not walk about, as an informer, in thy people." (Lev. 19 ch. 16 v.)

**95.** ***Who deserves the name of backbiter?***

The one, who from motives of malice speaks ill of his neighbour in his absence; and it is almost needless to mention him, who perverts the truth, and spreads false and evil reports about others.

דבר שקר ישנא צדיק ורשע יבאיש ויחפיר ׃"

The pious man hates a lying word; but the wicked slanders and abuses others." (Prov. 13 ch. 5 v.)

**96.** ***Is there any case, where we are permitted to tell the evil, which we know of our fellow-men, to another person?***

Yes, as, for instance, if the public well-being or justice demand it, then it is our duty to disclose the evil; silence under such circumstances were sin. And we are told: (Lev. 5 ch. 1 v.)

אם לא יגיד ונשא עונו ׃"

If he tell not, he will have a sin to atone for."

Or even when the sinner himself can be bettered by it, or others receive warning to guard against the evil intentions of a designing man. In either case, however, it must be done without bitterness of feeling, without scornful derision or joy, at the suffering of the sinner.

אולת שמחה לחסר לב ואיש תבונה יישר לכת ׃"

The folly (or the evil deeds of others) causes pleasure to the heartless; but the man of understanding will rather point out the just path." (Prov. 15 ch. 21 v.)

**97.** ***What does the*** **TENTH** ***commandment enjoin?***

That we should always endeavour to remain masters over

[p. 53] our wishes and inclinations, and thus guard against being drawn from the path of right by our desires and passions; much less should we ever desire the good things which others may have, or envy them for their possessions. On the contrary, we should wholly confide in the wisdom and goodness of God, who will apportion at all times to every man what he deserves, and what is the most beneficial to him.

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

Trust in the Eternal with all thy heart, and do not confide in thy own knowledge. In all thy actions look up to him, and he will make thy paths even." (Prov. 3 ch. 5—6 v.)

מכל משמר נצר לבך כי ממנו תוצאות חיים ·"

Be particularly watchful over thy heart (that thy desires and inclinations may not become too strong); for this is the source of life" (i. e. the foundation of all prosperity). (Prov. 4 ch. 23 v.)

**98.** ***In what light ought we to view this precept?***

We can with justice regard this commandment as the foundation of all moral law, and the chief means to promote the observance of the greater part of the divine precepts. For he, who accustoms himself always to govern his desires, and never to envy another man, will find it an easy task to do his duties on every occasion with cheerfulness and tranquillity.

עיר פרוצה אין חומה איש אשר אין מעצר לרוחו ·"

But the man, who cannot confine his desires within bounds, is like a city which is open and has no walls." (Prov. 25 ch. 28 v.)

All passions and sins have then free access to his heart. He will hate and envy his fellow-men, and be at the same time dissatisfied with his own station, and the duties which are demanded of him. And whereas he is himself thus a prey to his passions, he will be quite unfit to make any sacrifice for the promotion of virtue.

הקנאה והתאוה והכבוד מוציאין את האדם מן העולם ·"[p. 54]

Envy, unbridled passions and ambition, will soon destroy a man, and deprive him of bliss hereafter." (Aboth, iv.)

**99.** ***Does God also demand, that we should sacrifice our life rather than transgress any of his precepts?***

This is not necessary with all, but is only the case with a few.

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

Idolatry, adultery and murder; of these three capital sins it is said, that we should sacrifice our lives, rather than commit either of them.[11]

עבודה זרה גלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים יהרג ואל יעבור ·

For it is better to let our body die a few years earlier, since it cannot possibly escape death, than to injure our soul everlastingly by the commission of such crimes.

## [p. —] CHAPTER VII.

### OF THE TRADITION.

**101.** ***Has Moses written down all the precepts and ordinances quite clearly, so as to require no explanation?***

No; we believe, that God communicated some laws orally to Moses, which he in his turn was only permitted to communicate orally to others; and we explain in this manner the verse in Exodus (chap. 34 27 v.):

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

Write[12] down *these* words alone, for according to the meaning and intent of these words, I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel."

**102.** ***Are there no other passages pointing out the existence of a tradition?***

Yes; a great many others; amongst the rest the passage in Deut. 12 ch. 21 v.:

וזבחת מבקרך ומצאנך כאשר צויתיך ·"

And thou shalt kill from thy cattle and thy sheep, *in the manner* I have commanded thee."

Now, whereas there is no one amongst the scriptural regulations, which prescribes the mode of killing, we must presuppose an oral tradition, to which this verse refers, and which tradition gives a more complete account of *this* and many other commandments. Nay, without this oral law we could not know, how to observe the greater part of the ordinances of our religion.

[11] It would require too much room, to enumerate here all the circumstances and cases, when and how far we should—according to the doctrines of our wise men—sacrifice our property and our blood for the preservation of the religion of our fathers.

[12] The passage cited above, §62, is also applicable here.

[p. 56] **103.** ***Are there then two kinds of laws, the written and the oral?***

Not by any means; for in fact there is but one law and one code, as the Scriptures and Tradition constitute together but one whole,[13] they being the component parts of the Mosaic Law.

**104.** ***What would you then understand by*** **ORAL LAW?**

That part of the law, which explains more fully the written precepts, and fixes their meanings and the practice under them, that these points might not be left to be determined by the fancy of men, whose reason is necessarily circumscribed, and who are often blinded by prejudice and passion.

**105.** ***What was the reason, that these explanations were not originally committed to writing?***

Because in that case the explanations would in the lapse of time have been exposed to absurd interpretations and arbitrary perversions of differently thinking men. For this reason this oral law, or rather this more lucid explanation of the written

[p. 57] precepts, was communicated solely to a few chosen men, or persons eminently distinguished for piety and learning; that the law might be preserved through their means pure and free from perversions and forged additions.

**106.** ***Was not the oral law for all that finally committed to writing?***

Yes, in the times of *Rabbi Judah Hanassy*, surnamed *the holy*, about the year 3980 after the creation. When namely the learned men of those days saw, that the teachers of the law continually decreased in numbers, occasioned through the intolerable oppressions they had to encounter, and that the law was daily more neglected and forgotten; they determined, under the presidency of this pious chief רבי יהודה הנשיא הקדוש, to commit the tradition, which had hitherto been preserved orally, to writing, in short sentences; the book, thus composed, they called the *Mishna;* that is, repetition of the law. Although it must be confessed, that this was, to a certain degree, acting contrary to the *letter* of the law; yet they quoted, in doing this, the Psalmist (119 Ps. 126 v.):

עת לעשות לה' הפרו תורתך ·"

There is a time, when it becomes necessary, in honour of the Eternal, to suspend one precept, to preserve either the whole law or an essential part of it."

**107.** ***Is the Mishna the only work of this kind?***

No; it was afterwards found to be too short and unintelligible without further elucidation: it came therefore to pass, that, two hundred and eighty years after the afore-mentioned period, this Mishna,

[13]The Rev. Chief Rabbi Mr. Hurwitz drew here my attention to the numerical value[*] *of the words* בכתב *and* בעל-פה. *The numerical value of the first is 424, and of the second 187, which added produce the sum of 611, which is precisely the numerical value of the word* תורה *(Law).* Author.*

and in fact the whole law, were more clearly and amply explained and illustrated, under the presidency of the pious and learned chiefs *Rabina* and *Rab Ashy.*

[p. 58] The work, which was produced under this revision, is called the *Gemara* or *Talmud*, and is divided in 36 (מסכתות) books.

**108.** ***Were not other law-books composed at subsequeat periods?***

Yes; but they are no *new* law-books; on the contrary, they contain merely in the form of a code, and in a concise and systematic order, that which has been decided and instituted as law in the Talmud, with the omission of the more detailed discussions, which are found in the same.

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

The work *Yad hachasakah* (יד החזקה) in 14 books, written by the Rabbi Moses Maimonides, in the year of the world 4936, and the *Shulchan Ngaruch* (שלחן ערוך) in 4 volumes, which was edited by the Rabbi Don Joseph Caro in the year of the world 5325.

**110.** ***In what order do our wise men reckon the regular succession and transmission of the tradition?***

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

Moses received the law on Sinai, and delivered it over to Joshua. Joshua delivered it to the elders, the elders to the prophets, and the prophets communicated it to the members of the great synod." (Aboth, i.)

**111.** ***Was this regulation of any service?***

It was indeed very useful; for to it we are mainly indebted, that the written law even has descended to us pure and uncorrupted. For, as these pious men had been instituted through this means, as it were, guardians and interpreters of

[p. 59] the law; they directed their most particular attention to it, and they even counted the words and letters of the Holy Scriptures, showed how they ought to be written, and taught at the same time, how they were to be read and punctuated. This was afterwards expressed by signs and figurative phrases, which are easily understood, and published under the name of *Massorah* מסרה (Tradition).

**112.** ***What other benefit do we derive from the aforesaid wise regulation?***

The judges and elders of the people had thereby an opportunity of introducing many wise laws and useful regulations, which were suited to the circumstances and emergencies of their times; and the people felt the necessity of honouring their expounders of the law and their teachers, and of

obeying strictly, on all occasions, their words and admonitions. This is also the express will of the legislator, who says (Deut. 17 ch. 11 v.):

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

According to the law, which they (the elders) will teach thee, and according to the judgment, which they may tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not depart from whatever they may tell thee, either to the right or the left."

**113.** ***What duties do, according to this law, devolve upon the teachers of the people, the Rabbies and consistories of every generation?***

They must instruct the people in matters of faith, that they may learn to distinguish between true religion on the one side, and superstition and foolish addition on the other.

[p. 60] They ought to draw the attention of the people to their real duties, which the laws of God and of the state demand of them. They should have a watchful eye over the religious education of children, and in short, make such regulations and provisions, as the circumstances and wants of any particular time may demand as necessary and expedient. And if they should in some cases act even against established customs, which have become almost of equal force with laws[14] through public opinion, they ought to say, with the above-named pious teacher of the people:

[p. 61]עת לעשות לה' הפרו תורתך ·"

There is a time, when such a law should be repealed, in honour of the Eternal."[15]

**114.** ***What do our sages, the Talmudists, say on this subject?***

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

[14]As the words of Mr. Johlson may perhaps be misunderstood, I beg leave to subjoin the following in explanation. From the whole tenor of our laws it is apparent, that no old established custom, which has become general, can ever be abolished for the benefit of *one* particular section of country; as through such means the uniformity of our institutions would be annihilated. Let us, for instance, name the worship in the Hebrew language, which is now universal throughout all the dispersions of Israel. It is no doubt a great misfortune, that the Hebrew is so little understood by many persons; but it would nevertheless be more injurious to adopt, as the *sole* language of public worship, the languages of the countries in which we live; for the uniformity of our institutions would be greatly injured, by the substituting of *many* languages, for the *single* and energetic Hebrew. My limits will not permit me to enter at greater length into a discussion of this point, which would besides be also out of place here; but this one example will clearly prove, that reform, such as our author recommends from time to time, must be confined to *excrescences* only, but should never be extended to *essentials.* What the essentials in the ceremonial part of our law are, I am unable to detail here; but in general they are all those rules and regulations, which we have adopted as a distinguishing mark of *our* people, from *other* nations, which can therefore never be stigmatized as superstitious. The remarks of our author, however, are directed, against superstitious customs solely, and *these* should be abolished, no matter how sacred they may be regarded by the mass of our nation, since all superstition is contrary to the Mosaic Law. *Translator.*

[15]The above-mentioned Rev. Chief Rabbi remarked to me in this place, that he must again refer me to the passage cited in a note to §14. *Author.*

And all, who are engaged in the affairs of the congregation, are bound to transact their business from pure motives; then does the merit of their forefathers assist them, and their virtue remains for ever imperishable. 'For each good intention I promise you as much reward, as for the deed.'" (Aboth, ii.)

**115.** ***What duties have we then to observe, according to the rules just laid down?***

Religion makes it the most sacred duty of every Israelite, to honour the learned in the law, and to support them according to his means; also to obey willingly the ordinances of the chief tribunals (consistories[16]) of any time, in which he lives; to acknowledge gratefully the good tendency of their regulations, and live strictly according to their decisions, as they are only intended for the promotion of the happiness of the community.

"ובאת — אל השפט אשר יהיה בימים ההם ושמרת לעשות ככל אשר יורוך ·"[p. 62]

Thou shalt go—to the judge, who may be in *those times.* Thou must carefully observe all as they may teach thee." (Deut. 17 ch. 9—10 v.)

**116.** ***But, if the elders and teachers of the people are empowered to introduce certain regulations and decrees—and in fact, we have many of the like ordinances and precepts,***[17]***— how must we then understand the interdiction* **(*Deut.* 4 *ch.* 2 *v.*)*:***

"לא תוספו על הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם וגו' ·"

You shall not add any thing to that, which I command you this day"?

We are enjoined by this commandment, to exercise the already existing precepts in such a manner, as they are prescribed to us by the written or oral law; that we may not disfigure the same in their own parts through addition or diminution. As for example, to fix *fringes* on more than *four* corners of a garment,[18] to introduce more than *four* paragraphs of the Law in the Thephillin,[19] or if we would take more than the four[20] prescribed productions of the vegetable kingdom, which we employ for the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles. For, as each commandment has been instituted, as it is now, by divine wisdom, and as we are too short-sighted to discover the real truth on every occasion; we dare not have the audacity to abstract any thing from the prescribed rules, and proceed arbitrarily with our additions and alterations. This is accordingly enjoined on us in the most impressive terms in the verse just cited, as also in the following one (Deut. 13 ch. 1 v.):

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[16]The strict obedience to the mandates of the Sanhedrin, can only then be required, when they have been elected according to our old established custom—by the free voice of the community—not if called together by the will of a despot of a foreign people; much less can this obedience be due, when their deliberations are controlled through open or secret influence from abroad; in which case the assembly deserves not the name of a *Jewish Sanhedrin. Translator.*

[17]Of this more will appear in the Appendix.

[18]Numb. 15 ch. 38 v. and Deut. 22 ch. 12 v.

[19]Exodus 13 ch. 16 v.

[20]Leviticus 23 ch. 40 v.

[p. 63]את כל הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם אתו תשמרו לעשות לא תסף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו ·"

Every commandment, you must strictly observe, just as I command it you this day (either orally or in writing), without adding or diminishing."

## [p. —] CHAPTER VIII.

### OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF DUTIES.

### 1. DUTIES TOWARDS GOD.

**117.** ***In how many classes are the duties, which religion demands of us, generally divided?***

We divide them generally in *three* classes; we have, namely, duties towards God, duties towards ourselves, and duties towards others; which latter comprise not only those towards individuals, but also those which we owe to the whole state.

**118.** ***In what essential particular do the two first species of duties differ from those of the latter kind, since they are*** **ALL** ***the emanation of the holy will of God?***

If a man sins against God alone or against himself, he can make himself again worthy of participating of the grace of God, and may expect forgiveness from His mercy, as soon as he returns, and repents his transgressions with genuine feelings of repentance. But if a man has transgressed against his fellow-man, no penance nor repentance can in the least avail him, till he has asked his forgiveness, and made him complete restitution for the injury done, or has satisfied him in some other manner. (See on this subject Talmud, Tractate *Yoma.*)

והיה כי יאשם לאחת מאלה והתודה אשר חטא עליה וגו' ·"

If he has been guilty in any of these respects (against God): he shall confess what he has sinned, &c." (Lev. 5 ch. 5 v.)

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

Has he however sinned against men, then he

[p. 65] must restore what he has robbed, or what he has unlawfully withheld, or that which has been entrusted to him for safe-keeping, or the lost thing which he has found." (Lev. 5 ch. 23. v.) (See also Numb. 5 chap. 5—8 v.)

**119.** ***What is accordingly the proper meaning of*** **DOING PENANCE?**

A man does penance or becomes converted, when he confesses his sin before God, with a sorrowful and humble heart, and prays to him sincerely for forgiveness on account of the fault he has committed; but the chief requisite is, that he make a positive resolution, to become better, to

endeavour earnestly to obtain the mastery over his evil inclinations, to be very watchful over his conduct, and to compensate, as much as possible, for errors committed, with deeds of virtue and piety.

מכסה פשעיו לא יצליח ומודה ועזב ירחם ·"

He, who tries to hide his sins will not prosper; but the man, who confesses them, and acts better afterwards, will be pardoned." (Prov. 28 ch. 13 v.)

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

Return, O Israel, to the Eternal thy God, though degraded through thy sins! Turn but with prayer to the Eternal and say: Thou most perfect, pardoner of sins! accept our return to good, and let our words be as acceptable to thee, as the offered steers." (Hos. 14 ch. 2 v.)

**120.** ***Does repentance also avail against heavy sins and misdeeds, which are done on purpose and from disobedience to God?***

Yes, even here does repentance avail; the infinite grace of God will be extended to every one, who but seeks it sincerely and with an upright heart. Nothing, therefore, should withhold

[p. 66] us from repentance; for it would be the most unpardonable of all misdeeds, to despair of God's mercy, which he has promised us through all his prophets.

חי אני נאם ה' אלהים אם אחפץ במות הרשע כי אם בשוב רשע מדרכו וחיה"

As sure as I live, speaks the Eternal God, I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner; but I desire, that he may return from his wicked way and live." (Ezek. 33 ch. 11 v.)

כי לא אחפץ במות המת נאם ה' אלהים והשיבו וחיו"

Surely, I desire not the death of the dead (i. e. one deserving death—a sinner), speaks the Lord God; return therefore to good ways and live." (Ezek. 18 ch. 32 v.)

**121.** ***Can you state, in general terms, the duties we owe to God?***

This we are told briefly in the following verse from Holy Writ (Deut. 10 ch. 12 v.):

ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלהיך שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה' אלהיך ללכת בכל דרכיו ולאהבה אתו ולעבד את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך"

And now, Israel, what *does* the Eternal thy God (after having done all this for thee) demand of thee, but to fear him, the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to walk in all his ways, to love and to serve him?"

**122.** ***What do you call—to serve God? needs he our service?***

אם צדקת מה תתן לו או מה מידך יקח

? "If thou art even ever so pious, what canst thou give him by it? or what can he receive from thy hand?" (Job, 35 ch. 7 v.)

This is explained to us in the verse immediately following:

לשמר את מצות ה' ואת חקתיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום לטוב לך הן לה' אלהיך השמים ושמי השמים הארץ וכל אשר בה "Thou namely must observe the precepts and the statutes of the Lord, which I command thee this day, for thy own benefit; for behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the earth, and all [p. 67] things upon it, belong to the Eternal thy God!" (He therefore needs not thy offerings, nor thy service.)

**123.** ***How are we now to understand the expressions—Honour to God, service of God, and others of the same kind?***

The terms, service, honour to God, have a quite different meaning from that, which they have in reference to man. *Divine service*, is not a service, which I render to God; *honour to God*, is not honour, which I show him. The All-good desires but the welfare of his creatures—(which we are to acquire through the practice of piety and virtue)—and that we should be thankful for the good we may receive from his hands.

זבח תודה יכבדנני ושם דרך אראנו בישע אלהים"

He, who offers me thanks, honours me; and him, who is watchful over his course of life, I will cause to find divine happiness" (happiness emanating from me—God). (Psalm 50, v. 23.)

**124.** ***In how many classes is the worship of God, by obeying his commandments, divided?***

It consists of the following two kinds: the *inward* and the *outward* service of God.

**125.** ***What is meant by the*** **INWARD** ***veneration of God?***

Reverence, confidence, and ready obedience, arising from an undivided love to God, and from gratefulness to him for his innumerable benefits, bestowed upon us; the acquirement of a knowledge of God, by contemplating his works, and considering, how he has regulated them by his power and wisdom and goodness, and how he preserves them through his infinite mercy and paternal love. Whosoever fills his heart with love and reverence towards this great and holy God, who is nigh unto us, [p. 68] wherever we may be, remarks our actions and thoughts, and governs all our destinies—will also endeavour to lead undeviatingly a pious and god-pleasing life, and strive to imitate his beneficent ways, as far as his limited power will permit him. This David also recommended to his son in the following words:

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

Thou, my son Solomon, *know* the God of thy father, and thou wilt then serve him with an undivided heart and a willing mind; for the Eternal searches all hearts, and discovers all inclinations and thoughts." (1 Chron. 28 ch. 9 v.)

**126.** ***What do you call*** **OUTWARD** ***worship?***

Those acts of piety, through which we prove our love of God by words and deeds. This worship however does not merely consist in the exercise of acts of benevolence and charity, but also in private and public prayers, and the observance of the ceremonial laws. And say our wise men (Aboth, i):

לא המדרש הוא עקר אלא המעשה"

Contemplation and study alone are not sufficient; but we must also fulfil our duties, and prove our inward religion through outward works."

**127.** ***Why are we bound to honour God both*** **INWARDLY** ***and*** **OUTWARDLY?**

Because man, owing to his infirmities and multifarious wants, cannot always reflect upon the sublime truths of religion, nor is he able to have them on every occasion before his eyes, unless he is often reminded of them through actions and words. And then again, it is the repeated exhibition of pious feelings only, which can make a man truly virtuous; for he acquires by these means the facility of practising the good [p. 69] willingly on all occasions, and of always shunning the evil. We read therefore (Deut. 6 ch. 24 v.):

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

Therefore did the Eternal command us to do according to all these statutes, that we may always fear the Eternal our God, &c. And it will be reckoned to us as piety, if we observe to do all these precepts before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us."

**128.** ***Are there any other motives, which should induce us to worship God publicly?***

Yes, since our *feelings* already teach us the necessity of it. We delight to speak often of the person, whom we dearly love; we like also to praise him often, and this, wherever an opportunity offers; for the mouth will always speak of which the heart is full; and whatever has a strong influence upon the heart, will always incite a man to a greater degree of activity to act in such a manner, as may best correspond with the state of his feelings. And as every good man must and does love God, should not this love induce him to speak of him, and act up to those laws, which He hath given to us as his will?

And again, whilst we praise God publicly, proclaim his benefits, read aloud his wholesome laws, and execute his commandments amidst the assembled multitude: we edify and instruct at the same time our neighbours, and obey thereby the word of God:

ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל"

And I will be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel," i. e. publicly. (Lev. 22 ch. 32 v.)

**129.** ***But, can the outward worship be pleasing to God, without*** **INWARD** ***piety?***

By no means; a heartless prayer, a ceremonial act without [p. 70] meaning or object, can be of no use to man, and avails him nothing; for, to use the words of the Talmud:

רחמנא לבא בעי"

The Merciful requires the heart."

Each observance of a ceremonial law is to remind us of the favours of God, of which we hourly participate, and make us thankful for what we receive. But if we do not reflect upon the *object* and *intent* of such a law, it is written:

מסיר אזנו משמע תורה גם תפלתו תועבה"

The prayer of that man is an abomination, who will not listen to the instruction" (of the law). (Prov. 28 ch. 9 v.)

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

Because this people come nigh unto me with their mouth, and honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." (Is. 29 ch. 13 v.)

**130.** ***How does Holy Writ show us the relation between outward and inward worship?***

By the very appropriate figure of a lantern, in which a burning light is placed, but which would be extinguished by wind and rain without the former; whereas the lantern, without the light inside, would be entirely useless, nay, even a burden to the bearer. Both, however combined, illumine the path, and conduct a man safely to the place of his destination.

כי נר מצוה ותורה אור ודרך חיים תוכחות מוסר"

For the commandment is the lantern, the law the light therein; and moral instruction points out the way to life." (Prov. 6 ch. 23 v.)

**131.** ***But, are not sacrifices also indispensably necessary at public worship?***

Sacrifices are not a necessary requisite to our worship. Only when the temple yet stood, and the Israelites lived together in their own land, sacrifices were ordered to be brought at the [p. 71] place, which God had chosen, "to let his name dwell there" (Deut. 12 ch. 11 v.); but on no account, was

it permitted to bring them beyond the precincts of the temple. But since our temple is now destroyed, and the Israelites are dispersed in every land, the sacrifices have ceased of necessity; for, to offer them now, would be in direct contradiction to the will of God. And then, even when we were yet in Palestine, *private* sacrifices were not necessary, and a man was not considered as sinning, if he never brought a single voluntary offering in all his life; as a virtuous and religious life is more agreeable to the Deity, than any presents we can bring.

**132.** ***Does this view agree with the doctrines of the prophets and our wise men?***

Entirely; all the prophets and doctors of our nation agree in this respect; they repeat it often and on every occasion:

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

For I said nothing to your forefathers, and I commanded them nothing, at the time I brought them out of the land of Egypt, in relation to burnt or peace offerings, &c." (Jer. 7 ch. 22 v.)

הנה שמע מזבח טוב להקשיב מחלב אילים"

Behold, attention to the word of God is better than sacrifice, and obeying preferable to the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15 ch. 22 v.)

זבח ומנחה לא חפצת אזנים כרית לי עולה וחטאה לא שאלת "Thou desirest not offerings nor presents, ears thou hast given me (to be obedient)—burnt and sin offerings thou didst not ask." (Ps. 40, v. 7.) [p. —]

## CHAPTER IX.

### 2. OF THE DUTIES TOWARDS OURSELVES.

**133.** ***Which is the first duty, a man has to observe in relation to himself?***

That he always remember his dignity and high destination, and act accordingly.

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

Man is dear to God, therefore did he create him after his own likeness (§ 26); but a peculiar love has been shown to him, that God *made it known* to him, that he was created so, for it is written: in the likeness of God did he create man." (Aboth, iii.)

**134.** ***What are we therefore to learn from the first part of that verse (Gen. 1 ch. 26 v.), where it is said:*** **נעשה אדם בצלמנו** ***"we will make a man after our*** **LIKENESS"?**

We have here an indication of the will of God; that we should strive most sedulously to perfect, to the best of our abilities, those powers of body and mind, which the Eternal has imparted to us, and

to use them for good purposes, and like him, always to unite wisdom and goodness with power; so that man should do every thing from pure motives and with rational views.

**135.** ***What other duties does the knowledge of our high destination demand of us?***

That we should endeavour to keep both our body and mind in a healthy condition, to be always cheerful, and to avoid every thing which might injure our health; that we should [p. 73] view our body as a temple of the Deity, and to take care, not to injure it wilfully, much less weaken and contaminate it through excesses and sin

ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם"

Take especial care of your body and your soul."

**136.** ***What inference are we to draw from the*** **SECOND** ***part of the above verse:***

וירדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובבהמה ובכל הארץ וגו'"

And they shall rule over the fishes of the sea, and the birds of heaven, over the cattle, and over all the earth, &c."?

This must be another proof to us, that man was intended by God for a *social life;* for in no other manner can he alone, and without the assistance of others, subject to himself either the animals of the earth or the sea; in such a situation he appears rather as a very weak creature, scarcely able to satisfy those reasonable desires, which God has implanted in him for his preservation. It is therefore said, וירדו (in the plural number), *they* shall govern, that is to say, men united in society.

**137.** ***What is therefore the duty of every member of the human family?***

Every man, to be able to fulfil *all* the duties, for which the will of God has destined him, must so conduct himself in all his transactions and in his behaviour towards others, that he may acquire and deserve the good will and friendship of his fellow-men.

חסד ואמת אל יעזבך ומצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני אלהים ואדם "Let virtue and honesty never forsake thee: and thou wilt find grace and good will in the eyes of God and men." (Prov. 3 ch. 3—4 v.) [p. 74]

**138.** ***What do our wise men say in relation to the duty, of observing in our outward conduct also a civil and mild behaviour towards others?***

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

He, who is liked by men, must be pleasing to God; but he who is disagreeable to men, can neither be agreeable to God." (Aboth, iii.)

For the object of all learning and virtue is partly unattained, if we do not endeavour to introduce ourselves *into the hearts of men*, through a pleasing and amiable deportment.

**139.** ***Through what means can we best preserve our health, and render ourselves beloved by God and men?***

By temperance and by moderating our desires; by industry, activity, and a judicious application of our time and mental energy; but all this must be accompanied by a quietness and hilarity of the soul, which derive their origin from a joyous confidence in God.

לב שמח ייטב גהה ורוח נכאה תיבש גרם"

A glad heart causes good health, but a depressed spirit consumes the bones." (Prov. 17 ch. 22 v.)

**140.** ***Which are the faults we must avoid, as the origin of corruption, and the promoters of sin and vice?***

The most prominent are the following *seven*, which are alike destructive to body and soul, and against which the Holy Scriptures caution us most earnestly; to wit, pride, avarice, envy, anger, intemperance in eating and drinking, laziness, and the keeping of bad company.

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

[p. 75] 1. The *proud* thinks himself great, despises his fellow-men, and is hated by them in return; he is easily offended and excited to revenge, and therefore makes himself and others unhappy. His pride will also prevent him from receiving admonition and instruction, which wiser men even may offer him.

רום עינים ורחב לב נר רשעים חטאת"

Proud looks and a presumptuous heart, are fields of sin for the wicked." (Prov. 21 ch. 4 v.)

תועבת ה' כל גבה לב"

A proud heart is an abomination to the Lord." (Prov. 15 ch. 5 v.)

142. *Meekness* and *modesty*, however, are pleasing to God and men, preserve their possessor always serene and tranquil, and are accordingly no less useful to the body than to the soul.

It is for this reason, that of all the virtues of our teacher (Moses), his meekness is particularly praised by God. We read:

והאיש משה עניו מאד מכל האדם אשר על פני האדמה"

And Moses was a very meek man, more so, than any other man, on the face of the earth." (Numb. 12 ch 3 v.)

גאות אדם תשפילנו ושפל רוח יתמך כבוד"

Pride will lower a man, but the modest will obtain honour." (Prov. 29 ch. 23 v.)

143. 2. The *avaricious* is only desirous of accumulating money; and viewing the means as the real object of his existence, he denies himself every enjoyment, though it might even tend to invigorate his body and mind—neglects the observance of many duties, because they must cost him money—and is led away to commit many sins, from his desire to possess.

וכלי כליו רעים הוא זמות יעץ לחבל ענוים באמרי שקר "The avaricious employs the worst means; he invents fraudulent pretexts, to deceive with lying words the innocent, and to oppress the lowly." (Is. 32 ch. 7 v.) [p. 76] נבהל להון איש רע עין "The man, who is eager for money, possesses an evil eye" (i. e. is envious). (Prov. 28 ch. 22 v.)

144. *Benevolence* and a rational enjoyment of his lawfully acquired property, on the other hand, are highly beneficial to man, since they promote his temporal and spiritual welfare, and will always secure him the love of God and men.

טוב מעט ביראת ה' מאוצר רב ומהומה בו"

It is better to possess little, with true reverence of God, than to have great riches, with a disturbed conscience." (Prov. 15 ch. 16 v.)

טוב עין הוא יברך כי נתן מלחמו לדל"

The liberal man will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor." (Prov. 22 ch. 9 v.)

145. 3. *Envy* promotes hatred and strife, and thus causes the transgression of all the commandments; the envious enjoys neither rest nor satisfaction, and is therefore the cause of unhappiness to himself and others.

146. But *contentment* with his lot and *good-will* towards others will make a man serene, tranquil and satisfied. For the contented man never envies the possessions of another, but trusts in God, and fulfils his duties with scrupulous care.

חיי בשרים לב מרפא ורקב עצמות קנאה"

A contented heart preserves the body healthy, but envy destroys the bone." (Prov. 14 ch. 30 v.)

147. 4. *Anger* is very injurious to man's health, disturbs his understanding, irritates him no less against God than against men, and is the fruitful source of a variety of sins.

איש אף יגרה מדון ובעל חמה רב פשע "An irritable man excites quarrels, and a passionate man commits many faults." (Prov. 29 ch. 22 v.) [p. 77] 148. *Patience*, *mildness* and *suavity of temper*, however, are an honourable distinction to man, as they are the source of joy, bring comfort in adversity, and enable him to be a true worshipper of God.

טוב ארך אפים מגבור ומשל ברוחו מלכד עיר"

A forbearing man is better than one strong in arms; and he who governs his passions is better than the conqueror of a city." (Prov. 16 ch. 32 v.)

149. 5. *Intemperance in eating and drinking*, leads to extravagance, wastefulness, poverty, and lastly to stealing and other vices; it is for this reason, that we were commanded to punish a young man with death, who had become intemperate,[21] to prevent him from committing greater crimes.

זולל וסבא · ורגמהו כל אנשי עירו — ובערת הרע מקרבך"

He (the disobedient child) is a glutton and a drunkard; and all his townsmen shall stone him—and thus thou shalt remove the evil from amidst thee." (Deut. 21 ch. 22 v.)

כי סבא וזולל יורש וקרעים תלביש נומה"

The drunkard and glutton must become poor, and drowsiness will clothe a man in rags." (Prov. 23 ch. 21 v.)

150. But *moderation* confers upon man a sound body and a vigorous and cheerful mind. The moderate man says, I eat only to live; but live not to eat. And whereas he knows, how to limit his wants to the indispensable, he will never expose himself to the temptation of procuring his livelihood in an unlawful manner.

צדיק אכל לשבע נפשו ובטן רשעים תחסר"

The righteous eats only to satisfy his hunger; the wicked have never enough." (Prov. 13 ch. 25 v.)

[p. 78] 151. 6. *Idleness* and *slothfulness* depress man's spirit, lead him to bad thoughts, wicked actions, poverty, and to every species of sins. Even if he were guilty of nothing else, save the mere nothing-doing, it would nevertheless be unpardonable, to spend the noble and valuable time, his life, so uselessly.

תאות עצל תמיתנו כי מאנו ידיו לעשות"

The desires of the lazy man will kill him, for his hands refuse to work." (Prov. 21 ch. 25 v.)

גם מתרפה במלאכתו אח הוא לבעל משחית"

Even he, who is slow in his business, is a brother to the spendthrift." (Prov. 21 ch. 25 v.)

152. *Activity* and *industry* are in fact a part of the duties of man, and he is intended by God for labour and employment; for it is said (Gen. 3 ch. 19 v.):

בזעת אפך תאכל לחם"

In the sweat of thy brow, thou shalt eat bread."

[21] It is namely one of the characteristic features in the law relative to the disobedient child. *Translator.*

Labour makes a man healthy, and tends to raise his spirits, and is the best preservative from want and sin. And when man does his part with diligence, he may also rely then with confidence on the blessing of God.

יד חרוצים תמשול ורמיה תהיה למס"

The hand of the industrious will govern; but the lazy must be tributary." (Prov. 12 ch. 24 v.)

153. 7. *Bad company* has a very pernicious influence on the heart and morals of any man; it makes him forgetful of his duties, and seduces him to the commission of many vices. The bad examples, which he sees, work imperceptibly on his mind, and are the cause of his losing, by degrees, all taste for what is good, and of at last extinguishing in him every germ of virtue. We therefore find, that the pious *David*, and the wise *Solomon*, commence their respective books, with an admonition against the frequenting of bad society.

בני אם יפתוך חטאים אל תבא · בני אל תלך בדרך אתם מנע רגלך מנתיבתם "My son! if sinners will mislead thee to folly, [p. 79] listen not to them! My son! go not with them, and avoid their paths." (Prov. 1 ch. 10—19 v.)

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

O happy is the man, who never came in the council of the wicked; who never stood in the path of sinners, and never sat where deriders sit." (Ps. 1, v. 1.)

154. But the *intercourse* with the *wise*, nay even the desire for good company, ennobles a man, incites him always to the practice of virtue, and enables him to accomplish the object of his being here; which is, to grow daily in wisdom and virtue.

הולך את חכמים יחכם ורעה כסילים ירוע "The associate of fools will be unhappy; but he, who holds intercourse with the wise, will become wise himself." (Prov. 13 ch. 20 v.) [p. —]

## CHAPTER X.

### 3. OF THE DUTIES TOWARDS OUR FELLOW-MEN.

**155.** ***What does Holy Writ say, concerning the duties which we have to observe towards our fellow-men?***

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

It has been told thee, O man! what is good, and what the Lord asks of thee: to exercise justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before thy God." (Micah, 6 ch. 8 v.)

ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה'"

And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, I am the Eternal" (who command it thee). (Lev. 19 ch. 18 v.)

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

Most undoubtedly; the love of our neighbour is the foundation of all the other laws, and is derived immediately from the love we ought to bear to God.

**157.** ***Please to explain, how the love towards our neighbour is connected with our love towards God.***

Whoever loves and honours God sincerely, will also love all those whom he has made after his likeness, and whom he has destined for everlasting beatitude.

בנים אתם לה' אלהיכם"

Ye are the children of the Eternal your God." (Deut. 14 ch. 1 v.)

And would not every good child willingly contribute, what- [p. 81] ever he can, to make his brothers feel comfortable—and that the Father, who loves them all, should find pleasure in the happiness of his children?

**158.** ***How are we to understand—according to the interpretation of our wise men—the expression in Deut. 13 ch. 20 v.; 10 ch. 20 v.; and 13 ch. 5 v.:*** **לאהבה את ה' אלהיך ולדבקה בו** ***"The Eternal thy God thou shalt love, and to him thou shalt*** **ADHERE"?**

הדבק בדרכיו ובמעשיו גמול חסדים וגו' · מה הוא רחום אף אתה רחום מה הוא חנון אף אתה חנון וגו' "

Imitate thy God, in his acts of kindness and mercy. As he is merciful, so be thou too merciful; as he is gracious, so shalt thou be gracious; and as he is kind to all, so shall *thy* kindness extend to all his creatures."

**159.** ***Are there any other expressions in the Talmud, which teach, that the love of our neighbour is the foundation of our whole law? Will you please to state some of them?***

רבי עקיבא אומר ואהבת לרעך כמוך זהו כלל גדול בתורה"

Rabbi *Akiba* (one of the most eminent of our teachers) says: The principal article of our religion is: Love thy neighbour as thyself."

And when a heathen once asked our great teacher *Hillel*, concerning our religion, and wanted to know, in few words, in what it really consisted; this Rabbi answered him:

מה דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד הא לך כל התורה כלה ואידך פירושה זיל גמור "Do nothing to thy neighbour, that thou wouldst dislike to be done to thee. Here thou hast the whole law; all the rest is but a commentary (or consequence), go and learn it." [p. 82]

**160.** ***Whom does Holy Writ style* אח עמית ריע *neighbour, fellow-man, brother? Are those persons also understood, who profess another religion?***

Not alone Israelites, but also all other men who live in the same state with us, are included in these terms; no matter what religion they may profess, or to what nation they may belong.

**161.** ***Can you prove this from Holy Writ?***

It can be incontrovertibly established from many passages; for in the *first* place, whenever the Israelite alone is meant, the words עברי (Hebrew) or בני ישראל (children of Israel) are expressly added; for instance: Lev. 25 ch. 46 v.; Deut. 15 ch. 12 v. and 24 ch. 7 v. and many other places;—and *secondly*, we find, that the Egyptians even, who at that time treated the Israelites most cruelly, וישאלו איש מאת רעהו ואשה מאת רעותה are expressly called our *neighbours*, our *fellow-men*. (Exod. 11 ch. 2 v.)

**162.** ***What rule of conduct does Scripture recommend us to observe towards the Egyptians, after we had been delivered from their slavery, and had left their land—and towards the people of* EDOM, *who were the first to march out with a strong army to extirpate the Israelites, without their having received any provocation from them?***

לא תתעב אדמי כי אחיך הוא"

Thou shalt not reject the Edumite, for he is thy *brother*."

לא תתעב מצרי כי גר היית בארצו"

The Egyptian also thou shalt not reject, for a *stranger* thou hast been in his land." (Deut. 23 ch. 8 v.)

**163.** ***What conclusion ought we to draw from this?***

[p. 83] That we are in a much greater degree obliged, according to the doctrines of our religion, to love those as brothers, who are in fact our neighbours, our fellow-citizens, and are the inhabitants of the same state, where we enjoy equal protection with them, and to whom we are accordingly bound by gratitude and the ties of a common country.

**164.** ***What does religion demand of us in relation to the foreigner and stranger?***

וגר לא תונה ולא תלחצנו כי גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים"

A stranger ye shall not offend with words, nor oppress; for you have yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt." (Ex. 22 ch. 20 v.)

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

And if a stranger dwell with you in your land, you shall not do him any wrong; he shall be as good to you, as a native of your land, and thou shalt love him, this stranger, as thyself, I am the Eternal your God." (Lev. 19 ch. 34 v.)

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

You, the whole congregation, have but one law, as well the stranger, who sojourns with you, as yourselves (the Israelites). An immutable statute this shall be for all your generations: that you and the stranger shall be alike before the Eternal." (Num. 15 ch. 15 v.)

כי ה' אלהיכם הוא וגו' — אשר לא ישא פנים ולא יקח שחד ואהב גר לתת לו לחם ושמלה ואהבתם את הגר וגו' "For the Eternal your God is, &c. who judges not the appearance of the person, and takes no bribes—and who loves the stranger, to give him food and clothing; ye therefore must love the stranger, &c." (Deut. 10 ch. 17—19 v.) [p. 84]

**165.** ***But does Holy Writ any where make a difference, between the Israelite and the other, who is no Israelite, in those laws and prohibitions, which forbid us the committal of something against our fellow-men?***

No where do we find a trace of such a difference. God says, thou shalt not commit murder! thou shalt not steal, not cheat! And,

לא תעשו עול במשפט במדה במשקל ובמשורה"

You shall do no injustice, in judgment, in dry measure, in weight, and wet measure." (Lev. 19 ch. 35 v.)

In every place the action itself is prohibited, as being an abomination to God, without respect to the *person*, against whom it is committed.[22]

**166.** ***What do our wise men say concerning him, who permits himself to offend or to cheat any one, who is not a Jew?***

Our sages declare unanimously, that such an Israelite offends not only most grossly against the express laws of God; but that he is at the same time guilty of the unpardonable offence of profaning the holy name of God: because he lowers his religion and his fellow-believers in the estimation of the other nations. And we find written (Lev. 22 ch. 32 v.):

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

[22]It appears however that *slavery* was absolutely interdicted amongst the Jews themselves, whereas it was permitted to buy foreign or domestic slaves (Lev. 25 ch. 44 and 45 v.) belonging to other nations; it must nevertheless be observed, that it was prohibited, to *subject* a stranger even in the first instance to slavery, as the *buying* of slaves *alone* is permitted, but not stealing them. *Translator.*

And you shall not profane my holy name; I will be sanctified among the children of Israel, I am the Eternal who sanctifies you."

[p. 85] **167.** ***Do the Talmudists, who did not enjoy the privileges of citizens, which bind us more closely to the other inhabitants of the state, teach us to love and benefit our fellow-men, who profess another religion?***

Yes; for they teach: every Israelite is commanded by the divine law, to love those persons of all nations, who observe the seven precepts of the children of Noah. He is accordingly obliged, to visit their sick, to bury their dead, to support their poor, and to assist those of them, who may stand in need of assistance, as well as those of the Israelites; and there is therefore no act of philanthropy, which a true Israelite can abstain from exercising towards the observers of the precepts given to Noah. (69.)

**168.** ***Should we now loan money without interest, to a man who is not a Jew?***

By all means; for there is no difference in this respect even between an Israelite and a stranger, as long as he wants the money for the purchase of necessaries of life, and not for the sake of trading with it. And we find the following precept of philanthropy and benevolence:

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

If thy brother become poor near thee, and let his hand sink (be reduced): thou shalt assist him, as also the stranger and sojourner, that he may live with thee. Thou shalt not take from him any interest or advance, and thou shalt fear thy God, and suffer thy brother to live near thee. Thou shalt not loan him thy money on interest, nor thy food at advance." (Lev. 25 ch. 35 v.)

[p. 86] **169.** ***But what is intended to be prohibited in Deut.*** **23** ***ch.*** **20** ***v. as the*** **TAKING OF INTEREST** ***is so very clearly forbidden, not alone in the foregoing passage, but also in Exodus*** **22** ***ch.*** **24** ***v.?***

In this passage, it is forbidden to any Israelite, (according to the interpretation of the Talmudists and all other learned men,) who is obliged to borrow money, to *give* any interest therefore to any other Israelite.

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

Thou shalt not *pay* any interest to thy brother, not on money, not on food, nor on any thing else, for which interest is demanded."

**170.** ***Can you give any reason, why it was prohibited to pay interest?***

Because the whole polity of the Israelitish people aims solely, at forming them into a nation of agriculturists, who were not to be engaged in trading, but to depend chiefly, for their maintenance, upon the cultivation of the soil, and the necessary arts and mechanical occupations. For this reason

were the commandments relative to the sabbatic year, and the many other agrarian laws, instituted. It was therefore made obligatory upon the Israelites, not only to assist one another with loans, when any one was in distress, without receiving any interest; but it was also strictly prohibited to *pay* any interest for money advanced. For agriculture could never afford the means of paying it, and the country and community might perchance suffer in consequence. As the inability of complying with the *terms* of the loan, would invariably tend to transfer the land from its owner to the lender of the money; and this again would be the means of bringing large estates in the hands of the *few*, to the prejudice of the *many*; since it can be proved,

[p. 87] by every day's experience, that, when a man has once acquired a large amount of property, it must of necessity increase; and thus the accumulation in the hands of one or a few of a large portion of the land or money of a country, will create a kind of aristocracy, capable of acquiring an undue degree of political influence, because the multitude must look up to them as masters or protectors; and this again would have been evidently against the tendency of the Mosaic code, whose institutions throughout are intended to form a state, in which each man should have an interest in the soil, and in which one man should be upon an equality, with his more opulent and learned neighbour.

**171** ***What is then, according to the view just given, the intent of the* 21*st v. of the* 23 *ch. of Deut.?***

It is only a continuance of the preceding verse.

לנכרי תשיך ולאחיך לא תשיך" .

If the native will not loan thee without interest: thou *mayest* then *give* interest to the foreigner, but never to thy brother" (the Israelite).

Some of our learned men add the following explanation: If thou hast promised interest to a foreigner, thou art bound to give it him; but if thou hast made such a contract with an Israelite, it is void, and thou art not at liberty to comply with its conditions.

See *Abarbanel* and R. *Abadya Sapurny.*

**172.** ***But suppose the verse had another meaning, and should not refer to the* BORROWER, *but to the* LENDER; *and that its import be: "From a stranger thou mayest* TAKE *interest, but not from thy brother!" will this permit us to loan to those on* USURY *who are not of our faith?***

[p. 88] We can by no means give such a turn to this precept. For, in the first instance, this passage can not allude to *usury*, since we do not find a word of this import in the Holy Scriptures.[23]

[23] All etymologists must agree in this respect with our doctors; for *usury* means *more than legal interest;* but no where in the Mosaic law is there any proportion given for lawful interest, according to which the *relative* import of the word *usury*, or the excess of interest, might be fixed; but every where all kinds of interest, without reference to the amount, are strictly prohibited. And as no kind of interest is allowed by law; it is evident, that there can be no word, which signifies *usury*. *Author.*

Secondly, all our fellow-citizens, no matter of what faith they may be, are our brothers, and we are accordingly obliged to assist them in their need without compensation.

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

Have we not *all* one father? has not one God created us all? why then should one brother act deceitfully towards the other?" (Mal. 2 ch. 10 v.)

**173.** ***What then is the difference, in relation to the taking of interest, between the Israelite and the stranger?***

If our fellow-man, who is not an Israelite, wants money towards the support of his family, or the prosecution of his agricultural or domestic occupation, we are forbidden by our religion, to demand any interest; for the consciousness of having done our duty as men, and acted as God commands, should of itself be sufficient reward for us. But if our neighbour, who is no Israelite, wants to employ the loan for a mercantile speculation or similar purposes, it is lawful for the lender to ask for himself a small share of the profits, or what is the same, to take as much interest, as the general custom, or the law of the land permits. But if the borrower be an Israelite, it is

[p. 89] unlawful to take any interest at all, unless the lender assume a greater share of the loss, (if any there be,) than he receives profit, in case the speculation should turn out profitably. For instance, if he contracts to receive a third part of the profit, he must suffer half the loss, and so on, for a greater or smaller share of profit; so that the lender should not have too great an advantage over the borrower, and that the latter should be considered more in the light of an agent, than as the sole proprietor of the loaned money. But the lender of the money or merchandise has this advantage; in case the *agent* dies, and he can identify the goods, or prove any money found to be the sum he left with him, or the proceeds of the goods he entrusted to him, he can claim them, no matter how many other creditors the deceased may have besides; since the goods or the money were always his property. And whereas the lender is always considered as the proprietor, he is bound to pay the agent for his trouble, in case there be neither profit nor loss, if they have originally agreed for half profit and loss. But if the lender has consented, to assume two thirds of the loss against the chance of receiving one third of the profits, the agent cannot claim any remuneration, if there be neither profit nor loss.[24]

**174.** ***Can you point me out a Psalm, in which the chief duties towards our neighbours are laid down in the sublime language of sacred poetry?***

ה' מי יגור באהלך"

Who can sojourn in thy tabernacle? O Lord!

[24]The greater part of this paragraph is not in the original, but has been extracted from the יורה דעה from the Section on Interest (Chap. 177), where the other laws relative to this subject are laid down more at large. *Translator.*

מי ישכן בהר קדשך

Who can dwell on thy holy mountain?

[p. 90]הולך תמים ופעל צדק

He, who walks uprightly, and exercises righteousness,

ודבר אמת בלבבו

And speaks truth in his heart;

לא רגל על לשנו

Who calumniates no one with his tongue,

לא עשה לרעהו רעה

Does no evil to his neighbour,

וחרפה לא נשא על קרבו

And never reviles those near to him;

נבזה בעיניו נמאס

Esteems not the contemptible,

ואת יראי ה' יכבד

And honours those, who fear the Eternal;

נשבע להרע ולא ימיר

Who swears to his injury, and breaks not his oath;

כספו לא נתן בנשך

Who never loans his money on interest,[25]

ושחד על נקי לא לקח

And protects the innocent without bribes;

עשה אלה לא ימוט לעולם.

[25]In explanation of this passage, it is asked in the Talmud (Tractate Maccoth, Folio 24): *To whom?* אפילו רבית נכרי. "Even to the stranger, to the pagan." In the same place we also read the following: *Moses* taught us our religion in 613 precepts: *David* (Psalm 15) comprehended them in *eleven*, as enumerated above; *Isaiah* (33 ch. 15 v.) comprised them in the following *six:* הלך צדקות ודבר מישרים מאס בבצע מעשקות נער כפיו מתמך בשחד אטם אזנו משמע דמים ועצם עיניו מראות ברע. "(The pious man) walks in righteousness; speaks honestly the truth; despises unjust advantages; withdraws his hands from the touching of bribes; closes his ear against blood-thirsty calumny, and his eyes—not to behold the evil done." *Micah* (6 ch. 8 v.) taught us all the precepts in *three* articles: "To do justice, to love mercy and benevolence, and to walk in silent meekness before thy God."

He, who acts so, shall not be moved for ever." (Ps. 15.)

[p. 91] **175.** ***What does religion command us in relation to those who have offended us, or who conduct themselves in general as our enemies?***

בנפל אויבך אל תשמח ובכשלו אל יגל לבך פן יראה ה' ורע בעיניו" .

Rejoice not, when thy enemy falls; be not glad, when he stumbles; for the Eternal would see it, and disapprove of it." (Prov. 24 ch. 17 v.)

אם רעב שנאך האכלהו לחם ואם צמא השקהו מים כי גחלים אתה חתה על ראשו וה' ישלם לך" .

Is thy enemy hungry, offer him bread; is he thirsty, give him water. And though thou shouldst thus heap coals on his head, yet will the Eternal reward thy deed." (Prov. 25 ch. 21 v.)

כי תפגע שור איבך או חמרו תעה השב תשיבנו לו. כי תראה חמור שנאך רבץ תחת משאו וחדלת מעזב לו עזב תעזב עמו" .

If thou shouldst find the ox or the ass of thy enemy going astray, thou must return the same to him. If thou seest the ass of him who hates thee, laying under his burden, thou darest not withhold thy assistance from him; but thou shalt help him to unload." (Exod. 23 ch. 4 v.)

לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך. הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך ולא תשא עליו חטא לא תקם ולא תטר" .

Hate not thy brother in thy heart! Thou mayest reprove thy neighbour, but darest not cherish against him the remembrance of the offence. Thou shalt not take revenge, nor reserve thy anger." (Lev. 19 ch. 17 v.)

**176.** ***How do our wise men explain the concluding part of the last verse?***

"If some one has denied thee a favour, (thus says the Talmud—Tract. *Yoma*, Fol. 23,) and desires at any time hereafter any service from thee; thou shalt not refuse it to him: *Thou shalt not take revenge!* But thou must neither say to him:

[p. 92] 'Behold, I serve thee now, although thou didst refuse the favour, which I asked of thee.' As soon, as thou speakest thus, thou hast transgressed the commandment: '*Thou shalt not reserve any anger!*'"

אל תאמר כאשר עשה לי כן אעשה לו אשיב לאיש כפעלו" .

Say not, I will treat him, as he has treated me; I will act towards every one, as he has acted towards me." (Prov. 24 ch. 29 v.)

**177.** ***What else should we infer from these doctrines, and consider accordingly as a sacred duty?***

If the religion, which we profess, commands us to cherish love, forbearance, and lenity towards our personal enemies, those who have actually offended us: we must conclude, that we have even

less right to hate or offend those Israelites, who have been guilty of such sins, for which they are answerable to God alone. For in the *first* place, a man can easily repent for any and every one of such transgressions, nay even privately and at all times. (§ 118, &c.) *Secondly*, it is not our business to take God's part; it would certainly be punishable arrogance in us, to presume to act as his representatives or avengers.

הנסתרת לה' אלהינו" .

Secret actions are reserved for the Eternal our God alone." (Deut. 29 ch. 28 v.)

אל תאמר אשלמה רע קוה לה' וישע לך" .

But thou must not say, I will recompense the evil; trust in the Eternal, and he will help thee" (to guide thy brother in the path of virtue). (Prov. 20 ch. 22 v.)

**178.** ***Which is accordingly the line of conduct, prescribed to us by our religion, in relation to those, who transgress the precepts of this religion?***

We ought to endeavour to bring back such an erring or

[p. 93] blinded brother by mildness and indulgent love—not alone through kind words, but also by showing him ourselves a pattern of virtuous conduct. We are, however, not permitted to indulge, on any account, in any vindictive feeling, so as to offend him, or make him ashamed.

הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך. יכול אתה מוכיחו ופניו משתנות? ת"ל ולא תשא עליו חטא שכל המלבין פני חבירו אין לו חלק לעה"ב. (תלמוד ורמב"ם ה' דעות)" .

Endeavour to reprove thy neighbour in so mild a manner, as not to make him ashamed; for this would be drawing upon thyself a great sin, as we believe: he who makes his neighbour publicly ashamed, has no share of future happiness."[26] (§ 87.) In short, we must here also apply the rule (§ 158.) of והלכת בדרכיו "Walk in his ways!" For God proves himself a merciful judge, and nowise eager to punish sinners.

Then again, an unkind demeanour towards a sinner would only tend to remove him, our erring brother, to a yet greater distance from us, and render every effort at amelioration in him yet more difficult; and thus we would be guilty of closing against him the path of virtue, to which, however, it is our duty, to lead him back by gentle means and an amiable deportment to him on our part.

טוב וישר ה' על כן יורה חטאים בדרך" .

The Eternal is good and upright, he therefore shows sinners the right road." (Ps. 25 ch. 8 v.)

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[26]It must be observed, however, that on certain occasions it becomes necessary not to be too forbearing; as for instance, when we hear acknowledged truth, or the dignity of God or his law spoken of lightly, and it might be injurious to others to let the blasphemy pass, without an immediate and public notice being taken of it; for we say: במקום שיש חלול השם אין חולקין כבוד לרב. "Where the name of God is profaned, no respect is shown even to a teacher." *Translator.*

[p. —] # CHAPTER XI.

## OF THE DUTIES TOWARDS THE STATE.

**179.** ***How are the duties called, which we owe, in accordance with the demand of our religion, to the whole community of our fellow-citizens?***

They are called the *duties of a citizen*, or duties towards the state and our native land.

**180.** ***In what particulars do they chiefly consist?***

In fidelity and obedience to the laws and authorities of the land, in esteem, allegiance, and respect to the government, and attachment to the country.

**181.** ***Which is properly speaking our country, as we live now dispersed in every part of the world?***

Every country in which we were born, or where we have settled ourselves and are residents, and under whose laws we enjoy protection and security of person and property. Particularly however those countries, where we participate equally in the administration of the laws, and have equal political rights with the other inhabitants.

**182.** ***What does our religion command us in this respect?***

That we shall love the land, in which we live, as our country, and contribute all in our power towards the promotion of its general prosperity, and the preservation of its peace and good order. That we are not only bound, not to separate our own welfare and that of our own family and immediate friends,

[p. 95] from the welfare of the great mass of citizens of the state; but that we are also bound by the laws of our religion and of the state, to defend this our country with our property, and if necessary with our blood and life.

**183.** ***Must this duty be sacred to us?***

This law, and the *love of our country*, which God has implanted in the heart of every human being, must be to every upright man as a sacred call and the voice of God; for which reason it becomes also the duty of every Israelite, to join, when called upon, the defenders of the country, and to contribute under every circumstance, all his individual power is able, to co-operate with the rest of his fellow-citizens, in maintaining the independence and liberty of the country, in which he is protected.

**184.** ***What did God communicate, through the prophet Jeremiah, to those Israelites, who had been carried captives to Babylon, although their stay there was to be no more than seventy years?***

כה אמר ה' צבאות אלהי ישראל בנו בתים ושבו ונטעו גנות ואכלו את פרין ודרשו את שלום העיר אשר הגליתי אתכם שמה והתפללו בעדה אל ה' כי בשלומה יהיה לכם שלום" .

Thus speaketh the Eternal Zebaoth, the God of Israel: Build houses, and dwell therein; plant gardens, and eat their fruit, and seek to promote the peace of the city, whither I have banished you, and pray for the same to (me) the Eternal, for through its peace ye also shall have peace!" (Jer. 29 ch. 5—7 v.)

Again we read, (Jer. 40 ch. 9 v.):

וישבע להם גדליהו בן אחיקם לאמר אל תיראו מעבוד הכשדים שבו בארץ ועבדו את מלך בבל וייטב לכם" .

And *Gedalyahu* caused the Israelites to swear, to be true to the king

[p. 96] of Babylon, and said: Fear nothing, in being subject to the Chaldeans, remain in the country, and serve the king of Babylon, and you will fare well."

**185.** ***What inference are we led to draw from the foregoing?***

That we are in a much greater degree bound to serve that state with all our power, where we have really found a *home*, and which we can call *our* country; namely, that where we enjoy equal civil rights. The laws of such a country, therefore, must be sacred to us, as the laws of our religion. But it must be understood, that these laws must not circumscribe our liberty of conscience, nor in any manner tend, to compel us, to act contrary to any one of the laws and ceremonies of our religion; in short, the authority of the laws of the land is binding upon us in the same degree, as parental authority (of which see more, § 85, in the chapter on the Decalogue).

**186.** ***What rules does the Talmud lay down, as general principles in this respect?***

דינא דמלכותא דינא" .

The laws of the land are valid, and must be obeyed."

מלכותא דארעא כעין מלכותא דרקיע" .

The power of the governments on earth, bears resemblance to the power of the heavenly kingdom."

הרואה מלכי אומות העולם יברך ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר חלק מכבודו לבשר ודם" .

If thou seest a king of any other nation, speak the following grace: 'Praised be thou, O Eternal, our God, King of the world! who hast communicated some portion of thy glory to man.'"

**187.** ***What does our religion recommend, relative to our conduct towards the highest authority of the state, or the king?***

[p. 97]ירא את ה' בני ומלך עם שונים אל תתערב" .

My son! fear the Eternal, and respect the king;[27] and never mix with those who will create disturbance." (Prov. 24 ch. 21 v.)

גם במדעך מלך אל תקלל ובחדרי משכבך אל תקלל עשיר" .

Even in thought curse not the king! and in thy most secret sleeping chamber do not pronounce a malediction upon the superior in authority." (Eccl. 10 ch. 20 v.)

הוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות שאלמלא מוראה איש את רעהו חיים בלעו. (אבות פ"ג)"

Pray for the peace and prosperity of the government of the land; for through its authority, peace and order are preserved, and disputes repressed." (Lit. If it were not for its fear, one man would swallow the other alive.)

**188.** ***Does Holy Writ furnish us any examples of fidelity and loyalty to kings of another religion?***

Certainly. *Daniel* (6 ch. 23 v.) said to the king of Babylon:

אלהי שלח מלאכה וסגר פם אריותא ולא חבלוני כל קבל די קדמוהי זכו השתכחת לי ואף קדמיך מלכא חבולה לא עבדת" .

My God sent his angel, who closed the mouths of the lions, that they did not wound me; because he had found me innocent, and because, O king, I had always served thee well, and never been guilty of an untruth towards thee."

*Mordecai* lived under the tyrannical government of Ahasuerus, who afterwards intended to exterminate the whole people of Israel. Nevertheless did Mordecai tell of the conspiracy, which some courtiers had planned against the king's life; (Esther 2 ch. 21 v.) for he thought, "I must do my duty, no matter what the king's intentions may be towards us." And we should consider, that

[p. 98]פלגי מים לב מלך ביד ה' על כל אשר יחפץ יטנו" .

The heart of kings is in the hand of the Lord like streams of water; he directs it whithersoever it pleases him." (Prov. 21 ch. 1 v.)

**189.** ***What effect should these examples have upon us?***

That we should the more endeavour, to show our attachment and fidelity to the princes and governments, under whose protection we are fortunate enough to live as citizens and members of

[27] It must be remembered, that we are obliged to respect the institutions of the country, be the government monarchical or republican. *Translator.*

the state. It is further our duty, to prove ourselves faithful subjects and good citizens, by a strict obedience to the laws, a blameless life, and the exercise of all the duties which we owe the state in quality of citizens.

**190.** ***Have the Israelites any peculiar motives of gratitude towards the princes and governments of the present age?***

Yes; we as well as our posterity have the strongest motives to be grateful towards the princes and governments of our own days, and to call down upon them the blessing of our heavenly Father; because they have reinstated us in the enjoyment of the rights of men, and granted us a free exercise of our religion and the privileges of citizens, by placing us upon an equality with the other inhabitants of the state. They have therefore indeed broken our shackles, and pulled down that dishonourable wall of separation, which had, alas! for so many centuries, been standing betwixt us and our Christian fellow-citizens.

**191.** ***What other benefits have these wise governments shown to us?***

Convinced, that our holy religion contains nothing, which stands in opposition to the laws of the state, they have freed the Jews from the ignominious fetters, with which ages of super-

[p. 99] stition and barbarism had loaded them; and have taken paternal care for our regeneration and the amelioration of our condition. It is therefore obligatory upon every Israelite, to support the benevolent views of these fathers of their countries, and to obey willingly and with feelings of gratitude their wise institutions.

**192.** ***In what manner do these benevolent governments endeavour to ameliorate our moral and political condition?***[28]

In no other manner, save that, which harmonises in every respect with the spirit and the will of our religion, since they demand only that we should become proprietors of land, and cultivate the soil ourselves, and practise useful arts and trades; since our religion, as has been said above, is so well adapted to form a race of agriculturists, men who gain their livelihood by the labour of their hand, and such as, by their frugal industry and sterling honesty, should be an honour to themselves and to the nation to which they belong. It behoves us, therefore, to consider those as benefactors, who are willing to share the liberty, they themselves enjoy, with us—the descendants of those virtuous and constant men, who suffered every thing in the physical and moral defence of their holy faith.—To support ourselves by honest industry is also a religious

[28]It must not be forgotten, that in former ages no Jew was permitted to practise any trade; and the permission, therefore, given us in many parts of Europe, and in the United States of America, to acquire property and become mechanics, must greatly tend to improve the condition of the Jews. And this is in fact the only amelioration we desire, i. e. to be permitted to follow any calling, for which we may think ourselves best qualified; but for pecuniary aid, or the inducements to forsake our faith, we can never think ourselves indebted to any one, who may be weak enough to tender the former, or infatuated enough to preach the latter. *Translator.*

[p. 100] duty, of which we are oftentimes reminded by the text of the Scriptures; and as examples we read:

עבד אדמתו ישבע לחם ומרדף ריקים חסר לב" .

He, who ploughs his land, will have enough of bread; but he, who pursues wild speculations, is foolish, and will suffer want." (Prov. 12 ch. 11 v. and 28 ch. 19 v.)

יגיע כפיך כי תאכל אשריך וטוב לך" .

If thou maintainest thyself by the labour of thy hands, then wilt thou be happy, and enjoy what is good." (Psalm 128, v. 2.)

**193.** ***Can you name any trades, which are forbidden to us by the laws of our religion?***

There are none. On the contrary, religion makes it the duty of every parent, to teach his son some trade or useful art. The Talmud adds:

כל שאין מלמדו אומנות כאלו מלמדו לסטות" .

The man who does not teach his son some mechanical trade, is as bad, as if he had taught him to become a highwayman."[29] (Tractate Kidushin, fol. 30.)

**194.** ***Have our teachers, of blessed memory, ever set us the example in this respect?***

Certainly. Agriculture was the favourite pursuit of our ancestors, and the greater number of the Talmudists were mechanics. They even thought it honourable to be called after their trade; as for instance: *R. Jochanan* the Shoemaker; *R. Joseph* the Carpenter; *R. Jehoshua* the Smith; *R. Simon* the

[p. 101] Weaver; and many others. They used to carry their tools publicly about with them, and said:

גדולה מלאכה שמכבדת את בעליה" .

Every trade is honourable, it honours the master."[30]

[29] When one Talmudist inquired: "Is it not then enough, if he teach his son *business* solely?" "No," replied R. *Yehuda*, "both money and good luck are requisite for business; these might be unattainable to him, and he would thus at last be compelled to resort to cheating or stealing."

[30] The like rules of life, admonitions to pursue an active and useful employment, and to abstain from a more speculative than active state, are to be met with in many passages of the Talmud. "Love labour," say the sages, "and hate appearing the great man!" (Aboth, I.) "Skin the carcass of a beast in the street, and receive the wages due to thee for it, and say not, I am of too respectable a family, &c. but at all events endeavour to be independent of others." (פסחים קי"ג) "Live as poorly on the Sabbath, as in the week days, but only ask nothing of any man;" and many others. Nay, they even granted dispensation to the mechanic or day-labourer from onerous religious duties, as the saying of long prayers &c., so that he may not be compelled to neglect his work, and thus prevent him from doing justice to his employers.

**195.** ***With what thoughts shall we pursue our labours?***

With confidence in God; without apprehension and anxious cares; and in the pious hope, that God will send us blessing and prosperity in our undertaking from his high abode in heaven.

גל אל ה' מעשיך ויכנו מחשבתיך" .

Recommend thy doings to the Eternal, and thy purposes will surely prosper." (Prov. 16 ch. 3 v.)

## [p. —] CHAPTER XII.

### OF MEANS TO BECOME PIOUS.

**196.** ***What should we do to become daily more virtuous?***

We should often seriously reflect, how indispensably necessary virtue is, and how many beneficent effects we reap from its practice; we should also seek the intercourse of virtuous and good men; read sedulously and attentively the word of God in the Holy Scriptures, and lastly we should ask the grace and assistance of God with the greatest possible devotion—in other words, we should pray.

**197.** ***When can we be properly said*—TO PRAY*?***

When we raise our thoughts to God; when we lay our wishes and petitions, for ourselves or others, before him, or when we are joyous because of his mercy, and are directing our thanks to him, the author of all good;—in these cases, we are said *to pray.*

**198.** ***How should we pray?***

If we will offer up a true prayer, we must feel devotion, meekness, and sincere earnestness of heart.

זבחי אלהים רוח נשברה לב נשבר ונדכה אלהים לא תבזה" .

A contrite spirit is an acceptable offering to thee, O God! a meek and humble heart thou wilt not despise." (Ps. 51, v. 19.)

**199.** ***What consequences may we expect from such a sincere prayer?***

[p. 103] That the All-good will grant us *that* graciously, for which we have prayed to him; if he, in his wisdom, finds it conducive to our *real* advantage and prosperity. For

קרוב ה' לכל קראיו לכל אשר יקראהו באמת רצון יראיו יעשה ואת שועתם ישמע ויושיעם" .

The Eternal is near unto all who call upon him in uprightness. He grants the desire of those who fear him, and hears their supplication and assists them." (Ps. 145, v. 18.)

**200.** ***Has not the*** **ACT OF PRAYING ITSELF** ***already a very beneficial tendency for us?***

It has; the devotional directing of our thoughts to God, elevates our soul, makes us contented with the will of Providence—magnanimous and just towards others—and gives us strength to fulfil our duties with alacrity.

**201.** ***Explain to me more clearly, how the mere praying itself can become useful.***

If we bring our wishes before God, we must of necessity be taught to examine and test them, if they are really such as we ought to address to the throne of mercy, and if they spring from pure motives. If we find ourselves in any difficulty, and ask the help and the mighty assistance of God, we will be taught to inquire, if we ourselves have not been the first cause of our being in this difficulty, and if we cannot employ our own capacities so as to draw ourselves out of it. If we pray for others, our soul must participate in their misfortune, and we must become inclined to benevolence and charity. And in returning thanks, we enjoy the good once more in the purest manner, since we refer[31] it back to the source of all good.

[p. 104] **202.** ***Is it proper to shake the body, and raise the voice during prayer?***

No; it is rather a conduct unbecoming a rational man, and it moreover disturbs the collectedness of mind, necessary for devotion; and it is accordingly in every respect contrary to the regulations, which our sages have recommended to be observed during the time, we are *offering* our prayers to God.

**203.** ***What regulations have they laid down?***

תפלה צריכה כונת הלב" .

Praying requires devotion and collectedness of thought."

תפלה בלא כונה כגוף בלא נשמה" .

Prayer without devotion, is like an inanimate[32] body."

ויפנה את לבו מכל המחשבות ויראה עצמו כאלו הוא עומד לפני השכינה כעבד העומד לפני רבו וגו'.

הכון לקראת אלהיך ישראל" .

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[31] The Hebrew expresses *praying* by the word התפלל, the reciprocum of פלל to judge, to test; therefore, *to test one's self.* Prayer: תפלה *self-examination.*

[32] That our wise men thought devotion and collectedness of thought the first and chief requisites for prayer, can also be clearly proven by the *short* formulæ, which they have instituted for those who are at sea, at a dangerous place, or in any other situation, in which long prayers and serious reflection become impossible. (Talmud, Berachoth, fol. 29.) Of these formulæ *Maimonides* adduces only the following: צרכי עמך ישראל מרובים ודעתם קצרה יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתתן לכל אחד ואחד כדי פרנסתו ולכל גויה וגויה די מחסורה והטוב בעיניך עשה ברוך אתה ה' שומע תפלה. "The wants of thy people Israel are many; but their knowledge is weak and limited. O may it please thee, Eternal, our God! to give to each his maintenance, and whatever he may want for body and soul. Do however unto us, as seems best to thee in thy wisdom; thy will be done! Praised be thou, O Eternal, who hearest our prayers!"

Therefore it is necessary, that a man should guard himself very carefully against the diversion of his thoughts, and consider himself as in the immediate presence of God's majesty, and pre-

[p. 105] serve a respectful posture, like that a servant observes before his master." (Maimonides on the law of Prayer.) And thus says the prophet (Amos 4 ch. 12 v.): "Prepare thyself, O Israel, to meet thy God."

To prevent therefore our disturbing ourselves or others, we should follow the example of *Hannah*:

וחנה היא מדברת על לבה רק שפתיה נעות וקולה לא ישמע" .

And Hannah spoke for herself; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." (1 Sam. 1 ch. 13 v.)

**204.** ***Sould we also pray for others?***

Yes, it is the duty of every man; and our learned men say:

כל המתפלל על חברו והוא צריך לאותו דבר הוא נענה תחלה" .

He, who prays for his neighbour, and stands in need of the same thing, will be helped first."

**205.** ***Does Holy Writ furnish us any example?***

Yes, a great many. For instance, when God said to Moses:

ועתה הניחה לי ואכלם ואעשה אותך לגוי גדול. ויחל משה את פני ה' אלהיו וגו'" .

But now desist praying for them, for I will destroy them, and make thee a great nation. Thereupon Moses besought the Eternal his God." (Exo. 32 ch. 10 v.)

And *Jeremiah* and the other prophets did the same.

**206.** ***Did any of the patriarchs and other persons, mentioned in Scripture, ever pray for other nations?***

Yes; for when king Solomon consecrated the temple, he prayed most earnestly—that God, in his goodness, might graciously accept the prayers of other nations, hear their supplications, and assist them in their danger. (1 Kings, 8 ch. 41 v. and 2 Chron. 6 ch. 32 v.) When Abraham was informed of the impending destruction of Sodom and Gemorah, on account

[p. 106] of their manifold sins, he endeavoured, by interceding for them, to avert the punishment, either entirely or at least partly.

הנה נא הואלתי לדבר אל ה׳ ואנכי עפר ואפר:"

Behold I have undertaken to make representations to the Eternal, though I am but dust and ashes." (Gen. 18 ch. 23—33 v.)

**207.** ***Are we also to pray for our enemies?***

Certainly, it is our duty even to say every day, when we rise, and before we lay down, and before we commence our prayers:

הריני מוכן ומזומן לקים מצות ואהבת לרעך כמוך: שרא ליה מרא למען דמצער לי:"

I am ready and willing to observe the precepts, of loving my neighbour; I pardon all those who have caused me grief; pardon thou them too, O Lord!"

And David spoke (Psalm 35):

ואני בחלותם לבושי שק עניתי בצום נפשי ותפלתי על חקי תשוב כרע כאח לי:"

When they (my enemies) are sick, I clothe myself in sackcloth, and weaken myself with fasting, and I let my prayer sink in my bosom, as though they were friends or brothers."

**208.** ***What did Solomon ask of our Lord God?***

ונתת לעבדך לב שמע — להבחין בין טוב לרע — חכמה ומדעתן לי:"

Give, O Lord! an attentive heart to thy servant! give me wisdom and knowledge, to distinguish between good and evil." (1 Kings, 3 ch. 9 v. and 2 Chron. 1 ch. 10 v.)

שתים שאלתי מאתך אל תמנע ממני בטרם אמות שוא ודבר כזב הרחק ממני ראש ועשר אל תתן לי הטריפני לחם חקי:"

Two things I ask of thee, O deny them not to me, whilst I live. Remove foolish fancy and untruth from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but supply me moderately with what I may daily want." (Prov. 30 ch. 7 v.)

[p. 107] **209.** ***What moral are we to draw from this most beautiful and wise prayer?***

That the gifts of the mind should be the chief object of our desire, and that we should consider them as the greatest riches we can possess. We ought, therefore, to be satisfied, if we possess the indispensable only of the goods of this world, and it is improper to burden our heart with useless cares. In the same spirit did Jacob pray (Gen. 28 ch. 20 v.):

ושמרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך ונתן לי לחם לאכל ובגד ללבש:"

And if he preserve me on the way, which I am now going, and give me bread to eat, and clothes to cover myself."

**210.** ***How did David pray to God?***

ה׳ חקרתני ותדע"

O Eternal, thou hast searched and knowest me;

אתה ידעת שבתי וקומי

Do I sit, do I rise, it is known to thee:

בנתה לרעי מרחוק

Already afar thou probest my thoughts,

ארחי ורבעי זרית

My walk and my couch thou hast measured for me,

וכל דרכי הסכנתה

And prepared all my ways.

כי אין מלה בלשוני

Before yet a word was upon my tongue,

הן ה׳ ידעת כלה. . . .

Thou, O Lord! didst know all!

אנה אלך מרוחך

Whither shall I go from thy spirit?

ואנה מפניך אברח:

And whither shall I flee from thy face?

אם אסק שמים שם אתה

If I ascend to heaven, thou art there;

ואציעה שאול הנך:

And if I should lie down in the abyss, I should find thee!

אשא כנפי שחר

Should I fly on the wings of the morning-dawn,

אשכנה באחרית ים

To dwell at the farthest end of the sea:

גם שם ידך תנחני

Even there thy hand would lead me,

ותאחזני ימינך

And thy right hand would seize me.

ואמר אך חשך ישופני[p. 108]

If I even say, darkness shall surround me!

ולילה אור בעדני:

Then night even would become light around me.

גם חשך לא יחשיך ממך

For darkness darkens nothing for thee,

ולילה כיום יאיר

Night shines like the day,

כחשיכה כאורה. . . .

And light and shadow are to thee alike." (Psalm 139.)

לב טהור ברא לי אלהים"

Create, O God, in me a pure heart,

ורוח נכון חדש בקרבי

And give me a new noble mind.

אל תשליכני מלפניך

Thrust me not from before thee,

ורוח קדשך אל תקח ממני

And take not from me thy holy spirit!

השיבה לי ששון ישעך

Return to me the joy of thy salvation,

ורוח נדיבה תסמכני:

And let thy magnanimous spirit support me." (Psalm 51.)

כי גדול אתה ועשה נפלאות"

For thou art great and performest wonders,

אתה אלהים לבדך:

Thou art God alone!

הורני ה׳ דרכך

Teach me, O Eternal, thy ways,

אהלך באמתך

Let me walk in thy truth!

יחד לבבי ליראה שמך:

Cause my heart to devote itself solely to the fear of thy name;

אודך ה׳ אלהי בכל לבבי

That I may thank thee, O Eternal my God, with all my heart,

ואכבדה שמך לעולם:

And honour thy name for evermore!" (Psalm 86.)

# [p. —] APPENDIX.

## A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE CEREMONIAL LAWS AND CUSTOMS.

### 1.

The six hundred and thirteen precepts (365 *negative* and 248 *affirmative*) which are, according to the opinion of our principal doctors,[33] contained in the five books of Moses, may be conveniently and appropriately divided in three classes.—Namely:

*a. Moral laws*, i. e. precepts relating to morality and a proper conduct towards God and men.

*b. Local* and *police laws*, which refer to the then circumstances of that land, in which the Israelites lived, when they formed a separate state, and lived under the operation of their own laws. To this class belong all laws relative to punishments, as they are recorded in the Pentateuch. And

*c. Ceremonial laws*, or rules and ordinances relative to the outward worship of God; their object is always to keep alive within

[p. 110] us the belief in the *eternal* and *only* God, and the remembrance of his kindness towards us.

[33]: דרש ר׳ שמלאי תרי״ג מצות נאמרו לו למשה בסיני שס״ה לאוין כמנין ימות החמה רמ״ח עשה כמנין איבריו של אדם: "R. Simlai once commenced his discourse in the following manner: 365 are the days of the solar year; this also is the number of the *negative precepts* given to Moses on Sinai: 248 members are in the human body; and just as many *affirmative precepts* were given to Moses. For the purpose, that each day and every limb may remind thee of one of the divine laws!" (Tal. Tract. Maccoth, fol. 23.)

**2.**

Since the dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth, however, all the laws of the *second* kind, as also the greater part of the *third* class, are impracticable. For instance, the laws of sacrifices, the temple, priests and purification, the whole of which, with but few exceptions, are now not binding: as they are intimately connected with the existence of the temple in Jerusalem; and whereas this is destroyed, the laws connected with it have become impracticable. The whole number, therefore, of precepts yet practicable, is reduced to 369.

**3.**

Among these are 99—namely, 78 *positive* and 21 *negative*—precepts, which are only *accidental* or *conditional*, i. e. the exercise of which depends on certain cases, contingencies, and circumstances, which may never occur with certain persons. For example, if a man hires no labourers, he does not come under the *affirmative* precept (Deut. 24 ch. 14.): "Thou shalt pay to the poor labourer—be he of thy brothers or a stranger—*his wages on the same day!* and thou must not suffer the sun to set, before thou dost so!" nor the *negative* (Lev. 19 ch. 13 v.): "Thou shalt not keep back the wages of the labourer with thee till the morning!" and similar others. There are accordingly only 270 absolute and positive precepts; or 48 affirmative and 222 negatives.[34]

**4.**

The females are exempt from many ceremonial laws; namely, from the observance of the greater part of those affirmative precepts, which are not exercised at all times of the day and the year,

[p. 111] but are limited to a particular period. מצות עשה שהזמן גרמה נשים פטורות מהן: (Berachoth, fol. 20.) Thus, for instance, females are exempt from the wearing of the fringes (ציצית) and the phylacteries (as they are not worn after sunset); further from the precepts of the Tabernacle and Lulab (ישיבת סכה ונטילת לולב) with which the feast of Tabernacles is celebrated in the synagogue; and similar others. (It must be observed, however, that, if a female once accustoms herself to do any of the affirmative precepts, from which she is otherwise exempt, she is bound to adhere to this practice afterwards. This is the custom in almost every country where Jews are settled.)

**5.**

Besides the practicable *Mosaic* precepts, there are several *rabbinical* ordinances (מצות דרבנן) which we are all bound to observe, *without distinction of sex*. For example, the ordinance of the washing of hands, and the grace said *before* the use of any kind of food, drink, &c. (The returning of thanks *after* meals is a *Mosaic* institution.) The lighting of the lamps at the commencement of the sabbath and holy-days; the reading of the book of Esther on the feast of Purim; the lighting of

[34] From the preface of the justly highly valued and useful ספר החינוך:

the lamps during the eight Days of the Consecration (of the temple under the Maccabees— נר חנכה); the reading of various songs of thanks and praise from the Psalms of David on days of rejoicing (קריאת ההלל), and others of the like kind.

**6.**

Our wise men also say, if it is in accordance with the natural emotions of gratitude, no less than the precepts of the divine law, to *thank* God for every enjoyment, which promotes only the strengthening of our body: it is the more necessary, to do the same at every enjoyment of the soul, i. e. the observance of those precepts, which purpose the amelioration and welfare of our soul. We have

[p. 112] therefore not only a formula of prayers of thanks or *grace, before* and *after* the use of earthly things;[35] but also before the exercise of any ceremonial law. For instance: "Praised be thou, Eternal our God, king of the world! who hast sanctified us with thy commandments, and hast commanded us the precept of the fringes" (ציצית).

[p. 113] "Praised be thou —— and commanded us to lay the phylacteries."

"Praised be thou —— and commanded us to engage in the learning of the law." And so by all laws.

And whereas our religion demands of us, (see above §112), to obey also the ordinances of our wise men, we pronounce the same formula, before the performance of any one of the seven principal ordinances of the Rabbies (שבע מצות דרבנן), as before the obeying of any of the Mosaic laws. F. E. "Praised be thou, Eternal our God—who hast sanctified us with thy commandments, and ordered us to light the lamp of the consecration," (נר חנכה). "Praised —— and commanded us to read the roll" (of the book of *Esther*, on the Purim feast). And the same at the others.

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[35] F. E. Before the eating of bread made of rye, wheat, &c. "Praised be thou, O Eternal our God, king of the world, who producedst bread from the earth." Over any kind of cake: "Praised be thou, O Eternal—who didst create food of various kinds." Before drinking wine: "Praised . . . . . who didst create the fruit of the vine." Over all kinds of fruit, which grow on trees: "Praised . . . . . who didst create the fruit of trees." Over all productions of the earth or the fruit of shrubs: "Praised . . . . . who didst create the fruit of the earth." Over cheese, meat, eggs, &c. and all kinds of drink except wine: "Praised . . . . . through whose word all came into being." After the enjoyment of the last mentioned kinds of food and drink, say the following grace: "Praised be thou, O Eternal our God, king of the world! who didst create many beings with wants, which make them dependent on other creatures, through which the existence of all living things is preserved; praised be thou, Everliving God!"—At smelling aromatic herbs or flowers: "Praised . . . . . who createdst aromatic herbs." Over other aromatics, which do not grow out of the earth: "Praised . . . . . who didst create various kinds of aromatic things." At the sight of a rainbow: "Praised . . . . . who rememberest thy covenant, remainest true to thy word, and fulfillest thy promise." At the sight of trees in bloom: "Praised . . . . . who didst suffer nothing to be wanting in thy world, and didst create such beautiful beings and agreeable trees in the same, for the gratification of the children of man." At the sight of lightning, &c. "Praised . . . . . who always continuest to renew the works of the creation." Over thunder and heavy storms: "Praised . . . . . whose power and all-ruling strength fill the universe." At an unfortunate occurrence, or when we hear an evil account: "Praised . . . . . who art a just judge!"—At the hearing of good news, or at a fortunate occurrence: "Praised . . . . . who art an ever kind benefactor."—At the enjoyment of any *new* thing, and the commencement of festivals, and before the reading of the book of Esther on Purim, &c. "Praised . . . . . who hast preserved us alive, and in health, and permitted us to live to this time."

**7.**

Every Israelite should nevertheless know, or endeavour to learn, at the execution of any commandment, if it be Mosaic or Rabbinical; because error and ignorance in this respect may occasion gross abuses, and have very pernicious consequences. The yet customary and practicable ceremonial laws, which are recorded in the book שלחן ערוך (mentioned above § 109), particularly those in the first and second parts of the same (אורח חיים and יורה דעה), are of *three* various kinds namely: 1. מצות דאורייתא *Mosaic* precepts; 2. מצות דרבנן *Rabbinical* ordinances; and 3. מנהגים *Customs*.

The last again are very diversified; many of them are mere local usages, and practised only in a few districts or places,—and many others are those called מנהג חסידות or מדות חסידות i. e. customs from particular piety, or practices of certain pious men. As for instance, the custom of abstaining from all kinds of wine or meat during the thirteen last days of the month *Thamuz* (תמוז); or the practice of neither eating any *new* fruit, nor putting on a *new* garment during the first mentioned period and the nine first days of the month *Ab* (אב), (which time is called בין המצרים); so as not to be ob-

[p. 114] liged to pronounce the formula of grace, noticed in the note to the preceding paragraph, for the enjoyment of any new thing (שהחיינו); the custom of fasting on the 29th day of every month (ערב ר״ח) and to read certain penitential prayers, or, as it is commonly termed, to hold a small Day of Atonement (יום כפור קטן); not to use on the Sabbath *any other* language, besides the Hebrew. To *this class* (מדות חסידות) do the learned דרכי משה רש״ל and סימן מגן אברהם (צ״א) also reckon the custom *of keeping* the head covered without the synagogues.[36]

**8.**

Our wise men recommend *cleanliness*, as particularly obligatory upon every man. They say:

נקיות מביאה לידי טהרה טהרה מביאה לידי פרישות ופרישות מביאה לידי קדושה:"

Cleanliness of the body will occasion purity of mind and morals, and promote true piety" (or as they call it, sanctity).

They therefore made it a rule to wash the hands after rising from sleep, before commencing prayers and before meals. And for this very useful ordinance we thank God in the following formula:

[36]In mentioning this oriental custom, of keeping the head also covered in the houses of prayer, we read in *Midrash:* אמר ליה הקב״ה לישראל הרי לא הטרחתי עליכם לקרות פרועי ראש וכו׳: Only consider—spoke God to the Israelites—how little I desire from you any slavish service; I *would not even give you the trouble of* uncovering your heads, whilst you are reading the *Shemang*, and are acknowledging me as your Lord and King."

"Praised be thou, Eternal our God, king of the world! who hast sanctified us through thy commandments, and commanded us the washing of hands."

**9.**

Our first ideas at awakening should be directed to God; our

[p. 115] first thought every morning should be thankfulness for the benefits we receive daily and hourly from him. We have therefore a short but expressive prayer, which we are to pronounce immediately on awakening.

מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקים שהחזרת בי נשמתי בחמלה רבה באמונתך:"

I thank thee, ever-living, ever-enduring King! that thou hast again restored to me the use of my faculties, through thy great goodness and mercy."

**10.**

When we put on that garment (ארבע כנפות), on which the fringes ordained by the law (ציצית) are fixed, (Numb. 15 ch. 37 v. and Deut. 22 ch. 12 v.), we pronounce likewise the following prayer of thanks: "Praised . . . . . who hast sanctified us through thy commandments, and commanded us the precept of the fringes" (וצונו על מצות ציצית). But when we cover ourselves with the *prayer-cloak* (טלית), we say in place of the concluding words of the foregoing: (וצונו להתעטף בציצית) "sanctified and commanded us to *envelope ourselves with the garment of fringes*."

These fringes are to be considered as marks of remembrance and tokens, by which we are always reminded of the commandments of God; as it is written, (Numb. 15 ch. 39 v.):

והיה לכם לציצת וראיתם אתו וזכרתם את כל מצות ה' ועשיתם אתם ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם אשר אתם זנים אחריהם למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצותי והייתם קדשים לאלהיכם:"

These fringes shall serve you for the purpose, that you may see them and remember all the commandments of the Eternal and do them; but not follow the bent of your heart and of your eyes, by which you are led to sin; ye will thereby remember all my precepts and obey them, that you may be holy to your God."

**11.**

As soon as a boy has reached his thirteenth year, and he has

[p. 116] reason enough to keep his thoughts free from evil ideas, as well as his body and dress cleanly; it is his duty to lay every day, with the exception of Sabbath and festivals, the phylacteries (תפלין). These are two cubic formed parchment cases, in which the four chapters (adduced below)

from the Pentateuch, written on parchment, are inclosed.[37] Leather thongs are fixed on these two cases; of which one is laid on the left arm, just above the elbow, the other on the forehead. The *last* is closely fitted round the head, and hangs down on both sides round the neck; the former is wound seven times round the left arm, and three times round the middle finger.

Before laying the Tephillin it is customary to say the preparatory prayer: לשם יחוד קב״ה ושכינתיה בדחילו ורחימו בשם כל ישראל וגו׳; which can be thus translated:

"Out of respect and love to God, the only one, Eternal and Most High, praised be He, and in the name of the whole house of Israel, am I now prepared, with body and soul, to lay the Tephillin;

[p. 117] for the purpose of obeying the command of my Creator, which is written in the law: 'Thou shalt bind them on thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.' These Tephillin contain the *four* chapters, which commence with the words: "*Hear, O Israel—If you will hearken—Sanctify*—and, *When he will bring thee;* because the unity of God and his great wonders are mentioned therein, which he performed, when he carried us out of Egypt. For his is the government, no less in heaven, than on earth, and he

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[37] קדש "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, the first offspring of the mother, both of man and of beast; it is mine. Moses spoke to the people: remember this day, that ye went out of Egypt, from the house of slavery! for with a strong hand has the Eternal brought you out from here. Nothing leavened must be eaten. To-day ye will go out, in the month of Abib. When the Eternal now brings you to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which he has sworn to thy ancestors to give thee—a land in which milk and honey flow—thou shalt observe this service in this month. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh is a festival in honour of the Eternal. Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen, and no leaven shall be seen in all thy boundaries. And thou shalt then say to thy son: this is done on account of that, which the Eternal did for me when I went out of Egypt. This shall also be a sign on thy hand, and a mark of remembrance between thine eyes, that the law of the Eternal may ever be in thy mouth (i. e. be always transmitted further from father to son, and never be forgotten); for with a mighty hand did the Eternal bring thee out of Egypt. Observe therefore this precept from year to year." (Exod. 13 ch.) והיה כי יביאך ("It shall come to pass, when the Eternal brings thee into) the land of the Canaanite, which he has sworn unto thee and thy ancestors, and gives it thee: then thou shalt present to the Eternal all the first offspring of the mother: namely, all the first born of thy cattle, which are males, shall be consecrated unto the Eternal; the first born of the ass, thou shalt redeem with a lamb, but if thou wilt not redeem it, thou must break its neck; the first born of man, among thy children, thou shalt redeem (with money). If thy son asks thee: What is the reason of all this? then say to him: With a strong hand did the Eternal conduct us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. When Pharaoh refused to let us go, the Eternal slew all the first born in the land of Egypt, both those of man and of cattle. Therefore I do sacrifice to the Eternal all the first born of the mother, which are males, and redeem all the first born among my children. This shall be to thee a sign on thy hand, and as frontlets thy eyes: for with a mighty hand the Eternal did conduct us out of Egypt." (Ibidem.) שמע ("Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God is the only Eternal Being.) And thou shalt love the Eternal thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. These words which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart. Thou shalt teach them carefully to thy children, and always speak of them, when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest on the road, when thou liest down, and when thou risest. Bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be as marks of remembrance between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house and on thy gates." (Deut. 6 ch. 4—9 v.) והיה "If you will carefully hearken unto my commandments, which I command you this day, to love the Eternal your God, and to worship him, with all your heart and with all your soul: then will I give rain in your land, in its proper season, both the first and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, thy wine and thy oil. But be very careful, that your heart become not corrupted, and ye go astray and worship other gods, and bow down to them. For then the anger of the Eternal would be kindled against you, and he would close the heaven, that no rain should come, and the earth not yield its productions; and ye would be speedily lost from off the good land, which the Eternal gives you. Take therefore these my words well to your heart and your mind, and bind them as a sign upon your hand, and let them be as frontlets between your eyes. And teach them to your sons, to speak of them, when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest on the road, when thou liest down, and when thou risest. And write them on the door posts of thy house and on thy gates. That you and your children may remain as long upon that land, which the Eternal has sworn to your forefathers, to give to them, as the heaven remains over the earth." (Ibi. 11 ch. 13—21 v.)

[p. 118] can rule every thing and every where, as it pleases him best. In obedience to the divine command do I lay the Tephillin *on* the *arm*, and remember in so doing the words: 'With a stretched-out *arm* did the Eternal conduct thee out of Egypt.' Also on this spot, just opposite the *heart*, because I subject herewith all the desires and wishes of my heart to the holy will of my God. I do also lay the Tephillin of the head on the spot where the brain lays, where the organs of the higher capacities of the soul unite: to indicate, that I dedicate to the service of God all my senses and my thoughts."

"May God, in merit of my observing this commandment, give me strength enough to preserve my thoughts always pure, and my heart innocent; that no evil desires may ever overcome me, nor be able to lead me into the paths of sin. That I may be enabled to live always, as I most fervently desire, according to the statutes of my God. Amen."

The other prayers which belong hereto, are to be found (together with the daily service) in the book of common prayer (according to the custom of the German Jews).

[p. 119] **12.**

Amongst the prayers, however, must be particularly noticed:

קריאת שמע

and תפלת שמנה עשרה:

The *reading of the Shemang* is considered one of the *Mosaic* precepts. It is namely our duty to read every *morning* and *evening* the above mentioned chapters: שמע ישראל and והיה אם שמע, together with the five last verses of the 15th ch. of Num. (containing the commandment in regard to the fringes), with the utmost possible devotion, either in the *Hebrew*, or in *any other language*; but it is necessary, that we should be very careful to employ the most correct expressions in the language we are using, and to avoid all inelegant, not to mention, incorrect phrases.

But as the Hebrew is already the established language in our worship, it is proper to acquire a sufficient knowledge of the same, if it be at all within our reach, so that we may be able to perform our devotion in this language.

קורא אדם את שמע בכל לשון שיהיה מבינה: ויזהר מדברי שבוש שבאותה הלשון: וידקדק בה כמו שמדקדק בלשון הקדש: (רמב״ם פ״ב מהלכ׳ ק״ש: וש״ע א״ח סי׳ ס״ב): (ועמש״כ מגן אברהם שם):

This *reading of the Shemang* is considered by our Rabbins, as our confession of faith; they call it: קבלת עול מלכות שמים, the acknowledging of the kingdom of God, i. e. to declare God our ruler, and to subject ourselves to his guidance and laws; and they make it a requisite condition in reading the Shemang, that a person should *well understand* what he is saying.

**13.**

The שמנה עשרה prayer (18[38] Benedictions) is a Rabbinical institution.—*Maimonides* ( פ״א מהלכות תפלה) says the following on this

[p. 120] subject: The Jewish people, returning from the Babylonian captivity (about 3410 A. M.) had corrupted their language to such a degree, among the Persians, Greeks, and other nations, that they were *unable* to express themselves plainly and correctly in *any one;*—and Nehemiah complains of this (13 ch. 24 v.): "Their children speak half Asdodish, and understand neither the Jewish language, nor that of any other nation; I reproved them therefore." For this reason, were these prayers projected for their use, by Ezra and his college. (Before this period they had no set prayers, at least none which we can designate as such with any degree of certainty; though some few short prayers are ascribed to several persons, who died before the destruction of the *first* temple.) These formulæ contain thanksgivings and petitions for the most important requisites and occurrences of life, in as few words as possible; and the wise institutors of these prayers purposed thereby, that the people should be able to express their most important wants in a pure and appropriate language. The *three* first divisions contain praises of God, the others are petitions for health, support, peace, &c.

**14.**

In accordance with the well known verse from the Psalms (55, v. 18): ערב ובקר וצהרים אשיחה ואהמה וישמע קולי: "At evening, morning, and noon I complain and moan, and he hears my voice;" we read this prayer *three* times every day; namely, as שחרית morning, מנחה vesper, and ערבית evening prayers. These times of the day were also therefore chosen, because the sacrifices in the temple were offered at the same periods; and because the prayers are now in the place of the sacrifices, according to the expression of the prophet *Hosea* (14 ch. 3 v.):

[p. 121]ונשלמה פרים שפתינו:"

With our lips (i. e. with our prayers) we will replace the steers" (sacrifices).

We have also therefore the (מוסף) additional or extraordinary prayer on Sabbaths, festivals, and new-moon-days; because on these days there were additional offerings, מלבד עולת התמיד ומנחתה besides the daily customary sacrifices and their requisite accompaniments, as we find laid down more at large in the 28th and 29th chapters of Numbers.

[38]The Portuguese Jews call it the עמידה, from the verb עמד, to *stand*, because it is said standing. This prayer contains now nineteen benedictions, as in the time of one of the Gamaliels *one* was added against the heretics, dissenters and enemies of the faith; the original name however is yet preserved. *Translator.*

**15.**

What has been said above, in reference to our being permitted to read the *Shemang* in any language, is also applicable to this and all other prayers and benedictions; and the Talmudists teach in many places:

יוכל להתפלל בכל לשון שירצה: (ש"ע א"ח סי' ק"ב:)"

That he, who understands not the Hebrew, would do well to pray in any language he may understand."

מוטב להתפלל בלשון שמבין אם אינו מבין לה"ק: (מגן אברהם שם וסי' ס"ב:)

(It has, therefore, been always customary, to have the prayers intended for the sole use of females, in the vernacular language of the country; as they had not in every country and age the same facility of acquiring a competent knowledge of the holy language, with the members of the other sex.)

**16.**

Three times every week, namely, on Monday, Thursday, and Sabbath, portions of the law are read aloud in the synagogues, from the manuscript rolls (ספרי תורה). The Pentateuch is for this reason divided into 54 weekly lectures (סדרות), and each of these lectures in seven portions (פרשיות). On the *morning* of the Sabbath an entire *Sedrah* (סדרה) is read (which is always indicated in the Jewish calendar); but in the *afternoon*, and on Monday and Thursday

[p. 122] mornings, only the first *Parshah* of the following סדרה (for the ensuing Sabbath). The readings for the festivals, new-moon, and fast-days, consist of those portions of the Pentateuch, which have reference to the celebration of the day, and the sacrifices brought on the same; or in other words, those portions, which according to their import belong to the order of the day.

The number of those called[39] up to the law at these readings (קרואים), is as follows: On Monday, Thursday, Sabbath afternoon, fast-days, Purim, and Hanuckah, *three;* on new-moon-days and half-festivals (the middle days of Paysach and Succoth), *four;* on high festivals, *five;* on the Day of Atonement, *six;* on Sabbath, *seven;* besides the (מפטיר) *Maphtere*—with the exception of the fast-days—who reads a chapter from one of the prophets *in conclusion* (הפטרה), which has usually some reference to the order of the day. All those present, who do not know the parts read aloud by

[39]The person called up to the law, on ascending the תבה or *desk*, says, יי עמכם; and receives for answer: יברכך יי; he then says: ברכו את יי המברך and is answered: ברוך יי המברך לעולם ועד; he then resumes: ברוך יי המברך לעולם ועד; and adds the following grace: ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים ונתן לנו את תורתו ברוך אתה ה' נותן התורה: Which can be thus translated; "Praised . . . . who hast chosen us from all nations, and given us thy law; praised be thou, Eternal, who gavest the law." After the reading he says: ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר נתן לנו תורת אמת וחיי העולם נטע בתוכינו ברוך אתה ה' נותן התורה: "Praised . . . who hast given us the law of truth, and hast planted amongst us life everlasting; praised be thou, &c." *Translator.*

heart, ought to read them to themselves, only loud enough to reach their own ears, after the reader, from a printed Bible. In old times, it was also customary, for an appointed translator to read a *translation* of each verse aloud, after the reader had read it in Hebrew. A custom, which, more than any other, ought certainly to be reinstated.

[p. 123] **17.**

The following are the principal features of the Jewish calendar.

We reckon from the creation, and commence the year usually in the month of *September*. (For example, from the 25th Sept. 1813 to the 14th Sept. 1814 was the year 5574 from the creation, or 3760 in advance of the Christian era.) A common year (שנה פשוטה) has *twelve* months, each of which commences with the *new-moon*, and has either 29 or 30 days. But the thirtieth day of each month (having this number of days) is also celebrated in the synagogue as a new-moon-day; so that the succeeding month is considered as having *two* new-moon-days. For, properly speaking, there is between one new-moon and the other a period of 29 days, 12 hours, and 793 parts (1080 being considered equal to one hour). Now 12 such months make only a *lunar* year of 354 days, and consequently somewhat more than *eleven* days less than a *solar* year. Therefore, to remain even with the solar year, and to celebrate the passover-feast, agreeably to the biblical precept in the *spring-month*,[40] an additional month of 29[41] days (before the passover-month), which is called ואדר or אדר שני (*Veadar*), is intercalated every *two* or *three* years. Such a year of 13 months is called a *leap-year* (שנה מעוברת); and in every period of nineteen years (commonly called: מחזור קטן, lunar cycle) are always seven such leap-years; to wit: the 3d, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th.

[p. 124] **18.**

We have no proper names for the days of the week; and instead of Sunday, Monday, &c. we say merely the *first, second, third,* day, &c. of the week. The same was the case with the *months* before the Babylonian captivity: for only a few had particular names, as far as we know, previous to that time; and they were commonly designated as the *first, second, &c.* To distinguish, however, that month more particularly, in which the children of Israel went out of Egypt, and to perpetuate through this means the recollection of this memorable occurrence in every possible manner, it is

[40] שמור את חדש האביב ועשית פסח לה׳ אלהיך כי בחדש האביב הוציאך ה׳ אלהיך ממצרים לילה: "Take care to observe the spring-month, that thou sacrificest in the same the passover-offering in honour of the Eternal thy God; for in the spring-month did the Eternal thy God bring thee out of Egypt at night." (Deut. 16 ch. 1 v.) This is thus explained in Tradition: "Take care of the spring month, take especial care, that thou organisest thy calculation so, that the month in which thou bringest the passover-lamb, be also the one in which the grain ripens."

[41] Properly speaking, the leap-year has thirty days additional, as the month Adar, which has commonly twenty-nine, has in this case thirty days. *Translator.*

considered as the first of the months,[42] although in point of fact the year commences in the fall, as can be clearly inferred from several passages of Scripture (particularly Exod. 23 ch. 16 v. and 34 ch. 22 v.). Others are of opinion, that we have *two* kinds of year; and that the *civil year* (i. e. for all occurrences in civil life) commences in the fall; but the *ecclesiastical*, or that relating to religious matters, in the spring.

**19.**

We will now give a list of the months, with their present names, in the biblical order, together with the festivals and other remarkable days, occurring in each of them.

ניסן

*Nissan*, (in the older parts of Scripture, חדש האביב spring month, lit. the month when the grain shoots into ears), has always *thirty* days, from about the 20th of March to the 18th of April; it is in fact the seventh, and in a leap year the eighth month of the year; but is, from the reason just given, called the *first* in rank. On the 14th of this month (ערב פסח Passover-eve) all leavened bread with whatever belongs to it, (as vessels, in which it has been pre-

[p. 125] pared, beer, spirituous liquors made of grain, &c.), must be removed out of the house; and on the evening of the same day the *Passover*, or חג המצות feast of unleavened bread, commences, and lasts with us *eight* days; during all which time nothing leavened of wheat, rye, barley, oats, and spelt, is permitted to be eaten or used.

In the times, when the temple yet stood, the passover-lamb (קרבן פסח) was sacrificed in the afternoon of the 14th day, midst songs of festivity and praise; and it was necessary, that it should be eaten in each family in the evening, and nothing was to be left till the morning. Even in our days, it is yet customary in Israel, that every head of a family relates this night to the inmates of his house, who are assembled around him to partake of the wine of grace and the unleavened cakes, the wonderful history of our redemption from Egyptian thraldom.

Concerning every thing, which relates to the festivity, origin, duties, and customs of this feast, we are fully informed in the 12th and 13th chapters of Exodus; these are therefore read in the synagogue on the first day of Passover (the 15th of the month).

**20.**

Of the eight days, during which we celebrate the feast of unleavened bread, only the two first (the 15th and 16th) and the two last (21st and 22nd) are kept as strict holidays (מקראי קדש). The four middle-days, however, are called (חול המועד) intermediate-days, or half-festivals; and they are in

[42]: החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה "This month shall be to you the first of months; it shall be to you the first of all the months of the year." (Ex. 12 ch. 2 v.)

so far distinguished from the strictly kept holidays, as we are permitted to pursue on these days the means of our support, and to do those things which cannot be conveniently deferred.

**21.**

The *second* month we call *Iyar* (אייר); in the older Scriptures however it has the name of זיו (the month of splendour or beauty); it has always 29 days, from about the 19th of April to the 17th of May.

[p. 126] The 18th of this month is known by the name of ל"ג בעומר, i. e. the 33rd from the day, on which an *omer-full* of the first-ripe grain was sacrificed in the temple, that is to say, from the second day of the passover. It is said, that an epidemic disease, which once swept away a great number of Rabbi Akiba's scholars, ceased entirely on this day, for which reason it is also called the *scholars' feast.*

**22.**

The *third* month, *Sivan* (סיון), has *always* thirty days; from about the 18th of May to the 16th of June.

On the sixth and seventh we celebrate the *Pentecost;* in Scripture it is called, חג השבעות the feast of weeks, on account of the seven weeks, which we *count* from the second day of the Passover till this time; also חג הקציר, harvest-feast, for, as it appears from many passages, it is highly probable, that the harvest commenced in Palestine immediately after Passover, and was finished in the different districts during these seven weeks.[43] This feast is also called

[p. 127]יום הבכורים,

the day of the first ripe fruits, because on this day it was usual to bring the first fruits, as a present, to the temple. In our synagogues this feast is particularly celebrated, as the day of the promulgation of the law (זמן מתן תורתנו), which was revealed on this day in so extraordinary a manner on Mount Sinai. (See Exodus, chap. 19th.)

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[43] כי תבאו אל הארץ אשר אני נתן לכם וקצרתם את קצירה והבאתם את עמר ראשית קצירכם אל הכהן וגו׳ · וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את עמר התנופה שבע שבתות תמימת תהיינה ··· והקרבתם מנחה חדשה לה׳ ממושבתיכם תביאו לחם תנופה שתים שני עשרנים וגו׳ · "When you come in the land which I give you, and you will commence harvesting, you shall bring then an omer-full of the first of your cutting to the priest, &c. You shall then count from the day after the festival seven full weeks; that is to say, from the day that you brought the omer of the wave-offering . . . . You shall then bring a new meal-offering in honour of the Eternal. From your residences you shall bring two loaves of the finest flour, as a wave-offering, two tenth of an epha, &c." (Lev. 23 ch. 10—22 v.) שבעה שבעת תספר לך מהחל חרמש בקמה תחל לספר שבעה שבעות ועשית חג שבעות לה׳ אלהיך · "Seven weeks thou shalt number, from the time that the sickle is first laid on the standing corn, thou shalt commence counting the seven weeks; and at the end, thou shalt make the feast of weeks in honour of the Eternal." (Deut. 16 ch. 9 v.)

**23.**

The *fourth* month, *Tamuz* (תמוז), has always 29 days; from about the 17th of June to the 15th of July. The 17th of this month (שבעה עשר בתמוז) is a universal day of fasting and repentance. Zachariah (8 ch. 19 v.) calls it: צום הרביעי the fast of the fourth month. According to *Jeremiah* (39 ch. 2 v.) the conquest of Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish empire, did take place as early as the *ninth* of this month, after a siege of eighteen months (about 3340 A. M.); the fast day is nevertheless at the present time fixed for the *seventeenth,* because this is the day, on which Jerusalem was taken by the Romans just before the destruction of the second temple (about 3830 A. M.), which event is more immediately calamitous to us, than the conquest by Nebuchadnezzar: besides several other calamities befel our nation on this day, as we read in the Mishna. (Tr. *Taanith* IV.)

**24.**

The *fifth* month, *Ab* (אב), has always 30 days, from about the 16th of July to the 14th of August. The ninth of this month (תשעה באב) is distinguished by the many calamities, which our na-

[p. 128] tion encountered on the same, (see Talmud Roshe Hashanah, fol. 18; Taanith, fol. 27, and other places)—chiefly however by the destruction of the first and the second temples, and the total dissolution of the Jewish state. (2 Kings 25 ch. 8 v. and Jeremiah 52 ch. 12 v.) It is for this reason the principal day of fasting and mourning; the fasting commences already on the evening previous, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah (איכה) are sung in the synagogue both evening and morning. In Zechariah (8 ch. 19 v.) this day is called: צום החמישי the fast of the fifth month. (In dating a letter, &c. this month is commonly called *Menachem* מנחם after this day.)

The 15th of this month (חמשה עשר באב) was formerly a day devoted to rural festivities. The young females of the Israelites celebrated then, with dances and festive ornaments, the commemoration of the reconciliation, which they effected, between all the other tribes of the Israelites, and the tribe of Benjamin, which had been weakened, and nearly exterminated, in the bloody civil war, which is recorded in the last chapter of the book of Judges. The working people then resigned themselves to merriment, because on that day terminated annually the cutting of the wood for the use of the altar, (Nehem. 10 ch. 34 v.); therefore it is also called: יום תבר מגל the day, on which the axe was broken. (Talmud, Taanith, fol. 30.)

**25.**

The *sixth* month, *Elul* (אלול), has always only 29 days; from about the 15th of August to the 12th of September. In the common computation of time, from the creation of the world, it is the last of

the *civil* year; the last days of the same are called "days of forgiving of sins;" because ימי הסליחה[44] additional penitential prayers are read in the synagogues before the break of day, and the people

[p. 129] are reminded to repent. Many persons moreover fast voluntarily on the same, in order to conclude the year with repentance, devotion, and the exercise of good deeds. The same is the case with the first ten days of the new year, which are therefore called עשרת ימי התשובה "*the ten days of repentance.*" The Rabbis describe them as a time, appointed for the trial and judgment of the world, in which the occurrences of the coming year are ordained, as well for each individual, as for the whole body of mankind. (See Talmud Tractate Roshe Hashanah and Tractate Yoma.)

**26.**

The *seventh*—and in the civil year the *first*—month is *Tishry* (תשרי), and has always 30 days; from about the 13th of September to the 12th of October. In the older parts of Scripture, it is called ירח האתנים, the month of the *gathering* of the yet remaining produce of the field. (According to others, the *first month of the ancients,* i. e. of those who lived before Moses.)

The first two days of this month are strictly observed, and celebrated in the synagogues in solemn manner by the reading of many particular prayers and hymns, but chiefly by the *blowing of the cornet* (תקיעת שופר). This festival we call ראש השנה the beginning of the year; in holy writ it is styled יום הזכרון the Day of Remembrance; also יום תרועה the day of the blowing of the cornet. (Lev. 23 ch. 24 v. and Num. 29 ch. 1 v.) The Rabbins refer to this day the 81st Psalm, which says:

תקעו בחדש שופר בכסה ליום חגנו כי חק לישראל הוא משפט לאלהי יעקב ·"

> Blow the cornet on the new-moon-day! at the celebration of our solemn festival; it is a statute for Israel, an ordinance of Jacob's God."

The blowing of the cornet on the new year's day, is a sign of our proclaiming our God, as king; it should remind us of *that* blowing of the cornet, which the people heard, when the law was proclaimed from Sinai; then again it is intended to serve as an

[p. 130] earnest admonition to the people, and an excitation to repentance and conversion;[45] as also Amos (ch. 3. v. 6.) says:

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[44] This is according to the custom of the German Jews; but the Portuguese commence already with the *first* of this month. *Translator.*

[45] אף על פי שתקיעת שופר בראש השנה גזירת הכתוב רמז יש בו כלומר עורו ישנים משנתכם ונרדמים הקיצו מתרדמתכם ! וחפשו מעשיכם וחזרו בתשובה וזכרו בוראכם · אלו השוכחים את האמת בהבלי הזמן ושוגים כל שנתם בהבל וריק אשר לא יועיל ולא יציל ! הביטו לנפשותיכם והטיבו דרכיכם ומעלליכם ויעזוב כל אחד מכם דרכו הרעה ומחשבתו אשר לא טובה וגו' · (רמב"ם פ"ג מהלכות תשובה ·) "It is indeed incumbent on us, by the command of the law, to blow the cornet on this day; but it has nevertheless the meaning, as if it were to call to us: Awake, ye who sleep! rouse yourselves, ye who slumber! remember your Creator! investigate your conduct and repent! O you, who, forgetful, of the true aim of truth, squander away the precious time, and spend the whole year in worthless and foolish pursuits, and grasp at that which is worthless—look but once after the welfare

אם יתקע שופר בעיר ועם לא יחרדו ·"

Could the cornet be blown in a city, and the people not tremble?"

This however is one of those Mosaic precepts, from the observance of which the females are exempt, since it is only for a fixed time. (See above.)

**27.**

The *third* of this month is a universal fast day צום גדליהו on account of the murder of that noble minded man, *Gedaliah, son of Ahikam,* whom Nebuchadnezzar had appointed chief of the Israelites yet remaining in their country, after the destruction of the first temple; and who was, on this day, treacherously slain, as were also many others of his friends, by which means the people of Israel were thrown in the greatest misery. (Jer. 41 ch. 2 v. and

[p. 131] 2 Kings 25 ch. 25 v.) In Zechariah (8 ch. 19 v.) this day is called צום השביעי the fast day of the seventh month.

**28.**

The *tenth* of this month is called יום הכפורים, *Day of Atonement,* and is considered as the holiest day of the whole year, and is set entirely apart for fasting, devotion, and repentance.

אך בעשור לחדש השביעי הזה יום הכפרים הוא מקרא קדש יהיה לכם ועניתם את נפשתיכם ... וכל מלאכה לא תעשו בעצם היום הזה כי יום כפרים הוא לכפר עליכם לפני ה׳ אלהיכם ... שבת שבתון הוא לכם ועניתם את נפשתיכם בתשעה לחדש בערב מערב עד ערב תשבתו שבתכם ·"

But on the tenth day of this seventh month, is the Day of Atonement, it shall be to you a day of holy convocation and of fasting . . . . . No work shall ye be permitted to do on the same; for it is the Day of Atonement, on which you will be pardoned before the Eternal your God . . . . It shall be to you a complete day of rest, and you shall fast; on the evening of the ninth you shall commence, and keep your resting day from evening to evening." (Lev. 23 ch. 26—32 v.)

In the times of the temple this day was distinguished by a peculiar mode and order of sacrifices and offerings, and the service was obliged to be performed by the *high priest* alone, who was then also permitted to enter this one day, but on no other throughout the whole year, into the *holy of holies* (קדש הקדשים). The reader will please to refer to the 16th chapter of Leviticus, which is also read in the synagogue, as the order of the day. Whoever confesses, on this day, his sins before God, with a sorrowful heart, and promises amendment, and yields all enmity towards his neighbours, and endeavours to pacify those whom he has injured, wronged, or offended: has the

of your souls, and mend your actions! Let each of you take a look at his deeds and pursuits, and forsake his evil course, and suppress his evil desires, the tendency of which is injurious, &c." (Maimonides.)

promise, that he will receive a complete remission of sin and pardon of God. The object of the Day of Atonement is also to promote the reconciliation of one man with another, as is also

[p. 132] said by our sages in many passages of their writings. Thus, they also explain the 30th verse from the 16th ch. of Leviticus, in the last Mishna of *Yoma:*

כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני ה׳ תטהרו — עבירות שבין אדם למקום יה"כ מכפר עבירות שבין אדם לחבירו אין יה"כ מכפר עד שירצה את חברו ׳"

For on this day shall atonement be extended to you, to cleanse you; from all your *sins before the Eternal* you shall be clean.' For those sins alone, which were committed against the Eternal, the Day of Atonement can be available; but not for those, by which one man has transgressed against another, as long as *he* has not asked *his* pardon, and made restitution to him, or otherwise satisfied him."

**29.**

The 15th of this month is the first day of the *feast of Tabernacles,* חג הסכות and חג האסיף the festival of the gathering, or the autumnal feast.

The two first and the two last days are celebrated with us as holy festivals—מקראי קדש but the five intermediate days, are, like the middle days of the passover, only half-festivals ( ימי חול המועד). For the ordinances relating to this festival, see Lev. 23 ch. 33—44 v. There we read also:

ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר כפת תמרים וענף עץ עבת וערבי נחל ושמחתם לפני ה׳ אלהיכם שבעת ימים ׳"

And ye shall take unto yourselves on the first day, the fruit of the tree *Hadar* (אתרוג); the palm-branch (לולב *Lulab*); the twig of the tree *Aboth* (myrtle), and the willow of the brook; and you shall be joyful before the Eternal your God, for seven days."[46]

[p. 133]בסכת תשבו שבעת ימים ··· למען ידעו דרתיכם כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציאי אותם מארץ מצרים אני ה׳ אלהיכם ׳"

Seven days you shall dwell in booths . . . . . that your latest descendants may learn to know, that I caused the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I am the Lord your God."

[46]Some of our learned men think the probable meaning of this *bunch* to be, that it should be a symbol of concord and friendship, and at the time an admonition to us, not to despise any created thing, be it ever so unimportant: the common willow and the most beautiful and aromatic fruit of the most elegant tree—the *lowest* and the *highest,* are alike before the Eternal. According to others, these four kinds have reference to the human body: the heart, the back-bone and ribs, the eyes and lips—all should be devoted to the service of the Eternal.

**30.**

The two last days of this festival (the 22nd and 23rd of the month)—on which however neither of the just mentioned precepts are to be observed, i. e. סכה and לולב—we celebrate under the name of שמיני חג עצרת *the concluding feast;* according to the precept of the Pentateuch, (Numb. 29 ch. 35 v.):

"ביום השמיני עצרת תהיה לכם כל מלאכת עבדה לא תעשו ·

On the eighth day you shall have the feast of conclusion, and do no manner of work."

And whereas the 54th section of the law וזאת הברכה is read on the last day, and the annual reading of the Pentateuch is thus concluded: it is the occasion of particular rejoicing, which we call שמחת תורה *rejoicing of the law,* and it is celebrated in many places with much cordiality and convivial merriment.

**31.**

The *eighth* month, *Marcheshvan* (מרחשון), in the older parts of Scripture ירח בול rain-month,—has sometimes 29, at other times 30 days; from about the 13th of October to the 12th of November.

[p. 134] **32.**

The *ninth* month, *Kislev* (כסלו), also has sometimes 29, at other times 30 days; from about the 13th of November to the 11th of December.

On the twenty-fifth of this month commence the *eight days of the consecration* (of the temple) שמונת ימי חנכה; on these days portions from the Pentateuch are daily read in the synagogue; the *Hallel* הלל (Psalms 113—118) is sung, and the על הנסים (a prayer of thanksgiving, which contains the occasion of this church-festival) is inserted in the *eighteen benedictions,* and in the grace after meals. This festival was instituted in commemoration of a great victory, which the Israelites achieved (about 3630 A. M.) under the guidance of the high priest Mathathias and his sons (the Maccabees) over the army of Antiochus Epiphanes. After which event, the temple at Jerusalem, which had been defiled by the Greeks, was purified, and the altar rebuilt, and again consecrated.

During this festival *lamps are lighted every evening,* both in the synagogues and the dwellings of the Jews, midst songs of praise and thanksgiving.

The number of the *lights of consecration* is every day augmented by *one;* namely, *one* lamp only is lighted on the evening after the 24th, the *second* night *two,* and so forth, till on the last evening *eight* lamps are lighted.

**33.**

The *tenth* month, *Tebeth* טבת, has never more than 29 days; from about the 12th of December to the 9th of January.

The *tenth* of this month עשרה בטבת is a fast day, because *Nebuchadnezzar,* king of Babylon, commenced the siege of Jerusalem, during the time of the first temple, on this day. (2 Kings 25 ch. 1 v. and Jeremiah 39 ch. 1 v.) In Zechariah (8 ch. 19 v.) this day is called צום העשירי, the fast of the tenth month.

כה אמר ה׳ צבאות צום הרביעי וצום החמישי וצום השביעי וצום העשירי יהיה לבית[p. 135]
יהודה לששון ולשמחה ולמעדים טובים והאמת והשלום אהבו ׃"

> Thus speaketh the Eternal Zebaoth: The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be changed unto the house of Judah, to gladness and to joy, and into happy festivals; but love ye only truth, love but peace!"

The reader will please to compare this passage with the seventh chapter of the same prophet, where he refers to the ancient prophets (Isaiah 58 ch. and Jeremiah 22 ch. &c.), who there teach which fasting is truly pleasing and acceptable to the Deity.

**34.**

The *eleventh* month, *Shebat* שבט, has always thirty days; from about the 10th of January to the 8th of February.

The *twelfth* month, *Adar* אדר, has in a common year שנה פשוטה only 29, but in a leap-year, מעוברת, 30 days; from about the 9th of February to the 10th of March. The month, which in a leap-year is intercalated after Adar, is called *Ve-Adar* or *Adar Sheny* (second Adar) ואדר or אדר שני, and has always twenty-nine days.

**35.**

The thirteenth of the last month (either *Adar* or *Ve-adar*) is called תענית אסתר (fast of Esther), and is intended to remind us of that ever memorable fast, which the queen *Esther* imposed upon herself and the Israelitish inhabitants of *Susan.* (Esther 4 ch. 16 v.) The day following (the 14th) is a day of rejoicing, called *Purim* פורים, in commemoration of the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites, through the agency of *Mordecai* and *Esther,* from the evil machinations of *Haman,* the cruel minister of the Persian king Ahasuerus, about 3400 A. M.

The book of Esther (מגלת אסתר), which contains the account of this transaction, is then read in the synagogues with becoming so-

[p. 136] lemnity, in the evening and the morning, and the prayer of thanks (על הנסים), is inserted in the eighteen benedictions and in the grace after meals.

Family entertainments and other modes of rejoicing, but more particularly distributing of *alms* and deeds of benevolence, ought to enhance the festivities of this day; as we read:

לעשות אותם ימי משתה ושמחה ומשלוח מנות איש לרעהו ומתנות לאבינים ·"

> To make them days of feasting and joy, and to send presents to one another, and to distribute gifts to the needy." (Esther, 9 ch. 22 v.)

**36.**

At all our Sabbaths and festivals, as also in every other respect, we reckon the night, as being a part of the following day; and this appears to be the proper mode of calculation from many parts of Scripture; and more especially from the history of the creation; where it says: And it was *evening,* and it was *morning,* one day. (Genesis 1 ch.)

**37.**

Those of the holy days, which are to be kept strictly, (§ 80, called in Scripture, days of holy convocation), differ from the Sabbath only in so far, by its being permitted then, if we xcept the Day of Atonement, to kindle fire and light, cook and bake, and do every thing which is requisite for the *immediate* preparation of food. As we read in Exo. 12 ch. 16 v.:

כל מלאכה לא יעשה בהם אך אשר יאכל לכל נפש הוא לבדו יעשה לכם ·"

> No labour shall be done on the same, but whatever serves as food for man, this alone may be done for you."

**38.**

The following is the reason, why the Israelites residing *out of*

[p. 137] *Palestine* always prolong the prescribed duration of the festivals one day: In old times, when the calculation of the year was yet uncertain, and the rules for regulating the calendar were not yet laid down, it was impossible to know, if a month should have 29 or 30 days, until a formal decree of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem had been issued concerning the same. This decree could not be made, till after the appearance of the new-moon; but immediately thereafter messengers were sent out to the provinces, who travelled with the utmost expedition, to make those at a distance acquainted with the day, on which the festivals ought to commence. Those Israelites, therefore, who lived so far from Jerusalem, that they could not receive the account till after the fourteenth of the month, were compelled, since they were ignorant of the proper period of the commencement of the feast, to observe *two* days, instead of *one,* not to miss the proper period of the festival. And this *second day* of the festival of the *distant* (*captives*) י"ט שני של גליות was sanctioned by the Talmudists;

and it was decreed, that it should be observed by the Israelites out of Palestine, *even then,* when the calendar had been every where established according to fixed and certain rules. (Maimonides. רמב"ם פ"ה מהלכות קדוש החדש)

**39.**

The three festivals, *Passover, Pentecost* and *Tabernacles,* had, besides being originally instituted in commemoration of certain particular national events, also reference to *agriculture,* which was, as has been shown, §. 170, the chief employment and avocation of the Israelites. This is demonstrated not alone by the sacrifices, which were offered on the same—as the omer of the first cut grain on Passover; the two loaves on Pentecost, and the feast at the conclusion of the harvest;—but also by the names, which are given to these festivals in Scripture. (See Exod. 23 ch. 16 v. and Deuteronomy 16 ch. 9—13 v.)

וחג הקציר בכורי מעשיך אשר תזרע בשדה וחג"

And (Pentecost) the

האסף בצאת השנה באספך את מעשיך מן השדה ·[p. 138]

harvest-feast of the first ripened of thy field-labours, namely, of that which thou sowest in thy field. And (Tabernacles) the feast of the gathering of thy fruit, at the end of the year, when thou hast gathered the produce of thy labour from the field."

**40.**

These three festivals are also commonly called שלש רגלים, the three seasons of Pilgrimage; because these were the periods, at which the people used to undertake their pilgrimages to Jerusalem. (See Exodus 23 ch. 14 v. and 34 ch. 23 v. also Deut. 16 ch. 16 v.) By these pilgrimages it was intended to excite in the people a love of virtue and religion; and that they should, by their presence in God's holy sanctuary, be filled with a holy reverence for God, temple, priests, and the teachers of the law.

The festivals also afforded excellent opportunities of allaying family disputes, promoting concord, and creating friendship.

The pilgrimage in the autumn of the *seventh* (release) year, was particularly remarkable, on account of the public religious instruction. As no field-labour was performed in this year, every man could find time and leisure to attend the great assemblage, in which the king, or other chief of the nation, read, on the second day of the feast of Tabernacles, a great portion of the Pentateuch to the members of both sexes, with the utmost possible solemnity.

מקץ שבע שנים במעד שנת השמטה בחג הסכות ··· תקרא את התורה הזאת נגד כל ישראל באזניהם · הקהל את העם האנשים והנשים והטף ··· למען ישמעו ולמען ילמדו ויראו את ה׳ אלהיכם ושמרו לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת ·"

> At the end of seven years, at the time of the release-year, on the feast of Tabernacles, . . . thou shalt read this law aloud in the presence of all Israel. Thou shalt assemble the whole people, the men, women, and children, . . . that they may hear and learn to fear the
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> [p. 139] Eternal your God, and observe to do all the words of this law." (Deut. 31 ch. 10—13 v.)

Here we find a positive commandment, that the females also should receive religious instruction; and the will of the law is therefore only then obeyed, when we give all the members of our nation instruction in religious matters, that they may be able to fear the Eternal our God, and to observe all the words of his holy law, which was given "as an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob."

***Erratum.***

Page 24—9th line from bottom, for אתי כי אוני, read אותי כי אני