About these translations and transcriptions

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English translation by Claude of Herz Homberg, Bne-Zion: Ein religiös-moralisches Lehrbuch für die Jugend israelitischer Nation (Bne Zion: A Religious and Moral Textbook for the Youth of the Israelite Nation) (Vienna: k. k. Schulbücher-Verschleiß-Administration, 1837). This is a reprint of the work first published in 1812. By the imperial decree of 1810 printed at the front, it was the required textbook in the Jewish schools of the Austrian hereditary lands, and Jewish brides and grooms had to be examined on it before they could marry. The text runs in 416 numbered paragraphs in nine Sections. Each paragraph is followed by proof-texts from Scripture and the Talmud. The rabbinic sources are identified in brackets where possible. Numbers in parentheses are Homberg's cross-references to other paragraphs. Some of them do not match this edition's numbering. Where printed references are evidently wrong, they are kept and corrected in a note. Front-matter pages are unnumbered and marked [p. —]. Notes beginning "Translator:" are the translator's; the others are Homberg's.

[p. —]

BNE ZION

A

Religious and Moral

Textbook

for the

Youth

of the Israelite Nation.[1]

Price unbound: 15 kreuzer, convention currency.

Bound with leather spine: 19 kreuzer, convention currency.[2]

Vienna,

published by the Imperial-Royal School-Book Sales Administration, at St. Anna in the Johannisgasse.

1837.

[p. —] Decree of the Imperial-Royal Study Court Commission of 14 December 1810

His Imperial-Royal *Apostolic Majesty*, unceasingly occupied with promoting among all His subjects true welfare, which cannot be attained without good morals, has been graciously pleased, for the promotion of morally good dispositions and conduct among the Jews residing in the Imperial-Royal hereditary lands, to have a religious and moral textbook composed, which not only presents the precepts of moral teaching intelligibly on grounds of reason, but also establishes them with probative passages from the holy books of the Israelites.

Since this textbook has now been completed under the title *Bne Zion, a Religious and Moral Textbook for the Youth of the Israelite Nation*, and has been found suited to its purpose, *His Majesty* has commanded:

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[1] Translator: Herz Homberg (1749–1841), *Bne-Zion. Ein religiös-moralisches Lehrbuch für die Jugend israelitischer Nation*, first published Vienna 1812; this is the 1837 reprint. The title page bears the Austrian imperial double eagle and several handwritten owners' signatures, which are not reproduced.

[2] Translator: "Conv. M." = *Conventionsmünze*, the Austrian convention currency (silver coinage), as distinct from paper money.

[p. —] First, that this textbook be introduced and used as a statutory textbook in all Jewish schools of the German hereditary lands, and that all those charged with the inspection of the Jewish schools keep close watch over its proper use;

Second, that every bridegroom and every bride of the Israelite nation, when they apply for permission to marry, be examined by the District Office on the contents of this textbook, and receive permission to marry only if they have passed the examination well.

Further regulations for the wider dissemination of religious and moral instruction among the Israelite nation will follow.

[p. —] Opinion of the Local and Provincial Rabbi Markus Benedikt of Nikolsburg in Moravia, on the Work *Bne Zion*, a Religious and Moral Textbook for the Youth of the Israelite Nation[3]

You have expressed to me the wish that I communicate to you in writing my thoughts on your manuscript, composed in the German language and submitted to me for examination: *Bne Zion, a Religious and Moral Textbook for the Youth of the Israelite Nation*. I fulfill this wish with the sincerest goodwill. The work has truly given me very great pleasure. The concepts that occur in it, concerning God and His attributes, the destiny of man, virtue, universal love of mankind and all the other human and civic duties, punishment and reward, the immortality of the soul, and so on, are not only entirely [p. —] in accordance with our holy religion and in agreement with the teachings of Holy Scripture, of the Talmud, and of all the great teachers of our nation in ancient and more recent times, but they are placed by your exposition in the clearest and most beautiful light.

Since the presentation of these doctrines of virtue is so gentle and so penetrating, I hope to the holy God, who has sealed all things with truth, that these truths which you have made so clear will work much good upon the hearts of our dear youth and of adults. I therefore encourage you to bring this work to the press as soon as possible, so that the good may soon be sown and bear blessed fruit.

Markus Benedikt,
Local and Provincial Rabbi.
Nikolsburg, 12 January 1810.

[p. —] Contents

First Section.

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[3]Translator: Mordecai (Markus) Benet (Benedikt) (1753–1829), Chief Rabbi (Landesrabbiner) of Moravia, resident in Nikolsburg (Mikulov). Note that his opinion is dated 12 January 1810, before the decree of December 1810.

[4]Translator: So printed ("1 — 7"); since the Second Section begins on p. 18, read "1–17".

Second Section.

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Fifth Section.

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[p. 1] First Section. Of Man, His Nature and Destiny

1. With the eyes one *sees* all things: people, animals, mountains, forests, trees, plants, rivers, brooks, sun, moon, stars, and so on. With the ears one *hears* speaking, shouting, weeping, laughing, sighing, singing, the twittering of birds, the neighing of horses, and so on. With the nose one *smells* the fragrance of roses, violets and other flowers, and every good or bad exhalation. By means of the palate one *tastes* food and drink; one distinguishes the sweet from the sour, the salty from the bitter. Finally, we *feel* through the whole outer skin of our body whether a thing is cold or warm, wet or dry, soft or hard. Man therefore has five senses: *sight, hearing, smell, taste* and *touch*.

2. Through these five senses we perceive all the things that are around us, that is, we *sense* how this or that thing is constituted, how it looks, and what properties it [p. 2] has. Human beings have two feet, many animals four; nightingales sing beautifully, cocks crow, dogs bark, lions roar.

Grapes taste delicious; onions have a sharp smell and bite on the tongue. Most roses are red, but lilies are white. Butter and wax are soft and yield; wood and stone are hard and resist.

3. Through the senses we further perceive how the things around us *change*, take on a different shape, leave their first state and pass into another. The person who was fresh and healthy yesterday lies in bed today and cannot move a limb.

In the morning the weather was the finest; in the evening a storm arises and drives the clouds together. In winter the trees are bare. When spring comes they cover themselves with leaves, put forth buds, and then bear fruit. As soon as autumn is past, the trees return to their former state.

4. The sensations which we receive of the appearance and state, of the properties and changes of things, are called *sensory concepts*: that is, we come to know things through the impression they make on one or more senses. We grasp them, their constitution, change, property or accident, that is, that which is always and at all times found in them, and that which is found in them only at times.

5. Besides sensory concepts, however, we also recognize a great many things which we could not attain by means of the [p. 3] senses alone: we know much that we do not sense, for example, that a person cannot be in *Vienna* and in *London* on one and the same day; that the moon has no light of its own like the sun, but shines only by the reflection of the latter; that the globe of the earth is fastened nowhere, and that it is round, spherical or ball-shaped.

6. These and many other similar items of knowledge are called *concepts of the understanding*. For besides the *body* and its senses, man has a certain something which we call the *soul*. This soul has various powers and capacities to derive, from the sensations of the body and from the impressions which things have made on the senses, new knowledge that is no object of sensation and that cannot be recognized or perceived either by sight, or by hearing, smell, and so on.

7. It has, first, the capacity to *compare* sensations with one another, for example, the white color of snow and of milk, the scent of the carnation and of the rose, the sweetness of sugar and of honey, the prosperity of a well-to-do countryman with the good fortune of a rich townsman. It has the capacity to *find* the similarity among things, their qualities and states.

8. In making such a comparison it also has the capacity to notice that in which sensations *differ* and are unlike. The carnation and the rose both smell pleasant, but each in a different way; sugar and honey [p. 4] are sweet, yet the sweetness of the latter carries a certain sharpness with it; in the prosperity of the countryman one always notices something rough and boorish which the more refined townsman avoids.

9. The soul has the power to *separate in thought* the similarity of things, for example, the similarity among all visible living beings: namely, that all have senses, move themselves from one place to

another, need nourishment and take it in; and from this similarity it forms a *general concept*, and calls all things to which these properties belong by the *general name*: *animals*.

10. From the difference, on the other hand, which the soul notices among living beings, for example, that this one is upright, has a smooth skin and possesses special skills in its limbs, that one rises up and hovers in the air, yet another lives in the deepest water, it forms *particular concepts* of these things, gives them *particular names*, and calls the first *man*, the second *bird*, the last *fish*.

11. The soul can also *remember* what is past. We still know today what we thought, said or did yesterday. We can call back in thought all events that we have once seen or heard, and picture them as if they were happening now. If we had no *memory*, the instruction I give you would be entirely useless; tomorrow you would no longer know what I taught you today.

[p. 5] **12.** *Reason*, a special power of the soul, *judges* thoughts and assertions, and pronounces the *verdict*: this is true, and that is false. It is true, for example, that every body must occupy a place somewhere in vast space; it is false that part of an apple is larger than the whole apple. It is further true, for example, that man has the capacity to communicate his thoughts to others; but it is false that he is able, of himself and without the help of a machine, to soar aloft and remain in the air.

13. A quite special property of the human mind, however, is that it can infer from an effect to its cause. If, for example, I leave the streets dry when going to bed in the evening, and find them wet in the morning, I conclude that it must have rained in the night; that is, I infer from the effect, the wetness, to the cause, the rain that has fallen. If you see a firebrand thrown onto sacks of wool, you conclude in advance that the wool will burn: that is, you infer from the cause, the throwing of the brand, to the effect, the burning of the wool. The mind can thus state with certainty the past occurrence of a change, as well as the future occurrence of a state, and in general many things which the senses have not sensed.

14. Finally, the soul also has the capacity to *invent* events that have not happened, as in the telling of made-up stories and fables, and to put together beings that are [p. 6] found nowhere. Examples of this are winged horses, the bird Phoenix, and many other figments of the brain which, like ghosts, exist only in the imagination.

15. Body and soul are firmly bound together; they act upon each other reciprocally. The body, through its sensations, prompts the soul to *thoughts, reflections, judgments* and *inferences*. The soul, on the other hand, when it resolves upon something, decides on something, moves the body to actions, to carry out its purpose, to execute its decision. I hear it said of a book, for example, that it is good. This news, which is conveyed to the soul through *hearing*, acts on the soul and prompts it to judge whether I could make useful use of this book. Its judgment that it is indeed useful, and its resolve to acquire it, act upon my body and move it to buy the book.

Of the close union of the soul with the body Holy Scripture gives us a figurative picture. It says in Gen. 2:7:

"Then the one Being, God, formed man of the dust of the ground (that is, the body), and breathed into his nostrils living breath (the soul); and so man became an ensouled creature." (Gen. 2:7)

16. The reciprocal effects of body and soul make up the *life* of man. Life has more or less strength according as these effects arise in a person more strongly and quickly, or more weakly and slowly.

[p. 7] **17.** These effects grow ever weaker with time, and when at last they cease entirely, *natural death* follows. The bond between the two is destroyed; the body lacks strength and motion, it rots little by little and *decays*.

"In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, until you return to the ground from which you were taken; *for you are dust, and to dust you shall return*." (Gen. 3:19)

18. Only the body decays; the soul, which has nothing bodily about it, does not cease to be. It cannot be sensed by the senses; it has neither flesh nor blood, humors, bones and the like; it occupies no place, has neither breadth nor length nor height, nor anything else that belongs to a body. It is not composed of parts, and therefore cannot even be dissolved and fall apart into parts. It is a *spirit*, a mere power, a simple, incomprehensible, *immortal* being.

"The dust (the body) must return to the earth as it was, and the spirit (return) to God who gave it." (Eccl. 12:7)

19. Man has various needs. He must protect himself from rough, stormy weather, and still hunger and thirst. He therefore needs shelter, clothing, food and other things besides, without which he could not sustain himself [p. 8] and would perish. These are merely *bodily needs*.

20. The spirit too has its own. It feels an almost insatiable desire to come to know the things in the world, their properties and the purposes for which they exist. This desire is called *thirst for knowledge*. Without this desire man would remain ignorant and be exposed to many dangers; he would not know, for example, the difference between wholesome and poisonous herbs. Instruction, experience, observation and experiments made with things teach us what use we are to make of them.

21. The world exists to offer human beings all the means to sustain themselves and to prolong their life as far as their nature permits. Man exists to make of these means *a useful use that harms none of his fellows*.

"God blessed them (the first human beings) and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens, and over every living creature that creeps upon the earth." (Gen. 1:28)

> "Every animal that has life shall serve you for food: as with grasses and herbs, I have given you everything (destined it for your enjoyment)." (Gen. 9:3)

22. Notwithstanding this permission given to man in Holy Scripture to make use of all things, he would, by his natural indolence, have perished all the same in the midst of the abundance which nature [p. 9] offers him. He has therefore also received from nature *desires*, which drive him to seek out and apply the means of his preservation. This drive teaches him to use his limbs: he digs in the earth to unearth roots; he climbs the trees to pluck fruit; he dives under the water to bring out fish; he tames the animals, and makes the first attempt to procure himself a shelter out of a wickerwork of twigs and branches.

23. Man did not stop at this crude state. He was not content with what would sustain his life only in a very wretched way. He also wishes and strives to enjoy himself, to be glad of his existence. Instead of a hut he seeks a comfortable little house, with his bread a tasty relish, and to exchange the coarse smock for neat clothing made of good cloth. We therefore also have *inclinations* toward such things as promise us *pleasure*, ease and a comfortable life.

24. Just as nature has furnished us with drives, desires and wishes, so too it took care, for our good, to instill in us *abhorrences* and *aversions* toward things that can bring us utter ruin, pain, or even only discomfort.

We would become a prey to flames or to ravening beasts, and plunge ourselves into a thousand dangers, if fear did not hold us back from destroying or injuring ourselves.

[p. 10] **25.** Man is *fortunate* when he is rich in the means of his preservation and his pleasure, and has much more than he needs. He is unfortunate and *wretched* when he lacks the means of self-preservation, when he cannot satisfy even the most limited needs. Good fortune makes the heart *glad*; misfortune *saddens* the soul.

26. When the drives and desires, or the aversions, attain a high degree of strength, they are called *affects*, and when they become lasting, *passions*. Untamed joy, terror, anger, rage, anxiety, venomous hatred, deep grief, the craving for gambling, avarice for money, lust for power, and similar desires which are excessively strong, which the soul cannot master and toward which it must remain passive, are passions.

27. The nature of most animals that we know bears much resemblance to the nature of man. They too have various drives; they seek out what they need for their preservation, and carefully avoid those things that are harmful or repugnant to them. We further observe affects in them as well: anger and rage when they are provoked; attachment, faithfulness and fondness when they are cared for and treated kindly. They even possess various artful instincts, like the bee, the beaver, and many others, which is why a soul is also ascribed to them.

28. But their soul cannot bear any comparison with the spirit of man. The higher and superior powers that lie in the human [p. 11] soul (9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14) are found in no animal. The animals have not yet come so far, and never will, as, for example, to introduce a language among themselves, to erect houses, palaces and bridges, to build great ships and sail around the earth in them, or to imitate any other art, or even a single one of the many crafts which human beings have invented.

29. All the many astonishing arts that have been invented man owes to *reason*, this extraordinary advantage over the animals. Because of these great gifts of nature, he must therefore also have a higher, worthier *destiny*. He cannot, then, exist merely to acquire sensory concepts and to satisfy sensual desires. The purpose of his existence must be, besides the satisfaction of bodily needs, to strive after higher knowledge and to order his whole conduct of life according to reason, to do what it commands and to refrain from everything it forbids. Now it commands us to do what is *good* and *right*, and forbids only such actions as are *evil* and *wrong*. Both together, commandment and prohibition, are called *the law of reason*.

30. The drives and desires are innocent in themselves so long as they stand under the dominion of reason; but they become ruinous either for ourselves or for others when one surrenders to them blindly. The desire to enjoy fruit, for example, is an entirely permissible desire. [p. 12] But if we eat too much of it, we overload the stomach and fall ill. Immoderate enjoyment is evil and wrong, and thus a transgression of the law of reason. But even moderate enjoyment is wrong and evil if, to satisfy our appetite, we take the fruit from our neighbor's garden without his having permitted it. This purloining, by which the neighbor is deprived of part of his property, is likewise a sin against the law of reason.

> *Talmud.* "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Lev. 19:18)[5]
>
> "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor either." (BT Shabbat 31a)

31. If we wish to know whether a thought or an action agrees with this law or is contrary to it, we need only reflect and ask ourselves whether it would be suited to the nature of man if *all* thought and acted so. If we find that this would be good, the action is right; if we find the opposite, the action is wrong and evil. If you hear, for example, that someone steals, cheats, slanders, just ask yourself: How has this person acted? Ought he to have done this? Would people fare well if all were to steal, cheat or slander one another? How would you have to wish that he had acted? Do and refrain, then, as you wish that others should do and refrain. — An action is *moral* when it is in accordance with reason, and the person who performs it is just and *upright*. That action is *immoral*, and this person [p. 13] *evil, unjust*, when the deed performed runs contrary to the moral law.

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[5]Translator: The first saying is Lev. 19:18, which R. Akiva calls "a great principle of the Torah" (Sifra, Kedoshim 4:12; JT Nedarim 9:4); the second is Hillel's answer to the would-be proselyte, BT Shabbat 31a.

32. In order to do good and refrain from evil, man has a *free will*: he can give himself over to desire, as in the example above, and purloin the fruit from his neighbor, or resist his appetite and refrain from the purloining; it depends on his will whether to act merely *sensually*, according to the passions, or *morally*, according to reason.

> "Sin (the evil desire) lies at the door (lies in wait for you); its longing is for you, *but you can rule over it*." (Gen. 4:7)
>
> "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day (God said to the people of Israel), that I have set before you life and death (happiness and misery), blessing and curse; *but you can choose life*, so that you and your descendants may be happy." (Deut. 30:19)

33. Free will is thus the capacity to choose whether to act according to concepts of right and in agreement with the law of reason, or, like the animals, to give oneself over merely to the drives. Every action that a person performs is accordingly judged by his reason as to whether it agrees with the law, is *lawful*, or is contrary to it, *unlawful*.

34. This judgment of reason concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of what we do and leave undone is called *conscience*. If conscience *approves* our action, if it [p. 14] is recognized by reason as agreeing with its law, as right, then we have a *good conscience*, which makes us glad and content with ourselves. But if conscience has *disapproved* of it, if reason says that we ought to have acted otherwise, then we have an *evil, uneasy conscience*; we feel *anguish of conscience, pangs of conscience*.

> "Is it not so (God said to Cain): if you conduct yourself well, *you can also lift up your eyes*? etc." (Gen. 4:7)
>
> "It is *a joy* to the righteous (the virtuous) *to do what is right*." (Prov. 21:15)

35. When, for example, the child comes home from school, the parents can see at once whether it was diligent, devout and well-behaved at school, whether the teacher was satisfied with it or not. If it is lively and glad, if it looks about cheerfully and freely, that is a sign that it has done its duty; but if it hangs its head and casts down its eyes, it must have behaved badly.

36. Through the endeavor always to do what is good and right, and through frequent reflection on the morality of actions, we acquire a *facility* for judging, without long deliberation, the rightfulness or wrongfulness of what we should undertake or refrain from. This facility is called *a correct feeling* of right and wrong.

37. *Frequent repetition*, however, of such actions as agree with the commandments of reason and religion (of which latter we [p. 15] shall speak below) gives our free will a facility for resolving upon the good without much deliberation, and for resisting the desires without exertion. This facility in the practice of the good is called *virtue*; the ease, on the other hand, of acting contrary to the law of reason and of religion is called *vice*.

38. The virtuous person, since he never departs from the precepts of reason and always has a good, contented conscience, is *happy*; the facility for doing evil, on the other hand, and the unceasing reproaches of conscience that follow upon it, make the vicious person *wretched*: he feels an anguish that never leaves him.

39. Happiness must be carefully distinguished from what we call good fortune. The latter consists in the possession of *external goods*, such as beauty, lasting bodily strength, an excellent singing voice, and then wealth, prestige, posts of honor and the like. The first of these goods cannot be acquired at all; they are a gift of nature. The acquisition of the latter likewise does not depend on our power alone: the greatest diligence is often in vain if it is not favored by advantageous circumstances. Nor can one secure the possession of these goods forever: one can become ugly, sick, poor, or be removed from one's posts of honor. Happiness, on the other hand, a good conscience, contentment with ourselves, is an *inner* good which anyone can obtain, whose acquisition does not depend on external circumstances, which remains [p. 16] secure to us, and of which we can never be robbed. All human beings can attain happiness, because all can become virtuous.

> *Talmud.* "Everything is in the hands of God, except the fear of God" (the practice of the good; this is left to man's free will). (BT Berakhot 33b)[6]

40. That which all human beings wish for — who does not wish to be happy? — and which all human beings can obtain, must also be the purpose for whose sake they exist. *Our destiny, therefore, is that we should become virtuous, good human beings, and through virtue and piety become glad, content and happy.*

41. Everything we bring into the world, all powers of body and soul, in short our whole being, we have received, and have acquired not a single power.

There must, therefore, be a higher Being from whom these gifts, the constitution of our nature and soul, derive. Since this Being has destined us for the practice of virtue and the enjoyment of happiness, it must itself also take pleasure in virtue and itself be supremely happy; it must take joy in our being glad and happy.

42. We cannot refrain from our great advantages which we have over the animals (28, 29.), the beautiful constitution of our body, the manifold lofty powers of the soul, and the capacity to become virtuous and happy, as *extraordinary benefactions* [p. 17] to regard. We must therefore *gratefully revere* that Being from whom we have received all this. That exalted Being we call *God*, and the grateful reverence we call *religion*. Of both we shall treat at length in what follows.

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[6]Translator: The Talmud reads "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except the fear of Heaven" (BT Berakhot 33b; also Megillah 25a, Niddah 16b).

43. It therefore also belongs to the destiny of man *that he have religion*, that is, that he believe in and acknowledge the existence of God, strive to grow ever further in the knowledge of God, revere Him for the beneficent ordering of human nature and of the soul, and be zealous to show this reverence by proving himself, like God, beneficent toward men.

[p. 18] Second Section. Of the Knowledge of God from Created Things, and What We Can Know of God through Reason

44. What was said above (41) of man holds also of every other thing and of the whole world. It is, namely, utterly inconceivable that a thing should have come into being through itself. The whole world, with all that it contains, must therefore have been brought forth, *created*, by some Being. This Being is thus the cause of everything that actually exists.

45. The Author of all things, from whom everything comes, must exist of Himself; He cannot have come into being through any being, cannot have been created. For it would avail us nothing were we to assume that He too had been created, had had a Creator. We should have to let this Creator in turn arise through another, and that one again through another, and so on to infinity, always one through the other, and yet in the end we should have to stop at a primal Being who is the *first cause* of all created things. The Author of all beings we call *God*.

> *Nehemiah 9:6.* "Thou Only One! Thou alone hast made the heavens, and the heaven of heavens with [p. 19] their hosts, the earth and all that is upon it, the seas and all that they contain; thou also nourishest all (living creatures), and the heavenly host bows down before thee." (Neh. 9:6)
>
> *Ps. 33:9.* "For he (God) spoke: Let it be; and it was; he commanded, and all stood there." (Ps. 33:9)

46. God exists, the world exists; but the existence of God is very different from the existence of the creatures. God exists of Himself, was not created (45); His existence therefore has no beginning. Though we go back in thought millions of years, no time can be conceived in which He began to be. *God has no beginning*; the world, on the other hand, with all that it contains, only began to be when it had been created.

> *Isaiah 44:6.* "Thus spoke the Eternal, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: *I was the very first*, I remain the very last; *beside me there is no God.*" (Isa. 44:6)
>
> *Hymn Yigdal.* "Great is the living God, and highly praised! whose existence is *without time, without beginning*." (Yigdal)[7]

47. There have been men, indeed whole peoples, who believed that there were several gods side by side, each existing for himself alone, each of whom had created certain things and also

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[7]Translator: Yigdal, the hymn on Maimonides' Thirteen Principles sung in the synagogue liturgy; Homberg paraphrases its opening lines ("Great is the living God and praised; He exists, and there is no time to His existence ... He is first, and there is no beginning to His beginning").

continually preserved them. One god, for example, had created heaven, sun, moon and stars, another the human race, this one the animal kingdom, that one the plant kingdom, and so on. These people were in great error.

48. *Polytheism would, first, be superfluous.* The God who was able [p. 20] to bring forth heaven, sun, moon and the stars must possess the same powers and attributes that are required to create the human race and the other things. The same may also be asserted of the Creator of men; the bringing forth of men is just as wondrous and incomprehensible as the creation of the other beings. Whoever creates men can, indeed must be able to, create the whole world as well. To what end, then, the gods, if One alone can accomplish everything? There is only *one single God*.

> *Deut. 4:39.* "Know therefore, and take it well to heart, that the Eternal is the same God above in heaven and below on the earth: there is none beside him." (Deut. 4:39)
>
> *Ibid. 6:4.* "Hear, O Israel! the Eternal, our God, is the *only* God." (Deut. 6:4)
>
> *Isa. 54:7.* "*Who is like me?* (saith the Eternal). Let him come forward, declare it, lay before me the plan by which I made the universe! Let him proclaim all the consequences that shall follow (in the world)." (Isa. 54:7)[8]

49. Polytheism, however, would not only be superfluous; it would also have to be ruinous for the world. Is it at all credible that these gods should have agreed perfectly and without interruption since the beginning of the world as to what effects and changes should take place in the whole of nature, and in what manner? Should it never have happened that, when one had resolved to bring a heavy rain, it seemed good to another at the very same time to let the sun shine? Could the [p. 21] god of the animals have looked on so calmly until now while men exercise unlimited dominion over his creatures, whose preserver and protector he is? Countless occasions for discord and strife among the gods would have had to arise every day. From this, disorder and confusion would have arisen in nature, and causes would very often have been prevented from producing their proper effect. But since the beginning of the world every cause has produced the effect belonging to it; fire has never ceased to burn, nor water to quench it; every winter has always been followed by summer; in short, the same order as now has reigned from of old in all parts of creation. There can therefore be only a single Being, one only God, who directs all causes, effects and changes, and orders and preserves all things.

> *Gen. 8:22.* "As long as the earth has days, there shall never cease: seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night." (Gen. 8:22)
>
> *Isa. 44:24.* "Thus spoke the Eternal, the Owner, who formed thee in the womb: I the Eternal am he who does all things; I alone stretch out the heavens; I alone vault the earth: who is my helper?" (Isa. 44:24)

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[8]Translator: Printed "Isai. 54, 7"; the passage is Isa. 44:7.

50. The existence of God differs from the existence of the creatures also in this, that these are perishable, endure only for a certain time, then come to an end and cease to be; but God is *eternal*, infinite; His existence never ceases. Just as He has no beginning (46), because He exists of Himself and was brought forth by no being, [p. 22] so too will He continue to exist of Himself in eternity: for there is nothing in His essence itself, nor can any cause outside Him bring it about, that He should one day cease to be. Only what has come into being can pass away again; but the Supreme Being, who never came into being but is from eternity, must endure in eternity.

> *Ps. 90:1.* "Before the mountains were brought forth, before worlds and earth were created; and from eternity to eternity, thou art almighty!" (Ps. 90:1)[9]
>
> *Daniel 4:31.* "Thou didst praise the Ever-living, whose dominion is an everlasting rule, whose kingdom endures from generation to generation." (Dan. 4:31)

51. Everything that has come into being depends on the will of Him who let it come to be, caused it to arise. It lay solely in the will of God to create the world or not to create it. The existence of the world is therefore *not necessary*. So too it rests with God alone whether, and how long, the world is to endure. If He resolves to let it perish, it vanishes in an instant, and all things return to their former nothingness. Its preservation is just as *dependent* on the will of God as its existence. With God, however, it is quite otherwise. He did not come into being through any being, through any cause; He is Himself the first cause (45); therefore He is also an *independent, self-subsistent Being*: that is, His continued existence is just as necessary, and depends just as little on any being outside Him, as His existence.

> [p. 23] *Ps. 102:25 ff.* "Thy years endure through eternities. The globe of the earth which thou didst found of old, the heavens, the work of thy hands, they pass away — thou remainest. They grow old like a garment; thou changest them, they are changed. But thou remainest the same, imperishable are thy years." (Ps. 102:25–28)
>
> *Ibid. 104:29.* "Thou turnest away thy face — they (the creatures) vanish; thou takest away their breath, and they return to their former dust. Thou sendest forth thy breath — they come into being. Thus thou renewest again (at thy pleasure) the face of the earth." (Ps. 104:29–30)

52. God can have no body, can be neither thought nor imagined by us under any bodily form. For every body, however small it is, even the mite, is composed of tiny parts which, when the body ceases to be, separate from one another again (17). Had the Supreme Being a body, it would have to consist of parts and have been put together by another being. Were it to consist of parts, its existence would cease again when these separated from one another. But since God is self-subsistent, exists of Himself from eternity (51), and endures in eternity, His essence cannot be composite and can have nothing bodily about it.

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[9] Translator: Printed "Ps. 90, 1"; the words quoted are Ps. 90:2.

Deut. 4:15. "Take good heed to yourselves, as you love your lives (not to represent God under any image). *You saw no figure at all* when the Eternal spoke with you out of the fire at Mount Horeb." (Deut. 4:15)

Isa. 40:18. "To whom would you compare the Almighty? What image would you sketch of him?" (Isa. 40:18)

[p. 24] **53.** Nor may we ascribe to the Supreme Being any bodily properties or qualities, still less desires and passions. Every body has a length, breadth and height, and can be compared and measured with another body. This one is longer or shorter, broader or narrower, higher or lower than that. Every body takes up a certain space, is located in a place; it consists of parts and can therefore be broken up into parts again; it is thus *divisible*. None of this can be said of God. His essence has neither length, nor breadth, nor height; He is *immeasurable*. One cannot say: God is greater than this or that being; He can be compared and measured with no creature. God is incomprehensible; He neither consists of parts nor is He located in one place: He is everywhere, *omnipresent*. What was asserted above (18) of the soul — which is itself only a creature — must hold all the more, and in the highest degree, of God the Creator. He is exalted above all spirits; His glory fills the whole earth.

1 Kings 8:27. "The heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." (1 Kings 8:27)

Ps. 139:7. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit (O God)? whither flee from thy face?" (Ps. 139:7)

"Did I climb up to the heavens, thou art there; and did I make my bed in the underworld (would I hide myself deep beneath the earth), I should find thee. Did I soar on the wings of the dawn, to rest at the uttermost part of the sea, even [p. 25] there thy hand would lead me; even there thy right hand would take hold of me." (Ps. 139:8–10)

54. God is *invisible*. He can neither be seen nor perceived by any human sense (18). His essence is *incomprehensible*; not only men, but the spirits (angels) too are unable to understand wherein it consists. If we are not even able to explain the essence of our own soul, how should we be able to comprehend God?

Hymn Yigdal. "No being is so simple as the incomprehensible, infinite God." (Yigdal)[10]

55. What we are able to learn of God through our reason relates only to His attributes. When we *attentively* consider the things around us, the effects and changes in nature, and finally the order that reigns in the world, that is, direct our senses and thoughts upon them and reflect on them persistently, we can learn to understand the greatness of God to some degree. This is called: *knowing God by the light of reason*.

56. If we consider the great multitude of creatures, their various effects and extraordinary powers, we recognize that God, their Creator, is *supremely mighty*. Nothing great and glorious can be

[10]Translator: Paraphrasing the Yigdal line "He is One, and there is no unity like His unity; hidden, and His oneness is infinite."

conceived whose existence is possible that He could not and would not create, if its existence were good and useful. — The all-powerful force which, without having had any material, brought forth so great a manifold of beings, differing in size, [p. 26] form, nature and purpose, cannot be admired enough. What does it not take to bring forth heaven, sun, moon and stars, the earth with its enormous mountains and forests, the multitude of fruit trees, flowers and plants, the great ocean, other seas and rivers with their countless fish, all the kinds of feathered and winged creatures, of tame and wild beasts, and finally the great human race, so diverse in form, color and language!

> *Isa. 40:26.* "Lift up your eyes on high, behold (sun, moon, stars): who has created all these things? He who numbers this host (of creatures), calls each by name (knows its nature). Not a single one escapes the *Almighty*, at whose command all powers stand." (Isa. 40:26)

57. This wondrous creation continues, as it were, even now. For if God did not constantly direct His *providence* upon the world, did not continually preserve it in its purposeful state, it would perish. The preservation of the world is almost as great a miracle, proves the omnipotence of God almost as well, as its origin out of nothing. God preserves each individual creature as long as it is to exist according to its destiny and *can exist according to the laws of nature*[11]; and He does not permit any species or kind to perish entirely. [p. 27] Men, animals, birds, fish and so on die, to be sure, or are consumed, but their kinds never die out. The old pass away; but they leave young behind, who in turn beget young: and so everything is propagated and renewed.

> "Thou who daily and continually renewest the whole of creation," we say every day in the morning prayer: *La-El barukh*. (Morning prayer)[12]

58. Every being has its destiny, its purpose. Of very many things we know for what they are destined, what they serve. We know, for example, of bees that they exist to give honey and wax. If we now observe the structure of each individual bee and the activity of the whole bee-state[13], we say: they are arranged with great *art*; they work in keeping with their purpose; they accomplish what they are meant to accomplish.

[p. 28] **59.** A like art is to be perceived in all things that are furnished with such faculties, powers and instruments as are required for their purpose, but whose powers and instruments are also so arranged that they support one another and bring forth that for which they are destined. We see this clearly in a clock, which is made in order to show the division of time, the hours. To this end

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[11] Note. If, for example, someone is stabbed, he cannot continue to exist according to the law of nature; he must die. A sharply ground steel (sword, dagger) must, when it penetrates the heart with force, by the law of nature so separate its parts from one another that they can never again be united: the seat of life is destroyed forever.

[12] Translator: From the morning blessing before the Shema (Yotzer), beginning "La-El barukh" ("To the blessed God"): "who in His goodness renews every day continually the work of creation."

[13] Note. The dwelling and the work of the bees are compared with a state (a large country made up of many provinces). Among them prevail the same mutual assistance, order, and common activity toward a useful end as in a well-ordered state.

the little wheels, the chain, the spring and the other parts are so connected and fitted together that they mesh with one another, support one another, and act jointly to indicate the time correctly.

60. Art shows itself on a far greater scale (in the combination of so many works of art with one another), and in a far higher degree, when we consider the ordering of the world. One perceives in it so many and such manifold powers and things, some of which, like water and fire, are contrary to one another and cannot get along together. Nevertheless, these same powers and things, which taken singly are set against one another and work in opposition, contribute exceedingly much to the attainment of the chief purpose, namely the preservation of the world and the propagation of the creatures. This is beyond dispute the highest degree of art: so to combine beings that wear down and destroy one another with other things that in harmony they further the intention of the artist.

61. What the world is on a large scale, man is on a small scale. His outer limbs are so connected with the inner parts that [p. 29] the purpose, namely the preservation of life, is thereby perfectly attained. Here too are found powers of opposite kinds, such as the passions and reason, where the former always seek to suppress the latter; and yet they can be brought into harmony in order to attain the *final purpose*, namely the perfecting of the soul.

62. Let us first consider the principal limbs of man. The head, the ornament of this glorious creature, is placed on high. To it are assigned the eyes, to perceive all objects in the world, to delight in their beautiful sight, and to avoid dangerous things; the ears, to hear what is spoken and to take pleasure in the song of the birds; the mouth for speaking and eating; the teeth grind the food; the palate distinguishes its taste. Man has hands to grasp and feel everything, and to make all kinds of coarse and fine work; feet to carry the body in any direction he pleases. So too every inner part of the body is destined for a particular necessary or useful function. All the parts together are so united and subordinated to one another that, if no obstacle is put in the way of their movements and functions, they keep man alive, healthy and vigorous.

63. Let us now observe something of the nobler part of man, his soul. It has already been shown (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14) with what useful powers our spirit is [p. 30] endowed. These powers support one another in order to think and reason correctly. One is rightly astonished at how swiftly thoughts can *follow* one another in the soul and *change*. A word that we hear, a glance that we cast upon some object, often calls forth in us a series of thoughts which we think through with incomprehensible speed. Just as incomprehensible is their swift change. At this moment I am thinking of what we are now speaking about; the moment after, I happen to see, for example, the word "Africa," and at once there come to my mind the black color of the people, the rare plants and growths, and other things besides that are to be seen there.

64. What we admire most of all, however, is the artful union of the soul with the body (15). How was it possible to join two beings of entirely different kind and nature, as are *the simple and the*

composite, so firmly and so intimately for a long series of years that the one should act upon the other unceasingly! And this masterpiece was not only possible; it actually exists. Still more wondrous are many effects in the soul which the body does not seem to occasion, such as dreams. And how strange these often are! At times one sees oneself in a dark dungeon, chained to the iron, given over to despair; — soon afterwards on a throne, surrounded by the princes of the realm.

[p. 31] *Ps. 139:14.* "I thank thee, God, that I am so wondrously made! Incomprehensible and wondrous are thy works: that my soul knows well." (Ps. 139:14)

Job 19:26. "From my flesh I behold (perceive) the Godhead." (Job 19:26)

65. The great art which God has displayed in the whole of creation is also joined with the highest *wisdom*. The purpose of each individual being, like that of the whole world, is *to do good*. The more there are who enjoy this good — the more generally beneficial, therefore, the good is — the more excellent is the purpose; and it is most glorious and *noblest* when he who brings it forth was intent solely on the benefit of others and has not the slightest advantage from it for himself. We have an example of this in the bees, whose industry serves solely the benefit of others, namely to prepare honey and wax for men.

66. The bees, these irrational little creatures, produce the good, however, without *intention and deliberation*. They do it because they are driven to it by their nature; they merely follow the *instinct* implanted in them. But God, who created the world according to an artful plan befitting His supreme understanding, who draws from it not the slightest advantage — nor needs any advantage — and who has ordered the good in it solely for the benefit of others: God is *supremely wise*. He has brought forth so many species and kinds of creatures, [p. 32] furnished them with such different natures and powers, destined them for so many kinds of purposes, with the intention of attaining one great final purpose. The chief purpose He set Himself can be none other than to reveal His majesty to the souls of men and to the angels, so that they may know His exalted attributes and through this knowledge become virtuous and happy.

Ps. 104:24. "How great, how many are thy works, Lord! All of them hast thou made in wisdom!" (Ps. 104:24)

67. Since the infinitely wise Creator had no other intention in creating things than to do good, we recognize from this that He is also *supremely good*. He has brought forth countless living creatures, and has so arranged them themselves, and everything for them, that all can rejoice. He lets no being lack what belongs to its preservation or serves its enjoyment; He cares with fatherly love for all creatures that have life and feeling.

Ps. 145:9. — 16. "The Lord is beneficent to all; he has mercy on all his works. — All-bountiful, thou (God) openest thy hand and satisfiest what lives with good." (Ps. 145:9, 16)

Ibid. 104:14, 15. — 27, 28. "Thou makest grass to grow for the cattle, and crops through man's labor, to bring forth food from the earth: wine too, that makes glad the heart of man, and oil

that brightens his face, while bread nourishes the strength of the heart." — "All things hope in thee, wait for thee to give them food in its [p. 33] season. Thou givest, they gather; thou openest thy hand, they are satisfied with good." (Ps. 104:14–15, 27–28)

68. Toward men, however, God must be especially good and will that it go well with them; for He has arranged everything in the world for their benefit and their joy, in the way that brings forth the most good for them. How many kinds of savory foods, drinks and fruits has He not prepared! For how many joys and pleasures of the senses has He not provided! Man also rules over all his fellow creatures on earth, and is there to make useful and pleasant use of them all (21).

Ps. 8:7, 8, 9. "Thou (God) appointest him (man) ruler over thy works, and layest all at his feet: the lamb, the ox, and the game too; what moves in the air, what stirs in the water." (Ps. 8:7–9)

69. God has prepared still greater joys for men in giving them reason, whereby they are able to recognize what is right and good and to become virtuous. He has given us an immortal soul, destined it for happiness, and thereby granted man the highest rank among all earthly beings.

Ps. 8:5, 6. "What is man, that thou still rememberest him; the son of earth, that thou takest him into thy care? Thou hast set him *little below the angels*; hast crowned him with honor and adornment (spirit and feeling)." (Ps. 8:5–6)

[p. 34] *Ibid. 27:12, 13.* "Give me not over to the arrogance of my foes! For false witnesses rise up against me. Rapacity speaks scorn — (I should despair) did I not believe *that I shall behold the bliss of the Lord (God) in the land of (eternal) life*." (Ps. 27:12–13)

70. In the world we everywhere see the most exact order (49); that is, things act, change, and always follow one another just as the preservation of the world, the purpose of creation, requires. Men, animals and everything that lives are constantly supplied with what serves their preservation and their joys (67, 68). None of this could happen if even the slightest effect in nature, occurring at any time, in any place, remained unknown to God, hidden from Him. *God is omniscient*; He knows everything: the gentle fall of a leaf from the tree as well as the tumult of war and the wild roaring of the sea; the faintest stirring of the tiniest creature as well as the noisiest deeds of men. Indeed, since in man action is closely bound up with thought, and the body only carries out the resolutions of the soul (15), God must also see and know our thoughts and resolutions, as the mainsprings of human activity, however secretly they may be kept. No secrets can be hidden from God.

1 Sam. 16:7. "Man looks into the eyes, but God looks into the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7)

Ps. 139:1, 2, 3, 4. "Lord, thou searchest me, and knowest; I sit, I rise up, it is [p. 35] known to thee (thou knowest the cause of all my movements). Thou provest from afar what I think; thou hast measured out my going and my lying down (my doing and not doing), and directed all my ways. Before a word hovers on my tongue, thou, Lord, hast already known it wholly." (Ps. 139:1–4)

71. Nor is there any forgetfulness in God. If He were to forget anything, were it only a little worm, He could no longer care for all creatures, think of everything. *God forgets nothing.* All the effects and changes that have taken place in nature since the beginning of the world, all the thoughts, sentiments and deeds that all men since *Adam*, their first father, have thought and done, are as present to Him as if they had happened just now. We often have much trouble remembering a thought that we thought only a short while ago; often, for all the effort we apply, we can no longer remember it. God has no need to remember anything, nor to be reminded of it.

> The Talmud represents the omniscience and unforgetfulness of God *figuratively* when it says in *Avot*, chapter 2: "Mark three things, and thou wilt never fall into the hands of vice: Consider what hovers above thee: an eye that sees all, an ear that hears all; and all thy works are recorded in a book." That is: God knows all our deeds and forgets not a single one of them, as if they were recorded in a book. (Avot 2:1)

[p. 36] **72.** The Author of all beings has, as we already know, destined the human race to become happy; He takes His joy in their being glad and blessed (40). But without the practice of virtue there is no happiness; consequently God must also take pleasure in virtue. Now since every good quality that men possess is found in the most exalted Being in the most perfect degree, *God* is also holy: that is, He has the highest love of virtue and the greatest abhorrence of vice.

> *Lev. 19:2.* "Speak to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: You must be holy, for I, the Eternal, your God, am holy." (Lev. 19:2)
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> *Isa. 6:3.* "One called to the other and said: Holy, holy, holy is the God of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isa. 6:3)

73. In man, love of virtue shows itself when he practices it, when all his actions are right and good according to the law of reason; and abhorrence of vice in that he shuns it and readily resists the passions that entice him to evil. But in God, the simplest, incorporeal Being, without passions and desires, both — the highest pleasure in a pious way of life and the greatest displeasure at wicked, impious conduct — show themselves through the *exercise of justice*, in that He strictly punishes the latter and richly rewards the former. God loves good men, and grants them [p. 37] such happiness as they are capable of enjoying through their virtue. God despises wicked men, and lets them feel painfully what great and lasting good they have deprived themselves of through their perverse way of life. They do not enter the congregation of the blessed.

> *Gen. 18:25.* "It is unworthy of thee," said Abraham to God, "to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked be alike. It is unworthy of thee! Shall not the *Judge of the whole earth* do justice!" (Gen. 18:25)
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> *Eccl. 11:9.* "Rejoice, young man, in thy youth; indulge thy heart while thou art still young; go where thy heart's inclination leads thee, to feast thine eyes (to enjoy pleasure); but consider withal *that for all thy steps God will one day bring thee to judgment*." (Eccl. 11:9)

Jer. 32:19. "Great in counsel and mighty in working (art thou, O God!), who keepest thine eyes ever open (directest thine attention) upon the ways of men (upon their doing and not doing), to give to each according to his conduct (his behavior) and according to the fruit (the consequences) of his works." (Jer. 32:19)

74. Were there no justice in the world, might everyone do as he pleased, human society would be in a very bad way. No one would be secure in his *property*, that is, in what he rightfully possesses; no one would be secure in his life. Men would be forever at strife; each would seek to seize the possessions of others; the stronger would [p. 38] oppress the weaker. Everything would be in perpetual uproar, had one not prescribed *laws* concerning what one may do or must refrain from, and appointed *judges* to determine what is due to each according to the law and what he must forgo. Through this all disputes are settled, either amicably or by force, the property and life of men are protected and secured, and justice is administered.

Avot, chapter 1. "Three things preserve the world: *truth, justice and peace*. So too says Holy Scripture (Zech. 8:16): According to truth and peaceable justice must you judge in your gates." (Avot 1:18)

Ibid., chapter 3. "Pray for the welfare (the authority and power) of the government! For without fear (of the supreme power) one man would swallow up another." (Avot 3:2)

75. The human judge, however wise and upright he may be, can nevertheless sometimes err and pronounce unjustly, condemn the innocent to punishment, and uphold the crafty man in his improper claim. Man is not omniscient; he knows only actions, not their mainsprings, the sentiments, the secret intentions. At times he lets himself be taken in by dissembling; he trusts the pious, innocent air that someone assumes in order to deceive the judge. Often the judge condemns the most righteous man because the testimony of the witnesses compels him to, and because he does not know, or if he knows cannot prove, that the witnesses have been bribed with money [p. 39] to come forward against this upright man. It is also impossible for the judge to trace all the hidden motives that determine a man to a deed. Seldom does he know the degree of clarity with which this or that criminal recognized the culpability of his misdeed and nevertheless committed it. Two men commit the same crime under the same circumstances, for example a theft. Both are punished in the same way. Yet one of them may have been better instructed in his youth than the other in the sanctity of the right of property and the duty not to violate it, and therefore be more culpable than the other. But the judge is no searcher of hearts; he knows neither what goes on in the hearts of men, nor can he determine exactly how far this one, how far that one, has advanced in a thorough knowledge of his duties.

76. God alone is *supremely just*, can never err, never pronounce unjustly. He is omniscient; He forgets no circumstance (71) that could make an action blameless or less culpable. The most secret thoughts are known to Him; consequently He also knows the true causes of human deeds. He sees into the heart, whether it is pure and honest, or whether it is crafty, malicious and spiteful; and

since nothing remains secret or hidden before Him, He needs no witnesses in order to pronounce judgment.

> *Deut. 32:4.* "The Rock of refuge (God!) — his doing is without flaw, for right is all his dealing (with men). A God of faithfulness, without crookedness (without evading the law by crooked ways); just and upright is he." (Deut. 32:4)
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> [p. 40] *Avot, chapter 4.* "Blessed be he (God), before whom there is no injustice nor forgetfulness, no respect of persons (fear of eminent, powerful persons), nor bribery; for all is his." (With what could he be bribed who has everything and needs nothing?) (Avot 4:22)

77. In this world there is no perfect good fortune, no true happiness. Even the most fortunate of men still lacks many a thing he would gladly possess. How gladly, for example, should we like to have wings! Only after our death, when we enter a new state, can we obtain pure, unmixed happiness. The judgment before which every man is brought, as well as punishment and reward, must therefore also first take place properly in that world; although many a good deed is rewarded already in this life, and many a misdeed is likewise punished here. But man can best be judged after he has completed his whole course of life. — One sometimes sees a wicked man live in abundance and have everything he wishes, while the virtuous man suffers want and need and is persecuted by base, dishonorable men. Nevertheless one may not on that account regard God as unjust. The Judge of the world cannot be unjust.

> "No man leaves earthly things," says the *Midrash*, "with even half his wishes fulfilled." (Eccl. Rabbah 1:13)
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> Gen. 18:25. — Deut. 32:4. — Eccl. 11:9. — Eccl. 12:7.
>
> [p. 41] "For God shall one day bring each and every work into judgment, however secretly it may have been done, whether it be good or evil." (Ibid., v. 14)[14]

78. When one perceives such *apparent* injustices, that is, events that look as though they conflicted with justice, one must consider that some great good must come of them, for otherwise the all-just Being would not have permitted them. At times we ourselves see this; but our reason is too limited always to comprehend the purposes of God. Perhaps the good consequences of these apparent injustices will show themselves only in the days of our great-grandchildren. So too must we think when upheavals sometimes occur in the world, such as war, plague, conflagrations, floods and the like, which seem to conflict with the *all-goodness of God*. They are, to be sure, ruinous evils, but they bring forth a far greater good; they improve much more than they ruin. Does one not pull down a tumbledown little cottage in order to put up a solid, large, comfortable house? — These very events which seem unjust prove that this life is only a mere preparation for the life to come, where the actions and dispositions of human beings will at last be duly examined and judged,

[14] Translator: Continuing the proof-texts of the preceding page; the verse quoted is Eccl. 12:14.

where each will then receive his punishment and reward according to his deserts; and that it is for this reason, too, that God has let our soul be immortal (18).

> "For my thoughts are not your thoughts (you must not judge my deeds [p. 42] by your limited understanding); and your ways (as you think things ought to go) are not my ways (in keeping with my guidance and purposes), saith the Lord. For as high as the heaven is above the earth, so exalted is my guidance above your conduct, and my thoughts above your imaginings." (Isa. 55:8–9)
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> (Joseph said to his brothers): "Though you had the intention of doing me harm, yet God had the intention of turning it to good (and let all adversity happen in order to bring about what is now coming to pass), to keep a great people alive" (to bring forth a good for many people by means of an evil for a single person).[15] (Gen. 50:20)

79. This is what we are able to know of God through observation of the things in the world and through reflection with our understanding; and even by this alone we can and must be led to worship him. This worship consists in becoming like him and pleasing to him through the practice of virtue, through wisdom, goodness, universal benevolence and holiness (43).

[p. 43] Third Section. Knowledge of God, His Attributes and His Will through Revelation, or through the Teachings of Holy Scripture

80. It can very easily be shown that the knowledge of God through the light of reason (55) is not sufficient for all human beings at all times. Only a few people have so exercised and cultivated their reason that they can obtain this knowledge by themselves, through their own reflection, without instruction and the help of others' teaching.

81. Moreover, very few people have time enough to undertake all the reflections that come into play here. The greater part of our life passes in cares and exertions to be able to satisfy our needs. Especially in ancient times, before people were acquainted with the many advantages that make agriculture, fishing, hunting, spinning and weaving, the tanning of hides, etc., easier. In order to keep the body alive, one had too many hardships to be able to think of the development and cultivation of the powers of the soul. The first human beings had not even clothes to cover their nakedness.

> [p. 44] (The first human beings) "sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." (Gen. 3:7)

82. If, nevertheless, the mind stirred in one person or another, and he began to reflect on the things in the world, on their origin and causes, he fell into gross errors which in the sequel became very harmful. The first error was *polytheism* (48). To the uncultivated, feeble mind of the people of that

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[15] *Note.* If the story to which Joseph's answer refers should still be unknown to the children, the teacher is to tell it to them.

time it was incomprehensible that one single Being should alone have created the whole great world; just as incomprehensible, how it could be *governed* by one single Being.

83. Besides, those people could not see how it comes about that with so much good as is in the world, so many evils arise; how a Being that is so benevolent and beneficent can permit war, plague, epidemics, floods, earthquakes, hail and other ruinous natural events. It also seemed to them not to be reconcilable with the dignity of so great a ruler as the Lord of the world, that he should oversee and direct everything himself, and even be concerned for the preservation of every little worm, every insect.

84. They believed they could get out of these difficulties most easily and best if, instead of ascribing the whole of nature, with all its forces and effects, to one single and first cause, they assumed a special and separate cause for each force and effect. From this there now arose so many secondary, subordinate and demigods, which we now rightly call *idols*, that is, [p. 45] imaginary, useless beings. Thus, for example, the growth of grain was ascribed to a deity of its own, that of wine to another, and so on, every effect, every phenomenon in nature to a particular deity. (As if the God who brings forth grain could not also make grapes and flowers grow) (48). All the good that happens in the world was attributed to gentle and mild deities, all evils to destructive, wicked deities.

85. The worst of it was that to these imaginary beings (who were depicted as human beings, often also in the shapes of animals) people had also ascribed desires and passions, and that in a much higher degree than they show themselves in human beings. The god of war, for example, took great joy in the tumult of battle, in martial fury, in vengeance and bloodshed. One deity was given to drunkenness, another to lust and lewdness. People therefore believed they could not make themselves more pleasing to the gods than by becoming like them, by imitating their excesses. So they abandoned themselves to the full fire of the passions and to the most unbridled licentiousness; they were restrained by nothing, and did everything to which their evil lust seduced them, even though they harmed themselves and other people. They committed the greatest cruelties in the false opinion that they were doing God a pleasure. Many fathers sacrificed their own children, and had them burned in the fire in honour of some idol or other. These and other abominations they [p. 46] held to be the highest worship of God. So low had human beings sunk!

> "They shall no more offer their slaughtered beasts *to the wood-gods depicted with goats' feet*, after whom they go a-whoring (with strong desire)." (Lev. 17:7)
>
> "At Horeb they made a calf, a molten image, to worship; and changed the worship of God into the image of an ox that eateth grass." (Ps. 106:19–20)
>
> "The *Avites* made (the idols) Nibhaz and Tartak; the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to *Adrammelech* and *Anammelech*, the gods of the Sepharvites." (2 Kings 17:31)

> "They built altars to the idol *Baal*, which stands in the valley of *Ben-hinnom*, (to cause) their sons and daughters (to pass through the flame) to the idol *Moloch*: never did I command it, never did it come into my mind (that of the true God), that such an abomination should be done." (Jer. 32:35)

86. The corruption of humankind rose to its height; the most abominable vicious deed was itself held to be the finest, a heavenly virtue. In short, by the natural way no improvement was to be hoped for, no rescue to be expected. God had, as it were, to come down from heaven himself to tear the human race out of the general corruption. He had to scatter the gross errors which darkened the understanding as clouds at times darken the sun, and to teach human beings better about the attributes of God and his will. They had to be made capable of grasping the great truths of the destiny of man, of the immortality [p. 47] of the soul, of punishment and reward, especially of the judgment after death. It was necessary that God himself should reveal to them the eternal truth: without the practice of virtue there is absolutely no true and lasting happiness, and nothing in the world makes one more wretched than letting oneself be governed by the passions alone.

87. From time to time, therefore, as circumstances made it necessary, the supreme, eternal Being revealed himself to some of the best and most rational of human beings; that is, in a manner incomprehensible to us he made known to them his will, and imparted to them good teachings on how they should bring up their children and improve their friends, acquaintances and other people. Some of these chosen men were called by God, summoned, to convert whole peoples, to turn them away from evil and to guide them to good. The names of these men are: *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Jonah*, and many others. All persons who had been deemed worthy, found worthy, of such a revelation are called *seers, prophets, soothsayers*, because they announced future events in advance, in order to confirm the divine apparition they had had by the exact fulfilment of the announcement.

88. Abraham was the first who had worthier concepts of God. These he taught to his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob, and instructed them in the truths that are important and necessary to man. His children were [p. 48] likewise concerned to propagate in the family the teachings they had received, and each held his own to make them the rule of their conduct and to order their behaviour accordingly. The good, pure teaching had struck such deep roots among them, had settled so firmly in their hearts, that when these families grew into a great nation and through various events fell into slavery among the Egyptian people, they neither adopted the Egyptian idolatry nor became uncivilized and base after the manner of slaves. Even in the harshest and most degrading slavery they kept their dignity, the sense of true honour, and remained faithful to the teachings received from their forefathers.

89. When God saw that the Israelites (as this nation is called after its patriarch Jacob, who also bore the name *Israel*) remained good, civilized and virtuous, he resolved to free them from oppressive slavery and, through wise and useful laws, *to form* them into a model and example for

other peoples; that is, to make them better and more perfect through new and more thorough teachings.

90. For this, however, *miracles* — that is, effects which nature cannot bring forth, but which only a *supernatural* power can perform — were absolutely necessary. *Pharaoh*, Egypt's king, and his people could be moved by no means to release the Israelites from bondage. Yet God had once resolved to make them a free nation. He therefore chose from among this people [p. 49] a man who possessed the highest degree of human virtue and wisdom. Him he charged to persuade the Egyptians, with all kindness and gentleness, to set his brethren free. *Moses* — so this godly man was called — carried out his mission; he went where God had sent him, and spoke as he had been commanded. But in vain; by kindness he could achieve nothing. God thereupon had great punishments threatened against them through Moses; and when they nevertheless remained obstinate in their refusal, they were very severely chastised. This they had indeed deserved; for there is no greater crime than to rob a whole nation of its freedom. Unheard-of and supernatural plagues finally compelled them to acknowledge the omnipotence of the true God, to give full credence to the words of Moses, and to let the Israelite nation go out of the land free. When it went out of Egypt, Moses became its superior, its teacher and its leader.

91. A short time afterwards the eternal Being had them assembled in a wilderness around a mountain which was then called *Sinai*. When the people were assembled, the heavens were overcast with thick clouds. The whole region was filled with mist and smoke. Out of this deep darkness fearful lightnings were hurled about in the form of flaming firebrands. The thunder rolled on unceasingly, and a trumpet sounded a piercing blast without pause. And now, out of this apparition, one heard how the Majesty of God proclaimed its holy will in *ten commandments*. [p. 50] It would have continued further with the salutary instruction and given more commands, had not the people, seized and shaken through by the dread of the splendid yet terrible apparition, themselves expressly begged that the instruction be halted and that all the other teachings necessary for its happiness be made known to it through Moses, God's confidant. This also happened; and Moses remained, as long as he lived, the mediator, or the intermediary between God and the nation. From the mouth of this mediator it received from time to time the further divine ordinances.

> "All the people perceived the voice of thunder, the flames of fire, the sound of the trumpet, and the smoking mountain. When the people became aware of it, they trembled and stood afar off. And they said to Moses: Speak thou with us, and we will gladly hear; only let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Exod. 20:15–16)

92. All that God revealed at this apparition, and what he revealed before and after through Moses and the prophets, we still possess today in a great work called *Holy Scripture* (the Bible). This

Scripture contains[16] a great many truths from which we can know the attributes of God and his will, and everything that aims at the good of man and of a whole nation, far more clearly and completely, and can more easily see and comprehend them.

93. Most of the teachings, ordinances and precepts that occur in Holy Scripture refer, it is true, solely to the nation of Israel that was to be formed, and to its history, that is, to [p. 51] what had befallen it in slavery and after the exodus from Egypt; above all, however, to two principal events, namely the extraordinary deliverance from slavery, and the appearance of God, as wondrous as it was beneficent, which had fallen to the lot of this nation alone. But the great book of divine revelations also contains a great many excellent teachings and instructions for all peoples, for all human beings, at all times. Teachings which come from the highest wisdom must also be useful and necessary as long as there are rational beings.

> "He maketh his will known unto Jacob, and gave Israel law and justice. He hath not dealt so with any heathen nation; nor hath he revealed to them his ordinances." (Ps. 147:19–20)
>
> "The conclusion (the chief teaching) of all that we have now heard is: *Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the duty of all men* (it concerns all)." (Eccl. 12:13)
>
> "It hath been told thee, O man, what is good. The Eternal requires nothing of thee but *to do justice, to do good with love*, and in thy *secret walk* (in thy hidden doings) *to be with God* (always to think of oneself as in God's presence, to do nothing that might be contrary to his will)." In a few words, sublime teachings for all men of all ages! — (Micah 6:8)

[p. 52] Fourth Section. Of the Ten Commandments

94. The Ten Commandments which God made known out of that fearful apparition on Mount Sinai (91) read, according to Holy Scripture, as follows:

95. *First Commandment.* "I am the Eternal, thy God, who have brought thee (people of Israel) out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves (out of slavish bondage)." (Exod. 20:2)

96. At that time not yet three whole months had passed since this nation had been freed from slavery by a supernatural power, by extraordinary miracles. These miracles are the greatest proofs of the omnipotence of God. First, God had brought ten terrible plagues upon the Egyptians, which could not have arisen from natural forces. Nor did it rest with these miracles alone. Soon afterwards he had to perform a still greater miracle for the rescue of the Israelite nation.

97. When this nation went out of Egypt, and the tormenting plagues there ceased, the tyrants, Pharaoh and his people, regretted having released the Israelites from bondage. The king thereupon called his army together, pursued the nation, and overtook it in its camp on the [p. 53] shore of the

[16] Translator: The print has *erhält* ("receives"), evidently a misprint for *enthält* ("contains").

Red Sea. The Israelites, scarcely become free, were to return to slavery again, or perish in a bloody war.

98. Great was the distress of the Israelites: before them the sea, behind them the mighty enemy pressing on; wherever they turned, no escape was to be found; by natural means there was no way of rescuing them. But in the midst of the crush help came unexpectedly. The Almighty rescued them by a supernatural power. He commanded — and in an instant the waters in the middle of the sea drew back on both sides, piled themselves up on high, formed two walls (of ice), and between them there was a dry passage. Thus the pursued happily escaped the vengeance and fury of the Egyptian army. In its blindness the latter kept following the nation; but when it was in the middle of the passage, God commanded again — and in a trice the piled-up waters crashed together over the head of the tyrant; they were drowned: wickedness here found its grave.

> "Before their fathers he (God) did wonders in the land of Egypt, in the fields of *Zoan*; he divided the sea and led them through, set up the waters like a wall." (Ps. 78:12–13)

99. The creation of the world and its preservation are full of wonders, and prove sufficiently that God is almighty (56, 57). But the wondrousness of creation gradually becomes everyday to us through habit, and works upon the human heart not nearly so strongly as miracles that happen before our [p. 54] eyes. The effect of such new miracles must be very much stronger still when they deliver from great afflictions.

100. This is the reason why God did not announce himself with the words: I am the Eternal, *who created heaven and earth*, and continually preserves them. To the common multitude, not yet properly instructed, this would have made no greater impression, would not have set forth divine omnipotence vividly enough. To make the concepts of the omnipotence, the supreme wisdom and the infinite goodness of God really clear to this large part of the nation, it would have been necessary first to enter into lengthy investigations.

101. He therefore spoke: I am the Eternal, who have redeemed thee from the hardest, most oppressive slavery through miracles that were wrought before thine eyes. In an instant there arose in the hearts of the hearers the living conviction of the supreme power of God, of his wise and kindly providence. The miracles that took place in Egypt and at the Red Sea, these miracles by which the laws of nature were so often altered without the order of the world being on that account abolished, served the common human understanding as the very strongest proof that there exists a Being which created the world according to its good pleasure, and therefore can rule and dispose in it according to its will.

102. By appealing to the wondrous exodus from Egypt, God also taught the Israelites that he alone *orders and directs the fates [p. 55] of men*, that is, everything that befalls them, fortune and misfortune,* for their best*. He thereby instructed them that the dispositions and actions of all human beings, of slaves as of kings, are known to him; that, as with Pharaoh and his people, he

punishes crime without respect of persons (76), and, as with the Israelites, takes up with fatherly goodness the cause of every guiltless oppressed person and has compassion on him.

103. This comforting teaching means that even in the greatest distress we should *not despair of help*, should never give up all hope. He who was able so wondrously to rescue the people of Israel, hard pressed on every side on the shore of the Red Sea, must surely find it easy to stand by me too in my distress, and to send help where and when I least expect it. If we sincerely trust in God's goodness and wisdom, we often attain to fortune and honours just when we already consider ourselves wholly lost.

104. The first commandment bids us cultivate our understanding and clearly recognize the omnipotence of God, through which the world came into being when nothing existed; and to gain a more exact insight into the laws according to which everything in nature stirs and moves, lives and weaves. It teaches us at the same time that God does not lightly alter these laws of nature, and works miracles only when a nation or a distinguished, worthy man is to receive a special instruction, or falls into an agonizing situation and no natural means are possible to put an end to these agonies.

> [p. 56] "And though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I walk without fear; for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff (thy love and care) are ever my comfort." (Ps. 23:4)
>
> "I was a youth, I became an old man, yet never saw I the upright forsaken, and his seed (his children) going after bread (begging for bread)." (Ibid. 37:25)

105. Through the words with which God announced himself, we receive the certainty that we can hide nothing from him, keep nothing secret. Some children, who either receive no instruction or do not pay attention to instruction, abandon themselves to evil desires when they are sure that no one can find out. But they do not consider that God sees and knows everything. Others, again, do good not because it is commanded by the law of reason, but in order to be praised for it by people. These do not think that God knows not only the deed but also the intention a person has in it, and examines whether it is pure, noble or impure. Those children can convince themselves from this commandment that before God no deed, however secretly it is kept, no intention, however hidden it may be, remains concealed (71).

106. The example of the two nations, the Israelite and the Egyptian, proves in general the doctrine of the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice (73). But it teaches in particular as well that whereas the punishment and reward of the individual follow only rarely in this life, in the case of a whole nation the one and the other follow inevitably already in this life. A crime [p. 57] in which a whole people takes part must have ruinous consequences for the state, for the greater part of the inhabitants of the land; just as the good conduct and morality of a whole nation always promote prosperity and abundance, and preserve its *constitution*, that is, its inner order (147).

107. The example of the slaves of the Israelite nation and of their liberation further confirms the truth that everything that happens in the world has been recognized by God as good. Even the upheavals that floods, earthquakes and the like cause in this or that country, as well as the evils and misfortunes that people experience, must always bring forth a great good which far outweighs the damage of that disorder and the sufferings of the unfortunate (78).

108. That slavery under which the Israelite nation languished was indeed an evil, a hard trial of its patience and of its attachment to the teachings and dispositions of its patriarchs (88). But without this trial they would never have attained the brilliant good fortune of becoming a free nation and, what is far more, through the sublime divine revelation on Mount Sinai, a model for all contemporary peoples and many later ones (89). The teachings that became known to them are still today, after many thousands of years, good and useful for all human beings, and will remain so as long as human beings recognize and love the truth (93).

109. So too God permitted Joseph to be sold as a slave by his brothers and taken by the [p. 58] *Midianites* to Egypt. It must have pained a freeborn man deeply to be sold as a slave, and by his own brothers into the bargain. The purpose in it, however, was that Joseph should sincerely repent in misfortune of his unseemly exaltation of himself over his brothers and of the *accusations* he had brought against them before their father, and should *mend his ways*. The amendment of a human being is in itself already a great good. But a still greater good was to arise from this event. Through his stay in Egypt Joseph gained the enviable power to free a whole nation from a terrible famine and to keep it alive.

Gen. 50:20 (79).

110. Finally, this great example encourages us *to have sincere trust in the goodness of God*. We are perfectly certain that the almighty and benevolent Being can and will help us, provided that our destiny, our eternal happiness, suffers nothing thereby. But it cannot will that we be helped in this life, for a short time, in such a way that we should thereby become unhappy in the future, eternally enduring life. No sensible, good physician will, in order to still a small and brief pain, use such remedies as could cause a violent and lingering illness. God could remedy all misfortune, all evils on the spot. But his sublime wisdom sees that it is often better for [p. 59] us to endure a small hardship than, through swift help, to expose ourselves to greater dangers or to deprive ourselves of a considerable good.

> "The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed; a refuge in times of trouble (misfortune). They that know thy name (thy attributes) put their trust in thee; for thou forsakest not them that inquire after thee (that strive to know thee), O Lord!" (Ps. 9:10–11)
>
> "Hail (well) to the man whom thou (God) chastenest, and teachest through thy law to be composed in evil times. When I think, now my foot slips, then thy grace holds me up, O Lord!" (Ibid. 94:12–13, 18)

"When cares multiply within me, thy comfort delights my soul." (Ibid. 94:19)

111. *Second Commandment.* Thou shalt have no other gods before my face. Thou shalt not make thee an idol, nor any imitation of a form of what is in heaven above, on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them; for I, the Eternal, thy God, am a zealous God (who can suffer no other beside himself), visiting the crime of the fathers upon children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, namely, with those that hate me; but showing grace unto the thousandth generation to those that love me and keep my commandments. (Exod. 20:3–6)

112. This commandment warns us not to represent the Supreme Being under any image, in any [p. 60] form whatever (52). It displeases God when one takes him for a bodily being, attributes to him bodily qualities, characteristics, or even desires and passions (53). We must acknowledge him as the only true God, worship him alone, honour him alone in divine service, and place our trust in him alone. If it goes well with us, our thanks are due to him for the good fortune he lets come to us. If it goes ill with us, if we are unhappy and look about us for help, then we must direct our gaze to him alone. From him alone can we expect rescue, or at least the relief of our pains and sufferings. Him alone must we implore in our troubles; for he alone has the power and the will to give comfort and relief to human beings, his children.

Isa. 40:18 (52).

113. When one worships other beings besides God, ascribes the good one enjoys or the evil that befalls one to fictitious beings, conjures spirits and ghosts (calls upon them for help), one offends God. His name is thereby profaned and dishonoured, that is, we lower him in our thoughts when we turn the worship that is due to him alone to other beings, whether they have a real existence or are invented by human beings.

114. Scripture says: God is zealous; God hates this, he loves that. Zeal, anger, vexation, hatred, love, etc., are passions [p. 61] (26). God is the most simple Being, and has neither desires nor affects nor passions. We cannot, therefore, understand these and other expressions and turns of phrase occurring in the Bible as when they are used of human beings.

115. Man has needs; he must provide for shelter, food, clothing and still other things without which he could not preserve himself (19). Nature has therefore given him drives, so that he may seek out the means of procuring what is *necessary* to him (22). But it has also given him inclinations and desires, so that he does not remain in his first raw state but improves it as far as possible. He is to strive to make his life *agreeable* (23). Since there are many things through which we can bring upon ourselves pains, disorder in our body, or even its total destruction, we also have aversions and loathings toward such things, and seek to keep them away from us (24).

Drives, inclinations and desires thus arise from needs, that is, from weaknesses and deficiencies of human nature. We feel attachment, favour, goodwill and love toward persons and things from

which we receive, or *hope* to receive, benefit, comfort, help or pleasure. Aversions and loathings are likewise consequences of limited human powers, which are incapable of resisting evils. We feel repugnance, hatred, anger toward persons or [p. 62] things that have either harmed us or from which we *fear* harm.

116. The ground of every desire and loathing, of pleasure and displeasure, is thus need, the deficiency of human nature and the limitation of its powers. These are imperfections which have no place in the Supreme Being. God is almighty, possesses an infinite power, has no desires; he lacks nothing, he fears not to lose anything, he hopes not to gain anything.

117. Nevertheless there is also found in man a kind of hatred and love which does not come from his deficiencies and imperfections. They have a better and nobler ground. A good child, when, for example, it reads world history, rejoices at a virtuous action it finds there, and loves the one who performed it a thousand years ago. From this person, who has been dead so long, it can hope to receive neither benefit nor pleasure, and yet it rejoices and loves him.

118. In the same way it feels indignation, vexation and abhorrence toward the persons who in those remote times were inhuman and committed cruelties, although it has nothing to fear from them now. Hatred and love of this kind spring from moral feeling, from the spiritual part of man, from the soul, which has much resemblance to the divine Being. Moral feeling makes us inclined to love virtue and to hate vice, without regard to benefit and [p. 63] harm, but because virtue makes the spirit nobler, more perfect, more like God, whereas vice robs man of all dignity and degrades him to a beast of prey.

119. It is in this sense, though still always *figuratively*, that Scripture speaks: *God is zealous; God's anger was kindled; God was vexed; he loves* those that fear him, and *hates* his enemies, and more such turns of phrase, which are meant to express his manifestations of displeasure at crimes, or of good pleasure in good, noble actions, and their degrees. These expressions always remain figurative. With good pleasure and displeasure, with hatred and love, however noble their origin may be, we always think of a change in the motion of the blood; its circulation becomes either quicker or slower through the emotion. But this can in no way be thought of God, as an incorporeal Being.

120. The pure spirits, the angels, will surely have other expressions and designations for the manifestations of God, more befitting his nature, which do not suggest anything bodily. But Scripture does not speak with angels; it speaks with human beings, and in order to be understood by them must make use of human turns of phrase. To this belong the frequent passages of the Bible such as: God *sits* on the throne; he *looks down* from heaven upon men; the pious man totters but does not fall; *God holds him with his hand*; *the Lord passed through the land of Egypt by night*, [p. 64] and more such figurative turns of phrase.

Avot, ch. 2 (71).[17]

121. A kind of idolatry which God likewise cannot tolerate is *superstition*. That is, when one believes in effects which are supposed to have arisen without the will of God and through no natural causes; or when one ascribes an effect to such a cause, although the effects are not in the least connected with that cause.

122. One is superstitious when one expects help from the dead and calls upon them by conjurations; when one believes that on certain days of the year all undertakings must succeed, and on others again fail. That person is superstitious who says, for example: I know why I have been outwitted and cheated today in all my dealings; because the first thing I met today was a fox (an animal that is well known to be sly). But meeting the fox cannot possibly produce the effect this person imagines. He let himself be deceived either because he was inattentive, distracted, or because he had to do with practised cheats whose tricks were too subtle to be noticed by him at once.

123. One is further superstitious when one takes the appearance of a comet, or the arrangement of the clouds, for signs announcing war, crop failure, plague or other scourges of the land. There have been nations to which prudence and deep knowledge [p. 65] in the arts and sciences, and who nevertheless believed that from the flight of birds, from the entrails of sacrificial animals, they could learn the will of their gods, whether, for example, they would be fortunate or unfortunate in the war for which they were arming.

> "You shall hold no meal over the blood. (Some had let the blood of slaughtered cattle run into a pit made for the purpose, and held a meal beside the pit, in the belief that demons (spirits) would appear to partake of the blood and, in gratitude, foretell their future destinies.) Pay no heed to the movements of serpents, nor to the drift of the clouds (or: hold to no superstitious omen, and be no observers of lucky days)." (Lev. 19:26)
>
> "Do not resort to conjurers of the dead and interpreters of signs; do not seek to defile yourselves through them. I, the Eternal, your God (forbid this)!" (Lev. 19:31)

124. Superstition is extremely harmful. It has often kept men from good actions, and still more often led them to evil actions, to cruelties, to human sacrifice and to bloodshed. They believed that thereby they could reconcile God, appease Him, and win His love through the murder of human beings. So false, so wavering and so fanatical were their notions of God, of His attributes and of His holy will! — To guard oneself against superstition and fanaticism, one must be attentive to instruction and cultivate one's understanding. Whoever neglects this is culpable if he becomes vicious through [p. 66] error, even though he committed the evil only out of ignorance and fanaticism.

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[17] Translator: Mishnah Avot (Pirkei Avot), chapter 2, presumably 2:1: "Know what is above you: an eye that sees, an ear that hears, and all your deeds are written in a book."

125. Far more culpable, however, is he who in his heart is convinced of the absurdity and nothingness of the worship of gods, of superstition and of fanaticism, and yet pretends to hold these fables and fictions to be true. Such a man is a hypocrite, a blasphemer. In secret he laughs at these fables; in public, however, out of self-interest or some other purpose, he helps to spread and promote this false belief. He blasphemes God, because either he denies that God knows the thoughts of men, or because it is a matter of indifference to him whether God approves or disapproves of his public conduct. He is an enemy of God, whom he knowingly defies, and his offence is punished even in his descendants.

126. At first sight this seems to conflict with justice. It would be very unfair to punish children for crimes of their parents which they themselves did not commit, or to reward them merely because they have good, pious parents. Scripture pronounces that the offences of the parents are not imputed to their children, nor the misdeeds of the latter to the former: each has to give account only of his own actions. It would be very sad if the virtuous man had to atone for the outrages of his parents in which he took no part. The hardened villain, relying on the merits of his worthy father, would commit every vice without shame and without fear of punishment. He would even be so brazen as [p. 67] to lay claim to reward, since God shows mercy to those who love Him unto the thousandth generation.

> "Behold! (says God) all souls belong to Me: the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son are Mine; only that soul which sins shall die. He who never oppresses the poor, takes neither usury nor interest, carries out My ordinances and walks (lives) according to My laws, he shall not die for the iniquity of his father; he shall live happily." "The person who sins, he alone shall die: the son does not atone for the sin of the father, nor the father for the misdeeds of the son. The virtue of the pious benefits only himself; the vice is imputed to the wicked man (the villain) alone." (Ezek. 18:4, 17, 20)

127. Holy Scripture does not contradict itself. Both the threat to punish the crimes of the parents in their children and the assurance to reward the piety of the former even in the latter must be understood and explained according to what usually happens. Children almost always imitate the way of life of their parents; the son models himself on the father, the daughter on the mother. The good or bad examples of the parents in their conduct have a great effect on the mind of the young. Many people do good merely out of imitation, out of good-heartedness, and evil out of ignorance, merely out of imitation, out of want of instruction.

128. Children of such parents as have been corrupted merely by bad example (which stems from ignorance) [p. 68] can easily mend their ways once they come to understanding and reflection and perceive the errors with which they grew up. But if they remain in their defective upbringing without cultivating their understanding, they are culpable. They and their parents are punished only because they have neglected to have themselves better instructed about their duties. Their

actual crime, however, cannot be punished with full severity, because both, father and son, did not perceive the culpability of their offence.

129. But there are also people who are vicious from evil principles; who, as soon as it brings them profit or gives them pleasure, secretly commit any crime. Of this kind are those hypocrites who are convinced of the falsehood and harmfulness of idolatry and superstition, and nevertheless, out of self-interest or other culpable motives, publicly defend both and help to spread them (115).

130. In the case of children of such parents, who are led by evil principles to the practice of injustice and crime, almost no improvement can be hoped for. They are convinced of the viciousness of their actions and nevertheless sin wantonly like their parents, who deliberately rebel against the will of God. It is therefore entirely in keeping with *divine justice* to remember the misdeeds of a father of this sort even upon his children and children's children, since they perceive the abomination of the principles instilled in them, and [p. 69] yet do not abandon them, and so remain *enemies of God*.

131. It is the same with a good upbringing. Parents who possess a thorough knowledge of the duties of man are not content merely to live virtuously and thereby to give their children a good example. They also do not neglect to teach the children why they must perform certain actions and refrain from others: they instil good principles in them.

132. It is almost impossible that children brought up in this way should ever degenerate, or, despite the instruction and the examples, go astray. It is therefore in keeping with *divine grace* to reward the virtues of the father even unto the thousandth generation, if the good principles are handed down and children and grandchildren live by them. God rewards the good of those who love Him, however culpably their parents may have acted; He punishes the criminal, even if his father had deserved well of the whole human race.

> "Train the boy according to his way; even in old age he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6)
>
> "God repays a man according to his work, and seizes (judges) the man in his own way." (Job 34:11)

133. *Third Commandment.* "You shall not pronounce the name of the Eternal, your God, in vain; for the Eternal will not leave him [p. 70] unpunished who pronounces His name in vain."

Exod. 20:7.

Whoever swears by the name of God, pronounces it in order to confirm a lie as true, blasphemes the holy name of the Most High and is highly culpable. He is still more culpable, however, if through such a false oath the judge, who takes it for true, is led to deprive an innocent person of his property, of his honour, or even of his life. This is one of the most abominable of crimes. But that is not what is spoken of here. The third commandment bids us in general to show deep

reverence for the name of God on every occasion, never to pronounce it lightly, even when one has no intention of thereby making an untruth credible.

> "You shall not steal, nor deny anything to one another, nor lie; nor shall you swear falsely by My name and thereby profane the name of your God. I, the Eternal (forbid this)." Compare Lev. 22:32. (Lev. 19:11, 12)

134. If one pronounces the name of God in vain, that is, without its being necessary or required, as is wont to happen among ignorant people from bad habit, then the holy name becomes quite common, and one gradually loses respect and reverence for God, for His ordinances and commands. Even worldly rulers, out of reverence, [p. 71] are only seldom called by their own names. They are usually called by their rank: *Emperor, King, Duke, Prince*, etc. How much more must we esteem and hold in honour the name of the Supreme Being, the King of all kings! We may therefore by no means pronounce it, except in prayer, and when necessity requires it, when, for example, one has to make a statement before a court valid or invalid by invoking the divine name.

135. *Fourth Commandment.* "Remember always the day of rest, to keep it holy. Six days you may labour and do all your business. But the seventh is a day of rest in honour of the Eternal, your God. You shall do no work of craft, neither you yourself, nor your son or your daughter, your male slave, your female slave, nor through your cattle, nor through your stranger who dwells within your gates. For in six days the Eternal made heaven, earth and sea, together with all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Eternal blessed the day of rest (He gave it important advantages over other days) and declared it holy."

Exod. 20:8, 9, 10, 11.

136. To keep the Sabbath (so Scripture calls the seventh day) holy means: to abstain from all work, to put aside all cares, and on that day, more than on any other, to devote oneself to reflections on the destiny of man and to dwell on them especially. From [p. 72] reason we know that man is destined to become good, virtuous, and through virtue happy (40). Revelation, religion, expresses our destiny differently and more clearly. It wills that we ourselves be glad and joyful, and that we should also make others around us glad and joyful.

137. One is joyful and content when the conscience is pure and has no reproach to make itself over any action contrary to duty, when the body is healthy and enjoys permitted pleasures. One makes other people joyful when one frees them from grief and cares and lets them share in our innocent pleasures. To give joy to oneself and others, and especially to do good to those in need, was, after the divine service had been held, the occupation of the Israelites on the festivals.

> "On the festival you shall eat the sacrificial meat (in Jerusalem) before the Eternal, and make merry together with your households with what you have acquired through the blessing of the Eternal, your God." (Deut. 12:7)

"At your festival you shall be joyful, you, your son, your daughter, as well as the Levite, the orphan and the widow who are within your gates (and must eke out a meagre living)." (Ibid. 15:14)[18]

138. When things go well with us and we are happy, we feel the need to give thanks for it. We rejoice in the good; we laud and praise the goodness of Him who does us good. Therefore our prayers of thanksgiving and hymns of praise on festivals, on days when we are especially content, are more fervent, more devout and holier. [p. 73] They are also more moving and more solemn, because they are sung by the whole assembled congregation. Every person feels a deep respect for a large assembly of rational persons. This respect increases the earnestness, and the soul then thinks of nothing except God, the Giver of all good.

"This (festival) day the Eternal gave us; on it we shall be content and joyful." (Ps. 118:24)

"You are my God! You will I thank; my God! You will I exalt (in hymns of praise) (above all beneficent beings). Give thanks to the Lord, for He is kind; His goodness endures for ever." (Ps. 118:58 [i.e. 28], 29)[19]

"Your grace I do not hide in my heart; I proclaim Your faithfulness, Your help; I do not conceal Your love and truth from the great assembly of the people." (Ibid. 40:11)

139. The weekly day of rest (the Sabbath), which is holy to all civilized nations, has as its particular purpose that, through a complete cessation of all work and activity, one should remember the creation of the world and strengthen oneself in the belief that the creation and preservation of the world would have been impossible without the supreme power and boundless goodness. This remembrance strengthens our feeling of gratitude, because through the wise arrangement of the world we are able to become virtuous and happy. We are thereby also encouraged to benevolence towards all creatures, and especially towards human beings.

140. The other festivals, which were instituted by God in Scripture, concern only [p. 74] the Israelite nation. They relate more or less to its history: to its wondrous deliverance from long and oppressive slavery; to the great, beatifying revelation on Mount Sinai; and to the taking possession of the land of *Canaan*, which God promised to the patriarchs of this nation, namely Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (88), to give to their descendants.

(God spoke with Abram, who afterwards received the name Abraham.) "To you and to your seed (your posterity) after you I will give the land of your sojourning, the whole land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession, and will be the true God to it (as to you)." (Gen. 17:8)

141. *Fifth Commandment.* "Honour your father and your mother, that you may live long upon the earth (in the land) which the Eternal, your God, will give you."

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[18] Translator: The verse quoted is Deut. 16:14; "15:14" is evidently a misprint.

[19] Translator: Ps. 118:28–29; the printed "58" is a misprint for 28.

Exod. 20:12. Compare Exod. 16:8 (137).[20]

142. It is natural to every good person, nature itself brings it with it, to love father and mother and hold them in high honour, even if God had not promised a long life for it. Gratitude, too, binds us to it. What do the parents, and especially the mother, not endure with the child from the time it is born until they have raised it!

[p. 75] **143.** Early childhood is almost an uninterrupted state of sickliness. Now measles appear, now miliary fever or scarlet fever, and when the teeth break through, the child often has very violent pains. The mother is ceaselessly troubled with it; but her love bears everything with patience. She tends it and cleans it; day and night she spends at its cradle; no sleep comes to her eyes. When the child grows and begins to talk and walk, the parents must watch over it constantly: it might run too fast and knock itself; it might reach for knives and forks and wound itself with them; or it might put unripe fruit and other harmful things into its mouth.

144. Parents are always anxious to procure for their children food, care, clothes and other things that give them pleasure. For this they often submit to the hardest labours, the most irksome tasks. It is incumbent upon them to give the child a good upbringing, that is, to have it instructed, either themselves or through others, in religion, in moral teaching, in artistic skills, or in a trade. For this they spare neither pains nor expense, in order to form their children unceasingly into pious and well-mannered, skilful and useful people. Paternal care and maternal tenderness extend still further. They strive and work untiringly so as to leave the children, even after their death, sufficient means for their advancement. [p. 76] The love of good parents knows neither measure nor bound.

145. So too should the love of good children be! Even the most willing and grateful among them can never repay their parents all the benefits they have received. Even irrational animals cling with much love to their parents, to whom they owe so little.

146. People who are able to stifle filial love, this natural, holy feeling, in their breast are therefore worse than irrational animals. People who are capable of abandoning their parents in need, or even of wounding and grieving them — how can such monsters feel benevolence, compassion and mercy towards other people? They are villains capable of committing every act of violence and cruelty. Property, honour and life — nothing is safe from them. A state where such a brood of unfeeling and undisciplined evildoers nests, a land of wicked inhabitants, must perish.

> "An eye that mocks its father and looks scornfully upon the faithful mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall devour it." (Prov. 30:17)

147. Discipline and good morals establish the welfare and happiness of a nation. Without public morality and gentle feelings, men grow savage, and the bonds of civil society dissolve. This

[20] Translator: The printed "2. B. 16, 8" (Exod. 16:8) does not bear on the commandment; perhaps Deut. 5:16, the parallel text of the Fifth Commandment, was intended.

explains the meaning of Scripture: Honour your father and your mother; see to it that in the nation filial [p. 77] love, the source of all benevolent feelings, is held sacred and never troubled; then you (the nation) will live long in the land which God will give you. — That is to say: the happiness of the nation will then be of long duration. It then enjoys uninterrupted peace within and complete security without, because no enemy dares to attack so upright a nation.[21]

148. *Sixth Commandment.* "You shall not murder."

Exod. 20:13.

149. It is a terrible thought to deprive one's fellow man, the image of God, of his life. If a man is robbed of his existence, he is deprived of all means of perfecting his mind and soul and preparing them for the future life. Without this preparation, for which God placed him in this world, he could become eternally unhappy, or at least lose that happiness in which he could have shared had he not been deprived of his life too early.

> [p. 78] "I (God) will also require your blood, on which your life depends; at the hand of every living thing will I require it, and at the hand of man will I require the life of a man, at the hand of every brother of his (for all men are brothers) (before My judgement, and will punish the doer). Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed in turn; for in the image of God (that is, with an immortal soul) He made man." (Gen. 9:5, 6)

150. In general it is forbidden to spoil or destroy anything without a reasonable cause. Man is lord over the things in the world only insofar as he can make useful use of them (21). We may not, however, out of mere wantonness, either spoil plants and cut down trees, or maim or wound any living creature. We are permitted to kill only such animals whose flesh we eat or whose other parts we can use, or from which we have to fear the destruction of our being, our death, or the ruin of other animals and plants useful to us, such as snakes, tigers, mad dogs and the like.

> (God speaks to Noah and his sons:) "Whatever moves and is alive shall be yours to eat; as the green herbs, I have given you everything." (Exod. 9:3)[22]
>
> *Talmud.* "It is forbidden to cause animals pain out of wantonness, to provoke them, or to frighten them." (cf. BT Bava Metzia 32b)[23]

[p. 79] **151.** One could not have brought oneself to kill even a murderer, or a person who commits another capital crime, if God had not expressly commanded it. Such a person has dishonoured the divine image, his rational soul, and has become a harmful, dangerous animal. He may therefore,

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[21] *Note.* It is left to the teacher to make the connection of these propositions clearer to the upper class, and to show how easily a people is subjugated that is already undermined by selfishness, self-interest, treachery and other ruinous passions; and why a nation in which good, noble sentiments prevail, which sacrifices everything out of love for the fatherland and the laws, is almost invincible.

[22] Translator: Printed "2. B. Mos." (Exodus); the verse is Gen. 9:3.

[23] Translator: The prohibition of causing pain to animals (*tza'ar ba'alei hayyim*) is discussed in BT Bava Metzia 32a–b.

like a dangerous animal, be punished with death. The death penalty and its manner are determined by the laws; the evildoer is then *executed*, but never murdered.

Gen. 9:5, 6 (136).[24]

152. *Seventh Commandment.* "You shall not commit unchastity!"

Exod. 20:13.

153. He commits a great vice who seeks to make a wife unfaithful to her husband, to bring her to turn towards him the love that is due to her husband alone. Love between husband and wife is a precious good, and once it has been injured, it can never again be restored as before. Every domestic pleasure, however small, gains a higher charm through conjugal love and fidelity. In dark days, when good spouses are bowed down by grief and cares, it is their mutual tenderness that raises them up again and gives them courage to bear their lot patiently.

> "Let your fountain (domestic happiness) be blessed (pure); have your joy [p. 80]
> in the wife of your youth (whom you loved in your youth)." (Prov. 5:18)
>
> "If someone walks about on glowing coals, does he not burn his feet? So it goes also with him who comes too near to his neighbour's wife; his innocence is lost if he touches her (with desire)." (Ibid. 6:28, 29)
>
> "A worthy (good) wife is her husband's crown; a shameless one eats away his bones (he grieves himself to death on her account)." (Ibid. 12:4)

154. If the wife has become unfaithful to the husband, then his peace is gone for ever! He is robbed of all pleasure, all consolation, and he curses the day on which he felt a tender inclination towards her. Even the children he has by her, who were once his greatest joy, he looks upon with displeasure. The poor innocents, from whom the father's heart turns away, wander about like forsaken sheep.

155. *Eighth Commandment.* "You shall not steal."

Exod. 20:13.

156. *To steal* means: secretly to appropriate something belonging to another without his knowing and permitting it. This something may be of some value, or only a trifle, a penny or an apple. Whoever pilfers what is small ends by stealing things of consequence.

> "You shall not steal; nor deny (a debt, a thing entrusted to you); nor lie to one another." (Lev. 19:11)

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[24]Translator: Several of the author's cross-references in this part do not match the paragraph numbering of this edition: "(136)" here refers to Gen. 9:5–6 quoted at no. 149; "(134)" for the Fifth Commandment at no. 158 corresponds to no. 141; "(149)" at no. 166 to the verse quoted at no. 161; "(115)" at no. 129 apparently to no. 125; "(143. 144. 145)" at no. 169 apparently to nos. 156–158. They may follow the numbering of an earlier edition.

"Whoever shares with a thief hates his own soul; he hears the curse and must keep silent." (Prov. 29:24)

[p. 81] **157.** *Cheating* is just as culpable as stealing. To cheat means: to appropriate something of another's property by misleading him and making him believe that this something does not belong to his property, so that he therefore willingly lets it be taken from him. To this belongs, first, *overreaching*, that is, selling a commodity at a far higher price, or buying it at a far lower price, than it is worth, in order in the one case as in the other to draw from it an excessive gain, a greater advantage than is fair and than the other person, from whom one buys it or to whom it is sold, can sustain.

158. *Using false measure and weight*; buying goods with a larger measure and heavier weight than is fixed in the land, and selling them again with a smaller measure and lighter weight; selling bad goods for good; passing off false coin among people as good, genuine money: all these kinds of fraud are just as great crimes as stealing. In all these cases one's neighbour is deprived of what is his; and it is all the same whether he loses it through burglary or through trickery. Indeed, the latter seems in a certain measure even more culpable, because one can guard oneself more easily against thieves than against crafty cheats.

"Keep not in your bag two kinds of weight, a large and a small. Keep not in your house two kinds of bushel, a large and a small. A full and just weight, and also a full and just measure, shall you have, [p. 82]
that you may live long upon the earth which the Eternal, your God, gives you. — Compare with the 5th Commandment (134). — For whoever commits injustice is an abomination to the Eternal, your God." (Lev. 25:13, 14, 15, 16)[25]

"Whenever you sell anything to one another, or buy anything from one another, you shall not overreach one another." Do not overreach one another; but fear your God, the God who I, the Almighty, the Eternal, am. Keep My statutes, observe My ordinances and follow them; so shall you be able to dwell securely in the land (enjoy undisturbed security). — Compare with the 5th Commandment (134) and Deut. 25:15. (Lev. 25:14, 17, 18)

159. In none of these last three commandments does one find the slightest trace that they need be observed only towards Israelites and not towards people of another religion and descent. Scripture forbids murder, committing unchastity and stealing without regard to the person upon whom such or other crimes are committed. Before God all men are equal, however different they may be in their religious opinions. Whoever deals sincerely with his fellow men, loves them and does them good, him God loves in return, lets him be fortunate in this life and blessed in the life to come, be he an Israelite or a non-Israelite. The criminal, on the other hand, whether he professes this faith or that, He abhors and punishes without any mercy.

[25] Translator: Printed "3. B. Mos." (Leviticus); the passage is Deut. 25:13–16.

Talmud. "The virtuous of all the nations of the world shall share in eternal life." (cf. Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:2)

[p. 83] **160.** God's purpose in creating the human race was to make it perfect and happy through the practice of virtue (41). Those abominable vices make men unhappy. They produce hatred and bloodshed. They turn men into tigers; no one is any longer safe in his property, his wife, his life.

161. Whoever, therefore, murders, robs, tricks, overreaches or cheats a Christian or any other non-Israelite, be it in measure and weight, with bad goods, with false money, or in whatever way it may happen, whereby the non-Israelite is deprived of what is his or is cut short in it, sins against God in the same measure as if he had murdered, robbed or cheated an Israelite, his co-religionist.

"When a stranger (a heathen) dwells in your land, you shall not oppress him (do him harm, cause him vexation). The stranger (heathen) who dwells with you shall be to you as one native-born (a born child of the land, an Israelite): you shall love him as yourself; for you too were strangers in the land of Egypt. I, the Eternal, your God (command this)!" (Lev. 19:37 [i.e. 33], 34)

162. *Ninth Commandment.* "You shall not testify against your neighbour as a false witness."

Gen. 20:13 [i.e. Exod. 20:13].

[p. 84] **163.** Lying is hated by God and hated by men. A false person, who speaks otherwise with his mouth than he thinks in his heart and denies the truth, blasphemes God in his mind; for he knows that God knows the sentiments and thoughts of men. He loses all trust, all credit among men. Through lies and false reports he has led them into many undertakings and actions by which they have brought harm or vexation upon themselves. They want nothing more to do with him.

"I do not harbour (tolerate) in My house (says God) him who practises deceit and falsehood. Never shall a man who loves to lie prosper (rise) before My eyes." (Ps. 101:7)

"I do not sit with false people; with hypocrites I have nothing to do." (Ibid. 26:4)

"Whoever is of clean hands (to which no one else's goods cling), whoever is of pure heart (without falsehood); who has never affirmed perjury (false testimony), has never sworn to deceive: he receives rich blessing from the Lord, just reward from the God of his salvation." (Ibid. 24:4, 5)

164. Lying is nevertheless not so ruinous to men as confirming as true the false allegation of a plaintiff or defendant before a court. The judge, since he has to frame his *judgement*, his decision on lawsuits, according to the testimony given, is led, if this is untrue, to condemn the innocent and to confirm the cheat in his wrong. Such a misguided judgement [p. 85] can bring many a man to lose all his goods and chattels, and often even his life. A false witness is therefore in a certain sense a thief, a robber, a murderer.

165. In this commandment, too, no distinction of faith applies. To attest such an allegation as true before a court is an abominable crime, whether the testimony be directed against an Israelite, or against a Christian, or against a person who professes neither the Israelite nor the Christian religion. This vicious act is an evil which the best laws cannot check. It resembles a plague that creeps in the dark, and, when it gains the upper hand, undermines the security of property and of life.

166. Here, to be sure, Scripture says: *against your neighbour* you shall not testify as a false witness. This expression might perhaps lead someone to the erroneous idea that by the term *neighbour* only an Israelite and no other person is meant. But if that were so, if it were permitted to give false testimony in court against a non-Israelite, then Holy Scripture would plainly contradict itself. In another place it says expressly: You shall not oppress the heathen (who is neither Israelite nor Christian), not cheat him; you shall love him as yourself. How then might one testify falsely against him, when he could thereby lose his property, his honour, his life?

Lev. 19:33, 24 [i.e. 34] (149).

[p. 86] **167.** All men are our neighbours; especially those with whom we live in one state, under the same laws, and enjoy equal protection, whether or not we agree with one another in religious opinions. In the wider sense Scripture calls all men *brothers*; and that they are. All are created in the image of God and descend from one ancestor, from Adam. It calls the Israelites brothers in the narrower sense only when it speaks of ordinances and laws that relate solely to this nation, its divine service and its political constitution, but not to such duties as all men must observe, whatever divine service they hold and under whatever constitution they live. In the latter case it usually uses the term *neighbour*, and includes under it all men of all peoples, religions and colours.

> "I will require the life of a man at the hand of every brother of his." (At that time there were no Israelites, no Christians, no Mohammedans; there were only human beings.) (Gen. 9:5)
>
> "You may set a king over you whom the Eternal, your God, will then choose. But you must choose one of your brothers as king, and may not set over you a foreigner who is not your brother."[26] (Ibid. Deut. 17:15)

[p. 87] **168.** *Tenth Commandment.* "You shall have no desires for your neighbour's house; you shall have no desires for your neighbour's wife, for his male slave, for his female slave, for his ox, for his ass, or for anything that your neighbour possesses."

Exod. 20:14.

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[26] *Note.* The laws concerning the *year of release* (Deut. 15:3) and concerning *lending at interest* (ibid. 23:21), where in both cases the Israelite, in contrast to the heathen, is called brother, and the latter seems to be placed behind the former in rights, are political ordinances which were necessary under the Mosaic constitution and the circumstances of the time, but are not applicable at present. The Israelite nation had to be separated by the laws from the vicious peoples who lived in those times.

169. The property, the possessions of our neighbour, and everything that rightfully belongs to him, must be sacred to us. We may not take or appropriate the least of it that he does not let come to us of his own good will and free decision (143. 144. 145). Nevertheless, the desire for the possession of others' goods does sometimes stir in man. If someone sees a beautiful garden, a new garment that another is wearing, the longing comes over him, and he wishes to have the garment, to own the garden.

170. This longing that comes over us, however, is not voluntary and therefore cannot be culpable. It arises in us without our knowing how; it forces itself upon us suddenly. Scripture [p. 88] cannot forbid what does not lie within the *choice* of man, in his free will.

171. But it does lie within man's free will to suppress the rising desire and to rid himself of it, so that it does not settle in the mind and become a passion. Nourishing the desire, the striving to satisfy it, is what Scripture properly forbids. Already the law of reason commands us: not to harm ourselves through any satisfaction of our needs and desires, nor through the striving to enjoy, nor to disturb, wound or grieve other people in their enjoyment (30). Revelation therefore instructs us to stifle at once every impermissible desire that comes over us, in order to avoid the danger of transgressing[27] the law of reason.

172. Such a desire can quite easily be suppressed again at its origin. One need only say to oneself: the possession of, for example, the beautiful garden, the splendid garment, is after all not necessary for my preservation; I can very well be content in this life without these superfluous things, and be happy after my death.

173. Let one also consider that it is the will of God, and serves the general good of mankind, that not all should have everything; that some people possess much, others little. Such thoughts calm the mind, increase contentment, and cause the impermissible desire to vanish again the moment it arises.

> [p. 89] *Aboth, ch. 4.* "Who is rich? He who is content with his portion (with his condition, however humble it may be) and takes joy in it. Thus also says Scripture (Ps. 128:2): If thou nourishest thyself from thy labour (art content with what is allotted to thee): happy art thou, it is well with thee! Happy art thou in this world! it is well with thee in the life to come." (m. Avot 4:1)

174. If an impure, vicious desire that comes over us is not banished from the mind at once, it gains ever more strength and becomes a violent passion. Afterwards it is hard, often impossible, for reason to keep the passion in check, to overcome it.

175. One cheats, swears falsely, and steals; indeed, one is brought to commit still greater crimes in order to satisfy the wretched passion that has become unconquerable. Such a person no longer

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[27] Translator: The text prints *übertreiben* ("exaggerate, overdo"), evidently a misprint for *übertreten* ("transgress").

has it in his power; a kind of frenzy seizes him; he heeds no warning, no threat, and must carry out the vice, even though it cost him his life, his very future happiness.

176. A person who has many desires, who covets everything he sees with other people and cannot obtain it, becomes *envious*. Envy is the evil quality of mind that feels vexation at the good which has fallen to another's lot. The envious man would like to have what another has, even when he himself does not lack the thing he envies in others. A good person, however, who has few desires, is content with his modest means and takes pleasure in seeing others live in abundance.

> [p. 90] "Thou puttest joy into my heart at the time when their (my neighbours') corn and wine increase." (Ps. 4:8)

177. Envy begets *jealous ill-will*.[28] Jealous ill-will is a gloomy hatred of mankind; one would like to be happy alone, and is glad when others come to harm. The man who *gloats over others' harm* takes pains to deprive his fellow men of what they possess, even though he cannot obtain it for himself. He who is tormented by covetousness, envy and hatred of mankind as by poisonous serpents can never be content and happy.

> *Aboth, ch. 2.* "A grudging eye, evil desires and hatred of mankind remove the unhappy man from the world (from his destiny and his goal)." (m. Avot 2:11)

178. With every desire that springs up, therefore, one must look to see whether the possession of the object one longs for, and the means one intends to use to obtain it, are permitted and not contrary to the will of God and the law of reason. If one has considered everything well and found that no duty is violated by striving after a good, or by possessing and enjoying it, one must nevertheless *moderate* the desire and not let it grow too strong.

179. If one lets a longing, even a permitted one, get too much the upper hand, it takes over the mind entirely. The desire then fills the whole soul and drives [p. 91] out of it all other thoughts. A person who clings constantly to one single object becomes incapable of attending to his business and the duties of his calling. He neglects the household, the office or the trade over which he has to preside.

180. A child, for example, who would like to have a new dress must, even if it can obtain one in a permitted way, nevertheless moderate this innocent longing, not think of it constantly, and not let it hinder it in what it has to do. Many a person has already become melancholy, and many a one has even lost his reason, because he clung to a single object, occupied himself with it alone in his soul, and would think of nothing else.

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[28] Translator: *Scheelsucht* (printed *Schelsucht*), literally "squint-eyed craving", the grudging, malicious disposition that begrudges others their good and rejoices in their harm.

181. The fool pines away and loses his zest for life when he cannot satisfy the passion on which he hangs with all his soul. He grieves himself to death when that which he has wished for with so much longing, and obtained by great exertion, is torn from him again.

182. A wise man, on the other hand, watches closely the course of his desires. He does not suppress them so long as they are innocent, but he puts a bridle on them so that they do not overstep the bounds of lawfulness. He is wise, too, when he obtains the good he wished for. He enjoys it with moderation and does not satisfy his desires with vehemence. He is wise, too, when he loses this good again. It pains him, he becomes sad; but he does [p. 92] not lose his composure, and bears his sufferings with patience and resignation to the will of God.

> *Talmud.* "Be holy, abstinent even in things that are permitted to thee." (One should sometimes deny oneself a permitted pleasure, in order to acquire the facility of overcoming one's desires without effort.) (BT Yevamot 20a)

Fifth Section. Of the Duties Imposed on Us by the Knowledge of God and His Will

183. The first duty of children, which precedes all other duties, is to be attentive to the instruction of the teacher and to the good teachings or admonitions of parents and sensible persons, and to receive them with gratitude. But if one is heedless and does not turn one's whole attention to the daily instruction, one retains only little of it, and this little is indistinct and confused. All the trouble that teachers and parents spend on the child is then lost; it remains ignorant and ill-mannered.

184. Not seldom one commits the worst pranks out of sheer ignorance. The worst of it is that one cannot see one's faults and consequently cannot mend them either. Error, [p. 93] superstition and fanaticism very soon take possession of the mind of a poorly instructed youth and lead him into harmful rashness, indeed even into abominable vices which he would surely have carefully avoided had he been more teachable in his earlier youth. The inattentiveness of children at school is therefore very blameworthy (124).

185. The more one learns, the greater the diligence one applies to the cultivation of the understanding, the more distinct and clear become one's concepts of God and His will. We gain better insight into the nature of things in their connection, and are able to distinguish well error from truth, superstition from the genuine, beatifying faith derived from divine revelation, and false imaginings and fanaticism from pure moral teaching.

186. In the measure that we grow in insight, the *love of God*, *trust in His goodness*, *reverence for His wisdom and omnipotence*, and the *longing* to become like Him and to *serve God with our whole heart* also grow ever stronger and livelier in us.

187. We are to *love* God, to esteem Him above everything in the world. Love for any object, to be sure, cannot be forced, least of all that pure love which we are to feel toward God. But one can

very easily be inclined to it if one reflects quite diligently on His excellent attributes, the goodness and benevolence that show themselves daily toward us and other [p. 94] creatures. So beneficent a Being must, once one only comes to know it, awaken our whole love.

> "Thou shalt love the Eternal, thy God, with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy might." (Deut. 6:5)

188. Love of God does not in every respect resemble the love and friendship that people cherish toward one another. Friends, persons who are fond of each other, keep company as often as they can, embrace, dine together, stand by one another, and do each other favours and services of love. This friendly intercourse has no place in our relation to God. He needs neither our assistance nor our services of love.

189. But just as everyone conforms to the sentiments of his friend and adopts his ways, so we too should strive to become like God. We become like Him by preferring virtue, as He does, to all else, by being just in all our actions, loving our fellow men, supporting the needy, doing good to widows and orphans, and avoiding everything that is contrary to the will of God, our highest Friend.

> "Love the Eternal, thy God; that is, observe His charge, His statutes, His ordinances and His commandments at all times." (Deut. 11:1)

> *Talmud.* "Whoever would cleave to God, let him imitate His good works: as He is merciful, [p. 95]
> be thou also compassionate; as He is gracious, be thou also benevolent, etc." (BT Sotah 14a; cf. BT Shabbat 133b)

190. To please one's friend one gladly sacrifices everything with joy: pleasure, comfort, rest and fortune. I rejoice to show my friend thereby how much I love him. So we should conduct ourselves toward God as well. With heartfelt joy we must do that in which He takes pleasure, even when it conflicts with our inclinations. Pure, holy love of God sacrifices what is dearest, the only son full of promise, if it is demanded.

> "Then an angel of the Eternal called to him from heaven and said: Abraham! Abraham! He answered: Here am I! The other said further: Lay not thy hand upon the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that thou fearest God, since thou hast not withheld thine own son from me."[29] (Gen. 22:11–12)

191. We expect from God not merely temporal goods but also an eternal happiness. His friendship therefore surpasses all the love that human beings can show us. We thus have far greater reasons to submit willingly to all His dispensations. If the inscrutable Being permits us to lose our health, a limb of our body, a pleasure or a beloved person, [p. 96] then the conviction that our greater, more

[29] *Note.* To make this passage intelligible, the teacher is to relate briefly the biblical story to which it refers.

lasting welfare, our destiny in the other world, requires it so will soften the pain and make the loss bearable.

> "Naked came I out of my mother's womb (all that I have is from God), naked shall I pass away again (leaving all temporal goods behind); the Eternal gave, the Eternal hath taken; blessed be the name of the Eternal." (Job 1:21)
>
> "Despise not the chastening of the Eternal, my son! be not resentful when He admonishes thee. Whom God chastens, him He loves, and takes pleasure in him as a father in his son." (Prov. 3:11–12)

192. One seeks every opportunity to praise one's friend, to extol his good qualities and make them known. This we should do with regard to God as well. It is therefore fitting for us to praise His name publicly, to converse often with others about the goodness, wisdom and power we have received from Him, and to instruct our fellow men, as far as we know it, in the will of God.

> "Take heed to thyself, then, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things (wonders and benefits) which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; make them known to thy children and thy children's children." (Deut. 4:9)
>
> "Sing unto the Lord! praise His name! Proclaim (make known) His salvation [p. 97] (His comforting help)! Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among all peoples." (Ps. 96:2–3)
>
> "What we have heard, what we know, what our fathers have told us, we do not hide from their grandchildren, from the generations to come; we proclaim the praise of the Eternal, His might and the wonders that He did. He established a testimony (the truths to which He bears witness) in Jacob, He gave laws in Israel, and commanded our fathers to make it known to their children; that the coming generation, the grandchildren whom they will beget, might teach further what they have heard, and set their trust in God; not forget the deeds of the Almighty, and hold fast to His commandment." (Ibid. 78:3–7)

193. It is the will of God that we show Him our love by publicly honouring and worshipping His wondrous ordinances in nature and His just governance of the world. He requires it because this is the means of leading other people, too, to reflection, of instructing the ignorant, and of inclining them to the practice of the good.

194. We are to *trust* God, i.e. be perfectly convinced that He is in the highest degree good toward us, and that the world is governed by His infinite wisdom. Nothing can befall us that does not serve our own happiness or the good of others (78. 193. 105.).

> "Commit (entrust) thy ways (fortunes) unto the Lord, and trust in Him, that He will bring it to pass (guide it well to the end)." (Ps. 37:5)
>
> [p. 98] "Happy is he who sets his trust in the Eternal, and turns not to vain delusion (false hope) and seductive superstition." (Ibid. 40:5)

"O, only commit thy lot (fate) unto the Eternal, He will surely provide for thee; He lets the righteous waver."[30] (Ibid. 55:23)

195. Though we are to await fate, fortune and well-being calmly from God, we must not on that account be lazy and idle. It would be a foolish and harmful thought that God would provide for our sustenance without any effort of ours, merely because we trust in Him. Why else would He have fitted our body for so many kinds of work and tasks? To what end would He have given us the insight to use our bodily powers purposefully?

196. We see from this the divine intention that mankind should diligently apply its mental and bodily powers, and the means it finds everywhere, in order to procure what is necessary for its preservation and comfort. Trust in God is only to support our activity. That is, when we are diligent in our work or occupation, we should not be anxiously concerned about the outcome of our efforts. We should then commend the good result to our dear God and remain calm in mind; He will surely bless our diligence. If the outcome is sometimes not as we wished, God must have His good and wise purposes for directing things otherwise than we expected.

(Gen. 50:20; 78.)

[p. 99] **197.** Holy Scripture does indeed relate that, when the Israelites crossed the wilderness, God provided them for forty years with everything necessary, without their needing to do the least work. Every day, that is, except the Sabbath, He had quails brought to them in the evening, and in the morning made manna (a certain food) fall from the clouds. Nor did they need to take any care for clothing so long as they were in that fearful waste.

"The Eternal spoke unto Moses: I have heard the rebellious complaints of the children of Israel. Speak unto them as follows: Toward evening ye shall eat meat, and tomorrow morning ye shall eat your fill of other food, and ye shall know that I am the Eternal, your God. The next evening a multitude of quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew round about the camp. When the layer of dew had gone up, there lay on the face of the wilderness something fine and granular (like little round grains), fine as the hoarfrost on the ground." (Exod. 16:12–14)

"The manna was like coriander seed, and in colour it resembled the (precious stone) *bedolach*. The people roamed about, gathered it, ground it in mills or pounded it in mortars, boiled it in pots or made cakes of it, and it tasted like the finest oil-cake." (Num. 11:7[–8])

"Thy garments (Israel's) did not wear out upon thee, and thy feet did not swell." (Deut. 8:4)

198. This extraordinary and long-lasting miracle has confirmed many a lazy person, who does [p. 100] not like to work, in the delusion that it is enough to pray diligently and trust in God, without its being necessary to provide for one's livelihood. "I rely on God!" such an idler is wont to say;

[30] Translator: So printed ("er läßt den Gerechten wanken"); the Hebrew of Ps. 55:23 reads "He will never let the righteous be moved", so "nicht" ("not") has evidently dropped out.

"God will surely provide for me. Did He not feed and nourish our forefathers for forty years? They suffered no want, though they did no work."

199. But with the Israelites of that time the case was quite different. They were in a wilderness and could not work. In the sandy and stony region through which they wandered it was impossible to occupy themselves with agriculture and the growing of trees. Nor did they stay anywhere long enough to cultivate the land and lay out orchards. Where there are no forests, no rivers, where over long stretches no plant, no blade of grass is to be seen, neither hunting nor fishing nor cattle-breeding can be pursued. With the best will to be active and industrious, the Israelites would have perished of hunger had God not sustained them in a miraculous way. He had to let manna fall for them from the clouds.

200. For us, however, He lets fall more than manna; He lets everything fall from the clouds, He gives us the precious *rain*. Rain and sunshine, provided only that people first diligently cultivate the land, make everything grow: corn, grain, root crops and tree fruits; and the meadows give abundant fodder for the cattle. The earth possesses so many treasures, and rewards the toil of untiring industry with so [p. 101] many and such manifold things, that we need no miracle at all to procure what belongs to the preservation of our life.

201. God works no miracles when they are not most necessary, when that which is to happen can be brought about by natural means (104). But people are sufficiently furnished with natural means, with bodily strength and limbs, and with understanding to apply these means properly. One who is *hungry for miracles*, a person who is always dreaming of miracles and expecting miracles, becomes a sluggard, a fanatic, a burdensome and often even a dangerous member of civil society.

202. Every person must work, occupy himself with something useful. The child must be attentive at school and diligently review at home what it has learned. If he is apprenticed to a trade or to an art, he must practise in it daily in order to acquire in good time the necessary skill in carrying out what it is learning. The grown youth, in turn, has diligently to apply what he has been trained for, so as to earn an honest living by it. To work diligently, and at the same time to trust in God, makes one content and happy.

> "Hail to the man who fears the Eternal, who walks in His ways. If thou nourishest thyself by the labour of thy hands: happy art thou! It is well with thee." (Ps. 128:1–2)

[p. 102] **203.** In the rational use of our powers and of the skill we have learned, and in trusting in God, one must also be *prudent*, and choose only such means as are most effective and lead most surely to the desired end. Everything unsuitable and improper must thereby be avoided. Nor may one, in order that the work may prosper and have a good outcome, make use of such means as the superstitious do, from which certain effects are expected that stand in no natural connection with those means as causes, and consequently cannot arise from them in a natural way. This would mean to *tempt* God, to challenge Him to work miracles.

"Put not the Eternal, your God, to the test (tempt Him not), as ye did at *Massah*." (Deut. 6:16)

204. We are also to be *content* with what we acquire by permitted means. We are *happy and contented* when we subject our wishes to the will of God and desire nothing more than He sees fit to give us or to do for us. Whoever is still not content with a good livelihood is *ungrateful*. He does not consider that all that God does for us and gives us are nothing but unmerited benefits. He owes us nothing at all; what He does for us happens purely out of goodness.

205. Even the unpleasant things that God sometimes lets befall us happen out of goodness. He deals with us as a loving [p. 103] father with his son. Such a father, while he gives his son daily proofs of his tenderness, nevertheless does not fail to chastise him after he has often, but vainly, admonished him to desist from a vice. So God too deals with us. In adversity and misfortune we should consider that a loving Being can chastise only out of love.

"Do not neglect to chastise the boy (when he deserves it); if thou strikest him with the rod, he will not die of it. Thou givest him a few strokes of the rod, but deliverest his soul from hell (the deepest ruin)." (Prov. 23:13–14)

"He hates his son who spares him the rod (leaves him to his evil will); for he who loves his son holds to strict discipline." (Ibid. 13:24)

"Thou shalt therefore know in thy heart that the Eternal, thy God, chastens thee." (Deut. 8:5)

"And though I walk (wander) through the valley of the shadow of death, I walk without fear; for Thou accompaniest me. Thy staff and Thy support are evermore my comfort." (Ps. 23:4)

"He (God) brings forth thy right like the sunlight, and thine innocence like the bright day. Be of good courage toward the Lord! wait patiently for Him!" (Ibid. 37:6–7)

"To hold to God is my highest good! I seek my refuge in Thee, O God!" (Ibid. 73:28)

206. The more often and the more calmly we reflect on the omnipotence, all-goodness and boundless wisdom of God, the higher rises our reverence [p. 104] for the exalted Being. God is Lord and Lawgiver of nature. Are we not bound to behave respectfully even toward a human ruler? God is surely that Ruler who loves human beings most and gives them the best laws.

207. We must not fear God as the slave fears his master, but as a good child fears its loving father. It takes care not to cause the father vexation, and finds itself richly rewarded when he is pleased with it. To avoid vice out of fear of punishment does not mean to abhor it, and one does not yet love virtue if one practises it for the sake of reward.

208. A truly *God-fearing* man does not first calculate whether the vicious deed might bring him more harm or more profit; rather, he despises it with his whole heart. He does not treat virtue like a commodity that one acquires in order to earn something by it. He loves the worth that virtue has in itself, without regard to its consequences, and practises it even should his life thereby be put in danger.

209. Yet even the most God-fearing man is sometimes overpowered by a desire and acts against the precept of the laws of reason. Circumstances sometimes coincide by which the virtue of the steadfast man is made to waver; even the most righteous man lacks the strength to withstand a high degree of pain or of sensual pleasure.

> [p. 105] "For where is the man who does not now and then commit a sin (act against the will of God)?" (1 Kings 8:46)

210. By the law of reason, man would in such cases despair and give himself up for lost. In the light of reason we behold the Creator as a just Lawgiver, as an impartial Judge who strictly upholds the exercise of justice. Were the sins committed regarded as offences against the majesty of the Lawgiver, their punishment would be indispensable and as eternal as the Ruler against whom one has transgressed; there would be no reconciliation between God and man to be hoped for.

211. But beneficent revelation lets us see in God the kind, indulgent Father rather than the inflexible administrator of the law. It raises up the weak, fallen person again and comforts him with the hope of regaining the love of God if he sincerely *repents* his *transgression* with humility and a broken heart; duly *makes good* the *damage* that has thereby been done to anyone; and firmly *resolves never to sin again*, but always to act in accordance with the will of God. Revelation teaches that God is *gracious and forgiving*.

> "The appearance of the Eternal passed by before Moses and proclaimed: The Eternal is unchangeably the eternal Being, an almighty God, all-merciful and all-gracious, long-suffering (who long holds back punishment and waits for the sinner's amendment), of infinite [p. 106] loving-kindness and faithfulness: who keeps His loving-kindness for the thousandth generation; who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin." (Gen. [= Exod.] 34:6–7)[31]
>
> Cf. Lev. 14:18.[32]
>
> "Pure grace and truth are the Eternal's guidance to those who keep His covenant and testimony (obey His commandments). O Lord! for Thy name's sake Thou pardonest my iniquity, great as it is." (Ps. 25:10–11)
>
> "All-merciful is the Lord, all-gracious, long-suffering and of great goodness. He does not deal with us according to our sins; He does not requite us according to our iniquity. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so His love prevails over those who revere Him. As far as the morning (the east) is from the evening (the west), so far does He remove our guilt from us." (Ibid. 103:8, 10–12)
>
> "When the wicked man turns from vice and practises virtue and right again, he shall become happy." (Ezek. 33:19)

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[31] Translator: Printed "1. B. Mos." (Genesis); the passage is Exod. 34:6–7 (2. B. Mos.).

[32] Translator: So printed ("3. B. Mos. 14, 18"); the intended reference is evidently Num. 14:18 (4. B. Mos.), which repeats the attributes of mercy.

212. The comforting doctrine that God is gracious and forgiving does not, however, by any means abolish the other, that He is also supremely just and punishes vice. What would restrain wicked, godless people from carrying out their evil will if all the crimes and misdeeds they had committed were overlooked?

> "God lets no crime go unpunished." (Exod. 34:7)
>
> (Abraham said to God:) "It is unworthy of Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are alike. It is unworthy of Thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do justice?" (Ibid., Gen. 18:25)

[p. 107] **213.** Justice and grace seem at first sight to be opposed to each other. The former cannot by any means remit the deserved punishment; the latter, by contrast, forgives transgression and sins and is gracious even toward hardened evildoers. Nevertheless these attributes, apparently contradicting each other, are perfectly united in God.

214. Man transgresses in sentiments, words and deeds either against God alone, or against God and man together. He sins against God only when, for example, he has no trust in Him, murmurs against his fortunes, does not believe in His all-goodness, despairs, and commits suicide. These and similar culpable sentiments and actions offend the Deity alone, but have no harmful influence on the welfare and peace of human beings.

215. But man sins against God and man together when, contrary to the divine laws, he deprives others of their property by open force or by cunning, or attacks their honour and wounds them. Such crimes offend both God and one's fellow man: God, whose laws are insolently violated, and one's fellow man, whose goods, honour or life are attacked. In both kinds of these human transgressions God shows Himself now gracious, as a loving Father, now strict, as a just Judge.

216. If God alone is the offended party—He who properly cannot be offended—then pardon and reconciliation [p. 108] may be hoped for from His grace. He knows the limits of the human spirit, the strength of the desires that rule weak mortals, and takes account of the concurrence of circumstances that shakes him and, as it were, sweeps him away to depart from the path of virtue.

> "Then the Eternal said: My spirit shall not always (strictly) judge the inner man (his spirit), since he is also flesh (bound up with the body)." (Gen. 6:3)

217. He is no longer the strict Judge, but a good, gentle Father, who gladly forgives when the son repents with his whole heart of the follies he has committed, by which he has harmed only himself, and forms the resolve to amend.

> "As fathers have compassion on their children, so the Lord has compassion on those who revere Him. For He knows our frame (our nature); He knows that we are but dust (weak, frail). Man's life is like grass; it blossoms like the flower of the field. If a breeze breathes upon it, it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But throughout eternity God's grace remains with those who

fear Him, His beneficence with children's children, if they keep His covenant and remember His commandment to do it." (Ps. 103:13–18)

218. It is quite otherwise, however, with crimes and vicious deeds by which, besides God, man too is offended. Murder, wounding, stealing, cheating, slander, false swearing and similar outrages are transgressions of the divine commandments and at the same time attack the life, the honour or the property of one's neighbour. The most sincere repentance, the most humble [p. 109] prayer before God, and the most pious resolution for the future neither restore the life that one's fellow man has lost, nor make good the damage or the injury he has suffered.

219. Here God appears as a strict Judge. No praying, no fasting, no weeping can move Him so long as the wicked deed has not been atoned for, so long as the innocent person suffers. God is good; but He is also supremely just. If we do not do what His justice demands of us, if we do not make good to our neighbour the wrong done to him—in which genuine and sincere repentance properly consists—then the goodness of God cannot avail us. What was robbed must first be restored, what was taken by theft, fraud, usury, false oath, false measure, weight or money must be made good; in short, the injured person must be fully satisfied and appeased before God can forgive the offence that has thereby been committed against Him too, as Lawgiver.

"The Eternal spoke unto Moses: If a person sins and commits a breach of faith against the Eternal, namely denies to his fellow man either something that was given him for safekeeping or otherwise entrusted to him, or a thing taken by robbery, or he has unjustly withheld something from his fellow man, or he has found something lost; he denies it and swears a false oath: in short, any thing that a man does, and sins thereby. If he has now sinned and confesses (and repents) his guilt, he shall give back what he robbed, [p. 110]
or the wrongful gain which he unjustly withheld, or what was given him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or whatever else he swore falsely about: he must pay the principal and add a fifth part besides (in full satisfaction for the withholding of the other's property). He shall hand this over to him to whom it belongs as soon as he acknowledges his guilt (his transgression). The priest then makes atonement for him (for laying hands on another's goods, for the denial and the false oath) before the Eternal. Thus (only in this way) shall he be forgiven for whatever he has done to incur guilt thereby." (Lev. 5:20–24, 26)

"When ye spread out your hands (toward heaven), I turn Mine eye from you; pray as much as ye will, I do not listen: for your hands are stained with blood (from murders). Wash you, cleanse you, that Mine eyes may behold no evil works; cease from doing evil. Learn to know My will, seek after justice, relieve the oppressed, do right by the orphan, and take up the cause of the widow when she is involved in a lawsuit." (Isa. 1:15–17)

220. Divine grace shows itself also in this, that the sinner's punishment, according to the nature of the circumstances, though not remitted entirely, is nevertheless greatly mitigated. Only the hardened criminal who will not amend at all is punished with the full severity of justice.

Aboth, ch. 4. "Repentance and good works are a bulwark against the *appointed* punishment. If the punishment cannot be remitted entirely, it is [p. 111]
changed by the grace of God into a far milder chastisement." (m. Avot 4:11)

Prayer on the Day of Atonement. "Thou (O God!) stretchest out Thy hand to transgressors, Thy right hand is extended in gentleness to receive them when they turn back. But we must keep our hands from all that oppresses others (does them harm or injury)."[33]

221. Finally, it is our duty *to pray* to God, *to thank* Him for the benefits He shows us daily, and in need *to call upon* Him for help. To petition God, to thank Him, to praise Him and to keep His commandments is called *divine service*, or better: *veneration of God*. We weak, powerless creatures can render no service to the exalted, simple, self-subsistent and independent Being. Nor does it need any service.

222. Divine service properly has as its end only our own improvement and perfection. The more often we lift up our soul to God and occupy it with holy thoughts, the purer our spirit becomes. It more easily tames the disorderly desires and acquires a facility in doing good, even if it must sacrifice many a thing in doing so.

"And now, Israel! what does the Eternal require of thee, but that thou with thy whole heart and thy whole soul have reverence before the Eternal, thy God, walk in all His ways, love Him and serve Him, that is, keep the commandments of the Eternal and His statutes [p. 112] which I give thee this day, and this for thine own good? Behold! the heavens and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all that is on it, belong to the Eternal, thy God (how could He need thy service?)." (Deut. 10:12–14)

"If I set the Eternal always before mine eyes, if I have Him at my right hand, I shall not waver. My heart is glad, my glory (the soul) is full of joy, even my flesh (body) itself feels a secure rest." (Ps. 16:8–9)

223. In prayer, however, we should not be immodest, nor ask for more than is necessary for us. Nor should we implore God quite unconditionally for temporal goods, wealth, standing, honour and so forth, but rather for spiritual excellences, for the enlightenment of our understanding, the improvement of our heart, and strength to do good.

"Let falsehood and lies be far from me. Keep me from poverty; but give me no riches either; grant me only my daily bread." (Prov. 30:8)

"Jacob made a vow as follows: If God will be with me and will keep me on this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, etc." He did not ask for riches, but only for what was needful. (Gen. 28:20)

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[33] Translator: From the concluding (Ne'ilah) service of the Day of Atonement: "Thou stretchest out Thy hand to transgressors, and Thy right hand is extended to receive the penitent … that we may cease from the oppression of our hands."

224. We should not suppose that by our prayer we make known to God something He did not already know beforehand, or that only by our petitions could we move Him or make Him inclined to show us good, or [p. 113] to help. He knows our concerns, and gladly helps when it is good for us.

> *Ps.* 38, 10. "Lord, all my desire (every one of my wishes) is known before thee, and my sighing (my most secret longing) is not hidden from thee." (Ps. 38:10)
>
> *Ibid.* 139, 4. "Before a word hovers upon my tongue, thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether." (Ps. 139:4)

225. Although God knows our needs, and knows in advance what we shall ask, we must nonetheless make known our feelings and wishes, our distress and our dependence upon God, through prayers and hymns of praise. By doing so we calm our minds and strengthen ourselves in good dispositions. Through our prayer spoken aloud we also move others to holy thoughts and godly reflections.

226. Devout prayer, diligent reflection on the word of God, and exact observance of religious customs are truly well-pleasing to the holy Author of the world only when we do not at the same time fall short in good works. One would, as it were, be making a mockery of the word of God and of virtue if one were to extol them with great praise and yet not follow what they command us.

> *Aboth*, 1st chapter. "Not inquiry (into the Law), but action (according to the Law) is the main thing." (Avot 1:17)

227. Dispositions and actions, devotion and good works, godly feeling and love of mankind, inward and outward worship [p. 114] must agree with and be joined to one another, if we are to partake of uninterrupted contentment in this world and of blissful happiness in the life to come.

Sixth Section. Of What Man Is Bound to Observe toward Himself

228. We ought to love *ourselves*, that is, to care for our own perfection and happiness, and seek to promote them in every way that is permitted and well-pleasing to God. For this love God has placed an impulse in our nature. But we must take pains always to keep this impulse within the bounds of the laws of reason.

229. Self-love must not degenerate into *vanity*,[34] still less into *selfishness*. A person has vanity when he ascribes to himself perfections that do not belong to him, or when he sets far too great a value on slight, insignificant qualities which he really does possess. Many a one thinks himself very learned and is scarcely half-learned; and many a one believes that the greatest honour is due to him because he dances well. Vanity, to be sure, is merely ridiculous; but it must nonetheless be

[34] Translator: Homberg distinguishes *Selbstliebe* (self-love, legitimate), *Eigenliebe* (here "vanity", i.e. conceit or amour-propre) and *Selbstsucht* ("selfishness").

suppressed, because people form an unfavourable opinion of us when we make ourselves ridiculous.

[p. 115] **230.** Selfishness, however, is also culpable. The selfish man seeks to gain advantages in an unjust way or at the expense of others. All his actions refer only to himself; he does not do the least thing for the good of others, even when it costs him nothing at all. Selfishness makes many enemies and not a single friend.

231. Reasonable self-love, on the other hand, has no exaggerated opinion of the qualities and perfections one possesses, and it seeks to be useful to oneself and to other people. It is good, it is necessary, to respect ourselves; we ought to recognize our worth, but not rate it higher than it really is. One must not make one's own person the sole aim of one's strivings and actions, but must often endeavour to assist other people too in their undertakings.

232. From the correct estimation of one's own perfections, and from comparing them with the merits of other people, there springs that so beautiful and engaging quality, *modesty*; we gladly content ourselves with the opinion that others have of us. The modest man never boasts and demands no marks of honour, because he has no high notion of his own perfections.

233. One ought not to strive after marks of honour, but ought always to act in such a way as to deserve to be honoured: one ought to be *honour-loving*. The want of a sense of honour, the [p. 116] indifference as to whether our actions deserve the regard of others, is called *baseness*. A base man is capable of committing any vice, because he feels respect neither for himself nor for others.

234. It sometimes happens that someone, for all his good qualities, cannot win any respect because of prejudice and false opinions that people have formed against him. This unjust treatment must not lead him astray. Let him only continue to live in such a way that he deserves honour, even though he does not receive it. His good conduct must gradually refute that prejudice, and compel people either to hold him in honour or to admit that they are unjust toward him.

235. In every thing we prefer the better to the good. We ought therefore to love the soul above all, as the better and nobler part of man; to cultivate the mind through useful and thorough knowledge, and to guard the understanding against errors. The latter is done when one adopts no doctrine without seeing its grounds, and seeks to investigate the natural cause of every effect.

236. We love the soul when we suppress disorderly impulses and *moderate* even blameless desires. One often has duties to fulfil in which one must deny oneself the most innocent pleasures. The upright man does not hesitate a moment to sacrifice to duty that [p. 117] which is pleasant, or even necessary, to the body, because the practice of virtue takes precedence over everything else. This sacrifice comes easy to him because he has accustomed himself from an early age to let every pleasure go as soon as reason requires it.

237. It is also our duty carefully to preserve and maintain our body, its health, strength, limbs and senses. If our bodily condition is in a bad state, the soul too cannot think properly. Only when we are in perfect health can the senses perceive properly and give the soul the appropriate representations of external objects.

238. Our body is healthy when everything in it and about it is as it ought to be according to its nature and purpose. Every limb and organ of sense—hands, feet, eyes, ears and so forth—is then active and performs with ease the task for which it exists. Our whole being feels a sense of well-being; we are fresh and cheerful.

239. Even a slight pain felt by the body disturbs us in our thinking; our cheerfulness is lost, and we are not disposed to carry out our business as we ought. One must seek to get out of such a condition as soon as possible.

240. As soon as one's health is impaired, one should take the advice of a skilled physician, licensed by the authorities, and have him prescribe means for recovery. The medicine prescribed [p. 118] one must take willingly and regularly, and observe exactly the prescribed regimen, so that health may be restored with God's blessing.

241. But if we neglect to restore our health, then we are ourselves to blame if the condition of our body grows worse and makes us still less able to fulfil our duties and to care for our happiness. We shall then have to answer for having neglected all the good that we might have accomplished according to God's purposes.

242. He who lays hands on himself and takes his own life has a great punishment to expect in the other world, because he casts away with contempt the most precious gift with which God blesses men. The suicide is more unfortunate than any other criminal. However greatly one may have transgressed, one can still hope for divine grace through persistent remorse, repentance, abstinence and amendment. But he deprives himself of all hope, since he ends his life with a deed that is as culpable as it is horrifying.

243. To suicide there belongs in a certain measure also the self-inflicted weakening of the health and strength of the body, through failure to use good preventives against certain diseases, or when one puts one's life in danger in any way uselessly and wantonly.

244. The physician who attends sick people whose ailments are often contagious; the soldier who [p. 119] boldly sets himself against the fury of the enemy; and those people who plunge into fire or water to rescue human beings—these do not commit suicide. They risk their lives not out of wantonness but from their calling, because their station as physician, as soldier and so on obliges them to do so. Nor is it suicide when noble people, without any particular calling, sacrifice their lives for the good of the state. But when neither our calling nor public danger summons us to it, we may never risk our life.

245. Anger, grief, anxious cares, lack of trust in God, pride, lust, drunkenness, disorder in one's affairs, the passion for gambling, running into debt and so on can bring a man to the point of taking his own life. He is not, however, without guilt on that account, even though he committed this terrible deed out of violent passion or melancholy; for it was through his own fault that he fell into this condition.

246. He ought, through the use of reason, to have mastered his passions in good time and freed himself from melancholy. We must not let such a state of the soul become lasting, because it utterly unsettles the soul and could finally lead to a very sad end. Yet we ought not to judge harshly those unfortunates who, being sick in soul and body, were not in command of the free use of their reason and took their own lives; rather we should pity them, and leave the judgment upon them to God and to the authorities.

[p. 120] **247.** *Moderation of desires and wishes*, and *order in one's affairs*, preserve us from these harmful passions and their sad consequences, just as *temperance* in enjoyment of every kind, and a regular manner of life, preserve health and prolong life.

248. We ought to be moderate in our wishes, not strive after the possession of great riches, but content ourselves with what our trade or craft yields. A *contented* man is satisfied when he earns as much as he needs to support himself and his family decently, to assist a number of needy people, and still to put by some money. For in days of health, and while one has one's strength, one must take care to save something, so as to have the means in sickness to restore one's health, and in old age, when one cannot work, not to suffer want. And so much every diligent craftsman and tradesman can almost always earn.

249. But if we cannot satisfy even these moderate wishes, if things do not go with us as they should, and we have troubles and cares, even then we must not give ourselves up to grief: grief only increases the evil. It makes us lose altogether our desire for work and for the business of our calling; we earn still less, and sorrow gnaws at us until we become melancholy and despondent, and at last even despair.

[p. 121] **250.** If, on the other hand, we carry on our business with patience, redouble our zeal, put up with some restriction and privation in food and drink, clothing and comforts, and trust in God, who will surely one day improve our condition, then we preserve our health and cheerfulness. These are far more precious goods than power and riches, which so seldom make people content.

251. There are misfortunes in which even the most patient person loses heart: a flood that sweeps away house and goods all at once; a conflagration that reduces everything to ashes; death, which snatches from us the best of fathers, the tenderest of mothers, a son full of promise, the beloved, or the faithful friend in the bloom of life; violent and protracted pains; or when malice and tyranny forge the virtuous in chains, and torment them and slowly kill them in a dark and damp dungeon.

252. Who can demand that a man should bear the wounds of such hard blows of fate with insensibility, and refrain altogether from lamentation and tears? Nature cannot and ought not to be suppressed. He who sheds no tear at the loss of persons dear to him is hard-hearted and incapable of any gentle, beautiful feeling.

253. But even in such cases we must conduct ourselves as rational beings, moderate our pain, and gradually become composed. One attains composure when [p. 122] one seeks out grounds of comfort, and thinks more of what one still possesses than of what one has lost. We can never be so unfortunate that we should lack all comfort. However bitter our pains may be, they are still not of long duration. They ease death for us, and help us on toward the untroubled happiness that awaits us after our sufferings are over and remains eternally unchanging.

254. Composure has still other advantages. There are only few misfortunes in which everything is lost; much can often still be saved if one listens to good advice, considers it calmly, and takes courage for new undertakings. The loss suffered can then be made good again through activity and diligence, if not wholly, then at least in part.

255. *Useful diligence* is the endeavour to acquire such means as will nourish and preserve the body and perfect the soul. We must work diligently, that is, willingly exert our powers of soul and body to make something useful and to bring it to completion.

> *Gen.* 3, 19. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread." *Ps.* 128, 2. (Gen. 3:19; Ps. 128:2)

256. But this cannot happen if one neglects in one's youth to learn something useful. It is therefore our duty to devote ourselves early to a calling, a craft or a business. One should choose an occupation for which one has a particular [p. 123] desire and inclination, and for which one possesses the necessary abilities and strength. Then we must practise ourselves in it, take it up daily, repeat it often, and observe attentively how it might go more easily and better for us. (198. 204.)

> *Prov.* 14, 23. "Where one labours, there is enough—(toil and diligence bring abundance); but where one deals in words (chatters much and does little), there is want." (Prov. 14:23)

257. *Idleness* and *sloth* are opposed to diligence, and *botching* to *useful* diligence. The idler does nothing at all; the sluggard works, it is true, but very slowly and with frequent interruptions. One speaks of botching when one does the work so badly that the person who ordered it either cannot use it at all, or at least has cause to be dissatisfied with it.

258. Idleness breeds want and shame. He who spends his time idly in his youth and learns nothing cannot support himself afterwards and is forced to beg. It is in general a great misfortune to have to live on the compassion and charity of others. But such a one is turned away with contempt from every door; instead of a gift he receives the most wounding reproaches for having used the time of his youth so ill.

Grace after meals. "O Eternal, our God! let us not come into the distress of needing the gifts of flesh and blood (of men). Feed us from thy holy, ever [p. 124] open and full hand, that we may not be shamed and put to disgrace, now and in eternity." (Grace after Meals)[35]

259. One should never be wholly without occupation, even when one possesses great wealth and is not likely to fall into want; although there are examples of very well-to-do people who, after losing their whole fortune, had to live on the pity of others because in their youth they had learned nothing by which they could have supported themselves. A rich but unoccupied man takes up all sorts of foolishness; he catches flies merely to kill the oppressive boredom, or, what is much worse, he gives himself over to drink, to the passion for gambling, or to other excesses and vices.

Talmud. "Idleness can lead to madness; idleness can lead to vices." (M. Ketubot 5:5; BT Ketubot 59b)

260. Sloth is almost as bad as idleness. If one works slowly and with reluctance and frequently interrupts the work, it cannot be finished by the time for which the customers ordered it. This tardiness causes them loss. A merchant orders from the manufacturer a lot of goods that must be ready, for example, for the Vienna fair. If the goods are still on the loom at that time, the merchant cannot fulfil the obligation he has entered into, and must make good the loss arising from it. Since the customers cannot rely on his word, they abandon him, and he loses his livelihood.

[p. 125] **261.** Everyone must therefore work away at what he has to make, unflaggingly and briskly, one thing after another, without unnecessary interruption, so that it is finished at the proper time; indeed, when circumstances require it, he must even rise earlier than usual and go to his work. If he has the satisfaction of his customers, he will be recommended by them to others, and he can never lack work.

Prov. 6–7. 9. 10. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. In summer she already provides for her food; she gathers her store at harvest time. How long wilt thou still lie idle upon thy bed? When wilt thou have slept enough and rise?" (Prov. 6:6–10)[36]

Ibid. 10, 5. "A sensible child gathers in summer (is diligent in youth); but he who sleeps through the harvest is a son of shame." (Prov. 10:5)

262. Botching has the same evil consequence as sloth, though from a different cause. The botcher is diligent, it is true, but brings nothing proper to completion. He is not attentive enough to his work, and spoils now this, now that. The garment he makes, for example, is longer on one side than on the other, or one sleeve on it is longer than the other. He too loses his customers, although he does not keep them waiting long for the work.

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[35] Translator: A paraphrase of the third benediction of the Grace after Meals (Birkat ha-Mazon).

[36] Translator: The printed reference reads "6 — 7. 9. 10."; the verses quoted are Prov. 6:6, 8, 9 (and 10).

Prov. 18, 9. "The slothful one, who is tardy in working, is a brother of him who spoils his work." (Prov. 18:9)

[p. 126] **263.** Great are the advantages when one works briskly, steadily and with care. Every art, every craft too, nourishes and honours. If one goes at the work briskly, it comes easily. He who is constantly occupied with what he has to do and accomplish in his calling has no evil thoughts come into his mind, and seldom has disorderly desires. The movement of the body and limbs in work is healthy; it promotes digestion, appetite and sleep.

Prov. 12, 29. "See, the man skilled in his art stands before kings; he does not remain standing in obscurity. (He is sought after, brought forward and made famous.)" (Prov. 22:29)[37]

Aboth, 2nd chapter. "It is beautiful (good) to pursue a craft along with the study of the Law; the effort spent on both drives away all sinful thoughts." (Avot 2:2)

Eccl. 5, 11. "Sweet is the sleep of the labouring man, whether he eat little or much." (Eccl. 5:11)

264. False shame and family pride keep many a one from learning a craft. It seems very degrading to one whose family can boast of famous rabbis to descend to the working class. But the surely greater and more famous rabbis in the Talmud thought quite otherwise about this. *Rabbi Yitzhak* was a smith,[38] *Rabbi Yohanan* made sandals (a kind of shoe, slippers),[39] and *Hillel*, the sublime teacher of the nation, spent [p. 127] one half of the day chopping wood to earn himself a meagre living, and in the other half of the day gave public lectures before a numerous assembly of young learned men. (It was considered unseemly at that time to accept payment for teaching.)

265. No trade, no work or occupation degrades, if it is permitted by the laws and feeds the man. But begging, in whatever form it appears, is dishonouring and shameful. He sins against God who can work or serve and yet lives on the diligence and sweat of others. Every gift he obtains by begging is a robbery he commits against poor, unfortunate, sick or infirm people who cannot work.

266. The Talmud therefore makes it an indispensable duty for every father to have his son learn a craft or an art, and adds that whoever lets his son grow up without keeping him to a useful occupation, as it were destines him for highway robbery.[40] What better can become of good-for-nothings than burdensome beggars, thieves and highwaymen?

267. *Trade* too, commerce in goods on a large or small scale, is, like agriculture and the carrying on of other trades, a very useful occupation. It has this further advantage over other occupations, that through it one can, as the common saying goes, make one's fortune, that is, become rich.

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[37] Translator: Printed "12, 29"; the verse is Prov. 22:29.

[38] Translator: R. Isaac Nappaha ("the smith"), a Palestinian amora of the third century.

[39] Translator: R. Yohanan ha-Sandlar ("the sandal-maker"), a tanna of the second century (cf. Avot 4:11).

[40] Translator: BT Kiddushin 29a, 30b: "Whoever does not teach his son a craft teaches him robbery."

268. This is why so many young men, especially among our nation, devote themselves to the commercial [p. 128] estate. But since not all can carry on trade on a large scale, there arises from this a multitude of petty dealers, brokers and pedlars who go from house to house offering things for sale. If, however, the number of *middlemen* increases—that is, of such people as step between the producing and the consuming classes of citizens, buy goods from the former and sell them to the latter—then their excessive number can have harmful consequences for the state.

269. It is settled that the buying and selling carried on by the commercial estate renders very good service to civil society. If clothmakers, for example, had to supply themselves with wool, they would have to leave their looms, run about from village to village, from shepherd to shepherd, haggle with each of them over the price of the wool, until they had gathered as much as they need. In all this time they would have earned nothing, and would have had travelling expenses besides. Moreover, many a manufacturer at times lacks ready money to buy wool, and is thereby brought into the greatest embarrassment.

270. In selling the work they had finished, they would again be forced to leave their looms, wander about everywhere with their goods, even to the most remote places, and offer them at every house. A considerable time would pass before they had sold all of it. They could sell only a few ells here and there; it is very seldom that [p. 129] anyone needs a whole piece of cloth for himself alone. Thus new loss of time, new expenses.

271. These expenses, and the earnings lost by the workpeople over so long a time, would make goods uncommonly dearer. One would have to pay two, perhaps three times as much for a thing as it is worth. It would not be enough to pay the worker for the time he was occupied; one would also have to give him wages for the time during which he was idle.

272. Here the great usefulness of the commercial estate shows itself. The wool dealer and the cloth dealer remove all difficulties. Instead of all the manufacturers losing time, trouble and expense, a single wool dealer takes on the trouble of all of them, and devotes his whole time to supplying every clothmaker with wool at any time; he also gives it on credit to the one who cannot pay for it at once. The cloth dealer in turn takes the entire finished work off their hands at once, and none of them has to concern himself with selling it.

273. The saving of time and expense for so many workers, whose diligence is not interrupted, lowers the price of the goods. Commerce affords still other advantages. It carries those products and goods of which our country has a surplus to the most distant regions of the world, and exchanges for them precious things which we do not possess and which serve partly for the preservation of health, partly for comfortable living, such as: various [p. 130] medicines, spices, coffee, sugar, fruits, dyestuffs and the like.

274. For the trouble, time and expense that the wool dealer in our example lays out, he receives from the manufacturers, for the wool brought to them, somewhat more than they would have paid

had they bought it directly from the shepherds and farmers. In the same way the cloth dealer, for his expense and trouble, obtains the finished goods at a lower price than that at which the manufacturers would have sold the cloth directly to the consuming class. The little they at first lose to the wool dealer is made good many times over by their being able to work without interruption, and not needing to leave their trade for long periods and make costly journeys.

275. The wool and cloth dealers, too, can content themselves with the little that the former receive from the manufacturers on delivering the raw material, and the latter on taking over the goods made from it. But they can content themselves with little only so long as their number is still small and each has dealings with many workpeople. A small profit, often repeated, makes a considerable gain over the year. But as the number of middlemen increases, the earnings of each of them decrease in proportion as new ones come along. In order nevertheless to obtain a proper return for the expense and trouble laid out, the wool dealer must [p. 131] charge the manufacturer a higher price for the wool, and the cloth dealer must press down the price of the finished work, or sell it dearer to the public. The greater, therefore, the number of middlemen, the more grievous the pressure on the producing and the consuming class.

276. The same holds in a still higher degree of the crowd of pedlars, among whom many a one also resorts to petty cheating. It is vexing to see young fellows who, instead of applying their youthful strength to useful work, burden their shoulders with threadbare clothes and old hats, and with much noise offer, or rather force, their wretched wares upon people.

277. This prevailing propensity for trading, and especially the unhappy practice of peddling, has brought our nation under the very damaging suspicion that it lacks the good will to make itself useful to the state in other ways besides trade. Every suspicion, founded or unfounded, does harm so long as it is not refuted. It is therefore our duty to destroy it, by many young people devoting themselves to agriculture, husbandry, gardening and the like, by others taking up the practice of light and heavy crafts, and by some earning their living through the arts and sciences. It will then come to light that our co-religionists are animated by the same zeal as all other upright citizens of the state to take any path, however arduous it may be, [p. 132] provided only that it leads to the good of civil society.

278. If we apply ourselves to truly useful occupations, another reproach will also vanish thereby, which is made against our nation in almost all countries, though not with equal justice. It is reproached, namely, with not holding *usury*—that is, taking higher interest on money lent than the laws of the land permit—to be an impermissible means, and even with favouring it.

279. Usury is a dishonest, shameful trade; it lacks nothing of highway robbery except that no violence is used in it—though, on the other hand, one does not expose oneself to the danger of succumbing to brave resistance. When my neighbour, be he Israelite or Christian, seeks money in need or even merely in embarrassment, I must, if I can, lend it to him with the intention of

supporting him in his need, but not of bringing him still deeper into it. This certainly happens if he must pay high interest which he cannot possibly raise. He is then forced to borrow money at interest from others in order to pay the interest owed to me, or he must put up with my adding it to the capital, whereby capital and interest grow to a frightful height.

280. As the spider lies in wait for the fly, spins its threads about it, entangles it in its web and then mercilessly sucks it dry, so the usurer ruins all who have the misfortune [p. 133] to fall into his rapacious hands. He who deals so unlovingly with his distressed fellow men cannot hope for the mercy of God.

281. It is utterly absurd even to suspect our nation of holding usury, this shameful vice, to be permitted, since Holy Scripture forbids it so often and so emphatically. According to the Mosaic law no one who lent money or provisions was allowed to accept the least increase, even if it was offered to him voluntarily.

> *Lev.* 25—35—37. "If thy brother beside thee becomes poor, and his hand fails, then thou shalt support him, and the stranger as well as the sojourner (*all non-Israelites*), that each may live (prosper) with thee. Thou shalt take neither interest nor increase from him, but fear thy God, and let thy brother live (prosper) beside thee. Give him not thy money upon interest, nor thy victuals for increase." (Lev. 25:35–37)
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> *Ibid.* 3. B. 23—20, 21. "Thou shalt not take interest from thy brother, neither on money, nor on produce, nor any other interest that turns to harm. From a foreigner (an idolater) thou mayest take interest, but not from thy brother; that the Eternal may bless thee in all thy undertakings in the land whither thou goest to possess it." (Deut. 23:20–21)[41]

Compare Lev. 20, 12.—Deut. 55, 15.[42]

> *Ps.* 15, 6. "He who lends money without usury, and incorruptibly protects the innocent—he who does this shall never be moved (God does not let him fall)." (Ps. 15:5)[43]
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> [p. 134] *Talmud.* "Among the means of becoming perfectly moral is this, that one lends money without interest even to an idolater." (cf. BT Makkot 24a)

282. When our nation lost its former constitution and was scattered under foreign governments, this prohibition could no longer, to be sure, be observed in all its strictness. But for this not the nation, but its situation was to blame. All means of livelihood were denied it; it was left only the one freedom of carrying on trade and lending money at interest. In this restricted condition it nonetheless had to pay heavy, exorbitant taxes. No wonder, then, if even the tenderest conscience

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[41] Translator: Printed "Ibid. 3. B. [Lev.] 23"; the passage is Deut. 23:20–21.

[42] Translator: Both references are evidently corrupt as printed (Deuteronomy has only 34 chapters); the further biblical passages against interest are Exod. 22:24 and Ezek. 18:8, 13.

[43] Translator: Printed "15, 6"; the verse is Ps. 15:5.

often yielded to necessity, in order to be able to satisfy the enormous demands of the governments of that time for the mere toleration of our oppressed forefathers.

283. But those times have long since vanished, at least in our state, where a mild government has opened to us so many ways of earning a living; it is left to our choice which craft we will practise, to which estate we will devote ourselves. In this improved situation, when the nation enjoys so many liberties, one must abhor usury with all one's heart, as it deserves. Indeed, it were to be wished that, in order to bring the nation back into esteem, people would not seek to earn their living by lending money even at legal interest, so that even the appearance of usury might be avoided.

[p. 135] **284.** Just as it is a sacred duty to procure one's livelihood through a useful and permitted occupation, so one must take care to deal economically with the goods one has acquired. We ought to be *thrifty*. Thrift consists in arranging one's expenditure prudently according to one's income, husbanding and sparing the rest so that one can use it the longer. One should avoid all excess in eating and drinking, in clothing and amusements, and learn to do without many things when they are not required for a respectable standard of living.

> *Prov.* 13, 11. "Wealth diminishes where it is squandered (wasted) on baubles (useless things); but he who gathers little by little increases (his goods)." (Prov. 13:11)

285. He is a *spendthrift* who spends much more than is necessary, squanders his money on useless things, often gives costly banquets, and in general deals frivolously with what is his. The inclination to show off and the love of splendour have already brought many to the point where they have had to beg for the scantiest subsistence and thereby become a burden to other people. One should live according to one's station, and not seek to equal others who have larger incomes.

286. Extravagance has poverty as its consequence, which no one pities, because the thoughtless man has brought it upon himself. No one helps the spendthrift with an advance of money by which he might set himself on his feet again, out of [p. 136] distrust that he might squander this money too. On the help of his many table-companions he must not count at all; the parasites desert him as soon as he can no longer set anything before them.

287. Yet saving, too, must not be carried so far that one stints on what belongs to a respectable standard of living, or even to the satisfaction of one's needs. Such stinting would be *avarice*. This is a very low, ugly vice. People who, with a fine fortune, wear threadbare clothes and dirty linen, make do with wretched fare, and spend their evenings in very meagre lighting, sin against God. It is his gracious will that we should enjoy the good he bestows on us, and let others enjoy it too. The miser does neither of the two.

288. He is indifferent to respect and contempt as soon as there is but a groschen to be gained or saved; he is therefore base (230).[44] He is also capable, where great gain or considerable saving is at stake, of using the most unjust and cruel means.

289. It is indeed permitted to strive after wealth, if it is done without anxious cares and with the intention of being able to do all the more good. But if no opportunity offers itself to attain it by the path of uprightness, then one should be content with the modest means that God has given us. Contentment and frugality (206)[45] are [p. 137] worth more than all the goods of fortune, after whose possession many strive in anxious unrest.

> "It is better to have a little in the fear of the Lord (with piety) than a great treasure with which there is unrest." (Prov. 13:11)[46]
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> *Ps. 128:1–2 (204, 206). Avot, ch. 4.* "Who is truly rich? He who is content and satisfied with his portion (what God has allotted him)." (Avot 4:1)

290. In the enjoyment of sensual pleasures and amusements, which also belong to our outward well-being, we should be moderate, so that we do not acquire an inclination to be always amusing ourselves, and so that we do not harm our health through frequent or excessive enjoyment.

> "If you find honey, eat of it in sufficiency; but if you overfill yourself with it, you will vomit it up again. (Enjoy pleasure in moderation, so that it does not become distasteful or cause pain.)" (Prov. 25:16)

291. We must carefully guard against unripe fruits, indigestible foods, and such as are passing over into putrefaction. But neither may one overload the stomach with tasty and wholesome foods, because this hinders digestion and produces illnesses.

292. In the enjoyment of wine and other intoxicating drinks one must be especially cautious. One very easily grows accustomed to sharp and at the same time sweet drinks, and if one does not resist them, one finally gives oneself over to drunkenness. A vice as ruinous as it is contemptible! The drunkard neglects [p. 138] the business of his calling, squanders what he has, and comes to the beggar's staff. In his intoxication he quarrels and wrangles with everyone, deals out blows, receives them back tenfold, and commits all manner of beastly vices that ruin body and soul.

> "Hear, my son, and be wise. Be not among the drunkards and gluttons, for the drunkards and gluttons become poor. Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has red eyes? Those who sit late into the night over wine and always crave to drink. Look not upon the wine when it is red and sparkles beautifully in the cup: it goes down smoothly, but afterwards it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder (the consequences are extremely dangerous). Your eyes see strange things, and perverse speech

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[44] Translator: Baseness is defined in no. 233; the cross-reference "(230)" is probably a misprint.

[45] Translator: Thus printed; the contented man is described in no. 248, and the reference may be a misprint.

[46] Translator: So printed; the verse quoted is Prov. 15:16.

comes out of your heart. You are like one who sleeps in the midst of the sea, or up on the top of the mast (great dangers threaten you, but you do not perceive them). However many beatings the drunkard receives, he says (still, in his stupor): They struck me, it does not hurt me; they beat upon me, I hardly feel it; if only I were awake again, I would carry on (I would begin to drink again)." (Prov. 23:19–21 and 29–35)

293. One should take no cold drink as long as one is heated and in a sweat; one should first dry oneself off. People who have disregarded this have become dangerously ill, and many have died of it. Nor should one stay in a damp place, and still less sleep in a damp room.

294. Fresh and cold water strengthens the [p. 139] body. Wash your face daily, bathe often, and change diligently into clean linen. Fresh white linen presents a pleasant sight and makes people look upon us with pleasure.

"At all times let your garment be white (clean, fresh)." (Eccl. 9:8)

295. The fingernails must be cut often; if they are allowed to grow, they cause disgust. The hair of the head should neither hang wildly over the face nor be curled in many locks. The first betrays indifference to propriety, and the latter a craving to please in small, insignificant things, by which one makes oneself ridiculous. In general, in all such things one has to conform to the usage of sensible people. Thus one should dress decently, but without splendour, and content oneself with moderate, good fare. Only on festival days and on solemn occasions may one adorn oneself somewhat more, and add a few *rare* dishes to the daily fare.

[p. 140] Seventh Section. Of the Dependence of Men on One Another and the Duties Arising Therefrom

296. Man is the most helpless creature in the world. Every animal is almost entirely complete at its birth. The newborn human being, by contrast, the child, spends years before it learns to stand and walk. It is not possible for the individual human being to procure food, drink, dwelling, clothing and instruction for himself entirely alone, without the help of others.

297. All the means and advantages for self-preservation and for the cultivation of the understanding man obtains only through union with his fellows. We therefore depend on one another. God has also so constituted the human body and spirit that they are meant to subsist in no other way than in society with other human beings, who also assist one another in the necessary labours and tasks.

298. Man loves everything by which his life is preserved, and still more that which improves his condition. It is therefore natural for him to love his fellow men, whose help affords him many advantages. But God has not only placed this drive toward happiness in us, [p. 141] but has also expressly commanded: *Love your neighbour as you love yourself.*

(Exod. 19:18)[47]

299. The love of God gives us yet another ground for love of our neighbour. Even without regard to the benefit we receive from other people, we must love them for this reason alone, that they are created in the image of God, are His children and our brothers. A brother lovingly stands by another even when that other renders him nothing in return.

300. *Love your neighbour as yourself*: this fundamental law of our religion commands *universal love of mankind*. Our neighbour is every human being who needs our help, whom we can in any way help or be of use to: without distinction of acquaintance, friendship, kinship, nation or faith.

> *Talmud.* "A heathen came to Rabbi *Hillel* and said: Teach me your law in the short time that I stand on one foot. But he replied: *Love your neighbour as yourself!* This, he added, is the foundation of the law; all the rest is interpretation and inference." (BT Shabbat 31a)[48]
>
> "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal falsely (hatefully) with one another, and profane the covenant of our fathers?" (Mos. 2:20)[49]

301. In the time of Moses there were seven nations which God Himself had excluded from universal love of mankind. From this, perhaps, comes the very harmful prejudice by which it is believed that our nation is not obliged by the [p. 142] divine law to love sincerely people of a non-Israelite religion. Some even think that it is permitted to us to nourish an unholy religious hatred.

302. But where Holy Scripture mentions those seven nations and excludes them from universal love of mankind, it also adds the just reason: to keep the Israelites of that time as far removed from them as possible, so that they might not adopt their vicious, hateful worship and become unhappy like them.

> "You shall make no covenant with them (those nations) or with their gods (namely, to tolerate them in the land under certain conditions). — They shall not dwell in your land, lest they lead you into sin against me; you might be seduced into serving their gods, and this would be a snare (ruin) to you." Compare Deut. 7:1–11. (Mos. 23:23, 33)[50]

303. This proves that, with the sole exception of those seven, *which died out long ago*, we should love all people and nations just as we love our fellow believers, because God loves all men (299). The only preference He granted the Israelite religion consists in this: that to it alone He revealed His holy will on Mount Sinai and gave the law that brings happiness. Thus Scripture itself expresses this: "*God also loves all peoples; all their holy ones are in Your hand* (are pleasing to

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[47]Translator: Printed "2. B. Mos. 19, 18" (Exod. 19:18); the commandment is Lev. 19:18.

[48]Translator: The story of Hillel and the proselyte who asked to be taught the whole Torah while standing on one foot; in the Talmud Hillel's answer is the negative form, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow."

[49]Translator: So printed ("Mos. 2, 20"); the verse is Mal. 2:10.

[50]Translator: Printed "Mos. 23 — 23. 33"; the verses quoted are Exod. 23:32–33.

You) when they willingly submit to Your guidance and bear their lot with patience: [p. 143] *but to us Moses commanded the law, as an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.*" (Deut. 33:3–4)

> *Talmud.* "The virtuous of all nations shall have a share in eternal life." (cf. Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:2)[51]
>
> "He makes His will known to Jacob, gave Israel statutes and judgments. He has not done so for any heathen nation, nor revealed His judgments to it. Hallelujah! (Praise God for it!)" (Ps. 147:19–20)

304. When Solomon dedicated the magnificent Temple for divine worship in the presence of the Israelite nation, he let fall no word of national pride, and still less of religious hatred against other nations. In his wisdom and love of mankind he rather prayed for them, and said: "But also the heathen who does not belong to Your people Israel, and comes from foreign lands for Your name's sake — for they will hear of Your great name, Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm — and prays in this house: hear it in heaven, Your firm seat! and do as the heathen calls upon You, so that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name and show You as much reverence as Your people Israel, etc."[52]

305. Least of all may we hate the Christian nation, since many and essential articles of faith of their religion are holy to us as well. It teaches: that a single God, an almighty, all-wise and all-good Being, created the world out of nothing and sustains it by His grace; that this same Author of all created beings is omnipresent and knows [p. 144] what goes on in the whole of nature, and what men do and think; that God loves and rewards virtue, abhors and punishes vice; that man is destined to become happy, and for this reason has received an immortal soul. It teaches and commands the administration of justice and the practice of love of mankind in its widest extent.

306. It is therefore most unjust and culpable to hate a religion that contains such salutary teachings. We should also carefully avoid every religious dispute, and give absolutely no hearing to *zeal for conversion*, that is, to the desire to move people of other religions to accept our faith.

307. Universal love of mankind consists in the practice of justice, kindness and forbearance. We should be *just*: render, give and show to each of our fellow men what he can rightfully demand of us, and leave him what is due to him and belongs to him (30).

808.[53] But one must also be *equitable*, that is, often moderate for the good of one's fellow man the strict right one has to a thing. For example, I lend my neighbour money on a piece of land, and stipulate that if he does not pay me the whole sum at a certain time, I shall have the right to sell the land and pay myself out of it. Now the time comes; but he is not in a position to pay the whole

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[51] Translator: The saying "the pious of the nations of the world have a share in the world to come" (Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:2; Maimonides, Hilkhot Teshuvah 3:5).

[52] Translator: Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple, 1 Kings 8:41–43 (no reference printed).

[53] Translator: Misprint for 308.

sum at once, only little by little in instalments. It would be inequitable if I wished to proceed according to my right [p. 145] strictly, and to sell the land at once in order to obtain the whole amount, whereby he could be ruined.

309. Love of mankind also demands that we be *kind* toward others and take part in their weal and woe. This sympathy must be sincere, active and disinterested. It is *sincere* when we mean in our hearts what we express toward others in our words, gestures and conduct. It is *active* when we do not let it rest with friendly words, regret and good wishes, but actually do for our neighbour's welfare, or to lessen his distress, what we can do according to our strength and our means. Finally, it is *disinterested* when we expect no benefit for the service rendered, and do not demand thereby to oblige our neighbour to return the service.

310. Love of mankind demands still more of us: we should also overlook and forgive our enemies the injustices, harm and insults they have inflicted on us, and stand by them in their troubles.

> "If you come upon the ox or the ass of him who hates you going astray, bring it back to him. If you see the ass of your enemy lying under its burden, beware of leaving it to him alone; rather help him unload it." (Exod. 23:4–5)
>
> "If your enemy is hungry, feed him with your bread; if he is thirsty, give him water." (Prov. 25:21)
>
> [p. 146] *Night Prayer.* "Forgive, O Lord, everyone (Israelite or non-Israelite) who has offended me today."[54]

311. We must care for the welfare of our fellow men, avert all harm from them, and seek to make their life comfortable and joyful. So much the less, then, may we injure our neighbour's body, health and life, fortune, property, good name, or anything else that is his. Whoever hates his neighbour, persecutes or slanders him, or even seeks his life, commits an abominable vice which God punishes with great severity.

> *Lev. 19:16–18 (148–150). Exod. 20:13.* "Do not go about among your people as a talebearer (slanderer). Do not stand back when your neighbour is in danger. I, the Eternal (forbid it!). Do not hate your brother in your heart! You may reprove your neighbour — namely, if he has offended you — but do not bear the offence against him (do not harbour a grudge against him in your heart). You shall not take revenge, nor keep anger against the children of your people. Love your neighbour as you love yourself. I, the Eternal (command it!)" (Lev. 19:16–18)

312. Since we are to care for the life and health of our fellow men, we must avoid everything that could shorten their life even in the remotest way. To this belong blows, mortification, grief, vexation, frights caused, seduction into intemperance, drunkenness, lewdness and other dangerous acts, [p. 147] the imposition of too heavy labour, neglect and withdrawal of care in sickness,

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[54] Translator: From the bedtime Shema prayer ("Master of the world, I hereby forgive anyone who angered or vexed me..."); the parenthesis is Homberg's.

medicines and household remedies recommended without caution, neglected rescue from danger of life, omitted warning, harmful prejudices, e.g. as though it were a disgrace to take in an injured person who appears dead, or to cut down a hanged man. Rather, as far as lies in our power, we should seek to preserve the life and health of other people, by warning of dangers, by rendering assistance, by nursing in sickness, and by immediate rescue from mortal danger.

313. Only in rare cases does the authority of the land have and exercise the right to have very harmful persons who disturb the security of civil society — for example robbers, murderers and arsonists — put to death, in order to deter others from similar outrages (151); or in war, when the fatherland is attacked by enemies.

314. Justice demands that one not take to oneself the property of another, i.e. what someone rightfully possesses or can claim through purchase, acquisition, gift or inheritance, whether by force, or by cunning, or in any other unlawful way. To this also belongs: when one conceals a theft committed by others, knowingly buys or keeps stolen goods, appropriates and keeps things one has found, denies and does not give back goods entrusted for safekeeping; allows oneself overreaching, overcharging, fraud and lies in trade through bad wares, false measure, weight [p. 148] or false money; when one deprives others of their own through unjust lawsuits, does shoddy work, is a lazy and unfaithful labourer or servant, withholds from others the wages they have earned; buys up grain and holds it back when it is already dear and the poor are suffering; cuts short the taxes owed to the authorities or defrauds them of them; takes usurious interest; wins money from others by false play, or wheedles them out of their own by deceitful words; when one begs although one could work or serve, etc.

> *Exod. 20:12 (158, 160, 161). Avot, ch. 2.* "Rabbi Jose says: Let your neighbour's money be as dear to you as your own." (Avot 2:12)[55]

315. But if one has committed the sin and deprived one's neighbour of what is his in one of the ways mentioned, one must conscientiously restore to him what was taken, and also make good, according to equity, the damage he may have suffered through the withholding of what was due to him (218).

316. Since a good name, honour, or the good opinion other people have of us is so valuable a possession, which we cannot do without if we are to be useful to ourselves and others, it is our duty to seek to preserve for our neighbour as well this so precious possession, the esteem of others toward him.

> *Avot, ch. 2.* "*Rabbi Eliezer* says: Let your neighbour's honour be as dear to you as your own." (Avot 2:10)

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[55] Translator: The prohibition of stealing is Exod. 20:13 in Hebrew numbering (20:15 in English Bibles); 20:12 is the commandment to honour parents.

[p. 149] **317.** We should therefore be cautious in judging other people; not uncover their weaknesses unlovingly and spitefully, or magnify their faults; and least of all invent evil about them and spread it, or say of them what is not true, i.e. *slander*.

> *Lev. 19:16 (316). Ps. 15:1–4.* "Who, O Lord, may dwell in Your tent? Who may rest on Your holy mountain? He who walks uprightly, practises justice, speaks truth from the heart; never slanders with his tongue, never does evil to his neighbour, never reviles his fellow man." (Ps. 15:1–3)

318. Rather, one must gladly notice the good that each person has, and also make it noticeable to others and praise it, defend him against false accusations, speak good of him, and, as far as truth permits, turn everything to the best, i.e. interpret his faulty dispositions and actions favourably if it can be done. We must show our fellow men respect and honour for the sake of the good they have in them, and hold in especially high esteem those who distinguish themselves by virtuous actions, cultivation of mind, and skills.

> *Avot, ch. 2.* "*Hillel* says: Do not judge your neighbour until you come into his situation. (Do not condemn him harshly.)" (Avot 2:4)
>
> *Ibid., ch. 1.* "Judge every person in the scale of merit (seek out such reasons for his actions as outweigh the evil appearance)." (Avot 1:6)

[p. 150] **319.** We become fit for the practice of this virtue when we accustom ourselves to have *trust* in our fellow men, i.e. to credit them with good intentions and dispositions, and not to suspect evil of them without reason; when we apply ourselves to *discretion*, and guard against *credulity* and *talkativeness*, so that we do not immediately believe everything and repeat it. Yet neither should we bestow our trust *incautiously* on everyone whom we do not know well, because this can be abused and become harmful to us.

320. We should be *obliging* toward our fellow men, anticipating them in everything they ask of us that we can grant them. A friendly countenance heightens the worth of the smallest services we render anyone. To this belongs also *yielding* in our dealings with people, so that out of courtesy we appear to depart from our own opinion, even when it is well founded, when this can be done without truth being violated thereby.

> *Avot, ch. 2.* "Make his will your own, so that he in turn (on other occasions) may make your will his." (Avot 2:4)[56]

321. We should love the truth and be *truthful*. Our speech and utterances must agree with our dispositions. We may therefore never lie, never knowingly say anything that is not true. Truthfulness benefits us and others; but the lie has [p. 151] very harmful consequences. For example,

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[56] Translator: A saying of Rabban Gamaliel, son of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi (Avot 2:4), addressed to God's will in the original; Homberg applies it to one's fellow man.

someone is recommended as a skilful and well-mannered teacher and educator of youth, although one knows that he is incapable of teaching and a vicious man besides. On the strength of the recommendation, children are entrusted to him whom he is to instruct and guide. The deceived father or guardian at last, and often too late, becomes aware that the children have remained ignorant and have taken on bad manners. He grieves over it, and can never forgive the one who deceived him by the recommendation.

> "Keep far from a false matter." (Exod. 23:7)
>
> "You shall not lie to one another!" (Ibid., Lev. 19:11)
>
> "I will not keep in my house (says God) him who practises deceit and falsehood. A man who likes to lie shall never stand before my eye." (Ps. 101:7)
>
> "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are pleasing to Him." (Prov. 12:22)

322. We should then show love of truth, or truthfulness, according to the duty of justice in all our promises, contracts, engagements, and the testimony demanded of us in court and in ordinary life. Our given word we must keep most sacredly and inviolably, even if we ourselves should suffer harm from it, because otherwise the security and welfare of civil society would be violated.

> [p. 152] *Exod. 20:13 (262).* "A false witness does not remain unpunished, and he who boldly speaks lies does not escape (punishment)." (Prov. 19:5)
>
> (On the holy mountain shall he rest who) "swears to his own hurt and keeps his word." (Ps. 15:4)

323. There are sometimes cases where *prudence* and *caution* demand of us that we not reveal our dispositions to everyone, and where it is permitted to conceal the truth or not to tell it: when we know for certain that by truthful statements we would cause no benefit but harm; e.g. to sick people, or to persons bent on doing harm, such as enemy soldiers, robbers and murderers.

324. Apart from these cases one may never tell an untruth, especially when the weal and woe of others depend on the statement. Just as, according to justice, I can demand the truth from everyone, so I am obliged to tell it to him.

325. We should support the poor, nurse the sick, *feel compassion* at our neighbour's misfortune, and show it to him in words and deeds. Where we cannot help, we should comfort, and raise up the bowed down with good counsel. Every pain is lessened when others sincerely share in it.

> "Come! break (share) your bread with the hungry, take into your house the [p. 153] needy, clothe the naked, help everyone who is of your flesh (your kind)." (Isa. 58:7)
>
> "Let each show kindness and mercy to his brother." (Zech. 7:9)

326. *Peaceableness* is a beautiful virtue. It consists in carefully avoiding all quarrels and disputes, not insisting stubbornly on one's opinion, and, if a dispute nevertheless arises, being ready to offer one's hand for peace and reconciliation.

327. In practising all these virtues we must also observe certain rules of life. We should not only live morally but also be *modest*. Just as inwardly we should cleanse the mind of all evil inclinations and thoughts, so outwardly, in our dealings with people, we must avoid everything that is indecent and unseemly. Thus, for example, one may not bare the body in the presence of others, even of one's nearest relatives, nor use words and expressions that arouse in the hearer either disgust or unchaste thoughts. The first betrays a vulgar upbringing; the latter, however, that the heart is filled with culpable desires and the imagination with impure images. "Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks," says the proverb.

328. To modesty belongs also *politeness*. Whoever is polite endeavours at all times to give the persons with whom he associates proofs of the attention and respect due to them according to the nature of the [p. 154] relationship and the established customs. It is lack of politeness when, for example, one does not thank someone who takes off his hat to us, interrupts someone, or rejects a modest request bluntly and unkindly. He has no manners who visits a respected person in an unclean, offensive attire, always does the talking in company and lets no one else get a word in, walks on the right of venerable persons, etc.

> *Avot, ch. 5.* "A sensible (well-mannered) person lets those speak first who are older or more learned than he; he interrupts no one; he is not hasty in answering; his questions are to the point, and his answers are not long-winded; he answers questions in the order in which they are put to him; if he can give no answer, he says at once: this I have not heard, not learned (I do not know it); and he never contends against the truth. The boor (the uncultivated person), on the other hand, does the opposite of all these!" (Avot 5:7)

[p. 155] Eighth Section. Of the Closer Relationships and Connections of Man and the Duties Arising Therefrom

329. Because of their helplessness and their equality in needs, human beings are dependent on one another and bound to one another, from which universal love of mankind springs (296). But among our fellow men there are certain persons with whom we live in nearer and closer connections than with others, and who therefore have a greater claim on our love, kindness, help, forbearance, etc.

330. Such persons are spouses, parents, children, brothers and sisters, relatives, teachers, friends, benefactors, masters and servants, masters and journeymen, our fellow citizens, compatriots, and those who are in some other way more closely connected with us, to whom we owe duties other than those general duties of love.

331. The first society into which human beings entered was the conjugal one. *Marriage* is the close union and friendship which unites two persons, man and woman, with each other for the preservation of the human race. God Himself instituted and blessed marriage.

> [p. 156] "God blessed them (Adam and Eve) and said to them: Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth." (Exod. 1:28)[57]

332. The *spouses* promise each other most solemnly that they will live together to lighten their toil, for the joyful enjoyment of life and for the upbringing of their children, love each other above all others, help each other in their affairs and in need, mutually further each other's happiness, and give each other joy.

333. If the husband or the wife does not keep this marriage promise which they have made to each other, but breaks it, then the party who becomes unfaithful to the other commits *adultery*.

> (Exod. 20:13; 152, 154)

334. Since the conjugal union is so wise an institution of God, which He ordained for the preservation and welfare of the human race, it should not be dissolved without the most weighty reasons, because this would bring disorder and great harm upon civil society.

335. Spouses should therefore show each other the tenderest love, faithfulness, respect, mutual help, services and friendship. They must be unceasingly intent on preserving harmony between them through loving conduct, on being diligent and faithful in their tasks, above all on assisting each other in all things, and so on living together for [p. 157] their own happiness and that of their family according to God's will.

336. The husband must provide for the decent maintenance of his wife and family through the orderly pursuit of his calling, and also give them protection and assistance. The wife, for her part, should diligently attend to the order, cleanliness and prosperity of the household, show her husband respect and compliance, and be gentle toward him at all times.

> "A worthy wife always does her husband good; she never causes him vexation as long as she lives." (Prov. 31:12)

337. Spouses, when they have children, are called *parents*. Those, on the other hand, who take their place when the parents have died or are separated from the children, and become guardians, providers and benefactors of the children, are called *step- or foster-parents*, also *guardians* and *masters* (of apprentices). Parents are, of all people, our first friends and greatest benefactors, because for our sake they endure the most burdensome hardships, and have done us good the longest and the most.

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[57] Translator: Printed "2. B. Mos. 1, 28" (Exod.); the verse is Gen. 1:28.

338. Parents have the duty to *bring up* their children to be healthy, sensible and virtuous human beings and useful members of civil society, that is, from youth onward to apply wise and good means so that they become such. They should therefore first of all care for the body, the preservation and exercise of the limbs and senses, as well as for the nurture and health of their children.

[p. 158] **339.** It is therefore also a sacred duty of parents that they gratefully avail themselves for their children of the beneficent recent discovery, and have them given the *cowpox* (protective pox) early by an intelligent physician, in order thus to preserve their lives, their healthy limbs, senses and beauty.[58]

340. Parents who neglect this duty out of prejudice or obstinacy burden their conscience with a heavy responsibility; for they are manifestly guilty of the death, or of the disfigurement and mutilation, of their children through the natural smallpox, and are therefore punishable before God.

(Gen. 4:10)

[p. 159] **341.** The chief aim of the parents must then be directed to the souls of the children and their cultivation, so that through good instruction in useful things, especially in religion, they may become sensible and wise, and through habituation to good and weaning from evil, virtuous, well-mannered, also skilful and happy human beings.

342. *Mothers* must instruct their *daughters* in cookery and in handiwork, such as sewing, knitting, etc., and in general in the management of the household. They should also, by examples, teachings and admonitions, lead them to womanly propriety, retirement and modesty, and moderate in them the love of finery and the craving for fashion.

343. Upright parents must accustom their children to industriousness, order, cleanliness, domesticity and honesty, care for their outward fortune and their advancement in the world, and to this end have them learn early something useful and a regular trade by which they can one day earn their living, so that they do not become a burden on society.

344. Parents who do not fulfil these duties sin very gravely against God, against their children, against themselves and against the whole of civil society, whose prosperity gains just as much through a good upbringing of children as it suffers harm through a bad one (147).

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[58] Terrible were the ravages wrought by the hideous smallpox plague, of which 70,000 to 72,000 people died annually in Germany, and 400,000 in Europe, before this beneficent discovery was made. It had been noticed by chance that the poison from the pox-like sores which sometimes form on the udders of cows has the property of protecting people infected with it against infection by the ordinary children's smallpox; and the Englishman, Doctor *Edward Jenner*, who reflected further on this experience and carried out many investigations of it, made this great and salutary discovery in 1789 [Translator: Jenner's first vaccination took place in 1796, published 1798], and thereby became the greatest benefactor of his age and of posterity, which will yet bless his memory for it. Since then, of the many hundreds of thousands of children and adults in all countries inoculated with the cowpox matter, not one has ever caught the natural smallpox, nor has any child died of it; hence it rightly deserves the name of *protective pox* (Schutzpocken).

345. Since, then, the duties of spouses, and especially when they become parents, are so manifold and of so great an extent, [p. 160] one must not enter into marriage too young, nor without forethought. However harmful every violation of duty is, it is still not nearly so bad as when the one who acts against his duty has a wife and family: he draws them too into his misfortune, and his offence is so much the greater.

346. In many a land a very bad abuse prevails among our coreligionists, namely that they marry off their children at an age when they have scarcely developed half their powers of body and soul and their inclinations. From this much mischief arises. When the young spouses grow older and come to know their own feelings, only then do they become aware that the temperament of the one is utterly incompatible with the attractions of the other. Marriage becomes burdensome and oppressive to them, and when quarrelling and bitterness gain the upper hand between them, they must at last be separated from each other forever. Hence the frequent divorces.

347. Besides the fact that divorces cause great disruption in families (333), the children of dissolved marriages are also never entirely happy. Though they may lack nothing else, the minds of these creatures are nevertheless forever in anxious unrest. They can never let their love for their parents pour forth in its fullness without causing unpleasant feelings to the father or the mother.

348. Since young spouses, at a very early age, often already in their childhood years, when they [p. 161] are themselves still in need of upbringing, it is impossible to expect that they will be in a position to fulfil the duties of spouses and of parents as they should. Just as little can one demand that the still childish husband should have a calling and carry on a trade, and that the all-too-young little wife should manage the household properly. The consequence of such marriages is want and need; the poverty of the parents and children forces them to live on the good nature of others.

349. Since through all-too-early marriages so many duties are violated and so many families made unhappy, they are most sinful. The children are not to blame for this; they only do what their parents wish and command. The whole guilt falls upon the conscience of these thoughtless people, who must answer before God for all the unhappy consequences of untimely marriages.

> *Talmud.* "Before one proceeds to marriage, one builds (sets up) a house; that is, one must be in a position to fulfil all the duties that the marital union imposes." (BT Sotah 44a)

350. But even if one can satisfy all the obligations of the married state, one should nevertheless not enter into it until one has examined the disposition, inclinations, sentiments and abilities of the person with whom one wishes to be united. Whoever looks more to beauty, wealth or a respected family than to personal character in this often regrets, though too late, this [p. 162] important step, on which peace and contentment through one's whole life depend.

351. Children should, their whole life long, show their parents, as their greatest benefactors, through whom God bestows on them the most good in this life, the most heartfelt love, the greatest veneration, gratitude and obedience in words, and do them every honour.

(Exod. 20:12. [§§] 141–147.)

352. They should also bear with their parents' weaknesses when they grow old, and tend them in sickness and poverty with love and gentleness, as the filial duty of gratitude demands.

Prov. "Obey thy father, he begot thee (gave thee life), and despise not thy mother when she is old." (Prov. 23:22)

Talmud. "The good that thou doest to thy parents, and whatever thou givest them of food, clothing and so forth, shall be done with heartiness, friendly words and gentle looks."[59] (Talmud)

353. *Siblings*, that is, sisters and brothers, or relatives, since they are more closely bound to one another by nature, should also love one another especially, and be friendly, obliging and peaceable with one another.

Ps. "Behold! how fine, how pleasant (good and desirable) it is when brothers live in concord." (Ps. 133:1)

354. For every benefit that we receive from anyone we should be grateful, and show our gratitude to the *benefactor* by [p. 163] words and, where possible, by services.

355. Among our foremost benefactors belong especially our teachers, who instruct us in youth, or also when we are grown up, in religion and other useful things, and by teaching, warning and counsel take care for our education and our well-being, so that we may become good, useful and happy people. Such are *schoolteachers, tutors, masters of apprentices, higher teachers of the people, rabbis*.

356. Pupils, hearers and apprentices should be grateful to them for this, hold them in high esteem for their benefits, and by eagerness to learn, attentiveness, diligence and good conduct give them joy and thereby lighten their difficult office.

Aboth, ch. 4. "Respect thy pupil as thyself; let thy esteem for thy schoolfellow equal thy deference toward thy teacher, and this the reverence for God." (Mishnah Avot 4:12)

357. After parents and relatives, the pious and good teacher has the first claim on our support in poverty, old age and sickness or in other emergencies. He has led us on the way to virtue and wisdom, by which man maintains the highest rank in the visible world, and without which he would sink to the level of an irrational beast.

Talmud. "The teacher has deserved even more of thee than thy father. To the latter thou owest only the short (sorrowful) life, but to the former the eternal (blissful) life." (Mishnah Bava Metzia 2:11; BT Bava Metzia 33a)

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[59] Translator: Cf. BT Kiddushin 31a–b and JT Pe'ah 1:1 on the manner of feeding and honouring one's parents.

[p. 164] **358.** Some are also *employers of servants*, fathers and mothers of households who have to give orders to others who are in the house; and others are *servants* or *domestics*, who must render services to the former and obey them. Sensible people do not despise their servants, but are rather friendly toward them, because they are human beings like ourselves, our brothers, and useful people, without whom we should not have a great deal of good and many comforts.

359. Masters should always act justly toward their servants, and so give them sufficient good board and the promised wages without deduction. Nor should they lay on them heavier work than they are able to do. If they fall ill in their service, one must take care for the restoration of their health. If they have grown old and feeble in service, one must take particular care of them and not let them suffer want.

> *Lev.* "Thou must not rule over him (the servant) with rigour, but fear thy God." (Lev. 25:43)
>
> *Ibid., Deut.* "When thou settest him (the servant) free (dismissest him), let him not go away from thee empty. Give him a present to take along, from thy small cattle, from thy threshing-floor (thy grain) and from thy wine-press (wine, oil); as the Eternal, thy God, hath blessed thee, shalt thou give to him; thou must remember that thou too wast a servant in the land of Egypt, but the Eternal, thy God, redeemed thee; therefore I give thee this commandment today." (Deut. 45:13–43)[60]

360. Servants or those in service should be *respectful* toward their masters, never [p. 165] refractory and lazy in their service, but obedient and obliging toward them in all *permitted* things. Every servant is bound to perform his service faithfully, honestly, and so that his masters are entirely satisfied with it. He must also, by diligence and discretion, help to promote the honour and the welfare of his masters as much as possible.

361. The same holds also for journeymen. He must be mindful of his master's profit, work contentedly and untiringly, and so honestly earn his wages. Let him strive to work so that the master keeps his old customers and draws new ones to himself.

362. These duties the servant and the journeyman must strictly observe, without distinction whether he is in the service of an Israelite or a Christian employer, whether he works for an Israelite or a Christian master. Let him but think of the honesty, fidelity and sincere devotion of *Joseph* toward his master *Potiphar*, who was a heathen, an idolater. "My master," said the former, "entrusted all his property to my hands; how could I act dishonestly toward him and sin against God?"

> (Gen. 39:8, 9.)

363. There are yet other relationships in which duties are to be observed, although they arise neither from kinship nor from compacts. Such exist between *old* and *young* people, the *rich* and the *poor*,

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[60] Translator: So printed ("5. B. 45, 13—43"); the correct reference is Deut. 15:13–15.

people of *rare natural gifts and greatness of mind*, [p. 166] and people of *middling powers of understanding*.

364. Young people must honour old age. One should have patience with the infirmities and weaknesses of old people, contribute everything to their easier provision and comfort, and bear in mind that everyone hopes and wishes to grow old.

> *Lev.* "Before a hoary head thou shalt rise up, honour the person of an old man, and thereby show reverence before thy God. I, the Eternal (command it)!" (Lev. 19:32)
>
> *Talmud.* "One must honour old age even in a heathen." (BT Kiddushin 33a)

365. But the old and aged should adorn their old age with virtue, moderation and piety, and make it worthy of respect to younger persons, and not become burdensome through constant complaints, a peevish temper and intolerance.

> *Prov.* "The most splendid crown is a fine old age; it is attained only on the way of virtue." (Prov. 16:31)

366. The rich should not pride themselves on their wealth nor despise those without means, and should use their fortune for the good of the poor and needy and for the furtherance of useful institutions.

367. But the poor should not envy the rich, but be industrious, honest and pious, and trust in the dear God in their poverty; [p. 167] and show particular respect to those rich people who do good to the unfortunate.

> (Ps. 9:10.)

368. People of great talents may not look down on others with pride and despise them. Outstanding acuity, rare heroism and a bold spirit of enterprise must be regarded as means that God employs for the good of many people, often of an entire nation, to instruct them, to defend them in danger, or to restore its sunken prosperity.

369. But one acts contrary to the intention of God when one uses great gifts of mind, or wealth and standing, to oppress one's fellow men and to keep them in slavish dependence on oneself. The bad use that many a man has made of his talents has often been a scourge for human society.

> *Jer.* Thus spoke the Eternal: Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom, nor the brave man of his courage, nor the rich man of his treasures. Let him only boast who has reflected, knows me, and knows that I, the Eternal, exercise kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, and that I have pleasure only in this (in the practice of good, but not in the subjugation of men). (Jer. 9:22, 23)

370. Men, on the other hand, who through excellent knowledge, insight and virtues render service to mankind, be it through the drafting or administration of just laws, through [p. 168] useful

discoveries and inventions, or through magnanimous sacrifice of themselves for the good of the state—these benefactors of the human race have the most just claim to our admiration and deep veneration.

> *Talmud.* "Whoever beholds a king (lawgiver) for the first time, even one of a non-Israelite nation, let him speak the following blessing: *Blessed be He who has endowed flesh and blood with His majesty.* Whoever beholds a great sage for the first time, even one of a non-Israelite nation, let him speak the blessing: *Blessed be He who has endowed flesh and blood with His wisdom.*" (BT Berakhot 58a)

Ninth Section. Of the Duties of Man as Citizen

371. No man can by himself alone acquire the means by which the bodily needs are satisfied and the powers of the soul developed; nor can he easily have opportunity to practise the various virtues.

372. Self-preservation thus drives man to enter into societies with others, to increase and unite his powers with theirs, [p. 169] in order thereby to be in a position to lead a comfortable life and to prolong his existence.

373. But even without regard to these advantages, everyone feels an impulse of sociability to associate with others of his kind. A child gladly joins other children, even if they are strangers to it, it does not need them and expects nothing of them. This happens from a mere natural impulse, which is also proper to most animals.

374. The impulses of sociability and of self-preservation, however, can only bring people together, but not hold them together. Ignorance, passion and malice can set them at odds again and very soon separate them from one another.

375. Since every man has powers and abilities from God, he must also have the *right* to employ them for his own good, and to manage and dispose of his acquired goods as he pleases. But as this right belongs equally to all other men, so each also has the *duty* not to hinder anyone in the development of his powers, nor to disturb him in the possession and enjoyment of his property. Many people are without understanding, do not see this, and act against it out of mere *ignorance*.

376. Others, who see this natural right well enough, nevertheless act contrary to it, not out of lack of understanding, but out of *greed*, *lust for power*, *envy* and *malice*. [p. 170] Against the violence and wanton insolence of such degenerate people, the property and life of the weaker would find no security. Open acts of violence, when they become general, have as their consequence assassination, mutiny, rebellion and civil wars, in which the parties wear one another down and bring one another to ruin.

377. To prevent these sad consequences, *laws*, i.e. rules, must be prescribed as to how the members of society are to conduct themselves toward one another. They determine their rights and duties

and set *penalties* on every violation of duty. The former instruct the ignorant, and the latter keep wanton insolence and the passions within their proper bounds.

378. *Lawgivers* are those who, after mature consideration of rights and obligations, draw up laws that are to be followed exactly; *judges*, however, those who according to these laws decide all misunderstandings and disputes that arise, investigate transgressions of the laws and the offenders, and have what is lawful carried out by *court officers* and *executioners*.

379. People who are bound together by a legal constitution are called a *civil society*, each individual member of it a *citizen*, and the land or lands in which the society lives under *one and the same* constitution, a state.

380. The state is the *fatherland* both of all who were born and brought up in it, and of such foreigners [p. 171] as have settled permanently with their households in this land, enjoy all legal rights and take on all duties.

381. Besides good and wise laws, many other institutions, arrangements and establishments are also needed for the welfare of society, for the promotion of agriculture and other trades, for the encouragement of commerce, for relief in unfortunate events of nature, for the education of the people, and so forth.

382. One of the most necessary establishments in the state is the *coinage*, or the fixing of the value of each kind of coin, because money, as the general means of acquiring and selling products and of paying for work, represents the value of all things produced and manufactured, of all efforts and services.

383. The *postal system*, the construction and maintenance of *bridges* and *roads fit for carriages*, are also of quite particular use, chiefly for the furtherance of commerce. To prevent fraud it is necessary to *fix* measure, *weight* and *prices* of foodstuffs, and to keep *strict supervision*, so that no unripe fruit, spoiled bread, or foods gone to rot, such as fish and the like, are brought to market and sold.

384. In large cities it is also needful to make provision for rescue in danger of fire, and to pay men who will let themselves be employed for *extinguishing* fires. Further, an institution for the *healing of poor sick people*, *workhouses* [p. 172] for people without sustenance, and finally to set up storehouses in the land and fill them with grain, so that the inhabitants do not perish of hunger in years of bad harvest.

385. For the direction and maintenance of these and still more establishments, *administrators*, *collectors*, *officials*, etc. are appointed, and again *supervisors*, who see whether the former administer their office diligently and appropriately.

386. The state must also take care to have the young male and female citizens properly instructed in religion, morals and other useful knowledge, and for this purpose to set up *schools*; but for the

arts and sciences, such as theology, philosophy, natural science, geometry, mechanics, architecture, jurisprudence, medicine, history, geography, the study of countries and other subjects worth knowing, to establish *high schools* in the capital cities, and to appoint teachers of proven ability and integrity, and at the same time men of higher insight, who have to examine the pupils and carefully watch over the good progress of instruction.

387. All institutions concerning internal welfare are, however, of no duration if the state does not enjoy sufficient security from without and must always fear being attacked as an enemy by the greed and lust for power of a neighbouring people. *War*, i.e. the condition of a civil society attacked by an enemy, destroys all its good establishments.

[p. 173] **388.** The state must therefore also, in order to be able to defend itself against such an assault, maintain a standing *army*, i.e. a sufficient number of armed men trained in warfare, who, provided with everything that belongs to the defence of the land, can at any time march against the enemy, repel, defeat and drive him away.

389. Hence *ordnance* of every kind, wagons, horses, tents and other field equipment must be procured and always kept in good condition. The state chooses the *most capable generals*, superior and subordinate commanders, and sets them over the army, whose orders it must punctually follow.

390. The institutions that promote order and welfare and secure peace from without are bound up with enormous costs, which are defrayed by civil society and are called *expenditures of state*. These expenditures are apportioned among all members of society in proportion to their means, and each has to pay the contribution due. All contributions together, which are called the *revenues of state*, flow into the *state treasury*, from which the expenditures are defrayed.

391. The receipt of the contributions, the expenditure for and meeting of the needs of the state, the drafting and administration of the laws, the founding and maintenance of all necessary and useful institutions, the appointment of priests for divine service, of ministers, councillors, judges, teachers, generals, etc., the fixing of their [p. 174] duties and salaries, the decisions on war and peace, the concluding of friendly alliances with other nations, etc., together make up the *administration of the state*, which is entrusted to the highest person in the state. This person is called *emperor*, *king*, *duke*, etc. The lawful head of every civil society is installed by God, in order to guide it according to His will with justice, gentleness and love, and to promote its happiness.

> *Dan.* "So that thou (Nebuchadnezzar) mayest be convinced that the Most High (God) guides the government of men and entrusts it to whomever is pleasing to Him." (Dan. 4:22)

392. We should *love* our *fatherland*, i.e. esteem its constitution, laws, institutions, customs and usages above all others, and support and increase what is for its common good in every possible way.

393. This we do when we have *public spirit*, i.e. good dispositions toward the general welfare, which make us inclined to contribute to everything that promotes it, and willingly to undertake all services that the state requires of us.

394. Hence those also who are called upon to defend the fatherland against hostile attacks should willingly undertake this great duty and faithfully fulfil it. The warrior must shrink from no dangers, must offer the enemy the bravest resistance, and, if it is necessary, give his very life in the defence of the fatherland. One can depart from this world in no nobler way than [p. 175] through a *hero's death in battle for fellow citizens and lawful liberty*.

395. The soldier must obey his superiors blindly, carry out their orders exactly without any inquiry, trusting in the insight of those above him. Inquiring, doubting and brooding lead to lukewarmness in the fulfilment of duties, which can have the most harmful consequences.

396. He should also be content with his pay, and in general be frugal and sober, never abandon himself to wild passions or behave inhumanely. Heroes are only then truly great when they shed a sorrowful tear for the fallen victims of the just and even of the unjust cause, and take pity on those who are made unhappy by the war. Humane warriors will never practise violence, injustice and cruelty, or do more damage than is unavoidably necessary for their defence.

> *Deut.* "When thou must lie a long time before a city in order to fight against it and conquer it, thou shalt not destroy the trees and lay the axe to them; for thou canst indeed enjoy fruits from them, and must therefore not root them out in order to hem in the city with bulwarks; for the trees of the field sustain man's life. But such a tree as thou art sure bears nothing edible, that thou mayest destroy and cut down in order to build a bulwark around the city that makes war with thee, until it lies low." (Deut. 20:19, 20)

397. As the soldier must obey the general, so in general every subject must obey the authorities, [p. 176] even if he does not see the purpose of their orders. His field of vision is too limited to see in every case the necessity of the arrangements that the administration of the state decides upon.

398. All the rabbis of the Talmud, which was composed under heathen government, agree in the teaching *that the law of the sovereign and ruler of the land must be held and obeyed as a holy law*.[61] That is, everything that the ruler of a people ordains with regard to the *civil and political constitution* has for us the same force of law and sanctity as if a king in Israel, or the former Israelite supreme court (Sanhedrin), had established it.

399. Even in the case where the law of the non-Israelite head of state could not be reconciled with our former civil and political laws, it must be acknowledged and obeyed as the only valid one, *so long as it does not abolish or hinder the observance of religious duties*.

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[61] Translator: The principle *dina de-malkhuta dina*, "the law of the kingdom is law" (BT Nedarim 28a; Gittin 10b; Bava Kamma 113a; Bava Batra 54b).

400. From this doctrine, set forth by the Talmud and generally accepted, it follows that we Israelites are obliged to render strict obedience to the laws of the land of Christian rulers, because they bind us in the very same degree as if they were Israelite laws of state.

401. It follows from this that we should hold in high esteem the civil constitution under which we live, willingly follow its ordinances, and honour the [p. 177] Christian authorities, councillors, judges and officials as if they were Israelite superiors.

402. All who take care of the welfare of civil society, whether it concerns internal order or external security, we should willingly obey, not out of fear of punishment, but out of conviction of duty and of the usefulness of their official functions; we should satisfy without delay the demands that they make in the name of the state, and not hinder them in carrying out the highest commands.

403. The contributions required of us, which are called *taxes* and *levies*, which we owe to the authorities for their protection, and which in turn are used for the good of the land, we must pay gladly, without grumbling, honestly, without fraud, and at the right time.

404. Since the contribution or levy that each member has to pay is, as it were, a property of civil society, whoever in paying it permits himself a fraud, an embezzlement or a short payment commits an encroachment on the property of as many people as the state contains citizens. The punishment would then be enormously great, if it were made proportionate to the multiplication of the offence.

405. Whoever, out of prejudice and delusion, seeks to evade, wholly or in part, these or other civic duties when he is able to fulfil them, is ungrateful, unscrupulous, and sins against God just as much as if he lived in an Israelite state and deceived its authorities.

[p. 178] **406.** The Talmud expressly forbids *taking a detour and evading the toll* (a levy for the maintenance of roads and bridges, or for some other purpose), *or deceiving the vigilance of the toll collector*.[62]

407. This prohibition includes every tax, because the rabbis command that it be paid without short payment, even if the officials appointed for it should neglect its collection or should err in counting to the detriment of the state treasury.

408. All the less may we lead officials and judges into temptation through bribery, make the former unfaithful in their service, or induce the latter to deviate from law and justice; although these are obliged by religion, by the law of reason and by a special oath that they take, to reject every bribe conscientiously and to administer their office with fidelity.

[62]Translator: BT Bava Kamma 113a.

Deut. "Thou shalt not pervert justice (not proceed unlawfully in judgment), shalt have no respect of persons, and accept no bribe: for the bribe makes people blind (errant in judging), and perverts the words of the righteous." (Deut. 16:19)

409. *The earthly highest power* (in the state), says the Talmud further, *is a reflection of the heavenly government*.[63] We should therefore conduct ourselves in political ordinances just as obediently and reverently toward the human ruler as toward God in respect of religious precepts, and we must accordingly [p. 179] fulfil the duties of subjects with the best will and zeal.

410. As we trust in God's goodness and wisdom, and firmly believe that everything happens for our good (110), so should we have confidence in the commands of the sovereign of the land, and be assured that they always aim at the welfare of the state, and therefore willingly follow them, even if fulfilling them should be burdensome to us.

411. We must bear in mind that God Himself installs lawful rulers (291),[64] and grants them wisdom and deep insight to choose such means as most effectively establish and secure the prosperity of their subjects.

Prov. "The heart of the king is like streams of water: it is in the hand of God; He turns it according to His will." (Prov. 21:1)

412. A wise ruler decides nothing without first taking counsel with the most experienced men, hearing and examining their opinions; and a just, good king has no other purpose than the welfare of his subjects. He feels himself happy only when the people whose father he is are contented and cheerful.

413. It is therefore our bounden duty to pray diligently to God for the well-being of the sovereign of the land, his house, his ministers and councillors, in order to implore of Him peace, security and welfare for the state.

Jer. Seek the good of the city whither I have driven you (under a foreign government), and pray for it to the Eternal. For if it goes well with it, it goes well with you also. (Jer. 29:8)[65] [p. 180]

Talmud. "Pray for the welfare of the sovereign; for where he is not respected and feared, one man swallows another alive." (Mishnah Avot 3:2)

414. Our rabbis have therefore ordained that the following prayer be recited in the synagogues on the Sabbath and on festivals and on other solemn occasions:[66]

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[63] Translator: BT Berakhot 58a: "The kingship of earth is like the kingship of heaven."

[64] Translator: The numbers in parentheses here and in §410 refer back to the author's earlier paragraphs.

[65] Translator: So printed; the verse is Jer. 29:7.

[66] Translator: The traditional prayer for the government, beginning "Ha-noten teshuʿah la-melakhim" (cf. Ps. 144:10; Ps. 145:13; Isa. 43:16), recited after the Torah reading.

O God! who grantest salvation unto kings and dominion unto princes (but Thy kingdom endureth for ever and ever), who didst deliver David, Thy servant, from the destroying sword, who with Thine almighty power didst make a way in the sea and a path in the mighty waters, guard and preserve, exalt and bless our sovereign (or sovereign lady)[67]. O King of all kings! preserve him (her) long in the highest well-being; guard him (her) from harm, sorrow and affliction; raise the splendour of his (her) crown, that peoples may willingly submit to his (her) guidance, but the enemies fall down at his (her) feet. Let, O Almighty One, all his (her) undertakings prosper, etc. (Prayer for the government, "Ha-Noten Teshuʿah")

415. We must be loyal to the reigning head of state and mean well and sincerely by the fatherland. We are therefore bound, when we hear of evil plots that are being made against the security of the state or the life of the ruler, to report them at once, without sparing the person by whom they are devised, to the prince himself or to one of his trusted councillors, and to conduct ourselves [p. 181] in this as *Mordecai* did toward King *Ahasuerus*, although the latter was a heathen and at first not very favourably disposed toward the Israelite nation.[68]

(Esther 2:21, 22.)

416. Whoever holds the divine commandments holy and observes them, constantly directs his doing and omitting according to the universal law of reason, loves his neighbour as himself, fulfils his duties in every relationship, practises all civic virtues and is loyal to the sovereign of his land, he is happy in this life and blessed in the world to come, in the realm of the transfigured spirits.

Prov. "Fear God, my son, and the king." (Prov. 24:21)

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[67]Here the name of the male or female sovereign is spoken.

[68]The teacher is to tell this story if it should still be unknown to the children.