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Translated into English by Claude from the Internet Archive scan (University of Toronto copy) of Salomon Plessner, דת משה ויהודית oder Jüdisch-Mosaischer Religionsunterricht für die israelitische Jugend (Berlin: L. Fernbach jun., 5599 = 1838), printed in German Fraktur. Numbers in grey brackets mark the beginning of each printed page of the original. Hebrew proof-texts are given as printed (biblical verses in the standard Masoretic consonantal text), each followed by an English rendering of Plessner's German translation. Footnotes are Plessner's own unless they begin "Translator:", which marks the translator's notes (identifications, corrected references, misprints); short corrections inside Plessner's notes appear in square brackets. The two pages of errata to the German typesetting are not reproduced.

[p. —] דת משה ויהודית [*Dat Mosheh vi-Yehudit*][1]

or

Jewish-Mosaic Religious Instruction

for Israelite Youth.
A textbook,
suitable for public
as well as
private and self-instruction,
of the
principal religious truths and teachings
of Judaism.
"Now Jacob shall no longer be put to shame,
when he beholds his little children
as the work of my hands."
Isa. 29:22, 23.
Prepared
and published at urgent request
by
Salomon Plessner,
teacher of religion.
Berlin, 5599.
(1838)
Published by L. Fernbach jun.

[1]Translator: "The law of Moses and Jewish law" (*dat Mosheh* and *dat Yehudit*), the rabbinic pair of terms (Mishnah Ketubot 7:6) for the commandments of the Torah and the customary practice of Jewish women; Plessner uses it for the written and the oral Law together, as the poem on the following page makes explicit. The Hebrew year 5599 began in the autumn of 1838.

[p. —] אורה זו תורה[2]

אור ראשון ברא אל האיר שבעתים כה שמש וירח הופיעו כאחת ויהי אור ה' אך שובה ונחת כביום ה' הגדול ביפעת קרנים.

אחריו לאור יום נתן שמש בשמים ולבנה בעצם ליל בנגהה זורחת האיר ליושבי חשך זיוה שולחת והיו למאורי אור וממשלה כפלים.

עת קרן אור ישראל כשמש ברקיע דת כתבת ודת מסרת יחד התאחדו וביום גלות הארץ לשתים התפרדו.

ודת יהודית בליל גולה כלבנה תופיע. אך עוד יבער כבוד הדת כבערה יוקדת ובתורת ה' תמימה היא מתאדרת.

המחבר

"'Light' — this is Torah." The first light that God created shone sevenfold; thus sun and moon appeared as one; and the light of the Lord was, but in quietness and rest, as on the great day of the Lord, in the splendor of its rays. After it, for the light of day He set the sun in the heavens, and the moon, shining with her brightness in the very midst of night, sending forth her radiance to give light to those who sit in darkness; and they became luminaries of light, and their dominion was twofold. When Israel's light shone like the sun in the firmament, the written law and the transmitted law were joined together as one; and on the day the land went into exile, they parted in two. And the Jewish law, in the night of exile, shines forth like the moon. Yet the glory of the law shall still burn like a blazing fire, and in the Law of the Lord, which is perfect, it is made glorious. — The Author

[p. —] Introduction

The source of Israelite religious instruction is the fount of life and blessing of the divine word, or of His Revelation in the written and the oral Law.

From this heavenly spring, issuing from the high mountains of hoary antiquity, and not from the narrow, canal-like conduits of artificially systematic compilation which recent times have dug for themselves, the Jewish old and young have drawn from time immemorial.[3] Occupied early, and through all his school years, only with his sacred records, and that in their *original language*, and

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[2] מגילה ט"ז. ועיין ב"ר פרשה ג'. [BT Megillah 16b; and see Genesis Rabbah, parashah 3.] Translator: "Light — this is Torah" is the Talmud's gloss on Esther 8:16 ("The Jews had light and gladness"). The reading of two words of the poem (כבערה, "like a blazing fire," and מתאדרת, "made glorious") is from a worn print and not wholly certain.

[3] Instruction in the Bible began with the fifth year (Avot 5 [5:21]) (compare ibid. יין לבנון [*Yayin Levanon*]) and with the third book of Moses (Leviticus Rabbah ch. 7 [middle]). This is treated at length in one of my addresses, "*The Israelite School Institutions*," delivered in the year 5587. That adults too are to read the divine word daily, see Maimonides, הל' ת"ת [Hilkhot Talmud Torah] 1:1. Translator: The year 5587 corresponds to 1826/27. *Yayin Levanon* is Naphtali Herz Wessely's commentary on Pirkei Avot (see below, p. VIII); the Hebrew words here are small and blurred in the print and their reading is not certain. The duty of daily study is set out in Hilkhot Talmud Torah 1:8–11.

at the same time—partly through this very fact, partly by nature—endowed with a keener power of comprehension and a greater receptivity for the holy than others, the Jewish boy could without misgiving be led ever further upward along the grandly [p. II] begun path of his instruction in God, onto its heights, without having to fasten upon him the drag-chains of compendia and catechisms, which cut the great whole into pieces and in which we now confine the infinite in order to form *half-Jews*. Israel's youth also had *time* to come to know religion in all its aspects and to dedicate their entire years of learning to true wisdom; for they were not yet overfilled and overloaded—at the expense of their physical and mental vigor—with a jumble of subjects and languages that even now most children could do without. Whatever branches of worldly knowledge were taught to them were attached to the *highest* knowledge as something merely subordinate, and were regarded as the means to an end.[4] To that grander manner of conducting the instruction of Jewish boys, which drew only from the sources, is probably also to be ascribed the general lack in Israel of writings for children or youth, to which the present time attaches such great value—and to which, indeed, it sees itself compelled, so long as education has not yet been given a direction appropriate to Judaism. Indeed, *religious instruction* as a separate branch was not known at all, for there was no instruction for the boy that was *not* religion or did not relate to it. School and home, teaching and life, of the teachers as well as [p. III] of the parents, were an uninterrupted, living religious instruction for the pupil. Nor was any occasion given in the sacred records themselves for a separate, *systematically* ordered doctrine of religion. The Israelite religion and knowledge of God neither sprang from the soil of human reflection, nor is it itself such a soil, one that would bear its fruits only for cold definition or for blind faith in incomprehensible things. The Old Testament is a flower garden; in it blooms the tree of *poetry*; in it there still reigns the *childlike, simple, unaffected* and *definite*; it is the youth of the world, the radiant world of the first morning hours of humanity, when *God himself* walked among men; here one is not so much to believe as rather to *behold*, without artificial dogmatic definition and philosophical deduction. "*What the understanding of the understanding does not see, a childlike mind sees there in simplicity.*"[5] — Historical narrative leads the boy by the hand over the rosy paths of direct perception; his way winds through the romantic regions of prophecy, which offers a constant change of charms and beauties; to the *music of the Psalms* he makes his pilgrimage toward his beautiful goal. It is quite otherwise with religions whose origin falls in a later time, one in which *philosophy* set itself beside divine wisdom and even knew how to incorporate itself into it. Here *systematizing* and *catechizing* play their natural role, and sprang from the mother's womb almost together with the re- [p. IV] ligion itself. —

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[4]Compare that passage נהירין וכו' ["Clear (to me are the paths of heaven …)"], BT Berakhot 58b, together with the remarkable statement of that same scholar in Deuteronomy Rabbah ch. 8, end. Translator: In Berakhot 58b the amora Samuel says: "The paths of the heavens are as clear to me as the paths of Nehardea"; in Deuteronomy Rabbah 8 he is reported as saying that the Torah "is not in heaven."

[5]Translator: A slightly altered quotation of Friedrich Schiller's poem "Die Worte des Glaubens" (1797): "Und was kein Verstand der Verständigen sieht, / Das übet in Einfalt ein kindlich Gemüt."

Only a later time, as the prophet says, brought even the *house of Jacob* to forsake its people and to cleave to *strange children*.[6] The *Greek* wisdom that had migrated into Judaism by way of the Arabs exercised its influence on the Old Testament as well—an influence that was not, to be sure, essential in halakhic matters, yet made itself felt in aggadic and exegetical respects. — From this Jewish-philosophical school there issued, as is well known, a very considerable literature.[7] I pass over here an older philosophical epoch[8] and recall only a later one, which begins with the Geonic period and continues for centuries. This philosophical interpretation of the Bible, however, did not lack—and probably not altogether unjustly, for it did not belong within Judaism—for opponents,[9] especially among the Sages of Truth (חכמי אמת) [p. V] or Kabbalists.[10] The Kabbalah, however, is not, like that philosophy, a product of later times; it reaches up into the highest antiquity and has always been preserved only among the elect; for, rightly understood, all the prophets are *Kabbalists*, and Moses was the *greatest* of them. —[11]

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[6]Translator: An allusion to Isa. 2:6: "For thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob … and they please themselves in the children of strangers."

[7]See Zunz, *Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur*, Berlin 1818, and his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, p. 396 ff. Translator: Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (Berlin, 1832).

[8]That of *Philo* and of the Essenes. I collected long ago the materials for a small treatise on this subject, which shed great light on the *Essenes and Zoharites*, inasmuch as it demonstrates with ample proof not only the identity of the writings of the *ancient men* from whom Philo has the Essenes draw their wisdom with the ספרי קדמאי [*Sifrei Kadma'ei*, "books of the ancients"] often mentioned in the Zohar, but also the identity of the teaching and life of the Essenes and the Zoharites in general. — Compare also: "Einiges über den Einfluß der einer ausgedehnten Philosophie etc.," *Zeit. d. Judent.*, vol. 2, nos. 88, 89. Translator: The periodical is evidently the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* (founded 1837), vol. 2 (1838).

[9]See R. Hai Gaon in עין יעקב [*Ein Ya'akov*] on Ḥagigah, p. 15, and in ר"י דמן עכו [R. Isaac of Acre] in מאירת עינים [*Me'irat Einayim*]. Compare also the letters against Maimonides' book *Moreh* [*Guide of the Perplexed*].

[10]Already the *Zohar*—which at one point speaks in praise of the *Greeks* (a passage set in parentheses in our editions), פקודי [Pekudei] p. 237a—expresses itself bitterly against the philosophers, calling them *demons* (ר"מ תנא), and even forbids the apparently most laudable use of them; Zohar משפטים [Mishpatim] p. 121a. — Luria did not pray the יגדל [*Yigdal*], since it contains the 13 articles of faith laid down by Maimonides (Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin 11:1) [Against which R. Ḥasdai [Crescas], אור ה' [*Or Adonai*], and R. J. Albo, עקרים [*Ikkarim*], had already declared themselves; Abarbanel, on the other hand, vigorously defended them in ראש אמנה [*Rosh Amanah*]. Compare also Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem*, Part 1; Dr. Uri, "Ideen zu einer Enzyklopädie etc." (*Zeit. des Judenth.*, vol. 1, no. 35); on the question "Do the Jews have articles of faith or not?" ibid., vol. 2, nos. 4–9. Incidentally, ibid. (61:16) a work by R. Saadia Gaon, ספר אמונה [*Sefer Emunah*], *on the articles of faith*, is already mentioned.]. See פרי עץ חיים [*Peri Etz Ḥayyim*] 1:1, and מ"א [*Magen Avraham*] on א"ח [Oraḥ Ḥayyim] ch. 68, beginning, and my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 169, note 1. — Think of the perpetual attacks on the מלחמות [*Milḥamot*] of the רלב"ג [Ralbag], and compare the following anti-philosophical writings and passages: שו"ת רשב"א [Responsa of the Rashba] no. 414; שו"ת ריב"ש [Responsa of the Ribash], Regel 55; Arama, חזות קשה [*Ḥazut Kashah*], Porta 6, especially Porta 8 (though also Porta 11); also R. Jos. of Candia, אילם [*Elim*], preface; R. Jos. Ergas, שומר אמונים [*Shomer Emunim*], Dialogue 1, §§ 36 and 37; R. A. Berechiah, מעבר יבק [*Ma'avar Yabbok*], section שפתי רננות [*Siftei Renanot*] 3:39; R. Sar Shalom's excellent אמונת חכמים [*Emunat Ḥakhamim*]; Azulai, חסד לאברהם [*Ḥesed le-Avraham*], preface; especially של"ה [*Shelah*] on מס' שבועות [Tractate Shevuot], p. 183; also Wessely, גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], Part 1, 6, ch. 1–5. — And indeed the sacred Scriptures are most correctly explained one by the other (Numbers Rabbah ch. 19). In vain does he seek their meaning and truth who attempts to open their gates with foreign keys. See my *Foreword* to the exegetical appendix of my *Apocrypha*, and my *Erb.*, vol. 2, pp. 115–119, "Einiges über Bibelexegese etc." Translator: Plessner's references are to Isaac Luria; Gersonides' *Milḥamot ha-Shem*; Solomon ibn Adret; Isaac bar Sheshet; Isaac Arama; Joseph Solomon Delmedigo of Candia; Joseph Ergas; Aaron Berechiah of Modena; and Abraham Azulai. In this note "Regel" (rule?) is as printed, and the reading of the parenthetical ר"מ תנא is uncertain.

[11]Hence the book Zohar not unjustly gives R. Simeon ben Yoḥai the רעיא מהימנא [*Ra'aya Meheimna*] ("the soul of Moses") as his teacher. — Accordingly *Bellermann* (*Geschichtliche Nachrichten etc. über Essäer etc.*, Berlin 1821, p. 108, note) would be right when, with reference to Philo's words (*Philonis opera*, ed. Mangey, vol. 2, p. 632, etc.)—"Countless confidants has our lawgiver (Moses) initiated into fellowship, who are called Essenes etc."—he says: "Philo here asserts the existence of a former

[p. VI] The more favorably, however, the *modern* age began to act upon the temporal circumstances of Israel, and the more this favor was now to be secured for the future as well, and indeed the foundation laid for ever greater progress, the more the state had to be concerned above all with a Jewish system of education and schooling which was to qualify the new generation for carrying out what had been begun with Israel. Indeed, the more the adult generation, too, was torn from its former seclusion by its present entry into social life—an entry that surprised even itself—and urgently felt the necessity of not falling behind in general education, the more it too began to withdraw from that which alone had afforded it constant occupation, comfort and reassurance in its retirement, namely *the study of the Law*, and to take other paths toward an education suited to the times. The age itself had awakened to a so-called *Enlightenment*; philosophy wielded the scepter on thrones, taught from lecterns and preached from pulpits. — Mendelssohn, the philosopher, advanced this [p. VII] spirit with giant strides into Israel's dwellings as well. Even Bible instruction, which on the one hand made significant progress through the Mendelssohnian school, at the same time on the other hand took no insignificant *steps backward*, as now the subjects of instruction multiplied in the schools and educational institutions, and precisely Bible instruction had to come off the worse, because other tasks than religious formation through God's word were now set for solution. Religious instruction no longer filled the greater part of the day; it began, more or less, to play only a subsidiary role; and teachers and pupils applied themselves, with all the zeal that the *new* is wont to engender, to the culture and learning that promised advantage and secured the favor of the state. Since these fields had hitherto been entirely unknown in Judaism, especially in more recent times, the need had naturally arisen to acquaint Jewish youth with their *religion* no longer through the study of the Talmud but—in order to gain a great deal of time for the elementary sciences—by a far shorter, indeed the shortest, path. The need for a *religious textbook* had arisen. And it was a pious Israelite who, upon a request addressed to him, first drew up the plan for such a catechism.

This pious Israelite was a friend and contemporary of Mendelssohn, Hartwig Wessely, most honorably known through many excellent writings [p. VIII] (נפתלי הירץ וויזל). This draft of the work in question was made in his well-known writing דברי שלום ואמת [*Divrei Shalom ve-Emet*][12] (the

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secret Mosaic school …. several ancient writers have stated the same, and an *unprejudiced* study of those Hebrew records leads to many traces that cannot be denied, etc." — Translator: *Ra'aya Meheimna*, "the Faithful Shepherd," is Moses as he appears in the Zohar literature. Johann Joachim Bellermann, *Geschichtliche Nachrichten aus dem Alterthume über Essäer und Therapeuten* (Berlin, 1821).

[12]Translated into German by D. Friedländer in 1781, and a second edition, Breslau 1798. Concerning the passage on which that writing is based, כל תלמיד חכם שאין בו דעה ["every scholar who has no understanding …"], from Leviticus Rabbah ch. 1—which, as is well known, occasioned great misunderstanding and quarrels—I permit myself here the remark that *Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu* ch. 6 has, instead of נבלה, the reading נכלה (a later version has בהמה); compare there the commentary זקוקין דנורא [*Zikukin de-Nura*]. I also note that similar reproofs and proposals concerning the instruction of Jewish boys are found long *before* Wessely in quite pious authors. See the book דברי חכמים [*Divrei Ḥakhamim*] (5354), Porta עבודה [*Avodah*], ch. 7; the book דרך החיים [*Derekh ha-Ḥayyim*] by R. Leva [Judah Loew of Prague]; and the fine little work דברי נגידים [*Divrei Negidim*], Amsterdam 5559, preface. See also יערות דבש [*Ya'arot Devash*], Part 2, a discourse on the usefulness of scientific knowledge. Translator: The passage (Lev. Rabbah 1:15) continues "a carcass (נבלה) is better than he." Wessely took "understanding" (*de'ah*) to include

first of the so-called מכתבים [*Mikhtavim*]). This scholar was, as is well known, prompted to that writing by the appearance of the Edict of Toleration[13] under the reign of Joseph II in 1782, since this edict specifically ordered the establishment of Jewish elementary schools and of the schoolbooks needed for them. Taken by surprise by this edict and at a loss as to its implementation, Jewish communities of Austria turned to Mendelssohn, who, however, entrusted the answering of the question to Wessely. Mendelssohn had indeed turned to the right man. For Wessely had long since (in his יין לבנון [*Yayin Levanon*], which appeared in 5535, on the Baraita קנין תורה [*Kinyan Torah*] 6, on ביישוב ["with composure"]) clearly called for the preparation of a religious textbook. The occasion can therefore not have been unwelcome to him for now [p. IX] expressing himself more fully on the matter and being able to look forward with confidence to the carrying out of his proposal. The draft of this catechism is given in the *second number* of the aforementioned *Mikhtavim*, and reads, among other things—I give his words in German—as follows:

"When the boy has completed his seventh year, let the teacher begin to impart to him the principles of religion. For this purpose a work could be composed in a pure style, in questions and answers, and divided into smaller sections.[14] Take, for example, a section on the festivals. *Teacher.* My son! Can you tell me how many festivals the Law ordained on which work is forbidden? *Pupil.* The chief of them is the Sabbath, on which all work, even that which the preparation of food requires, is forbidden. *Teacher.* What is the day of rest? *Pupil.* In *six* days, etc. And in such a manner, again, another section would have to treat of the sacrifices, another of the cases of impurity, leprosy and the like, another of the forbidden marriages and other teachings of abstinence, etc., and yet another of the consecrated persons and the various classes and castes among the people, such as priests and Levites.[15] This book (being written in Hebrew) would also have to be [p. X] translated into the language of the country." Wessely's proposal did not long remain without result; it soon had its effect near and far. In the year 5584 the editors of the מאספים [*Me'assefim*] called for the composition of a little book of morals for Jewish youth.[16] In the year [55]85 M. Feibelmann announced (in the מאסף [*Me'assef*], p. 28) a German translation of the לקח טוב [*Lekaḥ Tov*] mentioned in the last note but one. In the year [55]86 an anonymous writer communicated such an essay in the *Me'assef* of that year under the title דברי חכמה ומוסר [*Divrei Ḥokhmah u-Musar*] (12 sections). And so in the course of time there appeared a whole series of such religious textbooks, now larger, now smaller, which have accumulated up to the present day into a considerable

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general human knowledge, which provoked fierce rabbinic opposition. The second Hebrew reading in this note is blurred in the print. The year 5354 is 1593/94 and 5559 is 1798/99; *Ya'arot Devash* is by Jonathan Eybeschütz.

[13] See the מאסף [*Me'assef*] of the year תקמ"ב [5542 = 1782], and the appendix to בן יקיר [*Ben Yakir*] by Herz Homberg, p. 114.

[14] As has already been done in the oldest Hebrew catechism, לקח טוב [*Lekaḥ Tov*], by Abraham Jagel. Translator: Abraham Jagel (Avraham ben Ḥananiah Yagel), *Lekaḥ Tov* (Venice, 1595).

[15] On all this see in detail גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], Part 1, a book that may surely be recommended as the most excellent for older pupils; it has always been used with profit and blessing by the author of the present book.

[16] Translator: "5584" (1823/24) is evidently a misprint for 5544 (1783/84), the first year of the Hebrew journal *Ha-Me'assef*; the years "85" and "86" that follow are accordingly 5545 (1784/85) and 5546 (1785/86).

number; and the present Introduction will name most of them in a special register at its close. Judaism, then, is accordingly not lacking in religious textbooks, and the present one may therefore not be a particular necessity. Moreover, the author, as has already been said in the prospectus, never intended to publish it, and in fact resolved to do so only after many years of requests from friends and pupils. Nevertheless, his predecessors seem to have treated many a thing worth knowing in religious instruction with an all too careless hand, and to have left him much still to do in this respect, which may not be unwelcome to teachers eager for knowledge. Thus, for example, to my knowledge the *divine origin of our Law*, on which so much depends, is touched upon little or not at all in our catechisms. Like- [p. XI] wise, one has cause to be not entirely satisfied both with the doctrine of the *Messiah*, everywhere handled so anxiously, which after all so especially distinguishes Judaism from the other religions, and with the doctrine of *prophecy*, and the like. It is precisely these weightier doctrines that seem until now to have been neglected and, as it were, reserved for the author's labor. But even if he had otherwise put forward nothing especially new in the well-known fundamental doctrines of Judaism, he may nonetheless, as a teacher of religion who has not only spoken on the divine word several thousand times and treated it in various ways, but has also had remarkable *experiences of his own* concerning God, the soul and the like, have discovered many a thing not yet known even within the known truths of a religious instruction for the young, and have put it to salutary use for this work of his. —

Now even if, as is at present the view of so many, such catechetical religious instruction were not altogether to be approved, and Holy Scripture itself certainly always remains the best religious book, such instruction, set alongside or subordinated to the Bible, will nevertheless never be wholly superfluous, and for *female youth*, to whom Holy Scripture is less accessible, but over whose neglect recent times have raised just complaint, it is surely needful. For although, according to the well-known view of a Tanna (Mishnah Sotah 3:4)[17], no knowledge of the Law is to be imparted to the female sex, he nevertheless [p. XII] seems to have meant only a *higher instruction in the Law*, or the *legal*, halakhic portion (תורה) of the Bible — inasmuch as women were in fact exempted from the performance of many commandments — but by no means a *doctrine of faith and of general duties*. The correctness of this remark is clear not only from another passage that seems to contradict that teaching (BT Sotah 21), חייב אדם ללמד וכו' ["a man is obliged to teach," etc.], but also from other passages in our older Sages. Thus, for example, from the following teaching of the very pious author of the ספר חסידים [*Sefer Ḥasidim*][18] §313[19]: "A man is obliged

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[17]Translator: The Tanna is R. Eliezer, who states in Mishnah Sotah 3:4 that whoever teaches his daughter Torah is as though he taught her frivolity; Ben Azzai in the same mishnah holds that a man is obliged to teach his daughter Torah (the passage cited just below from BT Sotah 21b).

[18]Translator: *Sefer Ḥasidim*, the ethical-pietistic work of R. Judah he-Ḥasid of Regensburg (d. 1217). The quotation that follows, which Plessner closes only at the end of the paragraph on p. XIV, is a free German rendering and expansion of §313.

[19]חייב אדם ללמד לבנותיו המצות וכו' ומה שאמרו וכו' זהו עומק התלמוד וכו' שאם לא תלמוד הלכות שבת, איך תשמור שבת וכו' ["A man is obliged to teach his daughters the commandments, etc.; and what they said, etc. — that refers to the depth of the Talmud, etc.; for if she does not learn the laws of the Sabbath, how will she keep the Sabbath?" etc.]. Indeed, the Mekhilta on Exod. 4:3
[Translator: Thus printed; the Mekhilta's teaching that "thus shall you say to the house of Jacob" refers to the women, who are to

to impart the precepts of the Law to his daughters. And if a well-known passage of the Talmud seems to forbid this instruction and to consider it dangerous, [p. XIII] then nothing else is meant in that passage than a *profound Talmudic inquiry*, or *the giving of reasons* for individual precepts, as well as in general the imparting of the mysteries of the Law; to impart these to the female sex, or to the young in general, would indeed be questionable. But it is necessary to acquaint one's daughter with the divine precepts as such. For if, for example, she does not know the laws concerning the Sabbath, how could she observe it? And this can be demonstrated from our records themselves. Thus it is said in the Talmud (BT Sanhedrin 94) that under the reign of Hezekiah even women and children possessed an extensive knowledge of the Law. — Thus the Lawgiver himself already calls for a *general* religious instruction when he says (Deut. 31:12): Assemble the people, men, *women* and children, etc. Thus he says (ibid. ch. 29:9–10): You are standing this day, *all* of you, before the Eternal, you, your children, *your women*, etc. (cf. Tractate Soferim 18:6). Thus, too, the well-known Shunammite woman used to attend the discourses of the prophet Elisha; and her husband therefore, when she traveled to the prophet outside the usual time, put to her with [p. XIV] astonishment the question: Why are you going to the prophet today? It is neither new moon nor day of rest[20]. A proof, therefore, that on such days she used to attend the instruction of the man of God." —

The more, however, this shorter, extra-biblical instruction is suited to the female youth, the less may we restrict the *boy* to it alone; rather we must seek to make him acquainted at the same time with Holy Scripture itself, in the fullest sense of the word. The teacher himself lays in the boy the foundation for the most dangerous ignorance in the most important of sciences if he wishes to put his catechism in the place of the Bible. Again and again material must be drawn out of Holy Scripture, its narratives used, the characters of its persons presented, its truths and principles applied, so that from it a freer doctrine of religion arises without constraint, and that of the artificial, systematic edifice of doctrine remains, as it were, unnoticed, or at least becomes less noticeable.

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be told "the main points," is on Exod. 19:3.] already has women, too, instructed, if only in the easier doctrines. See also Shemot Rabbah ch. 28: ראשי דברים שהן יכולות לשמוע ["the main points, which they are able to hear"], especially כדי שיהו מנהיגות את בניהן לתורה ["so that they may lead their children to Torah"], together with Berakhot 10 [Translator: Probably BT Berakhot 17a, where women's merit is said to lie in bringing their sons to study; the same statement appears in BT Sotah 21a.], Sotah 21, Yevamot 63. The teaching בניכם ולא בנותיכם ["your sons and not your daughters"], Sifre on Deut. 11:19, is likewise only the interpretation of *an individual*; and from the addition there, דברי ר' יוסי בן עקביא ["the words of R. Yose ben Akiva"], it follows that contrary opinions opposed him. But that this interpretation was given on this verse and not already on the *earlier* parallel, Deut. 6:7, ושננתם לבניך ["and you shall teach them diligently to your sons"], seems to me to be precisely because שנן designates the *more rigorous* instruction, from which daughters were certainly excluded, whereas they could very well be included in the general expression for teaching, ולמדתם ["and you shall teach"]. — This would give the above remark of the ס' חסידים [*Sefer Ḥasidim*] a legally grounded basis, namely that daughters are excluded only from the *stricter* instruction but not from all instruction. See also Maimonides, Hilkhot Talmud Torah 1:13; סמ"ג [*Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*] in Rema on Yoreh De'ah 246. A proof that Jewish women were not excluded from all instruction are also the already very old writings and textbooks for the female sex, e.g. R. Jonah Gerondi's דת הנשים [*Dat ha-Nashim*], R. Benjamin Mardono's מצות הנשים [*Mitzvot ha-Nashim*], R. Schmeika's סדר נשים [*Seder Nashim*], and many others; especially the well-known recent מחנה ישראל [*Maḥaneh Yisra'el*] by B. Fränk[el]. — Compare also M. B. Friedenthal: *Die Würde der Frauen* [The Dignity of Women], Breslau 1836, and my remarks there (misprinted), pp. 55 and 56.

[20]Translator: 2 Kings 4:23.

But what is particularly needful in such religious instruction for Jewish youth, what elevates and sanctifies it, is that all supporting and proof-passages from Scripture be practiced in the *original language*. This is what distinguishes and characterizes Jewish religious instruction. The spirit of religion passes, and especially into the youthful heart, most easily through *language*.[21]

[p. XV] And it goes without saying that the content of what is presented must be no less characteristic and national. The Jewish pupil must be made acquainted not merely with general religious truths, which are sacred to every nation, but also, and above all, with those of *his own* nation. Indeed, even with regard to those general truths which the Creator imparted to all peoples, it will be necessary to show how these too maintain certain advantages in the house of Israel and are characteristically distinguished there; and the religious truths of Judaism are, after all, the *sources* from which the similar ones in the daughter religions first flowed. It must also be pointed out, as an advantage of the Jewish doctrine of religion, that it is precisely calculated to *human powers*, and is not exaggerated and impracticable. Judaism has the important principle: God gave the Law only to human beings and not to angels.[22] A third distinction is the *truly divine origin* even of the general moral teachings of our religion. It surely makes a great difference whether God himself, or one of his true prophets, instructs us, or whether this teaching comes to us from and through *human beings*. — And for that reason it must further be singled out, as a fourth distinction of the general teachings and truths of Judaism, that they are in accordance with *reason*, [p. XVI] and contain nothing from which man as such would have to recoil.[23]

In general there are two principal features characterizing Judaism which must be carefully attended to in religious instruction, but which are treated all too lukewarmly precisely in our time; I mean the already mentioned *divine origin of the Law*, and Judaism's *idea of the Messiah*. If the former has been thoroughly demonstrated, so far as lies in our power, then the mind and heart of the pupil are already won for the Law, even if nothing has yet been said of its other advantages, and a foundation has been laid upon which, without further great effort, the whole edifice of religion can be raised. Let the teacher vigorously seek to wean the pupil from the erroneous turns of phrase of the age, based on gross ignorance, according to which Moses is supposed to have been not the instrument of a Providence invisible to us but himself the lawgiver, and to have passed off his human work as the work of God — the phrases *Moses* taught, *Moses* believed, *Moses* did, and the like.[24]

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[21]Cf. my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*] [Translator: *Even Tovah*, a collection of Plessner's own sermons and discourses; he cites it repeatedly below.], Discourse 7, Part 5.

[22]Cf. my *Erbauungen* [Devotions] [Translator: Plessner's published series of devotional sermons (*Religiöse Erbauungen*, issued in annual volumes, "Jahrgänge"), cited hereafter as "Erb."; the principle quoted in the text is from BT Berakhot 25b, "the Torah was not given to the ministering angels."], year 2, Discourse 18, beginning.

[23]Cf. my *Erb.*, year 4, Discourse 21.

[24]Cf. my *Erb.*, year 2, Discourse 1, pp. 4–16, and Disc. 21.

Let him prove from history that Moses in several respects possessed precisely the opposite of those qualities that are ascribed to him, or presupposed in him, in the phrases mentioned. [p. XVII] Moses was by nature timid, resisted in many ways the mission laid upon him, was the most modest of men, attained late — indeed only after the giving of the Law — to the *knowledge of God*, and had to entreat urgently for it before it was granted him. Nor did he have the gift of eloquence; he often even showed a certain faintheartedness with regard to the omnipotence of God, and so on. Indeed, let the grown pupil be made acquainted precisely with that erroneous view in Schiller's *Moses*[25], which ascribes the Egyptian mysteries to Mosaism as its source; but let it be proven, as famous scholars[26] have already shown in distinguished writings on this subject, that, on the contrary, the little that the Egyptians had in common with the Israelites had come to them through Abraham and Moses. Admittedly, then, learning is needed for religious instruction, if the lie that opposes the truth, in its learned garb, is not to intimidate us, but is rather to be, and must be, attacked with its own weapons, [p. XVIII] especially on the point under discussion. All religious instruction — I say it straight out — is *nonsense*, at the least pointless labor, if Moses is regarded as more than an envoy, and indeed often, in a certain sense, a reluctant servant of God.[27] The proofs of the divine origin of the Mosaic teaching are, as the present religious book will show in more detail, manifold and palpable. And should not *one* of them already suffice, the one that lies plainly before us in the long continuance of a revelation of God even in post-Mosaic times? Why, then, in other religions did all higher communication cease at once with the disappearance of their founders or of their nearest disciples; why did the gates of heaven close and all divine speech fall silent; and why did it continue in Judaism even after the people's exile? — Did the long chain of post-Mosaic prophets and men of God consist of nothing but fools or deceivers? — Indeed, even with Malachi there ceased, to be sure, a spirit of prophecy, but not yet a holy spirit. —

As for the aforementioned idea of the Messiah, namely that it is supposed to have long since been realized and to have come into being, it may well have its difficulties to express oneself on this quite without reserve; — nevertheless [p. XIX] we should be quite at liberty — provided only that we do not violate the respect due to the dominant religions (and why should we do so? They are, after all, certain admixtures foreign to Judaism excepted, originally *daughters* of our own, and in disparaging them we should only be disgracing ourselves) — to teach the said idea most clearly to

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[25]Translator: Friedrich Schiller's essay *Die Sendung Moses* (1790), which derives Moses' monotheism from the Egyptian mysteries. Of the authors in Plessner's note, Johannes Meyer (1651–1725), Jacobus Trigland (1652–1705) and Herman Witsius (1636–1708) were Dutch Reformed scholars who wrote against the theses of Sir John Marsham (1602–1685) and John Spencer (1630–1693) that Mosaic rites derived from Egypt.

[26]Joh. Meyer, *De temporibus sacris et diebus festis Hebraeorum* 1, 1, §2; especially ch. 7, on *circumcision*: that it was not borrowed from the Egyptians is argued by means of more than 20 proofs. — Especially important is Jacob Triglandius, *Dissertatio de origine et causis rituum Mosaicorum*; and Hermann Witsius, *Aegyptiaca*, a very learned and solid work, and more writings of this sort, which the author read diligently in his earlier youth and excerpted, to the honor of the attacked teaching of God, with the intention of publishing them some day in German. These works are directed against Marsham, *Chronicus Canon Aegyptiacus* etc., and Spencer, *De legibus Hebraeorum ritualibus*.

[27]Cf. year 2, Discourse 21, p. 351, my explanation of the Talmudic passage: לא העשיר משה אלא מפסולתן של לוחות ["Moses grew rich only from the chips of the tablets"].

our Jewish pupils according to *our* faith, to interpret the messianic prophecies according to *our* manner of exegesis,[28] and to demonstrate: that indeed much important knowledge of the truth has, by God's arrangement, without which nothing comes to pass (Lam. 3:37; Book of Wisdom 11:25), — come among the heathen, and that a great future has thereby been *prepared*, in which one day *all* will call upon *one* God; but that Israel still awaits its redeemer; that there is only *one* Israel and, according to the teaching of our Holy Scripture, no second, spiritual one; that in *our* view the prophecies and predictions have not yet been fulfilled; and that God could not possibly — especially from Israel's *exceptionally God-fearing men*, even in more recent times, men who day and night lived *around* and in him and implored him for *truth and enlightenment*, indeed from the whole house of Israel after such unheard-of sufferings and afflictions, which should long since have reconciled it with God for every sin — [p. XX] have concealed such a thing as the revocation of the Law[29] or the error in which Israel is supposed to find itself.[30] How would this square with his mercy over all his works? Or with the teaching that, even if a sin of former times were to be punished here, he visits his punishments only to the *fourth* generation? — Besides this, it remains open to us to appeal to the very words of the founder of the dominant religion, that he had not come to abolish the Law; and that whoever transgresses even *one* law has already transgressed the whole.[31] These questions can all the less be held against the Israelite, since the adherents of other religions, too, are not all equally agreed about their plan, dogmas and teachings,[32] and have thereby divided into numerous confessions and sects. — Only then could Jewish religious instruction in our day have a fruitful and purposeful effect, when those two points have been properly discussed and have taken root in the pupil.[33]

[p. XXI] For the treatment of the *ceremonial law* — which, even though the author, for lack of space, could draw it only meagerly into the scope of this religious book, forms no small component of the Jewish religion, but in our days, owing to the prevalence of sensuality and especially to a lack of knowledge of the Law, is held in low esteem and almost entirely passed over in religious books — a conscientious teacher in religious instruction needs a method of his own. This part of religion must be preceded by a special *preparation*, in which man must first of all be considered from the side of his animal body and its bodily needs, so that as such he also has need of outward exercises

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[28] Cf. my *Apokryphen*, Introduction, pp. 21–23; my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], Discourse 8 [numeral damaged in the print], pp. 101 and 102.

[29] Cf. Devarim Rabbah ch. 8: לא תאמרו משה אחר עומד ומביא לנו תורה אחרת מן השמים וכו' לא בשמים היא וכו' ["Do not say: another Moses will arise and bring us another Torah from heaven, etc. — it is not in heaven," etc.].

[30] See my *Erb.*, Discourse 21, p. 365 and following.

[31] Translator: Matt. 5:17; the second saying is in fact from the Epistle of James (2:10).

[32] *Theoduls Gastmal* [Theodul's Banquet] etc., Frankfurt am Main 1815.

[33] Some light on the idea of the Messiah and on Israel's last dispersion and liberation is given by my interpretation of that aggadah of the *gnat of Titus*, BT Gittin 56b, Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer 49, Bereshit Rabbah 10, Vayikra Rabbah 22, Bamidbar Rabbah 18, Tanḥuma חקת [*Ḥukkat*], in a discourse delivered on the Sabbath נחמו [*Naḥamu*] 5598, on the *openings of the seven haftarot of consolation* (שבעה דנחמתא). —

in religion, whose *ideal* is too lofty for most.[34] Here let him recall the visible actions that were connected even with *prophecy*, which is surely purely spiritual, as well as the bodily *forms and names* that even the Deity and its angels assumed when they had to do with mortals; let him here also consider the ceremonial service, which held so high a place even in the Temple and could not be absent even in the *Holy of Holies*, so that even *here small alterations* in it were already regarded as *mortal sins* (BT Yoma [p. XXII] 19a)[35]. But what must particularly be taken into account here is the *physical benefit* of observing the ceremonial law: how Israel has from time immemorial owed to the ceremonial law its better health, its freedom from a thousand ills and infirmities, its sobriety and level-headedness, its greater receptivity to virtue and morality, above all its nearness to God, and finally its outstanding powers of understanding, which its very glance tends to betray. — As examples of such salutary effects even of outward religiosity, circumcision,[36] and the dietary and purity laws should be adduced here. To demonstrate such *rational grounds* upon which the ceremonial law could be based, let the teacher use the so-called טעמי המצות [*ta'amei ha-mitzvot*, reasons for the commandments] of Maimonides, *Moreh Nevukhim*, Part 3,[37] especially the valuable work חנוך [*Ḥinnukh*] by R. Aaron Halevi; also the first part of the גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*] by Wessely;[38] but in so doing let the teacher not forget to remark to the pupil that beneath every ceremonial law there lie still higher causes and an incomprehensible benevolence of God, which will become known to us sooner or later, whereas [p. XXIII] the aforementioned writings have sought to give only the most obvious causes, evident to everyone.

For the revival of the religious sense, and particularly for the ceremonial law, the respect for which has sunk so very low, one would have to try, insofar as it belongs to the school, to win for it the *living* interest of the pupil as well. It could only have a detrimental effect on Jewish schoolchildren that recent times have robbed them of all the joy that the influence of religion formerly produced in them. What has always won a childlike heart for religion were days of rest and festivals, little holidays and joys that *Judaism* alone procured for it. Our time has taken these from it. It has taken from it not only the *lesser* festivals, the holidays of the *new moons*, the afternoons of its Chanukahs,

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[34] See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], Discourse 1 (beginning).

[35] Translator: The passage concerns the Sadducean manner of offering the incense in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, against which the high priest was made to swear (Mishnah Yoma 1:5; BT Yoma 19b).

[36] Cf. the English Bible commentary on Gen. ch. 12 [Translator: Thus printed; circumcision is commanded in Gen. 17. "The English Bible commentary" is the large German translation of an English annotated Bible published in Leipzig from 1749 onward. On the works in the text: the *Sefer ha-Ḥinnukh*, traditionally ascribed to R. Aaron ha-Levi of Barcelona (13th cent.), and *Gan Na'ul* (1765–68) by Naphtali Herz Wessely.].

[37] Cf. on this the endings of a number of the treatises of the book יד החזקה [*Yad ha-Ḥazakah*, Maimonides' Mishneh Torah].

[38] The English Bible commentary just mentioned, as well as that of Dereser, and especially J. D. Michaelis's commentary on the five books of Moses and his *Mosaisches Recht* [Mosaic Law], can also be fruitfully used for the above purpose. Also recommendable are *Baumgarten's Allgemeine Welthistorie* [Universal World History], and especially *Rosenmüller's Morgenland* [The Orient].

its Lag Ba-Omers and Ḥamishah Asars, and the like[39],[40] but even its Sabbaths and *festivals* in the stricter sense, and that even in Jewish schools. It is true that the dutiful obedience owed to the State now commands us to assign the *non-Jewish* Sundays and holidays to our youth as days off, and accordingly, if both religions were to assert their rights in the schools, there would be almost more holidays than school days; [p. XXIV] yet perhaps, through a representation of the religious harm that violating his festivals causes the Jewish boy, the State might be won over to yield to our religion in this matter, or at least to permit instruction on Sundays and holidays during the morning or afternoon hours, all the more since we could here appeal to the so-called *Sunday schools*. Surely all religious instruction is a vain effort if the Israelite boy spends the hours of his Sabbath and festival worship over his schoolbooks as on any other day. What should win him for his faith, what should dispose him toward it, if not precisely the bright points within it, the festivals and days of joy of Judaism? People complain of decline in religion, and in particular of the deterioration of the youth, and will not attack the evil at the root, will not recognize the source of this mischief; indeed, they drag the youth with their own hands into the abyss of ruin. —[41]

Now as for something more concerning the *method* in religious instruction and the *teacher*, let this preface be permitted the following remarks.

Two hours weekly suffice, in my opinion, for a *separate* religious instruction, [p. XXV] and these are to be placed at the beginning and the end of the weekly school instruction. If we set one in the middle of the week, the Sabbath could serve for the third. It is of course assumed here that the Jewish boy also receives instruction elsewhere in Holy Scripture, or also in the Talmud or the Shulḥan Arukh. Thus, according to the report of the Talmud (Kiddushin p. 71a),[42] instruction on the nature of God was given to the priests *twice* a week.

Each lesson of religious instruction ought to be preceded by a short prayer, composed, moreover, in the Hebrew language; its content: enlightenment in the truths of the Law, God's help in grasping them and putting them into practice, and in general a fruitful conduct of the school instruction;[43]

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[39]Although the Jewish boy is almost never to be dispensed from the *actual instruction in the Law*. Maimonides, Hilkhot Talmud Torah 2:2.

[40]Translator: Lag Ba-Omer is the thirty-third day of the Omer count; "Ḥamishah Asar" is the fifteenth of Shevat (and/or of Av), minor festive days on which the traditional ḥeder held only half a day of instruction.

[41]Cf. my *Erb.*, year [number not printed], Discourse 21, p. 338, with Zohar תצא [*Ki Tetze*], p. 229: גלותא רביעאה, דור דרשיעים מלא נחשים דעקרין מלי דרבנן ודיינין לשקרא עלייהו אתמר היו צריה לראש וכו' ["The fourth exile, a generation of the wicked, full of serpents, who uproot the words of the Rabbis, and the judges who deal falsely — of them it is said: 'Her adversaries have become the head' (Lam. 1:5)," etc.]. See especially Zohar נשוא [*Naso*] (in the ר"מ [*Ra'aya Meheimna*], p. 125b): ויפן כה וכה וירא כי אין איש דישראל באלין רשיעיא ערב רב וכו' ["'He looked this way and that and saw that there was no man' (Exod. 2:12) of Israel among these wicked ones, the mixed multitude," etc.].

[42]Translator: BT Kiddushin 71a speaks of the Sages transmitting the divine Name to their disciples "once in a septennate, and some say twice in a septennate"; Plessner's "twice a week" and "to the priests" reflect his reading of the passage.

[43]I shall, if space permits, append to the present book a school prayer that I composed long ago and have used at the daily opening and closing of instruction.

individual insertions suited to local circumstances are left to the discretion of the competent teacher.

In religious instruction too, especially in the *lower* classes, the correct principle of the Talmud is to be observed (Pesachim 5):[44] Let the teacher take pains to be as *brief* as possible in his instruction. The teacher will therefore have to draw up for himself an extract from a complete textbook, and use it for children of younger age. What such an extract lacks in completeness, the [p. XXVI] teacher must try to make up in other ways. Above all, let him try to win the child's receptivity for the subject by weaving in stories and examples of religious truths that have actually been realized in life. In this way the pupil will learn — and let it also be pointed out to him clearly every time — that having religion is not a knowing but a doing and observing, and that the knowledge of religion is necessary only for the sake of the *religious life*, and stands to it as the means to the end. —

It is in general of great importance in religious instruction that one first acquaint the young with religion from its *attractive sides*.[45] For the Jewish religion is a *religion* in the proper sense, i.e., the direction it gives to human life corresponds exactly to the relation of the *weak mortal* to the *most perfect Being*, God; it therefore insists above all on the *fear of God*, and in its precepts it is a strict, but for that very reason beneficent, educator of its confessors. Through this fear of God it leads man gradually but also surely to his goal, and, since it pervades the whole of human life, it reminds him at every moment of the higher, the supersensible,[46] and is therefore a *religion* in the true [p. XXVII] sense. And yet a *youthful* mind, especially in our time, so tolerant and indulgent toward itself, could very easily be frightened away from religion if it were presented to him at once from that strict side (whose beneficent intentions the boy does not yet understand); and all the more so if quite different notions, opposed to Judaism, of gentler religions are instilled in him by other persons. Let one therefore show the boy the Divine first from its appealing side; let one lead him, as it were, through the picture galleries of his great ancestors; let one draw his attention to the sublime epochs of Israel in ancient times, at which the world marveled; let one depict to him glorious antiquity in all its distinguished forms and relations; let one bring before his soul in lively colors all the martial epochs, the pilgrimages to the Temple, the splendid worship in the Sanctuary, prophets, kings, generals, miracles, and so on, and so seek to transport him into a certain enthusiasm for the cause of Judaism. — Such pictures are furnished partly by biblical history itself, partly by later writings such as the Apocrypha and Josephus.[47] For such model portrayals of Judaism, and for stories, one may also use the two Talmuds, the smaller tractates in them such as

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[44]Translator: the dictum "One should always teach one's pupil by the shortest way" is at BT Pesachim 3b.

[45]Cf. my *Erbauungen* [Edifications], vol. 1, Discourse 5, pp. 15 and 76.

[46]האדם נפשו מן השמים וגופו מן הארץ לפיכך עשה אדם תורה ועושה רצון אביו שבשמים הרי הוא כבריות של מעלה ["Man — his soul is from heaven and his body from the earth; therefore, if a man performs the Torah and does the will of his Father in heaven, he is like the creatures above."] Cf. Sifrei האזינו [*Ha'azinu*] on Deut. 32:2.

[47]How these have been used and skillfully combined with the older documents is shown in the attractive little work *Helons Wallfahrt nach Jerusalem* [Helon's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem], by Dr. Strauss.

*Avot de-Rabbi Na- [p. XXVIII] than *and the like, the Midrashim, especially* Tanḥuma *(to which an index of the stories it contains is also appended). The* Menorat ha-Maor* has already woven such stories into its moral instruction; and such stories have also been collected elsewhere.[48] The story in itself, by its power of attraction, will produce nothing but a wholesome impression on the boy. Once the boy has first come to know religion from its pleasant side, a basis has been laid for teaching him later to know it also as a strict educator. For he will gladly, yielding, overlook its strict discipline, in the awareness that it can also reward him richly; and all the more so because one can later make it clear to him that God's discipline is only a beneficent, wholesome one, like that of a father toward his child; that the strict side of religion works even more beneficially upon the human soul than the pleasant ones; and that this is why Holy Scripture, especially the Psalms and Proverbs, so often calls happy those who are visited by this discipline. — —

A quite special — indeed the chief — task lies before the *present-day* religion teacher: to demonstrate the *compatibility* [p. XXIX] *of Judaism with the present* — a thing that is now so readily disputed. To this end *more recent* historical epochs must serve the teacher as evidence. Let him draw attention to the continued existence of a genuine Jewish religiosity in *those* countries that have long favored the Jews; let him recall the world-famous Jewish scholars who knew how to combine so beautifully the sciences, art, crafts, even the administration of state offices in Christian countries, with their Jewish religion; and let him hold these up emphatically to his pupils as a model, with the remark that they should not let themselves be led astray by contrary phenomena, which may rest on a lack of genuine religious concepts or on other weaknesses, errors and passions of men, but never on a solid conviction. — The teacher must accordingly make every effort that the pupil unite the teaching of religion with his *life*. All instruction in synagogues and schools unfortunately turns only on general morality[49] and philosophical principles — one might say on mere *natural law*.[50] Nowhere, as has already been remarked, is account taken of the individuality of the Jewish coreligionist, which is intimately bound up with the true theory of Judaism. The so-called confirmand is given no definite direction corresponding to the society to which he belongs in the narrower [p. XXX] sense. I can very well imagine that even very honest religion teachers often find themselves here in a most unpleasant embarrassment; but what can love of truth and earnest will not accomplish! And God is surely more than men, His teaching and truth more precious than silver and gold; and it may not be sold for such. — (Prov. 23:23.)

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[48]Cf. סדר הדורות [*Seder ha-Dorot*], p. 137; Wolf, *Bibl.* [*Bibliotheca Hebraea*], part 2, p. 1360; Zunz, *Gottesdienstl. Vortr.* [*Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*], p. 130, and the note to p. 141 ff. Cf. also ספר המעשה [*Sefer ha-Ma'aseh*], which contains 300 stories. The famous ר' רפאל די אגילאר [R. Raphael de Aguilar] also collected, in his ס' המעשים [*Sefer ha-Ma'asim*] (manuscript), all the stories of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds; likewise ר' שמואל בן עטר [R. Samuel ben Attar] and ר' יצחק ליאון [R. Isaac Leon] in מעשיות [*Ma'asiyyot*]. Cf. the German collection by L. Hurwitz, and the like.

[49]Cf. my preface to my *Erbauungen*, vol. 2.

[50]Translator: *Völkerrecht*, literally "law of nations," here in the sense of a merely universal, natural morality common to all peoples.

Such makeshift instruction forms neither practical nor theoretical Jews. Religion must act upon the whole Israelite; it must be a guide to the Israelite for the week, for the Sabbath, the festival, the fast, the morning, the evenings, house and house of prayer, the bodily enjoyments — in a word, for every circumstance of life, business by no means excepted; *and that alone is religion!* What does not reach into life in this way, what does not so unceasingly link the human in us to the Divine, does not deserve to be called religion, and will never raise true confessors for Judaism. —

Since, however, such religious instruction lays claim to the ceremonial, especially that which relates to daily life, it will be the teacher's duty, at least once a week, to expound the first part of the *Shulḥan Arukh* (אורח חיים [*Oraḥ Ḥayyim*]). For this the חיי אדם [*Ḥayyei Adam*], which appeared some years ago, would render very useful service.[51] Or the teacher could also draw up for himself an *extract*, insofar as it is suit- [p. XXXI] able for school instruction, from the said book in the German language. In this extract the blessings over enjoyments (ברכת הנהנין [*birkhot ha-nehenin*]), to which religion attaches great value, would especially have to find a place.[52]

Finally, if his instruction is to be fruitful, the exemplary, morally good and especially religious conduct and way of life of the teacher is an urgent necessity. His conduct must not stand in contradiction to his teaching, for on this contradiction all his teachings would founder and remain wasted effort.[53] The young learn more by observation than by the word, and have a sharply observing eye. And the teacher's teaching ability in religious respects, and the inner strength of his calling, are truly at his command only when teaching and conduct stand in harmony in his life. —

The name of the present book, דת משה ויהודית [*Dat Mosheh vi-Yehudit*], is, as already said in the prospectus, taken from the Mishnah (Ketubot 7:6). For the *Jewish* Law, or Tradition, has also, as is only natural, been drawn into the interest of this Mosaic religious teaching, insofar as it is suitable for such a schoolbook. For indeed! *more* — so I say with the High Priest (Yoma 7:1) — than I have communicated to you here stands written in the book [p. XXXII] of Judaism. — I call Tradition *the Jewish* Law inasmuch as, although — as is also already intimated in the poetic motto printed before this book — it arose from the beginning together with the written Law,[54] it was nevertheless only with the Babylonian exile, and indeed through the tribe of *Judah* and in particular the *Great Assembly* that arose at that time, preserved, specially developed, and in part also already written down.[55] And it is this more distinctive and more natural spirit of Judaism, as in general a

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[51] Translator: *Ḥayyei Adam* by R. Abraham Danzig (Vilna, 1810), a digest of the laws of *Oraḥ Ḥayyim*.

[52] I have long since arranged these systematically and worked them out in German, but not with the intention of publishing them.

[53] See Devarim Rabbah ch. 2.

[54] Cf. my open letter עדות לישראל [*Edut le-Yisrael*], or On the Authority of the Rabbinic Writings; Pirkei Avot 1:1; Sifra on בהר [*Behar*], beginning.

[55] See BT Gittin 88; Tanḥuma בראשית [*Bereshit*] and תזריע [*Tazria*] on וישקוד [*va-yishkod*], Dan. 9:14. Cf. especially BT Shabbat p. 88a: הדר קבלוה בימי אחשורוש ["they accepted it anew in the days of Ahasuerus"]. See also קדושת לוי [*Kedushat Levi*], in דרושים לחנוכה [Homilies for Hanukkah], p. 27a, and דרוש לפורים [Homily for Purim], p. 61a and b: קימו וקבלו, ממרדכי ואילך התחיל להאיר אור תורה שבע"פ ["They confirmed and accepted (Esth. 9:27): from Mordecai onward the light of the oral Torah began to shine"]. Whoever compares with this my *Reden* [Discourses], vol. 2, Discourse 5 (conclusion, last note), will easily see

more conscientious and less accommodating treatment of the cause of God, that may give the present catechism certain advantages over others, even though in the chief doctrines of the Mosaic faith it can and must only agree with its predecessors. An exhaustive, comprehensive treatment of the doctrines and truths presented is all the less to be expected from such a book for the [p. XXXIII] young, since our Sages already teach (Pesachim 5 and Sifrei on Deut. 32:2):[56] In instructing pupils one should use the shortest way, and impart to them at first only general principles (כללים כללים [*kelalim kelalim*]).[57] —

The arrangement of this book in questions and answers will perhaps now be approved by only a few; for people want, after all, to be new again; and if they cannot be so in essentials, they want at least to assert this novelty in external things, especially in method. To me that old custom of *catechizing* seemed not only expedient, but even necessary for the greater number of teachers of the young. For the rest, the educated teacher need not bind himself strictly to the form of the present book, and the manner in which he wishes to treat the material presented here remains left to him.[58]

[p. XXXIV] And so let this work, with its merits and defects, go forth to the public! Far from failing to recognize such defects in his work, the author looks forward gratefully in advance to every *just* criticism; and all the more so because, as has already been remarked, he never thought of publishing this work, and only an urgent demand, especially in recent times, has wrung it from him. But the more he has, precisely for this reason, gathered together in hasty haste the scattered material — even if improved and enlarged often over a series of years — without being able to apply the last and most perfect polish, the more readily must he now await *what* the insight of outside critics, and especially of experienced teachers of the young, will find in it to object to and to improve. And so let this *Introduction* also be concluded with that sentence of our holy Mishnah (Demai 3:1):

גובין סתם ומחלקין סתם והרוצה לתקן יתקן!

> "Gathered without specification! Distributed without specification! And whoever wishes to correct, let him correct!"

Berlin, in the week of Atonement 5599.
S. Plessner.

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how greatly note 1 in the prospectus of the present book was misunderstood by the editor of the *Judenzeitung*, vol. 2, no. 106, and how an opinion was to be forced upon me that, as all who know me more closely will know, could never have entered my mind. —

[56] Translator: see note c above (BT Pesachim 3b).

[57] Cf. also Maimonides, Hilkhot Talmud Torah 1:11; BT Avodah Zarah p. 19; and BT Kiddushin 30.

[58] Much that is for teachers, pupils, and public and domestic education — certainly valuable, if only because of the interesting literary sources used — is contained in scattered places in my discourses, partly printed, e.g., vol. 1, Discourse 4, Discourse 5, p. 21; vol. 2, Discourse 7; as well as in those still unprinted: "*The Ill-Bred Children*," *Ḥayyei Sarah* 5585; "*The Israelite School Institutions*," delivered on 8 Sivan 5587; "*A Mother's Blessing Builds the House*," on the education of girls, 5592; "*Judaism and Cultured Education*," on Sabbath *Shemot* 5595; "*The Virtue Most Pleasing to God and Men*," on Sabbath *Va-yera* 5597, on Gen. 18:19; "*The Indifferent Children*," on Sabbath *Pinḥas* 5597; "*Israelite Family Life*," on Sabbath *Balak* 5598.

[p. —] **Register**

of already published older and newer religious books.[59]

לקח טוב [*Lekaḥ Tov*] (Hebr.) by Abraham Jagel, several editions, the first Venice 1542, most recently Warsaw 5562 (1802).[60][61]

גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*] (Hebr.) by Hartwig Wessely (ר' נפתלי הירץ ויזל [R. Naphtali Herz Wessely]), Amsterdam 5525.

יסודי הדת [*Yesodei ha-Dat*] (Hebr. and German) by Ben Sev, Vienna 1806 (several editions).[62]

אמרי שפר [*Imrei Shefer*] (Hebr. and German) by Herz Homberg, Vienna 1808.

בני ציון [*Benei Tsiyyon*] by the same, Vienna 1810.

בן יקיר [*Ben Yakkir*] by the same, Vienna 1814 and 1826.

[p. XXXVI] דת ישראל [*Dat Yisrael*] (two small volumes) by Peter Beer, Prague 1810 and 1811. (By the same, *Handbuch der mosaischen Religion für Studirende* etc., Prague 1818 and 1821.)

יסודי הלימוד [*Yesodei ha-Limmud*] etc., by J. Wolff, G. Salomon and M. Fraenkel, Dessau 1810.

אלומי יוסף [*Alummei Yosef*] by J. Johlsohn, Frankfurt a. M. 1814, 1819, and Vienna 1824.

אמונת ישראל [*Emunat Yisrael*] by A. H. Bock, Berlin 1814.

עדות ה' [*Edut Adonai*] by Dr. Klei, Berlin 1814.

שרשי אמונה [*Shorshei Emunah*] (Hebr.) by Salomon Cohen, London 1814 (translated into English).

מחנה לוי [*Maḥaneh Levi*] etc., by Beer Fraenk, Prague 1816.

Catechismus by Julius Schoenborn, Cracow 1819.

דורש טוב [*Doresh Tov*] (Hebr.) by Abraham Buchner, Warsaw 1823.

יסודי הדת ומוסר השכל [*Yesodei ha-Dat u-Musar ha-Sekhel*] (Hebr.) by the same, Warsaw 1826.

אמונת ישראל [*Emunat Yisrael*] by Naphtali Benedikt, Vienna 1824.

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[59] The above list contains only those religious textbooks and manuals that have become known to the author; any kind communication of others still extant, and especially of more important ones not yet in the above list, will be very welcome to the author.

[60] In the מאסף [*Ha-Me'assef*] 5515, p. 28, M. Feibelmann of Braunschweig announced an edition of it with a German translation, and a specimen is also appended there. Cf. especially "*Einige Worte über mein Religionsbuch*" [A Few Words on My Religious Textbook], Mainz 1825, by Dr. A. A. Wolff, p. 11, note 2.

[61] Translator: Jagel's catechism *Lekaḥ Tov* was first printed at Venice in 1595; "1542" is evidently an error. The year "5515" in the following note cannot be right either, since *Ha-Me'assef* began appearing only in 5544 (1783/84).

[62] Translator: Judah Leib Ben-Ze'ev (1764–1811).

תורת ישראל [*Torat Yisrael*], *Die Lehre der Israelit. Religion*, by Dr. Abr. Alexander Wolff, Mainz 1825. Cf. also his little work already mentioned: *Einige Worte* etc.

Gedankensammlung etc., by J. M. Lilienfeld, Berlin 1825.

Lehrbuch der mosaischen Religion by Dr. Alexander Behr, Munich 1826.

מורה לתורה [*Moreh la-Torah*] and מורה למורים [*Moreh la-Morim*], A. Büdinger, Cassel 1830.

יסודי התורה [*Yesodei ha-Torah*] by Dr. S. Herxheimer, Hannoversch-Münden 1831 and Bernburg 1836.

תורת ה' תמימה [*Torat Adonai Temimah*] by P. Hurwitz,[63] Berlin 1832.

[p. XXXVII] *Grundlage zu Catechisationen* by Dr. J. L. Saalschütz, Vienna 1833.[64]

Erklärung der Zehngebote by Juda ben Seb Löb, and by the same: *Religionsbuch für die jüdische Jugend* etc., Darmstadt 1834.

Der Lebensbaum etc., by H. Stern, Würzburg 1834.

Die mosaische Religionslehre by Abraham Grünthal, Breslau 1836.

Vollständige Confirmationshandlungen by S. Lippmanssohn, Neukirchen 1836.

Précis élémentaire d'instruction religieuse et morale, by Elie Halévy, Hebr. and French, Paris 1837.

Cathéchisme judaïque en hébreu, en allemand et en français, by L. M. Lambert, Paris 1837.

Handbooks and manuals:

דברי חכמה ומוסר [*Divrei Ḥokhmah u-Musar*] (12 sections) in מאסף [*Ha-Me'assef*] תקמ"ו [5546], p. 131 ff.

יסוד חנוך נערים [*Yesod Ḥinnukh Ne'arim*] etc. (8 sections) by M. Levis, Leipzig 1790.

Katechismus der jüdischen Religion by S. J. Cohn, Hamburg 1811 (translated into Danish 1812).

תורת אמונת בית ישראל [*Torat Emunat Beit Yisrael*] (Hebr. and German) by Dr. Heinemann, Cassel 1812.

מצות דת ישראל [*Mitsvot Dat Yisrael*] and תורת דת ישראל [*Torat Dat Yisrael*] by the same, Berlin 1829 and 1830.

Leitfaden beim Unterrichte in der mosaischen Religion by A. Arnheim, Glogau 1829.

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[63]The two following volumes are ready for the press.

[64]Translator: this page is misnumbered "XXXV" in the original; it stands between pages XXXVI and XXXVIII.

Leitfaden beim Unterrichte in der israelitischen Religion by H. Miro, Breslau 1834.

Auswahl von Bibelsprüchen etc., *zum Gebrauche [p. XXXVIII] beim Religionsunterrichte*, by J. Maier, Frankfurt a. M. 1830.[65]

Afterword

Proceeding from the excellent principle (Jerusalem Talmud, Ḥagigah ch. 1)[66] that is placed in God's mouth: הלואי אותי עזבו ותורתי שמרו ["Would that they had forsaken Me and kept My Torah"], and from the anxious caution that even Maimonides enjoins regarding the *attributes* of God — which were communicated even to Moses only late and in few words — this religious textbook has treated God and His attributes only sparingly, but has described the duties all the more fully; whereas others, precisely so as not to have to dwell long on these, *philosophize* a great deal *about God*. — Several reasons also moved me to be far more sparing than my predecessors in citing *Bible verses* and other proofs. How *rationalism* and *un-Judaism*, too, can be supported with forcibly dragged-in Bible passages, and how the Holy can be misused, is only too well known. Genuine Judaism sanctions itself; and the spurious is not washed clean by the whole of biblical literature. —

[p. 1] First Section

Man, or Natural Religion and the Primordial Revelation

עשרים ושׁשׁה דורות קדמה דרך ארץ את התורה

> "Twenty-six generations did proper conduct (*derekh erets*) precede the Torah." (Leviticus Rabbah 9)

1. *What was God's chief purpose in the Creation?*

To make the noblest of His earthly creatures, man, happy.

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[65] As aids in religious instruction I further recommend R. J. Fürstenthal's מאסף [*Ha-Me'assef*], Breslau 1829, pp. 57–72. — For instruction on the civic duties of the Israelite, *Das Judenthum in staatsbürgerlicher Beziehung* [Judaism in Its Civic Relations] (also in Hebrew under the title אהבת המלך [*Ahavat ha-Melekh*]) by Rabbi A. L. Landau, Breslau 1832, and in part also the little book תרומת מלך [*Terumat Melekh*] by B. Fränkel, Breslau 1833, should render very good service. — For expounding the הל' תפילין [Laws of Tefillin] in preparing Jewish boys for their thirteenth birthday celebration, I recommend for good use the little book גרסא דינקותא [*Girsa de-Yankuta*] by B. B. Meseritz, Breslau 1811, but especially the more complete little work צפירת תפארה [*Tsefirat Tif'arah*] by H. M. Copenhagen, Breslau 1833. For the teacher, however, the work to be recommended on this subject is מאמר גאולת מצרים ומצות תפילין [*Ma'amar Ge'ulat Mitsrayim u-Mitsvat Tefillin*] by Salomon Pappenheim (published after his death by the Jewish orphanage in Breslau), Breslau 1815.

[66] Translator: JT Ḥagigah 1:7 (76c).

2. ***How did God show this?***

By creating man *last*, and moreover in *His image*, for *eternal life*, as *ruler* of the whole earth, and by assigning him *Paradise* as his dwelling place.

3. ***What, accordingly, will happiness be?***

The state of a perfect contentment, the enjoyment of which, however, is grounded more in the soul itself than in the objects of the senses outside it.

4. ***Can we, too, attain such a state already on earth?***

[p. 2] Yes indeed;[67] even though the purest happiness awaits us only in another life.

5. ***Does man bring that state with him into the world, or must he first acquire it here below?***

He must first acquire it.

6. ***By what means does he acquire it?***

Through virtue and Religion.

7. ***What is virtue?***

A strength of spirit that does not let itself be determined in its strivings by passion, but lets itself be guided by reason and conscience.

8. ***What is reason?***

A natural awareness dwelling within us of good and evil, of true and false.

9. ***What is conscience?***

A very tender and noble impulse to do good and to avoid evil; or the true divine spark within us, the true soul,[68] which encourages us to good, warns against evil, gladdens us after good actions and troubles us after evil ones.

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[67] To this state the biblical expressions נעם [*no'am*, "pleasantness"] and שלום [*shalom*, "peace"] allude; here also belongs Zech. 3:7, ונתתי לך וכו' ["and I will give thee," etc.], and the Talmudic עולמך תראה בחייך ["mayest thou see thy world in thy lifetime"], BT Berakhot 16b. [Translator: The saying is found at BT Berakhot 17a.] Compare the Introduction to the present textbook, p. 26 [i.e., XXVI], note 2. —

[68] The נשמה [*neshamah*] is also often called רוח [*ruah*], sometimes even simply נפש [*nefesh*] (in the Talmud יצר טוב [*yetser tov*, the good inclination]). Since knowledge of the soul and of oneself is the basis of all knowledge and worship of God, the teacher will, at the above point, have to explain to the pupil the *soul*, and in particular its fivefold Hebrew designations (Genesis Rabbah ch. 14, end), with which that splendid passage (BT Berakhot 10a) about the five qualities that the soul has in common with God is surely also connected — as I demonstrated in my זהרי חמה [Translator: Reading of this Hebrew title uncertain in the scan (apparently *Zohorei Ḥammah*, "Radiance of the Sun"); presumably one of Plessner's own Hebrew writings.] — Only the correct understanding of that true human soul is the key to the correct understanding of prophecy and of a great many other passages of the Bible. One may think here also of the Talmudic מזלייהו חזו ["their *mazal* saw"], [Translator: BT Megillah 3a, "although they did not see, their *mazal* (guardian star/angel) saw."] and especially of the passage הקב"ה אומר למלאך והמלאך לכרוב וכו' לנשמה וכו' לאדם ["The Holy One, blessed be He, speaks to the angel, and the angel to the cherub, etc., to the soul, etc., to man"]. This נשמה is man's angel, his *mazal*; it rejoices in his piety, supports him in it, mourns over his degradation (Isa. 57:18; Job 14:22),

[p. 3] **10.** ***Is such virtuousness already Religion?***

No; it is rather right conduct toward *men* — and even here only in so far as reason perceives what is right — than toward God; but it is a preparation for Religion (Prov. 8:25).

11. ***What, then, is Religion?***

The knowledge and worship of the Supreme Being; and it is at the same time the perfection of virtue and morality.

12. ***Must one, then, have Religion in order to be truly virtuous?***

Certainly; without Religion our virtue can only be very imperfect and often degenerates into vice.

13. ***But what does the expression "Religion"*** **originally** ***mean?***

It arose partly from a Latin verb which means *to bind, to fetter* (*religare*), and partly from one which means as much as *to go back, to come back, to reflect, to turn inward* (*religere*).

14. ***What expression does the Hebrew language have for Religion?***

[p. 4] It has two expressions corresponding entirely to that original concept.

15. ***What are they?***

The one is מוסר [*musar*] (from יסר = אסר), *bond, fetter*;[69] the other is תשובה [*teshuvah*], *return, reflection*. —

16. ***But how is the usual explanation as knowledge and worship of God connected with these concepts?***

In so far as the powers of the soul within us, which by nature incline to *unrestraint* and *caprice*, are, through the knowledge and worship of a higher Master, as it were *bridled* and *directed back* within their bounds. —

17. ***How does Scripture express itself about that natural inclination to unrestraint?***

כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעריו

> "The imagination of the human heart is evil from its youth on." (Gen. 8:21)

18. ***But how do we arrive at the knowledge and worship of God, or at Religion?***

First by the natural way, or through ourselves: we recognize the Creator from His works and feel ourselves summoned to worship Him; and then through an actual, immediate Revelation of God.

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and will one day bear witness against him (BT Ta'anit 11; BT Hagigah 16). Knowing the extensive function of this power of the soul far less than ancient Egypt and Greece did, our German language calls it simply *conscience* (*Gewissen*), as it were confusing it with the ordinary intellectual faculty, with which it is only closely connected.

[69] The general name יראת ה' [*yir'at Adonai*, fear of the Lord] is closely connected with this; hence (Prov. 15:33) יראת ה' מוסר חכמה ["the fear of the Lord is the discipline of wisdom"], and also ch. 1:7.

19. ***What is Religion in the former sense called?***

A Religion drawn from nature, a natural Religion.

[p. 5] **20.** ***What is to be thought of this Religion?***

It is important when the actual, or revealed, Religion stands beside it, but without the latter it is precarious.

21. ***Why so?***

Because reason without higher guidance can very easily err and very soon be led astray into superstition and idolatry; of which antiquity indeed supplies numerous examples.

22. ***But beside the true and definite Revelation it is supposed to be important?***

Certainly; for Revelation itself, or Holy Scripture, directs us in many passages to recognize the Creator and His exalted attributes from the Creation.

23. ***But was such a definite Revelation always present?***

Yes indeed; in every age God revealed Himself to individual better men who were worthy of His nearness, and these were to communicate such Revelation to their contemporaries and descendants.

24. ***Name me some of these chosen ones.***

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; in part also Job and his friends.

25. ***What is the most correct name for this Revelation?***

To distinguish it from the later one, it is called the *primordial Revelation* to the human race.

26. ***How does Holy Scripture express itself about the necessity of a divine Revelation?***

בטח אל ה' בכל לבך ואל בינתך אל תשען

"Trust in God with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding." [Prov. 3:5]

[p. 6]

באין חזון יפרע עם ושמר תורה אשרהו

"Without revelation a people runs wild; he who keeps the Law, happy is he!" (Prov. 29:18)

It is also said in the Book of Wisdom, ch. 9: "*The thoughts of men are precarious ... We hardly hit upon what is on earth, let alone what is in heaven. Who could have learned Thy counsel, O God, hadst Thou not sent down Thy spirit from on high, through which we first learned what it means to do right, what is pleasing to Thee, and what makes happy.*"

27. ***What, then, follows from this?***

That Revelation is the actual purpose of the Creation; for it brings us precisely the happiness that God intended in the Creation.[70]

28. ***But in what way does Revelation make so happy?***

It teaches us to do what is truly right in every respect; it truly distinguishes the true from the false, the seemly from the unseemly; and it teaches in the most definite and reliable way the existence of that which, for our peace of mind, we only dimly sense, and often do not sense at all, so that in the most brilliant circumstances we are apt to feel deeply unhappy.

29. ***How do we best compare natural Religion with the actually revealed knowledge and worship of God?***

The former with the first rudiments of a science, the latter with the science itself; the former with the rules of the [p. 7] earliest upbringing, the latter with the means of education in the most exalted and comprehensive sense of the word.

30. ***But do natural Religion, or the Religion of reason, and revealed Religion perhaps contradict each other?***

No; unless reason had already gone astray and become estranged from the divine.

31. ***How does Holy Scripture express itself on this?***

ישרים דרכי ה' וצדקים ילכו בם ופשעים יכשלו בם

> "Straight are the ways of the Lord; the righteous walk in them, transgressors stumble on them." (Hos. 14:10)

מעוז לתם דרך ה' ומחתה לפעלי און

> "A support for the innocent is the way of the Lord, but a terror for evildoers." (Prov. 10:29)

אנשי רע לא יבינו משפט ומבקשי ה' יבינו כל

> "Evil men do not understand what is right; those who seek God understand everything." (Prov. 28:5)

32. ***But what if in revealed Religion there occur many strange teachings and precepts incomprehensible to reason?***

This very thing proves the superiority of Revelation and its truly divine origin, since precisely herein those prophetic words are confirmed:

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[70] One may think of the teaching of our Sages, בראשית בשביל תורה שנקראת ראשית ["'In the beginning' — for the sake of the Torah, which is called 'beginning'"], especially the passage BT Shabbat 88[a] on Ps. 76:9.

כי לא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם ולא דרכיכם דרכי נאם ה' כי גבהו שמים מארץ כן גבהו דרכי מדרכיכם ומחשבתי ממחשבתיכם

> "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways, saith the Lord. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are My ways above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8–9)

[p. 8] Second Section

The Israelite, or the Perfect Revelation in the Mosaic Law

מגיד דבריו ליעקב חקיו ומשפטיו לישראל

> "He declareth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel." (Ps. 147:19)

33. ***In what does the Religion revealed to us consist?***

In the number of truths and precepts that God made known to us.

34. ***What does the name "revealed Religion" presuppose?***

That this Religion had remained a secret to mankind until the time of its communication.

35. ***Cite me a proof-text on this from Revelation itself!***

ואהיה אצלו אמון ואהיה שעשעים יום יום משחקת לפניו בכל עת משחקת בתבל ארצו ושעשעי את בני אדם

> "I was brought up with Him, a delight day by day, playing before Him at all times. Now I rejoice in His earthly world, and have my delight with the sons of Adam."[71] (Prov. 8:30–31)

[p. 9] **36.** ***But in these passages it is wisdom, and not the Law, that is depicted?***

The Law is here represented under the figure of wisdom; for the Law is wisdom, and whoever lives according to it is a wise man.

37. ***Give me proofs!***

ושמרתם ועשיתם כי היא חכמתכם ובינתכם

> "Ye shall observe and do them, for this is your wisdom and understanding." (Deut. 4:6)[72]

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[71] Hence the expression חמדה גנוזה [*hemdah genuzah*, "hidden treasure"] (BT Shabbat 89a). Compare the excellent *openings* of the *piyyut* (on the two days of the Feast of Weeks) to the *piyyutim* on the Ten Commandments.

[72] Translator: Plessner's text prints "3 Mos. 4, 6" (Lev.); the verse is Deut. 4:6.

יראת ה' היא חכמה

"The fear of God is wisdom." (Job 28:28)

בדבר ה' מאסו וחכמת מה להם

"They despise God's word; what wisdom can they have?"[73] (Jer. 8:9)

38. ***Through whom did God communicate this Revelation to us?***

Through Moses, the son of Amram, of the tribe of Levi.

39. ***But He had already revealed Himself earlier?***

The Revelation to the first men, and in particular to the patriarchs, was not yet so perfect; they received only certain *individual* teachings and precepts, as their needs at the time required.

40. ***Explain yourself more fully on this!***

Noah knew clean and unclean animals; he also received the so-called *seven commandments* (שבע מצות בני נח [the seven commandments of the children of Noah]); Abraham gave the tithe and received the law of circumcision, and God expresses Himself about him:

[p. 10]

עקב אשר שמע אברהם בקלי וישמר משמרתי מצותי חקותי ותורתי

"Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, commandments, statutes and teachings." (Gen. 26:5)

41. ***But Abraham is said to have known the whole Law already?***

He could well have known it, for God Himself calls him a prophet (Gen. 20:7); and on account of his *unconditional faith* in God he was also capable of keeping the *whole Law*.[74]

42. ***In what, then, does the Revelation through Moses differ from the earlier ones?***

Earlier God revealed Himself only to individuals, through Moses to a whole people; earlier only in quiet, through Moses publicly and aloud; earlier mostly through precepts that were evident to reason alone, through Moses also through such as are not always comprehensible to reason; earlier through laws alone, through Moses both in the laws themselves and at the same time through their *interpretation*, or a more exact, *more intimate communication* about them, which was not to be propagated in writing, but only orally, in an equally intimate manner, from teachers to pupils.

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[73]Compare especially Baruch 3:37, Sirach ch. 24, and the Midrash תנא [*Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu*] ch. 11: ישראל נקראים חכמים בעת שהם עושים את התורה ואת המצות ["Israel are called wise when they do the Torah and the commandments"].

[74]Compare my *Erbauungen* [*Edifications*], vol. 2, sermon 17; my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 3 and 321; also my exegetical Appendix to the Apocrypha, p. 106.

43. ***How does God express the difference between the two Revelations?***

וארא אל אברהם אל יצחק ואל יעקב ושמי ה' לא נודעתי להם

> "I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob under (the name) אל שדי [*El Shaddai*], but by the name ה' I did not make Myself known to them." (Exod. 6:3)

[p. 11] **44.** ***What, then, is the sense of this passage?***

Since the name שדי [*Shaddai*] expresses the power of divine *self-limitation*, whereas the other, *true name* of God expresses His very *true essence* as infinite and *unlimited*,[75] the sense is: God *limited* His Revelation to the patriarchs, and communicated Himself *perfectly*[76] only through Moses.

45. ***With what did God open His*** **legislation** ***through Moses?***

With the precept of the Feast of Passover (קרבן פסח [the Passover offering]); with this the servitude of Israel in Egypt came to an end, and it was consecrated to the nobler service of God.

46. ***How many precepts in all did God give in His Law?***

613; namely 248 positive commandments and 365 prohibitions.

47. ***Are all of these still to be practised?***

At present only those that are not strictly bound to the Promised Land and to the Temple.

48. ***But why is there need of so many precepts? Would not faith in God and the observance of a small number of precepts have sufficed for the Israelite worship of God?***

No; for the Religion of Moses was to form a people of peoples, a holy kingdom of priests, whose [p. 12] circumstances of life *all* had to be permeated by Religion and bear the stamp of holiness; and precisely this comprehensive religiosity was to distinguish Israel from the heathens, who observed only a small number of teachings of reason.[77]

49. ***But is not so great a number of commandments burdensome?***

It is no burden, if one reckons up the great advantages that the one who observes them gains.[78] See Zohar יתרו [*Yitro*], p. 82b.

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[75] בלתי בעל תכלית, אין סוף ["without limit, infinite"]. — Compare that Mishnah: והתקינו שיהא אדם שואל את שלום חבירו בשם ["and they ordained that a person should greet his fellow with the Name"], [Translator: Mishnah Berakhot 9:5.] which was done to refute those who denied the *infinity* [of God]. See my *Erbauungen*, vol. 1, sermon 14, p. 221; my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 31, note.

[76] See, however, BT Rosh Hashanah 21[b].

[77] On this rests the blessing formula אשר קדשנו במצותיו ["who hath sanctified us by His commandments"].

[78] Compare on this Psalm 119, and גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], [Translator: *Gan Na'ul*, the treatise on Hebrew synonyms by Naphtali Herz Wessely (1725–1805).] part 1, section 9.

50. ***But where did God first make Himself known publicly as the Lawgiver of Israel?***

In the Arabian desert, on Mount Sinai.

51. ***Why did God not communicate*** **all** ***the precepts to Moses so publicly?***

It was not necessary; for once God had spoken publicly with Moses a single time, his credibility was acknowledged also for *those* teachings which he later received in quiet and communicated alone.

52. ***How does Holy Scripture express itself on this?***

"Behold, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe in thee for ever." (Exod. 19:9)

53. ***What is meant by "also in thee"?***

That is as much as to say: even when thou alone wilt communicate laws to the people in My name.

54. ***Which precepts did God reveal on Sinai in that famous appearance?***

The Ten Commandments (עשרת הדברות or עשרת הדברים).

[p. 13] **55.** ***Why may He have revealed the Ten Commandments first of all?***

Because they are, as it were, the epitome of the whole Law.[79] The first half of them contains the chief duties toward God, the other the chief duties toward our fellow men.

Addenda and Preliminary Notes

On page 3, question 11. The revealed Law forms the true hero of virtue and alone makes one worthy of the predicates צדיק, חסיד, ישר, נאמן [faithful, upright, pious, righteous] (Baraita קנין תורה [*Kinyan Torah*] 1).[80] Compare also Exodus Rabbah ch. 36: אין מוסר אלא דברי תורה ["there is no *musar* but the words of the Torah"]. See also my *Erbauungen*, vol. 2, p. 213.

On p. 17, question 67. Here attention should be drawn to the prohibitions against pronouncing the four-letter Name of God according to its letters, or erasing one of the divine names.

On p. 21, note 1. Here probably also belong the well-known words of that Sabbath table hymn: אל תוך בתיכם להניח ברכה ["to rest a blessing within your houses"]; hence the following trustworthy admonition: בכל מושבתיכם לא תעשו מלאכה וכו' ["in all your dwellings ye shall do no work," etc.]; for if the day of rest brings its own blessing with it, we need have all the less hesitation in letting business and trade rest.

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[79] Compare Zohar יתרו [*Yitro*], p. 82b: עשר אמירן דבהו תליין כל פקודין ["ten utterances on which all the commandments depend"]. Hence Rashi rightly on Exod. 24:12. Especially the commentary on the Song of Songs ascribed to רס"ג [R. Saadiah Gaon]. —

[80] Translator: The Baraita on the acquisition of Torah, printed as Pirkei Avot ch. 6; see Pirkei Avot 6:1.

Correction. P. 2, question 6, read: *erwirbt er ihn* ["does he acquire it"]. P. 4, question 19, read: *erstern* instead of *ernstern*.

[p. 14] Third Section

The Ten Commandments

עלתני אל על כל בנור, כי בעבורי בחורב תתה קול. — ! (שופרות ליום ב' של ר"ה)

"Exalt me, O God, above all …; for for my sake Thou didst give forth Thy voice at Horeb! — " (Shofarot for the second day of Rosh Hashanah)[81]

56. ***How does the first commandment[82] of the Ten Commandments read?***

אנכי ה' אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים

"I am the Eternal, thy God, who brought thee out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." [Exod. 20:2]

57. ***What does this commandment command?***

That we should acknowledge God as *our* God, as Him who in a time of distress deemed us worthy of a special attention; as our supernatural *Protector*;[83] and for that very reason should acknowledge His precepts here opened to us as our duties. —

58. ***Why does God here call Himself not the Creator, but the Redeemer from Egypt?***

[p. 15] Because, in part, God was already known as Creator; in part, because the Exodus from Egypt was a quite recent, undeniable[84] proof of divine wonder-working power, known to all of them; but above all because the redemption from Egypt laid on them the obligation to *receive the Law*, whereas the Creation obliged them only to the natural commandments incumbent on the whole world. —

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[81] Translator: The Hebrew motto, a line from a *piyyut* in the *Shofarot* section of the Musaf service, is printed as transcribed; its wording (esp. בנור) is uncertain and the translation tentative.

[82] That the first verse of the Ten Commandments is really a *commandment*, see in the famous דרוש [sermon] of the רמב"ן [Naḥmanides] (delivered at Saragossa) [Translator: Naḥmanides' sermon *Torat ha-Shem Temimah*, delivered in Saragossa.] the passage: והחכמי גוים נבהלים וכו' ["and the wise men of the nations are confounded," etc.]. See also his commentary on the Pentateuch, and בחיי [Baḥya] on this passage.

[83] On the expression אלקי ישראל ["God of Israel"] compare Wessely's very excellent treatise in the רוח חן [*Ruaḥ Ḥen*] on the Book of Wisdom 15:1. — (See also his גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], part 1, 8, 6. Especially his exposition of the first commandment there, section 10, ch. 2.)

[84] Cf. *Kuzari* 1:84, and Muscato on 3:11.

59. ***How does the second commandment read?***

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

> "You shall have no other gods before my face; you shall make for yourself no image or other likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or on the earth below, or in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them and not serve them, for I the Eternal your God am a zealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, namely of those who hate me; and showing grace to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments." [Exod. 20:3–6]

60. ***What does this commandment actually forbid?***

It forbids every kind of idolatry, that is, setting any being whatsoever — from the angel down to the creatures of the abyss — at God's side and worshipping it.

61. ***But how can God punish the sin of the parents upon the children, especially since it says elsewhere in the Law (Deut. 24:16): Parents shall not die for the children, nor children for the parents?***

1. Here, too, it is not a question of dying, but of a [p. 16] gradual diminishing and reckoning-off of the sin, which happened precisely so that God would not have to wipe out the guilt of sin all at once through death.[85]

2. If God lets descendants enjoy the merits of their fathers down to the thousandth generation, then they cannot find it unfair to help bear the burden of their parents' transgressions as well, down to the fourth generation, so that it should not crush them entirely.

3. This punishment, however, is decreed only upon such descendants as follow in the footsteps of their guilt-stained forebears.

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[85]This emerges more clearly in Exod. 34:7 and Num. 14:18, where the פוקד עון וכו׳ ["visiting iniquity," etc.] is counted among God's attributes of love, and where it says expressly: "he does not cleanse away (does not sweep away the sin all at once) but reckons it off *gradually*" (פקד, BT Avodah Zarah fol. 5, on Amos 3:2), [Translator: The passage on Amos 3:2 (God exacts punishment from Israel "little by little") is at BT Avodah Zarah 4a. "Apokr. Anh." is presumably the appendix to Plessner's own work on the Apocrypha.] etc. See my *Apokr. Anh.*, pp. 110–112. See also, besides the proofs given there, the following remarkable proof-passages: Sifrei on Num. 15:31. — Bamidbar Rabbah ch. 11, p. 184, on ישא; especially the Supplements to the Zohar, Part 2, Supplement 7. — ! — Also *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:54; Pesikta Zutarta on מצות; also the מפרש [commentator] on the Maḥzor, on the Seliḥah אל ארך אפים אתה. Cf. Rashi on Exod. 32, and Abarbanel there on 34:7. Zohar שלח 161b, and Recanati there. See also עשרה מאמרות [*Asarah Ma'amarot*], section אם כל חי, and Zohar בלק 199b. Cf. further the Seliḥah אנך הנה on the fifth day of penitence.

62. ***What else might be forbidden in this second commandment?***

All fear, and especially all idolatrous fear, to which our superstition so readily attaches itself — merely because earlier generations believed in and feared such things, or because fear of them was instilled in us in childhood.

63. ***Cite me a passage of the Bible on this.***

"Do not turn to the sorcerers and soothsayers." (Lev. 19:31.) "Do not learn the way of the heathen, and [p. 17] then you need not fear the signs of the heavens." (Jer. 10:2.)[86]

64. ***How does the third commandment read?***

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

> "You shall not utter the name of the Eternal your God falsely, for God will not leave unpunished him who utters his name falsely." [Exod. 20:7]

65. ***What does this commandment forbid?***

It forbids perjury. We must not affirm any untruth by the name of God.

66. ***How does false swearing (*שבועת שקר*) differ from vain swearing (*שבועת שוא*)?***

The false oath misuses the divine name on some occasion or other; the vain oath is entirely without cause, and a simple Yes or No could take its place.

67. ***Why is the expression*** לא תשא ***["you shall not take up"] used here, and not the more definite*** לא תשבע ***["you shall not swear"]?***

Because what is forbidden here is the vain utterance of God's name in general. Even a thoughtless prayer, indeed even an unnecessary blessing (BT Berakhot 33a), is regarded as a vain oath.

68. ***But the lawful oath is surely permitted?***

Certainly, when we are called upon to take it by the authorities; but even so we must not take an oath, however lawful, lightly and without a strict self-examination beforehand; and a small loss, if we can in any way bear it, is always preferable to an oath, however lawful.[87]

[p. 18] **69.** ***What does the addition mean: the Lord will not leave unpunished, etc.?***

However long it may take, the false swearer nonetheless does not escape the punishment of God.

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[86] Translator: Printed as "Jeremia 10, 1"; the verse is Jer. 10:2.

[87] For even with the lawful oath it is a very grave matter: one is to name the name of God, at whose utterance one in a certain sense sets all the worlds in motion (compare closely שערי אורה [*Sha'arei Orah*], Gate 5, fol. 49a and b — ! —), for the sake of our temporal, often quite insignificant affairs! Not to speak of doing so in order to draw unlawful gain! A false oath is the most terrible of sins already in that it is at the same time a חלול השם [profanation of the Name]; it never finds forgiveness and can root out whole families. (Sifrei and Tanḥuma.) An indelible curse rests upon gains that we acquire by it, and the authorities too, when it comes to light, know how to punish it in the most terrible manner.

70. ***What else is connected with this subject?***

Vows that one does not pay, or lets stand unpaid for a long time.

71. ***Give me a proof-passage for this.***

"When you make a vow, do not delay to pay it, for the Eternal will require it of you, and the sin will cling to you nonetheless." (Deut. 23[:22]. Eccl. 5[:3].)

72. ***How does the fourth commandment read?***

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

> "Remember the day of rest, to hallow it. Six days you may labor and do all your business. But the seventh day is a day of rest to the Eternal your God; on it you shall do no business of any kind, neither you, nor your son or your daughter, your manservant or your maidservant, your cattle, or your stranger who is within your gates; for in six days God created heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the day of rest and hallowed it." [Exod. 20:8–11]

73. ***What does this commandment command?***

That we are to distinguish the day of rest from the other days of the week by refraining from our everyday occupations.

74. ***Should we spend it in idle leisure?***

No; this day is appointed for occupations of a higher kind, or for the needs of our immortal soul, for which we have less time and leisure on the working days. (See Midrash [Tehillim] on Ps. 119:97. —)

75. ***What would such higher occupations be?***

They consist in praying, in reading and hearing the divine Word, and in imparting it to those who belong to us; also in reflecting on our moral and religious condition, and in earnest resolutions to improve it ever more.

76. ***Where in our commandment would the summons to these occupations lie?***

It lies in the expression: *To the Eternal your God.*

77. ***But why, then, is this day also distinguished by outward signs of joy, such as better food and dress?***

So that precisely these changes may remind us of the holiness of the day and guard against its profanation.

78. ***Why, in the prohibition of work on the day of rest, is each member of the household named separately?***

Because it says just before: you shall do *no business of any kind*, [p. 20] thus neither the *coarser* labors of the *manservant* and *maidservant*, nor the *finer* ones of the *son* and *daughter*.

79. ***By what could this interpretation be further supported?***

By the addition: for in six days *the Lord* created, etc. God created by his mere *will* — certainly a very fine kind of work — and yet he rested. —[88]

80. ***Of what does the Law's requirement that the cattle too must rest remind us?***

Of the duty, strictly incumbent on the Israelite, not to strain the animal beyond its strength or to torment it, which is commanded still more expressly in other passages of the Law.

81. ***What does the expression at the opening of our commandment mean:*** **Remember** ***the day of rest, to hallow it?***

We are to think of it already *before* it begins, and prepare ourselves for it, especially on the sixth day of the week, and indeed with the intention of *distinguishing* it from the other days.

82. ***And what does the conclusion say: The Lord*** **blessed** ***the day of rest, etc.?***

The working days lie, as it were, under the curse (Gen. 3:17–19 and ch. 9:25). The day of rest, on the other hand, grants the blessing of what has been earned by labor. At the same time a hint is given here that God, to make up for the apparent diminution of blessing that the Sabbath rest entails, inasmuch as business and trade rest on it, has placed in [p. 21] this day itself a *special influx of blessing*.[89] —

83. ***But the day of rest is also taught in many other passages of the Law?***

It is also taught by almost all the Prophets, and our Sages teach that in importance it is set equal to *the whole rest of the Law*;[90] and Nehemiah in fact expresses himself about it in his prayer thus:

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[88]Cf. my *Erb.* [*Erbauungsreden*?], year 2, discourse 12, pp. 187 and 188, note.

[89]Cf. Exod. 16:5 and 29. One should also think of the setting out of the *showbread* on the day of rest (Lev. 24:8), [Translator: Printed "3 Mos. 21, 8"; the showbread verse is Lev. 24:8.] and of the remark (Beitzah 16[a]) that God especially provides the needs of the day of rest, etc. —

[90]See my *Reden* [Discourses], year 1, discourse 9, p. 133.

ואת שבת קדשך הודעת להם ומצוות וחקים ותורה צוית להם ביד משה עבדך

"And you made known to them your holy Sabbath, and commanded them precepts, statutes and teachings through Moses your servant." (Neh. 9:14)[91]

84. ***How does the fifth commandment read?***

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

"Honor your father and your mother, that you may live long on the earth which the Eternal your God gives you." [Exod. 20:12]

85. ***What does this commandment command?***

Punctual obedience of children toward their parents, and the endeavor to bring them honor and joy.

86. ***Why is this commandment still counted among the duties toward God?***

Because our parents are the visible representatives of God, and therefore the honoring of parents and the honoring of God stand almost on the same rank.

[p. 22] **87.** ***By what did the Law further make known the great importance of this duty?***

By setting the death penalty for violating the respect due to parents; it says (Exod. 21:17):

ומקלל אביו ואמו מות יומת

"Whoever curses his father or his mother must be put to death."[92] (Exod. 21:17)

88. ***Has not the Law also laid the reverence for parents especially on our hearts?***

Certainly, in that it says:

איש אמו ואביו תיראו

"Let each one *fear* his mother and his father." (Lev. 19:3)

89. ***How do our Sages explain these commandments?***

To *honor* means to feed one's parents, care for them and render them every possible service, as soon as they need this from their children; and to *fear* means not to interrupt them when they speak, not to contradict them, not to sit in their usual place in the room, and the like.

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[91] More on the day of rest and the festivals in the section of the present book devoted specifically to them.

[92] See especially Deut. 21:18–21.

90. ***Does this relationship not cease when we become independent?***

Even then we are bound to our parents; and when we find ourselves far away from them, we must call up their image[93] before us almost constantly, in order to be safeguarded against missteps, and in many a doubtful and ambiguous undertaking put to ourselves the question: would [p. 23] your parents approve of this too, if they were near you now?

91. ***But when do we owe our parents particular attention and care?***

In their old age; then it is time for us to give back to them what we owe them from the days of our childish, helpless state.

92. ***Can you cite me some passages from Scripture on this?***

ואל תבוז כי זקנה אמך

"Do not despise your mother when she is old." (Prov. 23:22)

והיה לך למשיב נפש ולכלכל את שיבתך

"He shall be to you a restorer of the soul and a nourisher of your gray old age." (Ruth 4:15)[94]

93. ***Who makes himself guilty of an especially punishable bad habit?***

He who is ashamed of his parents' poverty and hesitates to give himself out as their offspring.

94. ***How do our Sages express themselves about the fifth commandment?***

They call it the weightiest of man's duties;[95] they place it at the *head* of those for which we enjoy a double reward, a temporal and an eternal [p. 24] one (Mishnah Pe'ah 1:1); they make the worth of the other nine commandments depend on this commandment alone (BT Kiddushin 31[a]).

95. ***What further hints are given us in this commandment?***

To hold in honor also those who stand in place of parents to us, or whose relationship to us resembles that of parents: such as our grandparents, older siblings, superiors, but above all our teachers, to whom, as our spiritual parents, we owe even eternal life. (Mishnah Bava Metzia ch. 1, end.)[96]

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[93]The image of the venerable old man *Jacob* saved his distant son at a *most dangerous* moment, one *decisive for his whole life and for that of his whole father's house*. — (BT Sotah 36b.)

[94]Cf. the important passages Sirach ch. 3:10 and 11, and the piyyut אזון להוריך (on the Feast of Weeks): ראה! כן תעזבם לעת זקונים [See! — so you would forsake them in the time of old age]. (See also Sirach 7:26, 27.)

[95]They call it חמורה שבחמורות [the weightiest of the weighty], as against the מצות שלוח הקן [commandment of sending away the mother bird] as the least (קלה שבקלות [the lightest of the light]) (JT Pe'ah ch. 1). See also Pesikta Rabbati ch. 23, end. As a most remarkable example of filial obedience toward one's long-departed parents, one should read Jeremiah ch. 35 aloud to the pupils; — make use also of the fine stories in BT Kiddushin 30 and 31, JT Pe'ah ch. 1, Ketubbot ch. 1:7. — Devarim Rabbah ch. 1, end.

[96]Translator: The ruling that one's teacher, who brings one to the life of the World to Come, takes precedence over one's father is at Mishnah Bava Metzia 2:11 (end of ch. 2).

96. ***How does the sixth commandment read?***

לא תרצח

> "You shall not murder." [Exod. 20:13]

97. ***What does this commandment command?***

That we are to rob no one of life.

98. ***Was this commandment not already one of the primeval revelation?***

Certainly; when God permitted Noah to slaughter animals for the eating of meat, he said:

שפך דם האדם באדם דמו ישפך כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם

> "But whoever sheds human blood, his blood shall be shed by man in turn; for in the image of God he created man." (Gen. 9:6)

99. ***What follows from that passage?***

That before Noah even the slaughter of *animals* had been forbidden; — and that now, all the more, the *murder of a human being* is, as it were, an assault on the Deity.

100. ***Does one become guilty of transgressing the sixth commandment only by an actual murder?***

He too who mistreats his fellow man, strikes him, raises his hand against him, does him harm, [p. 25] especially shames him publicly, leads him into a sin, or does not support him in misery, has committed an act of murder against him. —[97]

101. ***How can a man come into so unhappy a moment as to become the murderer of his fellow man?***

He can do so very easily, if he does not keep *anger*, *desire* and *envy* in check. —

102. ***But how does one keep these in check?***

One must always picture vividly to oneself where these passions could lead, and must therefore try to suppress them already in the bud.

103. ***But would boys already have to consider such dangerous consequences?***

Certainly; and they must therefore never engage in games that endanger life, nor let themselves be carried away by the force of anger into cruel lashing out.

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[97] Cf. the teachings: כל הגוזל פרוטה מחברו כאלו גוזל נשמתו ["Whoever robs his fellow of a penny is as though he robbed him of his soul"]; כל המלבין פני חברו שופך דמים ["Whoever whitens the face of his fellow (shames him) sheds blood"]. — המחטיא את חברו קשה לו מן ההורגו ["Whoever causes his fellow to sin is worse to him than one who kills him"].

104. ***How does the seventh commandment read?***

לא תנאף

"You shall not commit adultery." [Exod. 20:13]

105. ***What does this commandment forbid?***

The contemplation of, and brooding over, things that disturb our childlike peace and innocence, are ruinous to our imagination, and awaken evil desires.

106. ***Is that so dangerous a sin?***

It is the most dangerous and most dreadful sin of all. Holy Scripture teaches:

[p. 26]

כי היא זמה והיא עון פלילים כי אש היא עד אבדון תאכל ובכל תבואתי תשרש

"Lewdness is a crime punishable by the judges; it is a fire that devours to the abyss and uproots all the yield of blessing." (Job 31:11, 12)

107. ***How do our Sages express themselves on this?***

They say: "God looks on long at almost every sin, and only unchastity is excepted."[98]

108. ***What means are given us against transgressing the commandment under discussion?***

To guard our eye strictly; to fear the all-seeing eye of God always and everywhere; to avoid the reading of dangerous writings, bad company, and especially idleness;[99] a very moderate way of life; but above all an occupation with the Law that exerts the intellect is a mighty weapon against the roving imagination,[100] for thus it says:

מזמה תשמר עליך .... להצילך מדרך רע .... להצילך מאשה זרה .... כי שחה אל מות ביתה ואל רפאים מעגלתיה

"Deep reflection will watch over you …… to save you from the evil way … … to save you from the dangerous woman …… whose house sinks down to death, whose paths lead to the [p. 27]

shades," etc. (Prov. 2:11–19)

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[98]Bereshit Rabbah ch. 26: על הכל הקב"ה מאריך אפיו חוץ מן הזנות.

[99]Industriousness is a mighty weapon against those dangerous passions. Not for nothing does Scripture relate of Joseph: ויבא יוסף הביתה לעשות מלאכתו ["And Joseph came into the house to do his work"]. Surely the thought of his *professional labors*, which filled this diligent youth, made him deaf to the voice of the temptress; but because *one* good thought brings another, the image of his distant father could at the same time now come to him, and at the hand of these two angels he could flee his temptress and save honor and innocence. —

[100]Especially immediately before going to sleep.

כל הנותן דברי תורה על לבו מבטלין ממנו הרהורי חרב והרהורי רעב הרהורי שטות הרהורי יצר הרע הרהורי דברים בטלים וכו

> "He who has entrusted the words of the Law to his heart — from him are taken all imaginings of fear, of folly, of dissipation, of evil desires, etc." (Avot de-Rabbi Natan ch. 20, beginning)

109. ***But is even thinking about sin already sinful?***

It is not only equally sinful, but almost more sinful than the deed.

הרהורי עבירה קשין מעבירה

> "Sins of thought are almost worse than the sin itself." (BT Yoma 28b)[101][102]

110. ***How does the eighth commandment read?***

לא תגנב

> "You shall not steal." [Exod. 20:13]

111. ***What is forbidden in this?***

To take away secretly the possessions of our fellow man.

112. ***Is only ordinary theft forbidden in this prohibition?***

Everything whatsoever is forbidden in it by which we deprive our fellow man of what is his.

113. ***What would this be?***

If we conceal thefts, buy stolen goods, profit from them, find our fellow man's lost property and do not return it, do wrong in buying and selling, withhold the day laborer's wages from him or [p. 28] squeeze something off them,[103] or borrow money or money's worth and do not return it.

114. ***What is it, in the latter respect, by which many are wont to make themselves guilty of an unpardonable theft?***

Many are wont to have no scruples about keeping borrowed *books*. —

115. ***What leads to the sin of theft?***

The dangerous urge to amass wealth without effort; also the inclination to amusements, sensual pleasure and *sweets*, against which last one must already be on one's guard in early youth.

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[101] See מורה נבוכים [*Moreh Nevukhim*] 3:8, and ציוני [*Ẓiyyoni*] on פ׳ נצבים [the portion *Nitzavim*].

[102] Translator: The dictum is at BT Yoma 29a.

[103] "To steal after the thief is to taste the taste of theft itself." בתר גנבא גניב, וטעמא טעים (BT Berakhot 5b.)

116. ***But to what does the sin under discussion lead?***

To ever further, very punishable sins; therefore our Sages also say, with reference to that passage (Lev. 19:11):

"You shall not steal, you shall deny nothing, you shall not lie to one another, and you shall not swear falsely by my name": "Once you commit a theft, you will then find yourself led on to denying, to lying, and finally even to a false oath."

117. ***But what is the thief's punishment?***

A public one, set up as a warning to others, and an indelible disgrace, which often pursues the thief in the public newspapers into the farthest distance; and if a good name is worth more than anything, then a bad name is surely the worst thing that can befall us. —

[p. 29] **118.** ***Does this sin not also have its dangerous consequences within us?***

It instills in us a certain anxious unrest that does not let us look up freely, so that we very often become our own betrayers. —

119. ***But may one then not take anything even from persons who are in any case obliged to support us, e.g. from our*** **parents*?***

From these persons least of all; for what ingratitude would it not be to repay persons to whom we owe so much good in so base a manner!

גוזל אביו ואמו ואמר אין פשע חבר הוא לאיש משחית

> "Whoever robs his father or mother and holds it no sin is close to becoming the most depraved of men." (Prov. 28:24)

120. ***What theft borders on this one, and can yet become far more harmful to us?***

Laying hands on the property of those persons in whose service we stand and whose trust we enjoy; we commit a double theft against them, in that we also, as it were, steal their trust (גנב לב גנב דעת [*genev lev, genev da'at*, "stealing the heart, stealing the mind," i.e. deception]), and thereby cause pain and shame to our parents and relatives, to whom we ought to bring honor and joy; indeed, not at all rarely do young men in this way undermine the whole happiness of their future lives. —

121. ***What advantages does honesty bring?***

It grants us a pure and joyful conscience, makes us worthy of the trust of all people, and rewards us, even if somewhat later, not only richly and with honor, but also with a lasting blessing which does not, like dishonest gain, sooner or later vanish from its possessor.

[p. 30]

ועתה בי צדקתי ביום מחר

> "My righteousness will one day testify for me." (Gen. 30:33)

נבהל להון איש רע עין ולא ידע כי חסר יבאנו

"He who would quickly acquire wealth is an evil-minded man, but he does not perceive that only loss will befall him." (Prov. 28:22)[104]

122. ***To whom is the thief related?***

To the most dangerous of all men, the *murderer*.

לאור יקום רוצח ובלילה יהי כגנב יחדו בקר למו צלמות

"Before day the murderer rises; by night he is a thief; and to both, the light of day is a terror." (Job 24:14[–17])

123. ***How does the ninth commandment read?***

לא תענה ברעך עד שקר

"You shall not bear witness against your neighbor as a false witness." (Exod. 20:13)

124. ***Should this really be so great a crime that it is a prohibition among the Ten Commandments?***

It is so terrible a one that one could scarcely credit a moral being with it; the wise Solomon in the Proverbs warns *very often* against this sin.

מפיץ וחרב וחץ שנון איש ענה ברעהו עד שקר

"A club, a sword and a sharp arrow is one who is a false witness against his fellow man." (Prov. 25:18)

125. ***What befell the false witness?***

He had to suffer the same punishment that he had wished to have inflicted on the falsely accused.

כי יקום עד חמס באיש לענות בו סרה ועשיתם לו כאשר זמם לעשות לאחיו

"If a violent witness rises up against someone to testify a falsehood against him … then you shall do to him as he plotted to do to his brother." (Deut. 19:15–20)

[p. 31] **126.** ***What sin might yet be warned against in this commandment?***

All those of which we are accustomed to make ourselves guilty against our fellow men through the *word*, and in particular through untrue statements about them, such as slanders, spreading false rumors about them, belittling their virtues, exaggerating their faults, and the like.

[104]Translator: Plessner prints "Prov. 22, 28"; the verse is Prov. 28:22.

127. ***How does it come about at all, then, that Holy Scripture so often warns against lying, and that a whole multitude of expressions is in use for this sin, as also, in turn, for the commendation of truth-telling?***

Because lying is a great crime: an insult to the nobility of our soul, a mainspring of endless confusions; *every* lie is a deification of the kingdom of sin and high treason against truth.

מלשני בסתר רעהו .... דבר שקרים לא יכון לנגד עיני

> "Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, … whoever speaks lies, cannot stand before my eyes." (Ps. 101:5–7)

שש הנה שנא ה' .... לשון שקר, יפיח כזבים, עד שקר וכו'

> "Six things the Eternal hates: … a lying tongue … whoever speaks deceit, is a false witness." (Prov. 6:16–19)

על שלשה דברים העולם עומד על האמת וכו'

> "On three things the world stands: on truth, justice and peace." (Pirkei Avot 1:18)

128. ***Is being a witness forbidden in itself?***

No; we are obliged to give testimony when it is unavoidable and the judge calls upon us to do so.

129. ***How, finally, does the tenth commandment read?***

[p. 32]

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

> "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." (Exod. 20:14)

130. ***What does this commandment command?***

To master our appetitive drive, our greed for possessions and pleasure; to apply ourselves to the great cardinal virtue of *self-control*; and to rejoice in our lot without looking enviously upon the possessions of others.

131. ***Why might this commandment form the conclusion of the Ten Commandments?***

Because this commandment is, as it were, the sum of all the others; for only one who does not covet, and who resists the appetitive drive, is able to observe all the remaining commandments.[105]

[105] Menorat ha-Maor, introduction to Section 1, end.

132. ***Why are the objects in the tenth commandment enumerated so individually?***

Because we are to covet *absolutely nothing* of our fellow man's possessions, not even such objects as are less bound to his heart and can be acquired for little.

133. ***How might the*** לא תתאוה ***[lo titaveh, "you shall not desire"] (Deut. 5:21) differ from our*** לא תחמד ***[lo taḥmod, "you shall not covet"]?***

The latter is a coveting with which an outward effort to get hold of the object is already connected; the former, on the other hand, is a merely inward striving;[106] thus the coveting alone, without any further active steps toward obtaining what is wished for, is already a sin.

[p. 33] **134.** ***What very evil passion is usually connected with coveting?***

The dangerous passion of *envy*, which we must master if only for the sake of our own happiness, for:

חיי בשרים לב מרפא ורקב עצמות קנאה

"A contented heart[107] gives a healthy body, but envy is a gnawing at the bones." (Prov. 14:30)

135. ***When is envy especially reprehensible?***

When it turns its attention to the good fortune of the wicked.

אל יקנא לבך בחטאים

"Let your heart not envy sinners." (Prov. 23:17)

136. ***What thoughts must we call up within ourselves in order to resist striving after the property of others?***

That not everything suits everyone; that Providence has assigned to each his own; that many a person seems happier than he in fact is; that whoever once gives in to coveting never stops coveting and therefore can never be happy; but also that even our own lawful possessions are only *lent* to us by God.

יש עשר שמור לבעליו לרעתו

"Many a fortune is kept by its owner to his misfortune." (Eccl. 5:12)

ה' מוריש ומעשיר וכו'

"The Lord makes poor and makes rich." (1 Sam. 2:7)

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[106] Cf. Zohar, ואתחנן [*Va-eṯhanan*], p. 261, and גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], Part 1, Section 9, ch. 9, end.

[107] מרפא [*marpe*] from רפה [*rafah*], to be slack, yielding, content; the opposite of becoming heated. Likewise (Eccl. 10:4) and the like.

אהב כסף לא ישבע כסף ומי אהב בהמון לא תבואה

"He who loves money will not be sated with money, and he who loves pomp has no profit from it." (Eccl. 5:9)

[p. 34]

את שלך אינו שלך, את שאינו שלך למה הוא לך עליו הכתוב אומר הוי המרבה לא לו.

"What belongs to you is not yours; what does *not* belong to you, why should it be yours?" Woe! cries the Prophet (Hab. 2:6) to him who heaps up what is not his. (Derekh Eretz Zuta ch. 2)[108]

Fourth Section

Revelation in Its Further Development, or the Written and the Oral Law

כי לא על הלחם לבדו יחיה האדם, זה מקרא, כי על כל מוצא פי ה' יחיה האדם, אלו הלכות ואגדות.

"'For man does not live by bread alone' — this is Scripture; 'but by everything that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord does man live' — these are the halakhot and aggadot." (Sifre, עקב [*Ekev*])

137. *How, then, are the divine commandments divided in general?*

Into laws of reason (מצות שכליות [*mitzvot sikhliyyot*]), i.e. those which already make sense to reason; and into [p. 35] laws of obedience (מצות שמעיות [*mitzvot shim'iyyot*]), i.e. those which surpass our reason, but which we as Israelites are obliged to follow out of special obedience toward God.[109]

138. *Where, then, are all the teachings of Revelation contained?*

Partly in the written Law (תורה שבכתב [*Torah she-bi-khtav*]), partly in the oral Law (תורה שבעל פה [*Torah she-be-al peh*]).

139. *Of what does the written Law consist?*

Of the five books of Moses, and in the wider sense of Holy Scripture, called מקרא [*Mikra*][110] and also תנ"ך [*Tanakh*] or תורה נביאים כתובים [*Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim*], i.e. Pentateuch (the 5 books of Moses), Prophets and the remaining Writings.

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[108]Upon this passage, probably, rests that passage of the piyyut (piyyut for the second day of the Feast of Weeks): "O, the creature formed of clay! What does it profit him that he strives and covets after that which is not his own? That which belongs to him is not his: a possession that does *not* belong to him, to what end should it be his? — Let man with his understanding consider this wisely, and abide joyfully in the lot that has fallen to him."

[109]The former are also customarily called תורות [*torot*] or מצות [*mitzvot*], the latter חקים [*ḥukkim*] and also משפטים [*mishpatim*]; the Psalmist has still other names (Ps. 119). See there Kimḥi (רד"ק [*Radak*]), and also Luther in the introduction to this Psalm.

[110]See the ש"ך [*Shakh*] on Yoreh De'ah ch. 245, 6.

140. ***How are the five books of Moses usually named?***

ספר בראשית [*Sefer Bereshit*] (containing the history of creation and the history of the Patriarchs). ספר שמות [*Sefer Shemot*] (the Exodus from Egypt, the giving of the Law, the building of the Tabernacle). ספר ויקרא [*Sefer Va-yikra*] (the Temple service, the priestly laws and laws of purification). ספר במדבר [*Sefer Ba-midbar*] (the census and the wandering through the wilderness). ס' דברים [*Sefer Devarim*] or משנה תורה [*Mishneh Torah*] (the last speeches of Moses and his death).[111]

141. ***How are the books of the Prophets divided?***

Into the Former (נביאים ראשונים [*Nevi'im Rishonim*]), the Latter [p. 36] (נביאים אחרונים [*Nevi'im Aḥaronim*]) and the so-called twelve *Minor* Prophets (תרי עשר [*Trei Asar*]).

142. ***Which are the former?***

Joshua (יהושע), Judges (שופטים), the two books of Samuel (שמואל) and the two of Kings (מלכים); together they contain the history of Israel from the death of Moses to the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar.

143. ***And the latter?***

Isaiah (ישעיה), Jeremiah (ירמיה), Ezekiel (יחזקאל).

144. ***And the twelve Minor Prophets?***

Hosea (הושע), Joel (יואל), Amos (עמוס), Obadiah (עובדיה), Jonah (יונה), Micah (מיכה), Nahum (נחום), Habakkuk (חבקוק), Zephaniah (צפניה), Haggai (חגי), Zechariah (זכריה), Malachi (מלאכי).

145. ***Of what do the other Writings (כתובים) consist?***

Of the books: Psalms (תהלים), Proverbs (משלי), Job (איוב), Daniel (דניאל), Ezra (עזרא), Nehemiah (נחמיה), the books of Chronicles (דברי הימים), the five Megillot (חמש מגילות): Song of Songs (שיר השירים), Ruth (רות), Lamentations (איכה), Ecclesiastes (קהלת) and Esther (אסתר).

146. ***Which books belong to a later time, are also called*** **כתובים *[Ketuvim],***[112] ***but have not been received into the number of the holy books?***

The so-called *apocryphal*[113] books of the Old Testament.

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[111] Also called Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numeri and Deuteronomium.

[112] See my Apocrypha, Introduction, p. 17, note, and ס' חסידים [*Sefer Ḥasidim*] §11, end; ראשית חכמה [*Reshit Ḥokhmah*], Gate ענוה [*Anavah*], p. 259b.

[113] Hidden, unknown, doubtful with respect to their authors. They are the Maccabees (2 books), the book of *Sirach*, *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Susanna*, *Baruch*, Additions to *Daniel* (the *Prayer and Song of the Three Men in the Fiery Furnace* and the *Story of Bel and the Dragon at Babylon*), the *Addition to Esther* and the *Prayer of Manasseh*. There is also a Syriac book of Baruch. See my

[p. 37] **147.** ***What is the oral Law called?***

It is called the Tradition or the Transmission, also the *Talmud*; or the *Mishnah* (משנה) together with its interpretation, the *Gemara* (גמרא).[114]

148. ***How did it go with the Tradition?***

These oral teachings were handed down from Moses to Joshua, from him to the Elders of his time, from these in turn to the Prophets in their succession, and from the Prophets to the last of them, namely to the Men of the Great Assembly (אנשי כנסת הגדולה [*Anshei Keneset ha-Gedolah*]).[115]

149. ***Why did this oral transmission take place?***

In order to preserve an ever-living instruction, which would have been considerably neglected, or else much distorted by copyists, had one been able to rely on the merely written-down, dead letter.

150. ***Might not still other reasons have occasioned the oral transmission?***

Among several others, the chief one might be this: that it would have been impossible for all the cases that arise to be written down [p. 38] in advance; one must first await them from the future and leave the decision to the judges of each age, whose genuine *knowledge of the Law* and *fear of God* are presupposed.

151. ***Into how many divisions does the teaching of the Tradition fall?***

1. Into interpretations actually received from Moses, which one can also actually demonstrate to be alluded to in the Law, and against which no contradiction was ever raised.

Just as little, however, against the

2. הל' למשה מסיני [*halakhah le-Moshe mi-Sinai*, "law given to Moses at Sinai"], even if no allusion to these is found in the written Law, and they also cannot be derived by means of the so-called *rules of legal interpretation*.[116]

3. Certain laws and teachings derived by the Sages through certain principles of interpretation.[117]

4. גדרים [*gedarim*] or fences around the Law, that is, certain preventive measures for the preservation of the older Mosaic teachings. (Cf. Avot de-Rabbi Natan ch. 2.)

Apocrypha, pp. 1–6, and Introduction, pp. 21–27. A third book of the Maccabees (Arabic) and the books of Ezra, also Psalm 151 — these latter books can, with few exceptions, demonstrate their authenticity less well.

[114]To the Mishnah there further belong the books Sifre, Sifra, Mekhilta, Tosefta, Pesikta and the Baraitot. The Gemara is divided into the Jerusalem and the Babylonian.

[115]For the further succession of the Tradition, see Maimonides' introduction to the יד החזקה [*Yad ha-Ḥazakah*] and Abarbanel's excellent introduction to his נחלת אבות [*Naḥalat Avot*] (commentary on פרקי אבות [*Pirkei Avot*]).

[116]מדות שהתורה נדרשת בהן [*middot she-ha-Torah nidreshet bahen*, "the rules by which the Torah is expounded"].

[117]See e.g. Mishnah Ḥagigah 1:8.

5. Certain institutions and customs, מנהגות, תקנות [*minhagot, takkanot*], which the needs of each time require; among which the later מנהגים [*minhagim*] are also to be reckoned.

152. ***If the judges were authorized to make such arrangements, should they not then have been permitted to give Judaism in general a reshaping suited to the times?***

No; those arrangements concerned partly only individual matters, partly also momentarily pressing needs of the time (הוראת שעה [*hora'at sha'ah*, "a ruling for the hour"]), which, however, just as well and [p. 39] more often were an *aggravation* rather than an alleviation of the Law;[118] partly the intention and conduct of the teacher of the people were indubitably pleasing to God, enjoying the trust of the whole nation.[119] —

153. ***But what stands especially in the way of such changes, even if their intention were not so dishonest?***

The very correct principle of our Sages: no court can annul the institutions of its predecessor unless it is superior to it in wisdom and in number of members. (Eduyot p. 2b)[120]

154. ***Accordingly, however, the function of the administrator of the Law would be, according to our views, a very limited one?***

Certainly; it must keep within the bounds of the written and the transmitted Law.[121]

155. ***Can we demonstrate from the Law itself allusions to the existence of a Tradition?***

Very many passages presuppose an explanation communicated orally by God to Moses.[122]

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[118] See BT Sanhedrin 46[a].

[119] Cf. e.g. BT Makkot 24.

[120] Translator: the principle is stated in Mishnah Eduyot 1:5.

[121] And accordingly even today "the Rabbis cannot permit us a raven to eat, nor will they forbid us a dove." (BT Sanhedrin 99b)

[122] "Therefore Moses tarried with God forty days and forty nights; he learned there the explanations and expositions of the Law; for had he been meant to receive only the tablets of the covenant, this could have taken place in one hour and would not have lasted forty days; but had an oral explanation not been given together with the Law at the same time, it would be full of obscurities and contradictions. Thus it says, for example, in one place: *seven* days, in another place: *six* days shall you eat unleavened cakes; in one place: you shall count seven weeks, in another: fifty days; in one place: you shall offer a Passover sacrifice to the Eternal from the flock and the herd, in another place it says only from the lambs, sheep or goats; in one place: every firstborn among your cattle and flock, the male, you shall sanctify; in another place: only the firstborn among the cattle shall one not sanctify. … Likewise *circumcision*, the *doorpost inscription* [mezuzah] and the like would have remained obscure. … But because the Law is very great and extensive, so that no writing can contain it — as the Psalmist also sang (Ps. 119:96): 'In all that is finite I have seen an end, but your commandment is infinitely broad' — therefore God had *his precepts recorded in the written Law* only in brief allusions, and let the explanations and expositions be propagated in the oral Law." (R. Moses of Coucy, introduction to the סמ"ג [*SeMaG*, *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*])

156. ***What else is closely connected with the Tradition?***

The *Masorah* (מסורה) in the narrower sense, or the system of vowel and accent signs and the like, which are no invention of the [p. 40] later time,[123] and the *Targum*[124] as the oldest translation of Holy Scripture.[125]

157. ***But what convinces us, even in later times, of the authenticity of the Tradition?***

A thorough and natural investigation of language has proved how the transmitted word really lies in the Law, in an expression, a usage of language and the like.[126]

[p. 41] **158.** ***But is not the Tradition, on the whole, an aggravation in relation to the written Law?***

It only seems to be so; it is rather, in manifold respects, a great alleviation, and through it Mosaism can be practiced in all the circumstances and conditions of Israel. The few sects that held only to the written Law had in fact only made life harder for themselves and set up very clumsy, ridiculous religious systems, and in fact found but little following.

159. ***But how could I designate this traditional teaching with the name of Revelation?***

Not only were there still Prophets among the Men of the Great Assembly, but also the still later development of the oral teaching, namely through the *Tannaim* (תנאים), stood under an unmistakable *guidance of the Spirit of God penetrating their whole undertaking*.[127]

160. ***Who were the Men of the Great Assembly?***

It was a society of learned and very God- [p. 42] fearing men, consisting of 120 persons, who, in the Babylonian captivity, with the famous Ezra at their head, renewed much that had fallen into oblivion and been neglected in religion, and called many useful institutions into being.

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[123]BT Megillah 3a; Buxtorf, *De punctorum vocalium et accentuum origine, antiquitate et auctoritate*, Basel 1648.

[124]See Megillah, loc. cit.

[125]Cf. also my עדות לישראל [*Edut le-Yisra'el*], Breslau 1825, p. 12.

[126]See Ralbag on the Pentateuch; Wessely, the third book of Moses; Salomon Pappenheim's writings. Aben Ezra was so convinced of the authenticity of the Tradition (see his introduction to the Torah) that he himself used to reject supports for it with the words אין דברי חכמינו צריכים חזוק, "*The words of our Sages are not in need of support.*" —

[127]Cf. BT Ḥagigah 3a [recte 3b]: הללו מטמאין ⋯ הללו אוסרין ⋯⋯ ת"ל כלם נתנו מרועה אחד .... כלן אל אחד אמרן ["these declare impure … these forbid … Scripture teaches: all of them were given by one Shepherd … one God spoke them all"]. — See also Kuzari 3:65: הנבואה התמידה עם אנשי בית שני ..... ר' ישמעאל בן אלישע .... שהיה ראוי למדרגה קרובה מהנבואה .... ר' עקיבא .... שהוה משתמש בעולם הרוחניים ["prophecy continued with the men of the Second Temple … R. Ishmael ben Elisha … who was worthy of a rank close to prophecy … R. Akiva … who had commerce with the spiritual world"]. See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 157; Moreh Nevukhim 1:59 —!—

161. ***But is it not presumption and error when, among the Rabbis, already even in the Mishnah, the oral Law is accorded precedence over the written, and the Rabbis over the Prophets?***[128]

No; for the oral Law is indeed nothing other than the written Law together with its explanation; it contains precisely words of the living God (BT Eruvin 13b); it is the more extensive Revelation of God, entering more fully into the circumstances of our lives.

162. ***Why was the oral Law later written down?***

Because the disruption of the cultivation of the Law and of study, which arose through the dispersion and the manifold sufferings of the nation, had partly already brought much into oblivion, and partly the greater danger in this respect was still impending.

163. ***Who wrote down this Tradition?***

The Mishnah was collected by R. *Judah ha-Nasi*, or *Rabbenu ha-Kadosh*, in the year 3980 (6 volumes); the Jerusalem Talmud (4 volumes), R. *Johanan*, approxi- [p. 43] mately at the same time; the Babylonian (12 volumes), *Ravina* and *Rav Ashi*, some 300 years later.[129]

163. ***Does the Talmud, apart from its legal content, have any other value?***[130]

A very great one, which has even been recognized and appreciated by many famous non-Israelite scholars.[131] Already for the study of the Hebrew language,[132] as well as for Jewish antiquity in general, it is of inexpressible use.

*"The Talmud is a learned work; it contains manifold erudition in all the sciences; it teaches the most detailed and most perfect civil law of the Jews, so that they can live happily by it in the most desirable manner. It is the most lucid commentary on the written Law, as well as its supplement and support. It contains many excellent juridical, medical, physical, ethical, political, astronomical and other documents of the sciences, which wonderfully commend the history of its time and nation; it contains lucid sayings, excellent maxims, ingenious, tasteful [p. 44] and meaningful thoughts, which make the reader not only better, but also wiser and more learned, and which, like

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[128]E.g. in the principles חביבין דברי סופרים מדברי תורה ["the words of the Scribes are dearer than the words of the Torah"], דברי זקנים מדברי נביאים ["the words of the Elders than the words of the Prophets"]. — Jerusalem Talmud, Berakhot ch. 1; Mishnah Sanhedrin 11:3; Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu Zuta ch. 2, beginning. Cf. also חכמה עדיפה מנבואה ["wisdom is superior to prophecy"], BT Bava Batra fols. 11 and 12; and Azulai, חסד לאברהם [*Ḥesed le-Avraham*] 2:35.

[129]Cf. Zunz, *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, pp. 45–57.

[130]Translator: the print numbers this question 163 a second time (following question 163 on the preceding page) and then continues with 165; there is no question 164. Plessner's numbering is kept.

[131]Cf. my עדות לישראל [*Edut le-Yisrael*], "A Word in Its Season, or On the Authority of the Rabbinic Writings." Several of the testimonies to the value of the Talmud given there are contained in the collections appended to several sermons in the first volume of my *Erbauungen*.

[132]See my *Erbauungen*, vol. 2, pp. 115–119, and the interpretations of biblical and Talmudic passages incorporated into and appended to the sermons there.

sparkling jewels, adorn the Hebrew language no less than those Greek and Roman flourishes adorn the languages of those peoples, etc."*[133]

165. ***How does one divide the content of the Talmud in general?***

Into two main components, into *Halakhah* (הלכה) and *Aggadah* (אגדה).

166. ***What does one understand by these expressions?***

By *Halakhah*, the legal, or that which relates to the understanding of the laws and their practice;[134] by *Aggadah* (narrative) is understood all the remaining content of the Talmud.

167. ***Which are the writings in which the halakhic material is contained, and indeed already in fixed rules, that is, the law codes of Judaism?***

First of all the משנה תורה [*Mishneh Torah*] or יד החזקה [*Yad ha-Ḥazakah*] of Maimonides, and later treatments of the subject in the four טורים [*Turim*][135] of R. Jacob, and the four volumes of the *Shulḥan Arukh* (שלחן ערוך) by R. Joseph Caro.[136]

168. ***Has the Aggadah not also been collected separately?***

[p. 45] Certainly; namely in the books עין יעקב [*Ein Ya'akov*] and בית יעקב [*Beit Ya'akov*] by R. *Jacob b. S. Chabib*;[137] R. *Samuel Ashkenazi* also collected the Aggadah of the Jerusalem Talmud and commented on it in the book יפה מראה [*Yefeh Mar'eh*].[138]

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[133]Buxtorf, in his *Abbreviaturae* and in the dedication to his great Chaldaic-Talmudic dictionary. See my *Wort zu seiner Zeit* [*A Word in Its Season*], pp. 29, 31.

[134]See Wessely, יין לבנון [*Yein Levanon*], p. 37b.

[135]ארח חיים, יורה דעה, אבן העזר, חושן משפט [*Oraḥ Ḥayyim, Yoreh De'ah, Even ha-Ezer, Ḥoshen Mishpat*]. On the names בית יוסף [*Beit Yosef*] and שלחן ערוך [*Shulḥan Arukh*] see the book מגיד מישרים [*Maggid Mesharim*] on ויקהל [Va-yakhel] and צו [Tzav] (Amsterdam edition, pp. 34a and 40a).

[136]To which the glosses (הגהות) of R. Moses Isserles (רמ"א) are important for us. See his letter to R. Joseph Karo, from which there also emerges the hint that the customs prevailing in a place (מנהגים) are not to be taken so lightly, and that not everyone, however upright his intention, has the right to abolish them. —

[137]Translator: Jacob ibn Ḥabib (c. 1460–1516), compiler of *Ein Ya'akov*, the collection of the Talmud's aggadic passages; *Beit Ya'akov* is his commentary printed with it. *Yefeh Mar'eh* is by Samuel Jaffe Ashkenazi (16th century).

[138]The old writings *Sifri*, *Sifra*, *Mekhilta*, etc., as well as the minor Talmudic tractates, *Avot de-R. Nathan*, *Kallah*, etc., also contain much Aggadah; and the Aggadah of the first-mentioned books is especially noteworthy. — The Midrashim, e.g. *Rabbah*, *Tanḥuma* and many others, contain nothing but Aggadah. *Philo* and *Josephus*, too, are not seldom either aggadic sources used in the Talmud, or both draw on a source unknown to us. Cf. R. *Azariah* [de' Rossi], אמרי בינה [*Imrei Binah*], on Josephus and Philo.

169. ***But how is it, then, with those Aggadot which often sound so very fabulous and ridiculous?***

These are to be regarded only as *veils* under which the ancients concealed the *most important truths*; and here it is as that Rabbi says: *"Look not at the jug, but at what is in it."*[139] (Pirkei Avot 4:27.)[140]

170. ***Who are the most important interpreters of Holy Scripture?***

Rashi (ר' שלמה יצחקי), *Aben Ezra* (ר' אברהם בן עזרא), *Nachmanides* (רמב"ן), *Kimchi* (רד"ק), and *Abarbanel* (ר' יצחק אברבנאל).

171. ***And those of the oral Law?***

[p. 46] On the Mishnah, *Maimonides*, *Bartenura*, etc.; and on the Talmud, *Rashi*, the *Tosafot*, *Alfasi* (ריי"ף), etc.; — on the Aggadah the most important interpreter is מהרש"א [Maharsha].[141] The interpreter of Maimonides and of the טורים [*Turim*] is R. *Joseph Caro*; the latter are also explained by R. *Joel* (ב"ח).[142]

172. ***What are the works called in which legal cases that arose partly earlier, but especially later, and religious inquiries in matters of ritual are treated?***

Questions and Answers (שאלות ותשובות), among whose great number there are very learned works, and works of considerable importance for scholarly use in general.

173. ***Which, then, are the writings in which the higher or secret interpretation***[143] ***of the Holy Scriptures is contained?***

[p. 47] The clearest traces of such secret teaching are already found in the Talmud and the Midrashim; its special writings, however,[144] are the book *Yetzirah*, *Bahir* and the like, especially

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[139]So also Selden (*De Successionibus*, in the preface): *"It is subject to no doubt that among the Talmudic fables too, as among the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, certain mysteries were concealed for the class of the theologians."* See my *Erbauungen*, vol. 1, p. 126; vol. 2, preface, p. 19; ibid., sermon 10, p. 164, note. Zohar פנחס [Pinḥas], p. 216a (in the ר"מ [*Ra'aya Meheimna*] below); אמונת חכמים [*Emunat Ḥakhamim*], ch. 6; ס' הברית [*Sefer ha-Berit*], part 2, section 14, end; כרם חמד [*Kerem Ḥemed*], issue 2, מכתב א' [letter 1]; מנורת המאור [*Menorat ha-Ma'or*], ch. 34, beginning: כל מה שאמרו ז"ל במדרשות ובהגדות וכו' ["all that the Sages of blessed memory said in the Midrashim and Aggadot," etc.]. See a remarkable example of aggadic interpretation in R. *Isaac Israeli*, יסוד עולם [*Yesod Olam*], p. 58a. — Compare also the splendid remark of the famous ראב"ן in מאמר השכל [*Ma'amar ha-Sekhel*] (Rödelheim edition), p. 15b: האגדות .... הם בתכלית החכמה והשלימות וכו' ["the Aggadot .... are of the utmost wisdom and perfection," etc.].

[140]Translator: Pirkei Avot 4:20 in the now customary numbering.

[141]The Midrashim, too, particularly *Tanḥuma* or *Yelamdenu*, contain explanations of Talmudic passages.

[142]Commentators on the abridgment, the שלחן ערוך [*Shulḥan Arukh*], are טורי זהב [*Turei Zahav*], שפתי כהן [*Siftei Kohen*], מגן אברהם [*Magen Avraham*], סמ"ע [*Sema*].

[143]This question belongs in the present Section since Tradition (קבלה) is discussed in it; this expression, however, in the narrower sense, as is well known, designates the *secret science*.

[144]I speak here of this science merely as true theology and a very important source for biblical interpretation and Hebrew philology; by no means, however, of practical Kabbalah. The book Zohar is of infinite importance for biblical exegesis. See, e.g., on synonyms such as אבק and עפר [dust], Zohar וישלח [Va-yishlaḥ], p. 170a; on דרך and ארח [way], Zohar וארא [Va-era], p. 31;

the book *Zohar*; which science, however, was always the occupation only of especially distinguished men.[145]

[p. 48] **174.** ***But should there really be such mysteries in the divine word?***

[p. 49] Certainly, and not even the seemingly slightest thing in it is without meaning.[146]

סוד ה' ליראיו.

"The secret of God is made known to those who revere Him." (Ps. 25:14)

גל עיני ואביטה נפלאות מתורתך.

"Open my eyes, that I may behold the hidden things of Thy Law." (Ps. 119:18)

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on חכם and נבון [wise, understanding], Zohar ויקהל [Va-yakhel], p. 251; מתנים and חלצים [loins], Zohar בלק [Balak], p. 198; on חמדה and תאוה [desire], Zohar ואתחנן [Va-etḥanan], p. 261, and the like.

[145]It seems, as I also already remarked in the Introduction, p. 4, to have been the favorite science of the *Essenes*, or חסידים הראשונים [the early pietists]. These חסידים, already frequently mentioned in the Mishnah, appear often in the Zohar in particular under the name חסידי קדמאי, e.g. Preface to the Zohar, p. 10; Zohar אמור [Emor], p. 97; בלק [Balak], p. 187, and the like. These were the models of the *Zoharites* themselves and seem identical with the Essenes of *Philo* and *Josephus*. Well known from the Talmud, e.g., is the special care of the חסידים with regard to the prayers ק"ש and ש"ע [the Shema and the Eighteen Benedictions], to recite them very devoutly at the *right time*. (Cf. also Zohar לך לך [Lekh Lekha], p. 91b; *Zohar Ḥadash*, p. 60a.) But *Philo* and *Josephus* report the same of the Essenes. The like holds for the fervent movements during prayer (see my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 77–84), which was also the custom of the Essenes; likewise the *high veneration of the Sabbath*, especially through bodily enjoyment; the *night worship* extolled in the Zohar in almost countless passages (the well-known Essene *night vigil*, παννυχίδα); the allegorical interpretations of the Zoharites (which Philo often clumsily imitates) with the Essene ones; the *prophecies* of the Zoharites (whose principle is חסידות מביאה לידי רוח הקדש ["piety leads to the holy spirit"]) with the similar reports about the Essenes; their *cleanliness* with the Hasidic principle נקיות מביאה וכו' ["cleanliness leads," etc.]; the *fasting* of both classes; the views on the mysteries of the *table* and of *meals*; the *gathering* of the Zoharites in the *Idra* (hall) with the hall (σεμνεῖον) of the Essenes; the *separation from women*; the frequently mentioned ancient *writings* of the Essenes with the ספרי קדמאי [ancient books] constantly cited in the Zohar (on the latter see Zunz's little work *Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur*, Berlin 1818, p. 16. — But compare with this also *Tikkunim*, ch. 70, p. 134; *Zohar Ḥadash* בלק [Balak], p. 43a; Supplement 9 to the Zohar, part 2, and the like). — Teachings of the Zohar will accordingly be partly older, partly also younger, than R. *Simeon b. Yoḥai*. His *disciples* and successors *wrote down* what he had taught orally (ר' אבא יכתוב ["R. Abba shall write"], Zohar האזינו [Ha'azinu], p. 287b). One of the *older* Zoharites was the famous ר' המנונא סבא [R. Hamnuna Sava]; he lived during the Second Temple (Zohar משפטים [Mishpatim], p. 124a). — R. *Simeon b. Yoḥai* was the greatest and most divinely favored wonder-worker of his time (Jerusalem Talmud שביעית [Shevi'it], ch. 9, with Midrash Bereshit Rabbah ch. 79; Midrash Kohelet on Eccl. 10:8; Midrash Esther ch. 2; Vayikra Rabbah ch. 34 (middle); BT Me'ilah 17. See also Jerusalem Talmud Berakhot ch. 9: רשב"י אמר בקעה בקעה וכו' ["R. Simeon b. Yoḥai said: Valley, valley," etc.]; the same in Bereshit Rabbah ch. 35, Shemot Rabbah ch. 52), and so he was surely also the head of the Essene order. As a distinguished Talmudist, however, the *Pharisees* too attached themselves to him, seeking his instruction. (See the remarkable passage Zohar תצוה [Tetzaveh], p. 187a: המשה כאינון פרושים דהוו אזלי אבתריה ["... like those Pharisees who went after him"].) Who indeed could better than he, in his many years of solitude, live for those lofty investigations and become capable of the higher illumination that is needed for them (BT Shabbat 33, with Zohar, Preface, p. 11a; *Zohar Ḥadash* כי תבא [Ki Tavo] (beginning)) — ! — and lay the foundation for the greatest part of the book Zohar? But that this solitude was not exploited in order to foist the book Zohar upon him — for this a great many reasons speak; and truly the well-known insinuation in the *Yuḥasin* concerning the author of the Zohar [Translator: Abraham Zacuto's *Sefer Yuḥasin* reports the testimony of Isaac of Acre casting doubt on the Zohar's antiquity and pointing to Moses de León as its author.] deserves a refutation just as little as all the other opposition of scholars to the Kabbalah. A single work like R. *Joseph Irgas*'s שומר אמונים [*Shomer Emunim*] already strikes all the insipid objections to the ground. —

[146]See Sifri on Deut. 32:47: כי לא דבר רק וכו' ["For it is not an empty thing," etc.], and my *Erbauungen*, vol. 2, sermons 11 and 22.

(Cf. Maim[onides, Commentary on the Mishnah], Sanhedrin 10:1, on the 8th article of faith; בן נעור 1, 7, 12; 10, 1.)

175. ***So with the doctrine of Tradition we would have two Laws?***

No; the oral Law explains the written; the former is also often illuminated by the latter, and *both* form *one* Law.[147]

[p. 50] Fifth Section

The Articles of Faith

האמינו בה' אלהיכם ותאמנו האמינו בנביאיו והצליחו

> "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe His prophets, so shall you prosper." (2 Chron. 20:20)

176. ***Who first speaks of articles of faith of Judaism?***

The famous sage and teacher of the Law R. *Moses ben Maimon*, or *Maimonides*.[148]

177. ***What speaks against the adoption of articles of faith in Judaism?***

The correct principle that *everything* is an article of faith [p. 51] and everything is indispensable truth that Holy Scripture teaches; and just as we may not and cannot distinguish more or less essential ones among the *commandments of God*, so neither among the truths which Scripture communicates to us in order that we should believe them.

178. ***But what speaks for the adoption of articles of faith?***

Several things: the certainty that even among equally important components of a subject, some nevertheless always constitute its essence more than others; the existence of *elements* in all the sciences; the need, in less believing ages, to simplify as far as possible what is to be believed; that a man like Maimonides set them up for Judaism; that even the *prayer book* long ago adopted them

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[147] Zohar ואתחנן [Va-etḥanan], p. 268a: תורה שבכתב לא אשתמודעה אלא מגו תורה שבע"פ, ותורה שבע"פ לא אשתמודעה אלא מגו תורה שבכתב, ודא כלל הצריך לפרט ופרט הצריך לכלל. ["The written Torah is known only through the oral Torah, and the oral Torah is known only through the written Torah; and this is a general rule that needs the particular, and a particular that needs the general rule."] Regarding the note on p. 13 of the present religion book, I must here add a reminder of the ingenious solution of that problem in the מאמר השכל [*Ma'amar ha-Sekhel*] of the famous ראב"ן.

[148] Commentary on Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1. That R. *Saadia*, incidentally, is already said to have composed a book on articles of faith, I have already stated (Introduction, p. 5, note a). — To be sure, Maimonides seems — one thinks of the tendency of his *Moreh Nevukhim* — to have been moved to set up those articles of faith purely by the need of his unbelieving age. But the more a so-called enlightenment exercises its dominion in *our* time as well, the less dispensable those articles of faith should be in our age too. — Cf. also Maim[onides], יד החזקה [*Yad ha-Ḥazakah*], in הלכות יסודי התורה [*Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah*], ch. 1; — but already R. Saadia, too, in אמונות ודעות [*Emunot ve-De'ot*]. —

— and that even their opponents could not avoid setting up some, if fewer, and conceding to the remaining ones of Maimonides a certain fundamental force.[149] —

[p. 52] **179.** ***But is not faith in Judaism a mere secondary matter, and the main thing rather* knowledge*?***

Faith plays a secondary role only insofar as the religion of Judaism consists more in *practice*, in *life*, and an idle credulity does not make an Israelite; but faith comes first, and knowledge is usually only a late consequence of it. —

טוב טעם ודעת למדני כי במצותיך האמנתי:

> "Teach me understanding and knowledge; for I have believed in Thy commandments." (Ps. 119:66)

בא חבקוק והעמידן על אחת, שנאמר וצדיק באמונתו יחיה.

> "Habakkuk based the whole Law upon *one* duty: the righteous shall live by his *faith*." (BT Makkot 23;[150] Hab. 2:4)[151]

180. ***How many articles of faith did Maimonides set up?***

Thirteen: (שלש עשרה עקרים).

181. ***How do they read?***

א' אני מאמין באמונה שלימה שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים והוא לבדו עשה ועושה ויעשה לכל המעשים.

> "1. I believe with sincere faith that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things."

[p. 53]

ב' אמב"ש שהבו' ית"ש הוא יחיד ואין יחידות כמוהו בשום פנים והוא לבדו אלהינו היה הוה ויהיה.

> "2. I believe with sincere faith that He is One, and that His unity is entirely incomparable, and that He alone is our God, *was, is and will be*."

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[149] And that an *Abarbanel*, in ראש אמנה [*Rosh Amanah*], [Appeared Constantinople 1505, Venice 1544, Sabbioneta 1557, Cremona 1557, Altona 1776. See Wolf, *Bibl.* [*Hebraea*], vol. 4, p. 877. Since the author of this book mentions it in his ישועות משיחו [*Yeshu'ot Meshiḥo*], it must already have been composed before 1498. — A brief assessment of the book is given in my treatise *"Abarbanel und seine Schriften"* [Abarbanel and His Writings] (manuscript).] defends the articles of faith of Maimonides against Albo and Ḥisdai. It therefore seems to me presumptuous when religion books do not include them. Why slight a Maimonides here in particular? Why side here, of all places, with a *Kabbalist*? I would have called this inconsistency, did not the consistency show itself precisely in this, that thirteen articles of faith are *too many* for our religion teachers. — The said older opponents of those articles of faith did after all acknowledge even those *not* adopted as fundamental articles, at least as roots or as more important truths of faith; whereas our religion teachers often, and cleverly enough, pass them over almost entirely in silence. See in the present book the postscript note to the articles of faith treated here.

[150] Translator: the passage is at BT Makkot 24a.

[151] See the explanation in my *Erbauungen*, vol. 2, sermon 17, p. 284, note 3, and my עדות לישראל [*Edut le-Yisrael*], p. 13, note 1.

ג' אמב"ש שהבו' ית"ש אינו גוף, ולא ישיגוהו משיגי גוף, ואין לו שום דמיון כלל.

"3. I believe with sincere faith that He is not a body, that nothing corporeal pertains to Him, and that nothing is to be compared to Him."

ד' אמב"ש שהבו' ית"ש הוא ראשון והוא אחרון.

"4. I believe with sincere faith that He is the first and the last."

ה' אמב"ש שהבו' ית"ש לו לבדו ראוי להתפלל ואין ראוי להתפלל לזולתו.

"5. I believe with sincere faith that to Him alone, and to no being besides Him, worship is due."

ו' אמב"ש שכל דברי נביאים אמת.

"6. I believe with sincere faith that all the words of the Prophets are true."

ז' אמב"ש שנבואת משה רבינו עליו השלום היתה אמתית, ושהוא היה אב לנביאים לקודמים לפניו ולבאים אחריו.

"7. I believe with sincere faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher, of blessed memory, was an especially true one, and that he was the father of the prophets who were before and after him."

ח' אמב"ש שכל התורה המצויה עתה בידינו היא הנתונה למשה רבינו ע"ה.

"8. I believe with sincere faith that the whole Law, as it is now in our hands, was communicated to Moses our teacher of blessed memory."

ט' אמב"ש שזאת התורה לא תהא מחלפת ולא תהא תורה אחרת מאת הבורא ית"ש.

"9. I believe with sincere faith that this Law will never be exchanged, and that no other Law will ever be given by God."

[p. 54]

י' אמב"ש שהבו' ית"ש יודע כל מעשה בני אדם וכל מחשבותם שנאמר היוצר יחד לבם המבין אל כל מעשיהם.

"10. I believe with sincere faith that God knows all the actions of human beings and all their thoughts."

יא' אמב"ש שהבו' ית"ש גומל טוב לשומרי מצותיו ומעניש לעוברי מצותיו.

"11. I believe with sincere faith that God does good to those who keep His commandments, and punishes those who transgress them."

יב' אמב"ש בביאת המשיח ואף ע"פ שיתמהמה עם כל זה אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא.

"12. I believe with sincere faith that the Messiah will come, and although he still tarries, I nevertheless hope daily that he will come."

יג' אמב"ש שתהיה תחית המתים בעת שתעלה רצון מאת הבורא ית"ש ויתעלה זכרו לעד ולנצח נצחים.

"13. I believe with sincere faith that there will be a revival of the dead, when the time of God's will for it shall have come."

182. ***Where does Scripture teach that God is the Creator of the universe?***

Holy Scripture begins with the history of creation:

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ וכו'

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth, etc." [Gen. 1:1]

אנכי ה' עשה כל נטה שמים לבדי רקע הארץ מאתי.

"I, the Lord, made all things; I stretched out the heavens alone and spread out the earth, by Myself alone." (Isa. 44:24)

[p. 55]

כי הנה יוצר הרים ובורא רוח עשה שחר עיפה....

"Behold, He is the former of the mountains and the creator of the wind ... He made the dawn and the darkness, etc." (Amos 4:13)

(See especially Job 12:7–10.)

183. ***Out of what, and by what, did God create the world?***

Out of nothing, and by His mere will, He created all things; "He spoke and it was, He commanded and it stood there." (Ps. 33:9).

184. ***Does not reason itself already teach the existence of a Creator?***

Certainly; for a thing cannot create itself,[152] and an object such as the universe can only have been called into existence by an almighty and all-wise Being.

185. ***In what respect is our article of faith important besides?***

With respect to the *miracles* which Scripture narrates, and with reference to which it obliges us to believe in God.

186. ***Where does it oblige us to this?***

In that passage:

[153]עד אנה ינאצני העם הזה ועד אנה לא יאמינו בי בכל האתות אשר עשיתי בקרבו.

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[152]See חובות הלבבות [*Ḥovot ha-Levavot*], Gate of יחוד [Unity], ch. 5.

[153]With regard to this verse, three errors are to be corrected in our editions of the Midrash, Bamidbar Rabbah ch. 7, p. 168a: it must read בי for לי, האותות for נפלאות, and עשיתי for עושה. (Although in Kennicott several manuscripts have לי, as does Buxtorf's Concordance.) Exod. 3:20 was in [the writer's] mind. —

"How long will this people provoke Me, and not believe in Me, for all the signs which I have done in their midst?" (Num. 14:11)[154]

[p. 56] **187.** ***But in what way is the creation important for the acknowledgment of those miracles?***[155]

Because these, as merely small copies of the creation, deserve all the more credence. An omnipotence that could produce the gigantic edifice of creation could surely all the more perform those miracles of which Scripture reports to us.

אתה עשית את השמים ואת הארץ בכחך הגדול... אשר שמת אתות ומופתים בארץ מצרים וכו'

"Lord God, behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power ... nothing at all can be too wondrous for Thee .... Thou didst signs and wonders in the land of Egypt." (Jer. 32:18–21)[156]

188. ***Can you also cite me a biblical passage concerning God's preservation of the world, mentioned in the first article of faith?***

כלם אליך ישברון לתת אכלם בעתו. תתן להם ילקטון תפתח ידך ישבעון טוב:

"All hope in Thee, that Thou wilt give them their food in its season. Thou givest it to them, they gather it; Thou openest Thy hand, and they are satisfied with good." (Ps. 104:27, 28)

ואתה מחיה את כלם.

"And Thou nourishest all." (Neh. 9:6)

ופקדתך שמרה רוחי:

"Thy watchfulness preserves my spirit." (Job 10:11)[157]

[p. 57] **189.** ***What does the conclusion of the first article of faith teach?***

That God still creates and works all things, and never grows weary in His activity.

ה' בורא קצות הארץ לא ייעף ולא ייגע אין חקר לתבונתו.

"The Creator of the ends of the earth does not grow faint and does not grow weary; His inventiveness is unsearchable." (Isa. 40:28)

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[154]Admittedly, as Mendelssohn teaches, miracles cannot prove eternal truths; yet a distinction must be made not only among the *miracles which prove*, but also among the *truths for which* they are meant to prove — and in general it must be noted that it is indeed not the miracles alone, but the miracles in combination with that famous *credential* of the giving of the Law, which are adduced as proofs of the divine! More in my lecture delivered on the Sabbath of שלח [Shelaḥ] 5593: "Die unendliche Wunderkraft Gottes" [The Infinite Miraculous Power of God].

[155]Translator: this page is misnumbered "98" in the print; it is p. 56.

[156]Translator: the words quoted are from Jer. 32:17 and 32:20. The print sets a double-asterisk marker here, but the only note on this page (marked with a single asterisk) refers to the Hebrew of Num. 14:11 on the preceding page; it is given there.

[157]Translator: the verse is Job 10:12.

ה' תשפת שלום לנו כי גם כל מעשינו פעלת לנו.

"Lord, You let us rest in peace, for even all our deeds You work for us." — (Isa. 26:12)

290. [158] ***What does it mean in the second article of faith: God is unique and one, and is therein incomparable?***

He is not only no being composed of parts, but also a being unique in itself, incomparable.[159]

שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד.

"Hear, O Israel, the Eternal, our God, is One." (Deut. 6:4)

191. ***What does the conclusion of our article of faith say, that God was, is, and will be?***

That God's unity is at the same time an eternal, infinite one, whereas among human beings individual creatures cease and die out.[160]

192. ***What does the third article of faith teach?***

That God is not a corporeal being and therefore knows no bodily infirmities.[161]

[p. 58] **193.** ***But Holy Scripture does use bodily expressions and figures of speech of God?***

These are merely the figurative designations of certain attributes and workings of God; and our Sages already teach concerning this:

דברה תורה כלשון בני אדם.

"The Law here only makes use of human language." (BT Sanhedrin 90b)

גדול כחן של נביאים שמדמים צורה ליוצרה.

"Great is the power of the Prophets: they could compare the creature to its Creator." (Bereshit Rabbah 27, beginning; Bamidbar Rabbah 19; see also Mekhilta on Exod. 19:18)[162]

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[158] Translator: Misprint in the original for 190.

[159] See חובות הלבבות [*Ḥovot ha-Levavot*], in שער היחוד [*Sha'ar ha-Yiḥud*], ch. 8 and following.

[160] This comes out more clearly in the יגדל [*Yigdal*], in the verse וגם אין סוף לאחדותו ["and there is also no end to His unity"]: whereas a single human individual ceases for the physical world here below, God's unity knows no such ceasing; it is at the same time infinite. —

[161] In the יגדל [*Yigdal*] this article of faith is presented in a difficult way in the verse אין לו דמות הגוף ואינו גוף ["He has no likeness of the body and is not a body"]; for we would rather expect, in the order, first גוף and then דמות הגוף, [i.e.:] God is not only no body, but does not even have anything *resembling* a body? But הגוף with the article seems to designate a coarse animal body, while גוף designates *any* body, however fine; and accordingly the order would be right: God has nothing similar to an *ordinary* animal body; indeed, He is *no body at all*. — —

[162] See *Moreh Nevukhim* [Guide of the Perplexed], Part 1, ch. 46. But already the Targumim usually did not render such expressions literally, but *interpretively*, in a manner befitting the majesty of God. Maimonides also recognizes the Targum as the most important basis of biblical interpretation. Cf. *Moreh* 1:27, 33. — But the Kabbalists, too, had long done this; cf. the solemn preface to the Great Idra (Zohar נשא [Naso], p. 127b; שערי אורה [*Sha'arei Orah*], Preface; Recanati on Gen. 19:22; R. Judah Ḥayyat on מערכת אלקי' [*Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut*], p. 34; cf. also חנוך [*Ḥanokh*], Preface.

149. [163] ***What does the conclusion say: and nothing is to be compared to Him?***

That even among incorporeal beings, the angels and souls, He has no equal.

כי מי בשחק יערך לה' ידמה לה' בבני אלים.

"Who in the clouds is equal to the Lord, resembles Him among the mighty?" (Ps. 89:7)

ואל מי תדמיון אל ומה דמות תערכו לו.

"To whom will you compare God, what image will you set beside Him?" (Isa. 40:18)

[p. 59] **195.** ***If God is no body, how could He show Himself to the Prophets?***

He showed Himself not to their fleshly eye, but to the spiritual and true power of sight, which perceives even the invisible, and even then only in images and not according to His true essence.[164][165]

[p. 60] **196.** ***How is this contradiction to be understood: one time it says*** כי לא ראיתם כל תמונה ***["for you saw no form at all"] (Deut. 4:15), but another time*** ותמונת ה' יביט ***["and the form of the Lord he beholds"] (Num. 12:8)?***

The *people* could have been led into error by visions; to Moses they could do no harm; he would never have confused the image with the true essence, since its invisibility had been made clear to him. Moreover, at Sinai a magnificent appearance of God, such as had never been before, had taken place (Deut. 5:19–23). Appearance in *images* is a far less significant thing. —

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[163] Translator: Misprint in the original for 194.

[164] But what then will צלם אלקי' ["the image of God"] mean? *Wessely*, on the Book of Wisdom 2:23, did not, as a connoisseur of language, write any such nonsense as it might seem if one compares it with the philosophical-sounding interpretation of the *Moreh* (1:1), which Wessely himself had *earlier* copied out (יין לבנון [*Yein Levanon*] on Pirkei Avot 3:18). — Compare only passages such as Deut. 21:23; Vayikra Rabbah ch. 34 (*Hillel's care of the body*); Zohar תולדות [Toledot] p. 140 (bottom) —! — יתרו [Yitro] 90a. See also בחיי [Baḥya] on Gen. 1:26; ראב"ן in מאמר השכל [*Ma'amar ha-Sekhel*] on the first Commandment; Manasseh b. Israel, נשמת חיים [*Nishmat Ḥayyim*] 1:1; Azulai, חסד לאברהם [*Ḥesed le-Avraham*] 4:11. — God is indeed no body, but when He appears to man He takes on a — as the most perfect of shapes — *human* shape. Compare the kabbalistic אדם קדמון [*Adam Kadmon*, Primordial Man]. — "But how can one speak of form and shape in a *spirit*?" Foolish question! We do not even know what a spirit is, so as to be able to say with certainty what it can be and represent, and what not. — Let us content ourselves for the present with passages such as Ezek. 1:26; Dan. 8:16. Thus the Talmudic צלם דמות תבניתו (BT Ketubbot 8a) contradicts the Maimonidean principle concerning תבנית (*Moreh* 1:3); precisely תבניתו, among these synonyms, refers to God. — Nor does the principle לשון תורה לחוד וכו' ["the language of the Torah is one thing, etc."] help where the Talmud makes use of pure Hebrew. — Long after this difficulty had struck me, I noticed that R. *Saul*, too, in his queries to *Abarbanel* (Question 2), puts it to him for an answer. But this answer is just as daring as the principle in the *Moreh* itself. — It is to be taken as a rule that only *Talmud*, *Midrash* and *Zohar* — only they must be understood — contain the natural and correct interpretation of Holy Scripture; a wholly heterogeneous element over against the Bible was the *philosophy of paganism*, on which the later interpretation of the divine word is based. This philosophical interpretation did indeed rest on a noble intention; it was a momentary necessity (see עקדה [*Akedat Yitzḥak*], Preface); — but it brought us neither a correct knowledge of *God* nor of *language*. — Whoever wishes to understand the one passage in the Law, let him seek the interpretation only in another passage of the Law! (Bereshit Rabbah 19.) — כל דברי תורה צריכין זה לזה. ["All the words of the Torah need one another."]

[165] Translator: Wessely is Naphtali Herz (Hartwig) Wessely (1725–1805), author of the Hebrew commentary *Ruaḥ Ḥen* on the Wisdom of Solomon and of *Yein Levanon* on Avot. R. Saul is Saul ha-Kohen Ashkenazi of Candia, whose philosophical questions Isaac Abarbanel answered (printed Venice, 1574).

197. ***What does the fourth article of faith teach?***

That God is the first and the last, that He is without beginning and without end; for it says:

כה אמר ה' מלך ישראל וגאלו ה' צבאות אני ראשון ואני אחרון.

> "Thus says the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: I am the first and the last." (Isa. 44:6)

אתה ה' אבינו גאלנו מעולם שמך.

> "You, Lord, our Father, our Redeemer; from eternity is Your name." (Isa. 63:16)

ואתה הוא ושנותיך לא יתמו.

> "You remain ever the same, and Your years do not pass away." (Ps. 102:28)

[p. 61] **198.** ***But can we then conceive of a thing that has no beginning?***

We cannot conceive of it because we, as finite beings here below, who see all other beings around us come into being and vanish, have no concept of the infinite.

199. ***What teaching follows from this article of faith?***

That the divine power is still the same as that of renowned antiquity, even if it now makes itself known in other, seemingly natural ways; and that the wicked man can just as little flee from God, or save himself through a violent death, as the righteous man who is *tried* here below may despair.

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> "I kill and will make alive again, I wound and will heal again . . . and nothing rescues from My power; for I raise My hand to heaven and say: As surely as I am eternal!" (Deut. 32:39, 40)

200. ***Why, according to the fifth article of faith, is our worship due to no one but God?***

Because there is only *one* God and Creator, and apart from Him, consequently, everything consists only of created beings, which must themselves first worship God; it therefore rightly says:

זבח לאלהים יחרם בלתי לה' לבדו.

> "Whoever sacrifices to any divine being other than to God alone shall be put to death." (Exod. 22:19)

אתה הראת לדעת כי ה' הוא האלהים אין עוד מלבדו.

> "It has been shown to you, so that you may know that the Lord is God and there is none other besides Him." (Deut. 4:35)

201. ***But are there not certain prayers addressed to angels*** [p. 62] ***in which we ask for their intercession for us with God?***

Even such prayers, of which there are a very few in late writings, were nonetheless based only on the thought of God and on the most anxious avoidance of any deification of any being other than God.[166]

202. ***How did Judaism demonstrate its strict observance of the article of faith under discussion?***

In that, among the countless martyrs who sacrificed themselves for the truth in its midst, it paid divine veneration to not a single one; that it recognizes no single human being as free of fault, not even a Moses; that the grave of this Lawgiver remained a secret, so that it might give no occasion for idolatry and for unlawful pilgrimages and processions.[167] —

203. ***But does Judaism permit the worship of a holy spirit?***

No, for this too is rightly regarded as something created, as having first gone forth from God, and it takes such varied forms that its worship would necessarily become a punishable [p. 63] polytheism.[168] — Even a worship of the *highest angel*, whom Holy Scripture mentions so often, even with the remark that one should not oppose him because God's Name is in him (Exod. 23:21), was not permitted.

204. ***How can that be demonstrated?***

Partly from the fact that God after all called him His *messenger*, partly from the fact that the Lawgiver did not want this companion at all and desired *God Himself* near him.[169] But if the pure beings of heaven deserve no worship, it will surely befit the one *born of woman* all the less.

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[166]As concerns the well-known prayer מכניסי רחמים [*Makhnisei Raḥamim*], see רקנטי [Recanati] on שלח [Shelaḥ] (beginning): ידעת מה שאמרו רז"ל וכו' ["You know what our Sages of blessed memory said, etc."]. Compare also R. Azariah [de' Rossi], מאור עינים [*Me'or Einayim*], section ימי עולם [*Yemei Olam*], ch. 9 (Berlin ed.), p. 289b. Passages such as BT Bava Batra 75b, עתידין צדיקים שנקראו על שמו של הקב"ה ["In the future the righteous will be called by the name of the Holy One, blessed be He"], or עתידין צדיקים שיאמרו לפניהם קדוש ["In the future 'Holy' will be said before the righteous"], are not to be taken literally. A proof: the city of Jerusalem, too, is counted among those bearing the name of God! — On the strange passage in the Mekhilta on Exod. 15:1, לה' ולא לבשר ודם ["to the Lord and not to flesh and blood"], see my *Apokr. Einl.* [Introduction to the Apocrypha], p. 51, note 1.

[167]Cf. my remarks on the *second* Commandment in the present book, pp. 15 and 16; also Bereshit Rabbah ch. 96 (beginning) on the sin of the *deification of man*.

[168]See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 101 and 102.

[169]Cf., on אל תמר בו ["do not rebel against him"], the Talmudic explanation אל תמירני בו ["do not exchange Me for him"], BT Sanhedrin 38b. Compare the remarkable saying that the Talmud there puts in the mouth of Moses: א"ל הימנותא בידן! דאפילו בפרונקא נמי לא קבלניה ["He said to him: We hold fast to our faith! For we would not accept him even as a courier"] —! That the Kabbalah has been misunderstood on this point is due to the ignorance of those who read only words but do not penetrate into the sense. No philosophy has demonstrated the unity of God more strongly than this one; but it naturally lets man reach the goal step by step, and lets God show Himself to him at first in all kinds of shapes; recall the saying of the Pesikta Rabbati ch. 21, אם יאמר לך ברא דזניתא, תרין אלהים אינון, אימר ליה אנא הוא דימא, אנא הוא דסיני ["If the son of a harlot says to you, 'They are two gods,' say to him: I am He of the Sea, I am He of Sinai"] (see Mekhilta on Exod. 15:3), and the well-known verses: המשילוך ברוב חזיונות / הנך אחד בכל דמיונות ["They likened You in many visions; behold, You are One in all the likenesses"]. —

מה אנוש כי יזכה וכי יצדק ילוד אשה. הן בקדשו לא יאמין וכו'.

"How then can man be pure, the one born of woman be righteous? He does not trust even His holy ones, etc." (Job 14:15, 16)[170]

205. ***What does the sixth article of faith teach?***

That all the words of the Prophets are *truth*.

[p. 64] **206.** ***What does that mean?***

That they did not pass off their own words as divine, that they delivered to us not empty dreams but real messages of a higher Being; and it is precisely by this that the true Prophets are distinguished from the false (נביאי שקר [*nevi'ei sheker*]), who, as seducers of the people, always set themselves up against the true ones.

207. ***By what were the true Prophets distinguished from the false even outwardly?***

The former were stern, preached the observance of the Law with zeal, and mostly announced the punishments decreed by God; the latter, on the other hand, preached an easier worship of God and mostly announced peace and prosperity.[171]

208. ***What, then, are real*** **Prophets*****?***

Persons who were deemed worthy of a special nearness to God, in which, in all kinds of appearances and through a clear address from God, sometimes in a kind of slumber, sometimes also in the waking state, they learned the future and proclaimed it to the people, since the Prophets were at the same time orators of the people.[172]

209. ***But should it really be possible to become aware of the future in advance?***

[p. 65] No one denies the human soul a faculty of presentiment; given the particularly *pious* and *secluded* way of life of the Prophets, nothing at all stood in the way of the visionary power of their souls.

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[170]Translator: The verse is Job 15:14–15; the original misprints "Hiob 14, 15, 16."

[171]Cf. passages such as 1 Kings 22:8 and following; Amos 4:4, 5; ch. 7:10; Jer. 23:16, 17; 27:9 and following; ch. 28. —! Ezek. 13:10, 10, and the like. For this reason, too, the people were more attached to the false prophets than to the true: Isa. 30:10; 42:19; Hos. 9:8. See JT Avodah Zarah ch. 1, p. 39b.

[172]In the latter respect especially they were called נביאים [*nevi'im*], from נבא, to let speech *flow*, to deliver *fluently*. There could be many good *orators*; hence the name נביא, with the addition שקר ["falsehood"], also served to designate the *false* Prophets; the names that designate the true Prophets more specifically are therefore: רואה, חוזה, צופה, איש אלקים [seer, visionary, watchman, man of God].

300. [173] ***But should it not cast suspicion on the matter of prophecy that God also communicated Himself in* dreams*?***

The *prophetic dreams* were entirely different from the ordinary ones; they came only in a certain stupor (תרדמה [*tardemah*]); the Prophet was clearly conscious of himself, and with the appearance there was also joined a *clear address* from God;[174] in this state the Prophet was indeed as though firmly spellbound to the object, and often seized by great fear, which the *nearness of God* produces (מורא גדול זו גלוי שכינה ["'great awe' — this is the revelation of the Shekhinah"]), but by no means was he in a state of absence of reason. —

211. ***For what purpose did God show the future in advance?***

Precisely in order to move the people to amendment, to prevent evil fates, and to make Israel worthy of better prophecies and destinies.

212. ***Did such influence of the spirit of God cease with the older Prophets?***

No, it not only continued in the Babylonian captivity, but showed itself in manifold ways even in the latest times, so that posterity learned, almost from experience, to believe in the divine element of former times.[175]

[p. 66] **213.** ***But for all that, one did not see God in reality?***

We do not see our *soul* either, and yet its existence is undeniable; it thinks, it speaks in us, it sets all the parts of our body in voluntary motion, and it is our real self; so too God is invisible, and yet He showed Himself to the Prophets in certain images that corresponded to the content of each particular prophecy.

214. ***Should we curiously strive to learn the future?***

No; rather we should walk sincerely before God and leave the future wholly to Him.

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[173] Translator: Misprint in the original for 210.

[174] Two of my addresses treat this in detail: "*What is to be thought of dreams?*" (Manuscript.)

[175] Recall the names נשמתא דנשמתא, טייעא, מגיד, שכל הפועל, רוח הקדש, בת קול [soul of the soul, the Arab (*Tayya'a*), the *maggid*, the active intellect, the holy spirit, the heavenly voice] and the like. See my *Apokr. Einl.*, pp. 21–23; אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 99–103.

215. ***But Moses did express the wish (Num. 11:29): would that the whole people of the Lord were Prophets?***

But he added: *that the Eternal would put His spirit upon them*; in the same way it is said of the future, too: *that God will pour out His spirit upon all flesh*, that our sons and daughters shall prophesy, our young men and old men shall have prophetic dreams, etc.[176][177]

216. ***But what would be the advantage of this universal gift of prophecy?***

The wavering knowledge of God gained in the world through the contemplation of nature and laborious philosophical inferences will cease, and a clear, immediate [p. 67] perception will take its place, which will raise us above all doubts and grant the same conviction as the men of God of old possessed.[178][179]

217. ***What, then, follows from what has been said so far?***

That we must believe in the Prophets as divine messengers, and revere their writings as the divine word.[180]

האמינו בה' אלהיכם .... האמינו בנביאיו והצליחו.

> "Believe in the Eternal your God, and believe in His Prophets, and you will prosper." (2 Chron. 20:20)

218. ***What does the seventh article of faith teach us?***

That the prophetic gift of Moses in particular was a truly divine one, and that he was the greatest of the Prophets with respect both to his predecessors and to his successors.

119. [181] ***If the words of* all *Prophets are true — as is already stated in the preceding article of faith — why would the prophetic gift of Moses not have been a true one?***

Precisely because Moses is named here as the father of the Prophets, and all the Prophets were, as it were, only Moses continued,[182] it must here [p. 68] be noted, as it were, in addition, that the words

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[176]To this also belongs the concluding promise of prophecy: *Behold, I will send you the prophet Elijah*, i.e. I will give you back, in the great future, the lost spirit of *prophecy*. (See my *Erb.*, annual vol. 2, Address 21, pp. 352–54, and the present book on the twelfth article of faith.)

[177]Translator: The verses alluded to are Joel 3:1 (2:28 in English Bibles) and, in the note, Mal. 3:23 (4:5 in English Bibles).

[178]See my *Erb.*, annual vol. 2, Address 17, p. 288. Recall also the apt remark in ch. 53: "*Everything remains struck with blindness until God Himself opens the eyes*." Cf. Job 42:1–6. — ! —

[179]Translator: The "remark in ch. 53" is Bereshit Rabbah 53:14 (on Gen. 21:19): "All are presumed blind until the Holy One, blessed be He, opens their eyes."

[180]See *Erb.*, annual vol. 2, Address 22, pp. 381 and 82.

[181]Translator: Misprint in the original for 219.

[182]See Deut. 18:15, נביא מקרבך מאחיך כמני וכו' ["A prophet from your midst, of your brethren, like me, etc."]; see also Shemot Rabbah ch. 42, וכל שהיה מתנבא מעין נבואתו של משה היה וכו' ["and whoever prophesied, prophesied from the wellspring of Moses' prophecy, etc."], with which Shemot Rabbah ch. 28 (end) is connected: מה שהנביאים עתידין להתנבאות קבלו מהר סיני ["what the Prophets were destined to prophesy, they received from Mount Sinai"]. In the person of *Moses* all his successors received the spirit of prophecy.

of the Prophets were truth because their very *source*, the prophecy of the father of all prophecy, that of Moses, had been a *true* one; the same spirit that lived in Moses then lived on in the whole chain of men of God.

220. ***Did Moses then also have*** **predecessors** ***in prophecy?***

Certainly; the Patriarchs were Prophets, insofar as they were instructed by an immediate revelation of God.

221. ***In what respect was Moses the greatest of all Prophets?***

He had the very clearest revelation of God, without image, riddle, dreams and the like;[183][184] he had it in full consciousness; he spoke with God as often as he found it necessary, and was always master of his gift of prophecy;[185] but he also received *laws* by prophetic means, whereas his successors were only Prophets and not recipients of laws.[186]

[p. 69] **222.** ***By what was he worthy of such distinctions?***

Through his outstandingly virtuous character, his unexampled modesty, especially his tireless, self-sacrificing love for the people, unconditional obedience to God, restless faithfulness to duty, but above all through his boundless abstinence and his way of life withdrawn into God. He was the one who could say: *And now, would that You might forgive their sin! If not, blot me out of the book that You have written.* (Exod. 32:32)

223. ***Were the other Prophets otherwise all equal to one another?***

Among these, too, one had certain advantages over another.[187]

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[183]See Exod. 33:11; Num. 12:6–8; Deut. 35:10; Vayikra Rabbah ch. 1 (end); Zohar בהעלותך [Beha'alotekha] (end). My אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 102 (note).

[184]Translator: "Deut. 35:10" is a misprint for Deut. 34:10.

[185]Cf., by contrast, 2 Sam. 7:3 with verse 4 and following. — On the difference between Moses and the other Prophets, the following treat in their remarks on the gift of prophecy: (*Kuzari*, Part 2, 9–14; Part 5 (towards the end); Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:1; הל' יסודי התורה [Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah], ch. 7–10; *Moreh Nevukhim* 2, ch. 39 and following; עקרים [*Sefer ha-Ikkarim*], Part 3, ch. 8 and following; Nachmanides, Baḥya, Abarbanel on Num. 12:6–8; עקדה [*Akedat Yitzḥak*], Gate 76.

[186]In general — since in our days the correct concepts of the task of rabbis and teachers of the people have been lost, and their purpose is misunderstood almost everywhere — Jer. 18:18 (תורה מכהן — עצה מחכם — דבר מנביא ["instruction from the priest — counsel from the wise — the word from the prophet"]) is to be heeded, so that one may not set the demands on the rabbi, as on the preacher (מגיד [*maggid*]), too high. — Even on earth *one* messenger can seldom carry out two commissions at once. —

[187]See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 101 and 102 (*note*), but compare, besides the proof-texts cited there, the following as well: Sifre on Deut. 1:24; Zohar בראשית [Bereshit] p. 33b, בשקל הקדש דא רוח הקדש ["'by the holy shekel' — this is the holy spirit"]; Zohar לך לך [Lekh Lekha] p. 85a; Zohar תרומה [Terumah] p. 170a, לזמנין נבואה וכו' ["sometimes prophecy, etc."]; Tikkunim to the Zohar Ḥadash (Amsterdam ed.) p. 68b, אית נבואה וכו' ["there is prophecy, etc."]. In the said note the numeral 1 (line 3 from the bottom) marks the proof-text for line 14 (from the bottom), that *prophetesses* too were distinguished from prophets. Cf. also Wessely, רוח חן [*Ruaḥ Ḥen*] on the Book of Wisdom 1:4 and ch. 7:27.

224. ***What, according to the eighth fundamental doctrine, are we to believe?***

That the Law, as we have it in our hands, was given to us by God through *Moses*.

225. ***Explain this to me more fully!***

The written Law — all that is contained in the five books of Moses, *narrative*, *laws*, *prophecies* [p. 70] — as well as the orally transmitted Tradition of the teaching of Moses, were revealed to him by God, and he added nothing of his own impulse.

226. ***What do our Sages teach about this?***

"He forfeits salvation who says that the Law is not of divine origin (מן השמים [*min ha-shamayim*, "from Heaven"]); indeed, whoever says that the Law is from God, but with the exception of some passage, some verse, etc., which Moses composed himself — to him already is applied that passage (Num. 15:31), '*he has despised the word of God*,' as well as the punishment of complete extirpation threatened (in the same place)."[188]

227. ***How does Holy Scripture express itself about the divine origin of the Law?***

It was so well known to the contemporaries of Moses, as eyewitnesses, that Moses often appealed to it and said:

"Take heed to yourself and guard yourself well, lest you forget the day .... when you stood before the Eternal your God at Horeb .... the Lord spoke with you out of the midst of the fire .... and declared to you His covenant."[189][190]

228. ***Can you cite for me some proofs of the*** **divine origin** ***of the Law?***

Several.

[p. 71] I. The restless contemporaries of Moses would — just as they often reproached Moses with the exodus from Egypt as his own high-handed work — also have *contested* the Law and denied its divine origin, had they not themselves been *eyewitnesses* of his undeniably divine appearance.

II. The Mosaic Law contains at times very *strange*[191] precepts, incomprehensible to human reason, which stand before *our* understanding like the most absurd decrees of power and expressions of

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[188] Translator: BT Sanhedrin 99a; cf. Maimonides, Hilkhot Teshuvah 3:8.

[189] A correct understanding of the act of lawgiving, or of the narrative in Exod. 19, invalidates every suspicion against the literal truth of that holy document. One of my preparatory addresses for the Festival of the Giving of the Law has clearly demonstrated this: "*The Infallibility of the Appearance at the Giving of the Law.*" Delivered on the Sabbath before the Feast of Weeks 5597 [1837]. (Manuscript.)

[190] Translator: Deut. 4:9–13, quoted selectively.

[191] See the present textbook, Q. 32. — The strangeness of the Mosaic teachings is expressed with displeasure not only by that Persian statesman (Esther 3:8) in the accusation ודתיהם שנות מכל עם ["and their laws are diverse from those of every people"], but also by that well-known passage of the Roman historian Tacitus (*Histories*, Book 5), in the words: "Moses gave them laws *contrary to those of all other mortals*; among them everything is profane that is sacred among us," etc. — See my *Reden* [Discourses], year 1, Discourse 19, p. 302.

mere will; but what human beings cannot grasp, and what no one apart from the Mosaic Law has ever invented, could surely also not have been composed by any human being!

III. With regard to the *distinguishing marks* or signs *of the clean animals* given in the Law (Lev. 11; Deut. 14), the whole animal kingdom is divided into four classes, of which three have the *one* mark of cleanness, and the fourth class the *other*. (See Lev. 11:4, 5, 6, 7, and Deut. 14:5–7.) But how could Moses know that in the whole wide world there were only those *four* kinds of animals? Perhaps somewhere a *fifth* may be discovered that would have *both* marks of cleanness? — But no such fifth has yet been found. Indeed, already the book Sifre (on ראה [*Re'eh*]) says on this passage: Was Moses then a huntsman or a marksman? Rather, from this it [p. 72] follows that the Law is of heavenly origin.[192][193] — An unmistakable proof of this higher origin of the teaching of Moses, however, is also:

IV. The *rewards* that are promised in it, as well as the *punishments* that are threatened. As reward there are promised, for example, *rain, dew* (Deut. 11:14) (see Exod. 23:25), *unusual fruitfulness* of human beings, animals and plants (Lev. 25:20–22); as punishment, their most wondrous curtailment or complete failure. But how would Moses, who was (Num. 12:3) the most modest of all mortals, not have shrunk from uttering such statements, which border almost on *foolhardiness* — for which our Moses was surely far too calm and level-headed? Thus the punishment of *childlessness* is set down with certainty for some of the forbidden marriages (Lev. 20:20, 21). From *one and the same water-ordeal* (Num. 5:27, 27, 28) *death and life*, indeed even *offspring*, are promised, according as the suspected woman was guilty or innocent. For the three annual pilgrimages, with which the absence of *all male persons* from house and home was necessarily bound up and strictly prescribed, the *bold* promise is given (Exod. 34:24) that *during this time no enemy would covet the land*.[194] Would Moses, of his own accord, have [p. 73] ventured such statements, have staked his teaching in this way and undermined it with his own hands? — ! —

V. The *times and destinies* of Israel are foretold in the Law literally *just as* they have come to pass in history. No presentiment, no human glance into the future, however shrewd, is able to foresee and determine what is to come so specifically; so that the wisest of men, on the most solemn day of Israel, at the sight of the Temple about to be dedicated — the final goal of God's guidance of Israel up to then — could not refrain from crying out aloud (קול גדול [with a loud voice]) and most solemnly before the whole congregation (1 Kings 8:55, 56): "Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, just as He promised; *there has not failed one of all His gracious promises which He promised through Moses His servant*."

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[192]I have borrowed this proof from the גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], Part 1, Section 7, ch. 7.

[193]Translator: The Sifre passage is Sifre Deuteronomy §100 (on Deut. 14:7); *Gan Na'ul* (1765) is a work of Naphtali Herz Wessely.

[194]ולא יחמד ["neither shall any man covet"], that is, not even have the *desire* for conquest; only He who created hearts and has them in His power can give such promises. —

VI. Only to the divine origin of the Law can its wondrous power and its *incomprehensible continuance* be ascribed, in which it has maintained itself through all the millennia-long, unheard-of afflictions of Israel, while contemporary, indeed even far younger peoples, together with their laws, have long since vanished from the earth.[195] How would it have been possible even in the remotest sense, if the germ of the [p. 74] divine did not lie at its foundation here, that the perpetually assailed teaching of Moses could have withstood all obstacles in this way?

VII. A *continuance of Revelation* over many centuries, and that entirely in the spirit of *Mosaism*, is an especially noteworthy proof of the divine origin of the Law. As Moses foretold (Deut. 18:18) that God would raise up from Israel prophets like him, in his spirit, so history confirmed it (Amos 2:10);[196] and such a *gift of prophecy* is the surest guarantee of the divinity of Religion (Isa. 46:10; 48:3–7). Whoever might doubt God's self-communication to Moses, long since deceased, could learn to believe in the divinity of Mosaism through the Revelation of God in Israel that continued long after his death; but with the cessation of prophecy this faith had to find a new support in the fact that *Mosaism* became the basis of the religions of the nations that arose later.[197]

VIII. Without doubt Moses would have appointed one *of his sons*, and not a stranger, Joshua, as his successor, had he not been bound to his heavenly [p. 75] Lawgiver; and supposing he had found them unfit for his great office, he could after all have placed Joshua at their side, just as his brother Aaron was given to him as helper when he himself raised his own unfitness for his mission. In any case, had he been dependent on himself, he would have hastened the crossing over the Jordan in order to see the land so longingly desired, for which he had to pray so vainly (Deut. 3:22 and following).[198]

IX. Moses found himself, in several *legal questions* addressed to him, put *in perplexity*, and had first himself to *obtain the decision from his Lawgiver* (Lev. 24:12; Num. 9:8; 15:34; 27:5). Had he himself been the lawgiver, he would never have exposed himself to such disgrace and laid bare such ignorance. — Finally,

X. the *modesty* of Moses, already mentioned here, can be for us the most reliable guarantee that he could not possibly have passed off laws which he himself had invented, or, as some erroneously believed, borrowed from the Egyptians, as such as he had received from God. Such dishonesty

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[195]Think of the concluding words of that historian (Ludwig Holberg's *Jewish History*, Part II, conclusion): "*Truly, it is incomprehensible that a scattered, a derided people, persecuted with fire and sword, could grow to some millions and, despite all adversities, preserve its ancient language, its laws, customs and usages until now. Here neither the causes that are commonly adduced nor other historical examples suffice; rather one is compelled to say: this is the finger of God!*" —

[196]Translator: The verse meant is Amos 2:11, "And I raised up of your sons for prophets."

[197]See my *Erb.*, year 2, Discourse 18, p. 312. — That these daughters are not to supplant the mother, but rather, according to God's intention, are ever more to strive after her as their model, will be discussed in treating the next article of faith.

[198]Translator: Moses' prayer to enter the land begins at Deut. 3:23.

does not accord with the whole character of Moses; and that this character is portrayed unfalsified, the so plain and innocent narrative of the sacred history in general may again be our guarantee.[199]

[p. 76] **229.** ***What does the ninth article of faith teach us?***[200]

That our Law will never be supplanted by another, and that God will never give any other law at all.

230. ***Can you cite me a proof-text on this from the Holy Scriptures?***[201]

Yes indeed; it says:

ואני זאת בריתי אותם אמר ה' רוחי אשר עליך ודברי אשר שמתי בפיך לא ימושו מפיך ומפי זרעך ומפי זרע זרעך אמר ה' מעתה ועד עולם.

> "And as for me, this my covenant … with them, says the Lord: my spirit that is upon you, and my words … shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your children and children's children, says the Lord, from now on and for ever." (Isa. 59:[21])

קדם ידעתי מעדתיך כי לעולם יסדתם.

> "From of old I have known of your testimonies that you have established them for eternity." (Ps. 119:152)[202]

שלא תאמרו משה אחר עומד ומביא לנו תורה אחרת מן השמים, כבר אני מודיע אתכם לא בשמים היא, שלא נשתייר הימנה בשמים.

> "Do not say: *another* Moses could arise and bring us another teaching from heaven; I tell you in advance, it is not in heaven; nothing of it has remained behind in heaven." — (Deuteronomy Rabbah ch. 8)

230. ***What is a particular chief proof of the unceasing validity of our Law?***

That the prophet Ezekiel, who in the last eight chapters of his book foretells the great, long-yearned-for future of Israel, especially the building of a third Temple, nevertheless arranges this Temple, together with the worship in it, entirely according to the Mosaic Law. —

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[199] A little work cited in the religious textbook of Naphtali Benedict, p. 106, in the note, under the title תורה מן השמים [*Torah min ha-Shamayim*], published in Vienna in 1818, in which the *most satisfying and irrefutable proofs for the divine origin of the Law of Moses* are said to be adduced, has *not* come before my eyes.

[200] Translator: Misprinted "129" in the original.

[201] Translator: Printed "30" in the original; the following question is again numbered 230, so from here on the original's numbering runs one behind.

[202] See my *Erb.*, year 2, Discourse 21, p. 364 and following.

[p. 77] **231.** ***But what objection has been raised against our article of faith?***

That God expressly promised the revelation of a *new covenant*, namely in that prophecy (Jer. 31:31–33): "Days will come, says the Lord, and I will make with the house of Israel and of Judah a *new covenant*."

232. ***Is this objection well founded?***

No; it rests on a misunderstanding; for the prophet himself gives the interpretation of that prophecy, adding (v. 33): "But as for this covenant that I will make … *I will instill my Law* (תורתי) *into them and write it upon their heart*," etc. God thus does not mean, in the *literal* sense, to give a new teaching in place of the old, but to awaken a new attraction for the old teaching, to make people receptive to it, as though it were not already so old but had only then appeared anew; it is the same as what Ezekiel foretells (36:27): "*I will put my spirit within you, and thereby bring it about that you shall walk in my statutes*," etc.

233. ***So the expression*** **new** ***is not to be taken here in the literal sense?***

Certainly; it is used entirely in the sense of similar ones: *I will give you a new heart and a new spirit* (Ezek., loc. cit., v. 26); or, I create *a new heaven and a new earth* (Isa. 60:17),[203] and the like.

234. ***What teaching now follows from this?***

That we are not entitled to renounce our Law, inasmuch as it has bound us *indissolubly*,[204] [p. 78] and is therefore also designated with the names *covenant, oath, curse* (ברית, אלה).

235. ***Name me passages on this from the Holy Scriptures themselves.***

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

> "Not with you alone do I enter into this covenant and this sworn oath, but with those who stand here with us today before the Eternal our God, as also with those who are not yet here with us this day." (Deut. 29:13, 14)

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[203] Translator: Recte Isa. 65:17.

[204] J. Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, Section 2, pp. 127–131: "In fact I do not see how those who are born in the house of Jacob can in any conscientious manner free themselves from the Law," etc.

והעלה על רוחכם היו לא תהיה אשר אתם אמרים נהיה כגוים .... חי אני .... אם לא ביד חזקה ... אמלוך עליכם ... והבאתי אתכם במסרת הברית.

"And what you imagine may not and shall not come to pass, that you think: we will be like the nations …. As I live, says the Lord, if I do not rule over you with mighty power … and bring you into the bond of the covenant." (Ezek. 29:32–37)[205]

כי הנה אנכי מצוה והנעותי בכל הגוים את בית ישראל כאשר ינוע בכברה ולא יפול צרור ארץ:

"I command, and will shake the house of Israel about among all the nations, as something is shaken in a sieve; *and yet not a clod shall fall to the ground!*" (Amos 9:9)[206]

236. ***But is then the Law, which after all*** [p. 79] ***is bound up with the land and property of the Israelite, at present fully practicable?***

Certainly not at present; but the onset of the present time is indeed *foreseen and proclaimed* in the Law itself, and nevertheless the Law was instituted as an *eternally inviolable covenant*; if only because in the Law and the Prophets the Jewish people is promised the *return* of its old, happy time, when the Law will again come into its old, complete validity.

237. ***But until then?***

We are obliged conscientiously to observe all those laws that are not bound up with land and property.[207]

238. ***But there have, after all, been instances of changes in the Law?***

In very rare cases and only upon the urgent necessity of the time; and they were moreover only momentary, not changes for the duration.[208]

239. ***What does the tenth article of faith teach?***[209]

[p. 80] That God knows all our actions and dispositions, so that we can conceal nothing from Him.

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[205]Translator: Recte Ezek. 20:32–37.

[206]That both prophetic passages cited above foretell one and the same matter is proved by the following verses: וברותי מכם המרדים והפושעים בי ["and I will purge out from among you the rebels and those who transgress against me," Ezek. 20:38], and Amos 9:10: בחרב ימותו כל חטאי עמי ["all the sinners of my people shall die by the sword"].

[207]It is to be noted here that in the Law the words לדורותכם ["throughout your generations"] or בכל מושבתכם ["in all your dwellings"] and the like are added to several precepts. See, to be sure, עקרים [*Ikkarim*] 3, ch. 16; but against this stands the Midrash on Proverbs 9:2. Compare Jerusalem Talmud, Megillah ch. 1 (Maimonides, הל' מגילה [Hilkhot Megillah], ch. 2, end): התורה והלכות תורה שבעל פה אינן בטלות לעולם ["the Torah and the laws of the oral Torah will never be annulled"]. Passages such as כל הקרבנות בטלות לעתיד ["all sacrifices will be annulled in the future"], or תפלות בטלות וכו' ["prayers will be annulled," etc.], only remind us that one day sin and pain will vanish, and therefore only thank-offerings and songs of praise will fill the divine service.

[208]See the present textbook, p. 39. The Aggadah of the ארבעה גזרות ["four decrees"], Makkot 24b, is not to be taken so literally. One proof of this is already Deut. 24:16. — Translator: The passage is BT Makkot 24a (Moses' four decrees annulled by four prophets).

[209]Translator: Misprinted "289" in the original.

240. ***Can you name me other Bible passages on this subject, besides the one cited in the article of faith itself?***[210]

Oh yes, for there are very many of them, e.g.:

משמים הביט ה' ראה את כל בני האדם.

"From heaven the Lord looks down, He sees all the children of men," etc. (Ps. 33:13)

כי אתה ידעת לבדך את לבב כל בני האדם.

"You alone know the heart of all the children of men." (1 Kings 8:39)

אני ה' חקר לב בחן כליות.

"I, the Lord, search the heart and try the reins."[211] (Jer. 17:10)

עין רואה, אזן שומעת, וכל מעשיך בספר נכתבים.

"An eye sees, an ear hears, and all your deeds are written in a book." ([Pirkei Avot 2:1; reference not printed])

241. ***So our* thoughts *too are known to the Most High?***

He penetrates us wholly; not the faintest of our feelings remains hidden from Him; we cannot even imagine how we are everywhere and always noticed, observed, seen through and at the same time judged by God.[212]

הנטע אזן הלא ישמע, אם יצר עין הלא יביט ... ה' ידע מחשבות אדם:

"Shall He who implanted the ear not hear? Shall the Former of the eye not see? … The Lord knows the thoughts of man." (Ps. 94:8 and following)

ותפקדנו לבקרים לרגעים תבחננו.

"You inspect him every new morning, you try him every moment." (Job 7:18)

[p. 81] **242.** ***What is further connected with this subject?***

That with God there is no forgetting, as if everything were, so to speak, written down before Him.

243. ***Is this divine omniscience, then, an intentional one, an attentiveness to human beings?***

Certainly; it is partly that of a master toward his subordinates, partly that of a father toward his children; it is a general and, so to speak, mediate attentiveness, and a particular and immediate

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[210] Translator: Misprinted "340" in the original.

[211] A masterly portrayal of this divine attribute is Psalm 139.

[212] See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 128. —

one,[213] according as a person holds fast to God and makes himself more or less worthy of His fatherly regard. —

244. ***I should like to know some evidence on this from the Holy Scriptures!***

כי יודע ה' דרך צדיקים ודרך רשעים תאבד: הנה עין ה' אל יראיו וכו'.

> "The Lord is attentive to the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked *loses itself*."[214] (Ps. 1:6; see also Ps. 16:8; Ps. 33:18; Ps. 139, end)

245. ***In what respect is what has just been said important?***

With regard to the contradiction that seems to lie in divine foreknowledge as against human freedom of the will.[215]

[p. 82] **246.** ***Explain yourself more fully on this.***

To man, to be sure, freedom of the will has been given; without it he could merit neither reward nor punishment (Zohar Bereshit, p. 23); nevertheless God reserves to Himself His predetermination, namely with respect to very pious or very wicked people. To the *proven* pious man God comes forward in a fatherly way, so as to spare him at last — after he has for a long time done good by his own choice and self-mastery — *the trouble of choosing for himself*;[216] the *proven* evildoer, on the other hand, after long self-hardening, He hardens in heart, *withdrawing* free choice from him.[217]

247. ***In what respect is our article of faith especially important?***

With regard to our devotion in prayer and our pious dispositions in general, since God *particularly notices* and rewards these.[218]

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[213] Worth reading on this is the tenfold division of divine attentiveness from R. Moses Cordovero's אלימה [*Elimah*], cited by R. J. Ergas, שומר אמונים [*Shomer Emunim*], ch. 81. — Translator: Moses Cordovero (1522–1570), kabbalist of Safed; Joseph Ergas (1685–1730), kabbalist of Livorno.

[214] The passage refers to the preceding image of fruit and chaff (vv. 3 and 4); the righteous man is the fruit, on which God keeps His eye, while He leaves the wicked to himself, as the thresher abandons the chaff to the wind.

[215] See Maimonides, הל' יסודי תורה [Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah]. Compare Zohar Ḥadash, in the appended Tikkunim (Amsterdam ed.), p. 69a; עקדה [*Akedah*, i.e. Arama's *Akedat Yitzḥak*], Porta 28.

[216] See Sifre ראה [*Re'eh*] (beginning): אחז את ידו והניחה על המנה היפה וכו' ["He took his hand and laid it upon the good portion," etc.].

[217] Maimonides, שמנה פרקים [*Shemonah Perakim*], ch. 8, end; עקרים [*Ikkarim*], Section 4, ch. 25; עקדה [*Akedah*], Porta 36; Wessely, רוח חן [*Ruaḥ Ḥen*], ch. 19:4, and the notes to the שירי תפארת [*Shirei Tiferet*], Part 5. With the lofty truth that ידיעה [*yedi'ah*, divine foreknowledge] and בחירה [*beḥirah*, free choice] do not contradict one another is connected that important teaching (Tanḥuma תולדות [*Toledot*]): ג' דברים ברא הקב"ה ברשותו של אדם, וג' אינן ברשותו וכו' ["Three things the Holy One, blessed be He, created within man's power, and three are not within his power," etc.]; Zohar מקץ [*Miketz*] 195a; but especially that of the apparent contradictions 1 Sam. 15:11 and 20. — Translator: The second verse meant is 1 Sam. 15:29.

[218] Compare the passages: תשמע ברגע כל הקולות, זעק ולחש וכל התפלות וכו' ["You hear in an instant all voices, crying and whispering and all prayers," etc.] (שיר היחוד יום ג' [Song of Unity, third day], based on the Mekhilta on Exod. 15:11), — and the principle: מחשבה טובה, הקב"ה מצרפה למעשה ["a good intention, the Holy One, blessed be He, joins to the deed"].

[p. 83] **248.** ***What does the eleventh article of faith teach us?***

It is closely connected with the preceding one, and teaches that God does not regard the actions and dispositions of human beings idly, but rewards the good and punishes the wicked.

249. ***Cite me some proof-texts from the Holy Scriptures.***

אמרו צדיק כי טוב כי פרי מעלליהם יאכלו: אוי לרשע רע כי גמול ידיו יעשה לו:

"Say of the righteous: Happy are they! they enjoy the fruits of their deeds; woe to the wicked, it goes ill with him; according to his desert shall it be done to him." (Isa. 3:10, 11)

עיניך פקחות על כל דרכי בני אדם לתת לאיש כדרכיו וכפרי מעלליו:

"Your eyes are open upon all the ways of the children of men, to give each according to his ways and the fruit of his deeds." (Jer. 32:19)

ולך ה' חסד כי אתה תשלם לאיש כמעשהו:

"Yours, O Lord, is grace, you repay each according to his doing." (Ps. 62:13)

250. ***But is it grace not to leave someone's*** **merits** ***unrewarded, and especially to punish evil?***

We are in fact already rewarded in being able to serve God, and it is also our duty; every *further particular* reward from God is therefore a *grace*. But the punishment that strikes the wicked is surely, for him and often also for his contemporaries, a work of divine kindness.

251. ***Has nothing been objected against this article of faith?***

Indeed; it is held that daily experience contradicts it, which commonly shows us the good suffering and the wicked happy.

[p. 84] **252.** ***How then is this phenomenon to be explained?***

It lies partly in the nature of the case: virtue as such does not let us reach for each and every means of earthly happiness, as his lack of conscience does the wicked man;[219] partly, not *all* the wicked are happy and *all* the good unhappy; it is rather an equally common phenomenon that the wicked are only seemingly happy, or even *wholly* unhappy, while the good are tolerably so, or often only seemingly unhappy (Ps. 37, end); partly sufferings are necessary, beneficial means for the good man's ennoblement and for the true happiness awaiting him, while the wicked man's happiness is usually a deceptive sunshine followed by a great storm; or else the former is punished here below for certain transgressions, while the latter is rewarded for certain virtues of his own or of his ancestors; partly the good man cannot at all call *that* happiness which the wicked man calls happiness (Eccl. 2:26; BT Yevamot 102b; my *Erb.*, year 2, p. 164, note); partly, finally, true virtue

[219] See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], Discourse 1, p. 8; and to this point refers that splendid remark (Midrash ראה [*Re'eh*]): מיום שאמר הקב"ה ובחרת בחיים, מפי עליון לא תצא הרעות והטוב ["From the day the Holy One, blessed be He, said 'Choose life,' out of the mouth of the Most High proceed not evil and good"] — *first of all*, well-being and misfortune lie with ourselves.

and fear of God cannot possibly be rewarded according to merit here on earth, nor vice truly punished; such a state of affairs would also produce only hypocrites, and our freedom of the will would be entirely restricted.

253. ***But there do occur, even here below, instances of rewarded virtue and punished vice?***

[p. 85] To be sure, there are many duties of which we, as it were, enjoy the foretaste here below, but the reward itself in the other life; and likewise there are sins which are necessarily punished already here below.

הן צדיק בארץ ישלם אף כי רשע וחוטא:

> "Behold, even the righteous man is wont to be repaid on earth, how much more the wicked man and the sinner." (Prov. 11:31)

254. ***But that the good and the wicked are requited sooner or later — may this be taken as settled?***

This is a principle long proven in experience, and therefore *often* expressed in Holy Scripture; especially in the following passage:

"Only because the divine sentence[220] upon the evil deed is not carried out speedily, therefore are men so bold to do evil. But though the sinner do evil a hundredfold, and be he borne with ever so long, yet I know that happiness is destined only for the God-fearing [p. 86] .... but never for the evildoer .... who is like a shadow; and it is but a vanity that comes to pass *on earth*, that there are *righteous men* to whom it happens as would befit the wicked, ... I say that this too is but a vanity." (Eccl. 8:11–14.)

255. ***On what is the twelfth article of faith, concerning the coming of a*** **Messiah,** ***founded?***

On the general promises of all the prophets, *that God at the end of days will send a descendant of the House of David*[221] *for the redemption and glorification of Israel, after its so protracted sufferings, especially those since the destruction of the Second Temple.*

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[220] The *sentence* of God thus takes place at once, and what the passage Deut. 7:10 says is true; even though the *punishment* itself often becomes visible here in our corporeal world only after years. Only to the righteous is God wont to let the *sentence* already become perceptible; and when these are then the intercessors for their contemporaries, the punishment can indeed, according to what the sin was, either be withheld entirely (if the sentence was not an *oath*), or for a very long time, or at least be greatly mitigated. *Sentence and fulfillment are like light and sound.* Only the righteous already perceive the *former*. On the above passage of Kohelet compare my *Apocr.*, Appendix, p. 90. See further on the article of faith under discussion in general Ps. 73, 92; *Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu Zuta* ch. 2 (toward the end); my Edifying Discourses, Year 1, Discourse 17; Year 2, Discourse 8.

[221] *David's soul* itself; compare also the prophetic idiom דוד ["David"] for בן דוד ["son of David"]; on this rests Kalir's הוא דוד בעצמו ["he is David himself"] (in the last Hoshana, אמיץ ישעך), together with Zohar לך [*Lekh Lekha*] p. 82b, and רקנטי [Recanati] on וישב [*Va-yeshev*]. — I remark in passing that the שלש שעות ["three hours"] (Hoshana אל למושעות) are wrongly interpreted in the מפרש [commentary] of the Maḥzor; the source is without doubt in the *Midrash on the Song of Songs* on ch. 5:8. — (From my notes on the Maḥzor.)

256. ***Is the coming of a Messiah limited to Israel alone, and all his influence to the redemption just mentioned?***

No; Israel as such almost needs a Messiah less than creation as a whole[222] — heaven and earth, the world of spirits and the world of bodies — needs one; but it is Israel from which he is to arise, in whose midst he is to work, to which his activity is first to extend, and through which he is to act upon the rest of the world. —

[p. 87] **257.** ***Explain yourself more fully on this!***

According to our Holy Scriptures, the so-called *End of Days* (אחרית הימים), or rather the *goal of the ages* and of world history, when the person of the Messiah is to appear, is *the true and final purpose* of creation, the realization of God's *original plan* for it, which sin has already twice[223] frustrated. It is, namely, the long-yearned-for, foretold, but *never yet existing time*, in which at last *the good will truly triumph over evil*, and with sin all its fruits — errors, *discord, early death, other ills and infirmities of life* — will vanish, and the *first* state, that of a perfect *paradisal bliss*, is to set in in such a way that we have almost no words for the grandeur of those phenomena into which the history of mankind is at last to resolve itself.[224] —

258. ***By what are we to recognize the*** **nearness** ***of this time?***

By certain striking preparatory occurrences which, as such, are not to escape at least *the truly God-fearing*, or in general *not inattentive* people. (Dan. 12:10.)

[p. 88] **259.** ***What signs are given for this*** **pre-messianic** ***time***[225]***?***

An ever greater decline of religiosity and of respect for the Law and for those learned in divine matters; increasing insolence; a public, utterly shameless transgression of the Law[226]; later also unusual phenomena in nature, namely swiftly carrying-off disease (מגפה [plague][227]); inner unrest;

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[222]Compare the saying of that Rabbi (BT Sanhedrin 98a [read 99a]) אין משיח לישראל ["Israel has no Messiah"]; Maimonides, הל' תשובה [Hilkhot Teshuvah] (end).

[223]Compare BT Avodah Zarah 5a and following (Bamidbar Rabbah ch. 16); especially the excellent treatise in the גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], Part 1, Section 5, ch. 7–9.

[224]Compare especially R. Saadia, אמונות והדעות [*Emunot ve-De'ot*], Sections 8 and 9; Azulai, חסד לאברהם [*Ḥesed le-Avraham*] 1:17 and 18 (description of the 15th to the 18th world-period), and Section 5, ch. 36–40. — ! —. See also Shemot Rabbah ch. 15, pp. 101 and 102, עשרה דברים עתיד הקב"ה לחדש וכו' ["Ten things will the Holy One, blessed be He, renew in the future," etc.]. See especially Maimonides, הלכ' תשובה [Hilkhot Teshuvah] ch. 8–10, הל' מלכים [Hilkhot Melakhim] (end).

[225]עקבא דמשיחא [*ikveta di-meshiḥa*], *the footprint of the Messiah*; sometimes also called חבלי משיח [*ḥevlei mashiaḥ*, the birth-pangs of the Messiah].

[226]Mishnah Sotah ch. 9; Tractate Derekh Eretz ch. 10; BT Sanhedrin 97a, following Micah 7.

[227]Zech. 14. — Compare my discourse ימים ידברו [*Yamim yedabberu*], "*Time Speaks*," or: "A Word of Exhortation ... with particular regard to the cholera in its higher cause and purpose, on the Sabbath" [of the portion] תצא [*Ki Tetze*] 5597. The above phenomena, however, are also the so-called *Last Judgment* (Joel ch. 4); the expression "Valley of Jehoshaphat" is an image, and means as much as a *deep, strict* divine judgment; compare the expression עומק הדין ["the depth of judgment"] or משפטך תהום ["Your judgment is a deep," Ps. 36:7].

an urge for changes and remodelings in the moral and political world; similar phenomena almost even in the world of spirits; and the reappearance of the prophet *Elijah*.[228] —

260. *But what marks are given for the time of the* Messiah once come*, and of his influence itself?*

[p. 89] *Bodily*[229] and spiritual well-being, and that in the most perfect sense, will proclaim his presence; e.g., [p. 90] universal peace on earth — a suddenly awakening *urge toward religion* — the *calming of the passions*[230], wondrously long life — *great blessing* in every industry — *wisdom — nearness to God and vision of Him — true enlightenment* about the most important phenomena *of nature* and *of life*, which until now were inexplicable mysteries[231] — quite especially the *discovery of mysteries in the Holy Scriptures — recognition* and universal *veneration* of hitherto despised *Israel*, recognized as the people which God has preserved for the *highest purpose*, and in whose *nearness* He would now be *visibly* present — the *ennobling of the nations* in general — the *building of the Temple — resurrection — perfect bliss of the souls*[232], etc.

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[228]Mal. 3:23. *Elijah* is a designation of *prophecy* in general (see my Edifying Discourses, Year 2, Discourse 21, pp. 352 and 353); that is why he is here called נביא ["the prophet"], and not, as elsewhere, תשבי ["the Tishbite"] or גלעדי ["the Gileadite"]. — ! Prophecy will one day reappear. — The conclusion of that passage, that Elijah will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and that of the children to the fathers, confirms my interpretation. For according to Joel 3 the spirit of prophecy is to pour itself out over young and old, and this alone can reconcile the otherwise conflicting aims of the old and the younger generations and bring about harmony. — At the same time, the actual reappearance of the *soul of Elijah* for that very purpose need by no means be a fable; since, according to countless narratives of the ancients, the appearance of that *everlasting prophet* was something quite ordinary. See נחלת שמעוני [*Naḥalat Shim'oni*] under אליהו [Elijah]; *Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu*, preface of the commentator; Azulai, חסד לאברהם [*Ḥesed le-Avraham*] 4:56; he is also (BT Berakhot 4b; Zohar ויגש [*Va-yiggash*] 209a) counted among the angels. See also מגיד מישרים [*Maggid Mesharim*] on בראשית [*Bereshit*] (end); also חמדת הימים [*Ḥemdat ha-Yamim*] on שבת [Sabbath], ch. 18; R. Naphtali, בית רחל [*Bet Raḥel*], the זמר למוצאי שבת [hymn for the close of the Sabbath]; especially the Zohar passage ויקהל [*Va-yakhel*] 197a; also in עקרים [Albo, *Ikkarim*] 4:34 (end).

[229]Judaism thought of nothing less than of a *purely carnal* Messiah; *ignorant people* among the folk may perhaps, from *lack of acquaintance* with the spiritual life and its enjoyment, have dreamed *too much of the earthly* about the Messiah. — But it goes without saying that the *perfect* supremacy of the Kingdom of God on earth — which we can expect only through the true messianic age — must exercise its all-powerful influence over *each and every thing*; only a power of God also in the *visible* world can result in a *universal* awakening. — ! No *duality* of powers, in which the one would, as it were, stand over against the divine, can then exist any longer. Here it is said not only *God is One*, but also *His Name is One* (Zech. 14[:9]), that is, His renown or *acknowledgment on earth*; *public* phenomena must then produce that being-permeated-by-God which now only quiet hours of devotion are able to engender. *Visible to all flesh* must the glory of God be; so that religious wars need not first force convictions upon people; for then the world must at last recognize the *true Divine*, which dwells not in the storm, in the tumult of battle and the clash of arms of parties ablaze with fury, but in the gentle whisper of peaceful godliness and contemplation — (1 Kings 19:12, 13). — Compare also Maimonides' view of the Messiah (Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:1), and the expression לדוד ולזרעו עד עולם ["to David and to his seed for ever"].

[230]See my Discourses, Year 2, Discourse 6, p. 95 and following.

[231]E.g., the apparent contradiction between God's *foreknowledge* and human *free will*; the phenomenon of the suffering of the righteous and the good fortune of the wicked, and the like. Pirkei Avot 4:19.

[232]The realm of immortality, too, needs the great future; the soul, too, had as it were its גלות [exile]; — many of the departed souls, too, are to rise again out of a kind of rejection and an oblivion resembling the sleep of death, to come to life, and to gain their freedom. —

261. ***Is the Messiah to be a mortal or an immortal being — a spirit?***

A mortal one, to be sure: a human being and a descendant of *David*, but nonetheless in the highest sense a godly [p. 91] man[233], consecrated to the most exalted nearness to God through the purest spiritual life and an almost complete deadness to all bodily enjoyment of life; a great prophet, deeply familiar with all divine things; strong, not by physical power, but through his *influence on God*, through study of the Law, prayer, indeed almost by mere *wish* and will, the mightiest, even if perhaps for a long time *unnoticed*[234], mover of the grandest world events and destinies of nations.

262. ***Will Israel worship him?***

By no means; although he will stand as the worthiest intercessor before God; for he will be only a [p. 92] messenger of God and a man permeated by the spirit of God (Isa. 11:2), but by no means himself a deity. Indeed, *God himself* is in the truest sense the Redeemer of Israel, but the Messiah the instrument of this redemption[235], just as Moses was once the instrument of the giving of the Law. (See Introduction, p. 16 and following.)

263. ***But Judaism does teach of*** **two** ***Messiahs?***

To be sure, an Aggadah in the Talmud teaches this (BT Sukkah 52[a][236]), and the occasion for it is certainly partly the duality of the Jewish people, Ephraim (the ten tribes) and Judah, and partly

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[233] ירום מאברהם וכו' ונשא ממשה, וגבה ממלאכי השרת ["He shall be exalted above Abraham, etc., and lifted up above Moses, and be higher than the ministering angels"] (Tanḥuma תולדות [*Toledot*], end. — See Maimonides, הל' תשובה [Hilkhot Teshuvah] ch. 9 (end).)

[234] It is thus possible that the Messiah will have appeared, yet remain hidden for a time and work in unnoticed solitude. Similarly Eccl. 9:11 and following. Indeed, this activity of the Messiah in concealment is a clear teaching in that *remarkable* portrait of the Messiah, Zohar שמות [*Shemot*], p. 7b and following. Compare also the Silluk (שבת החדש [Shabbat ha-Ḥodesh]) — ויתכסה מהם — וכו' ["and he was hidden from them — — etc."]. Since the Messiah spoken of in the *piyyut* is under discussion here, I cannot refrain from remarking, in correction of a misunderstanding resting on literary ignorance, that in the *penultimate* of the piyyutim קדושת מוסף י"כ) [the Kedushah of the Musaf of Yom Kippur]) which begin with אז מלפני בראשית, the passages פנה מנו משיח צדקנו וכו' ["the Messiah of our righteousness has turned from us," etc.] refer merely to the *concealment* of the Messiah just mentioned, and in general have their sources in Pesikta Rabbati ch. 31 and following (also in Yalkut on Isaiah ch. 49:8 and ch. 60). — Compare also the well-known formula of the after-blessing at circumcisions: כהן צדק אשר לוקח לעלום וכו' ["the righteous priest who was taken into concealment," etc.]; for the Messiah (his soul) is indeed always stated to be *at work in concealment* (BT Sanhedrin 98a). The *gnat of Titus* (BT Gittin 56[b]), too, seems to represent this figuratively. — ! —

[235] This too is already said by the ingenious expression אין משיח לישראל ["Israel has no Messiah"], to which both Albo (עקרים [*Ikkarim*] 4:24) and Abarbanel, משמיע ישועה [*Mashmi'a Yeshu'ah*] (preface) and (ראש אמנה [*Rosh Amanah*] ch. 14), gave a clumsy interpretation; yet it is a clear teaching of our Sages (Midrash on Ps. 107:2): יאמרו גאולי ה' וכן ישעיה אומר ופדויי ה' ישובון ולא פדויי אליהו ולא פדויי מלך המשיח אלא ופדויי ה' ["'Let the redeemed of the Lord say so'; and so Isaiah says, 'And the ransomed of the Lord shall return' — not the ransomed of Elijah, nor the ransomed of the King Messiah, but 'the ransomed of the Lord'"] — ! — (Even the name מלך [king] stands chiefly in a spiritual sense. See my Discourses, Year 2, Discourse 13, pp. 218 and 219.) Compare with this also the passage in the prayers: אפס בלתך גואלנו לימות המשיח, ואין דומה לך מושיענו לתחית המתים ["There is none but You, our Redeemer, for the days of the Messiah, and none like You, our Savior, for the resurrection of the dead"], and the strange attribute חמור [ass], which Bereshit Rabbah ch. 75 [and] Tikkunei Zohar (Appendix) ch. 10 (see there חמדת צבי [*Ḥemdat Tzevi*]) ascribe to the Messiah as one actually burdened, while the Tikkunei Zohar, however, [ascribe it] with the letter-interpretation חכם מופלא ורב רבנן ["a wondrous sage and master of masters"]. —

[236] As the ten tribes (אפרים [Ephraim]) were driven out *earlier*, so the redeemer, too, is to arise for them earlier. — Compare further on the two Messiahs Zohar פנחס [*Pineḥas*] p. 252a; Tikkunei Zohar ch. 19, ch. 37 (end); R. Elijah of Vilna's commentary on 1 Sam. 2:10 (מלכו—משיחו ["his king — his anointed"]).

the twofold influence of the Messiah on the *world of spirits* and the *world of bodies*. However, our [p. 93] Sages themselves give *hints* pointing only to *one* Messiah, but in a *twofold* form.[237]

264. *By what means can one draw conclusions about such phenomena of that great time itself?*

By comparison with the first redemption of Israel from Egypt, which is taken to be the prototype of that great future redemption of Israel.[238]

265. *Have the signs given so far perhaps already come to pass?*[239]

No; time has so far borne out none of all those signs; it was only a slowly preparing time, and always still merely the means to the end; the [p. 94] human race first had, as it were, to pass through all the *schools of culture* and *of passion*, and Israel especially through all *attempts* to help itself; God, as is natural, kept the *true* thing back until *last*.[240] Only the latter and most recent time may perhaps have brought us some earnest hints and preparations of the great goal.[241] —

266. *On what does Holy Scripture make the appearance of this great time, and especially its hastening, depend?*

On our *repentance and amendment*: not only do the Talmudists (BT Sanhedrin 97b) and the prophets (Isa. 1:27; 59:20) make it depend on this, but already *Moses* (Deut. 30).[242]

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[237]Compare the very important section Pesikta Rabbati ch. 37 and Yalkut on Isaiah ch. 60; also Zohar בהעלותך [*Be-ha'alotekha*] p. 153b, Zohar פנחס [*Pineḥas*] p. 223a; and the appendices to the Tikkunei Zohar, ch. 7. — Accordingly the death of the first Messiah would be a figurative one, and would signify merely his sufferings resembling death (see e.g. BT Nedarim 64b and the like) and his almost complete dying-off to earthly enjoyments of life and bodily needs; which would then advance him to the *second* and higher dignity of true and perfect messiahship, called the *Davidic*; the two Messiahs would thus signify merely two *periods* in the life-history of the Messiah. — More cannot be communicated here on this subject, which is of purely Jewish, and indeed biblical, origin. But to pass over in silence, in communicating on the present article of faith, so old a doctrine of faith as that of the double Messiah and the like — views less known to the less well-read — neither my conscience nor my love of thoroughness permitted me. —

[238]This parallel has already been drawn by the מערבות [*Ma'aravot*] of the last two evenings of Passover, in the piyyutim פסח אושרו and פסח לעתיד, where the פסח לעתיד [Passover of the future] always appears, as it were, as the renewed פסח מצרים [Passover of Egypt], and that resting on a genuine basis of the messianic prophecies.

[239]Translator: The question number is misprinted "365" in the original.

[240]Thus I interpreted that passage, BT Yevamot 60 [62a], BT Avodah Zarah 5a, BT Niddah 13[b]: אין בן דוד בא עד שיכלו וכו' ["The son of David will not come until all ... are exhausted," etc.]. All spirits, *geniuses* in the corporeal world, must first *exhaust* themselves, must first have made their *attempts* — and these too, as such, were certainly necessary means to the end and to the glory of God — to become the helpers of Israel or of mankind. The greatest hero will appear *last* and carry off the victory. Similarly Ps. 76:10, 11.

[241]Compare my discourse already mentioned: "*Time Speaks*."

[242]See also BT Sanhedrin 99[a].

267. ***Should we perhaps, out of curiosity, want to inquire strictly into the onset of this great time and its products?***

No; we should indeed wish for it and also pray for it, since the welfare of the entire universe depends on it, and Israel especially can never be perfectly happy without it[243]; but we should not [p. 95] undertake curious investigations about it, not only so as not to offend against that wise teaching (Sirach ch. 3:19 [21]; BT Ḥagigah 13a; see also BT Ketubbot 110b[244]), "Inquire not into what is hidden from you," etc., but also so as not to bring upon ourselves that curse which our Sages (BT Sanhedrin 97b) pronounced upon such curious people. Indeed, they even count the appearance of the Messiah among those things that must come *unexpectedly* (BT Sanhedrin 97a; Zohar Ḥadash p. 9b).

268. ***On what is the*** **thirteenth** ***and last article of faith, that of the resurrection, founded?***

On Moses and the Prophets[245]. Already in Moses it says (Deut. 32[:39]): *I cause to die and make alive again*; the fuller exposition of this doctrine we read in the Prophets.

ה' ממית ומחיה מוריד שאול ויעל:

> "The Lord causes to die and makes alive again; He casts down into the grave and brings up again." (1 Sam. 2:6)

[p. 96]

יחיו מתיך נבלתי יקומון .... וארץ רפאים תפיל:

> "Your dead shall live, the corpses shall arise .... the earth shall give forth the shades." (Isa. 26:9)[246]

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

> "And many of those who sleep in the dust shall awaken, some to everlasting life, the others to reproaches and everlasting abhorrence." (Dan. 12:2)

The prophet Ezekiel in particular sets forth this doctrine at length in a section of its own (ch. 37).

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[243]Compare my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], or Treatise on Prayer, Lecture 7, pp. 141–144, especially the remarkable utterance of Maimonides from one of his letters quoted there: כי אלו הגדולות והשררות יהודים עתה בזה הזמן, אינם אצלי הצלחה וכו' ["for these greatnesses and dominions of Jews now, in this time, are not, in my view, success," etc.].

[244]These prayers do no harm whatsoever to our love of our fatherland; compare R. Abraham Emden, צרור החיים [*Tzeror ha-Ḥayyim*], last section. — — ! My Discourses, Year 1, Discourse 19: "*Judaism and Civic Loyalty*."

[245]BT Ketubbot 111[a–b]; BT Sanhedrin 90[b] and following; Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 33; *Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu* ch. 5; Zohar חיי [*Ḥayyei Sarah*] 130; Tikkunim ch. 31; R. Saadia's אמונות והדעות [*Emunot ve-De'ot*], Section 7; *Kuzari* 1:116 and 117; Maimonides, מאמר תחית המתים [*Treatise on Resurrection*]; *Ikkarim*, Section 4, ch. 35 and following; Abarbanel, ראש אמנה [*Rosh Amanah*] ch. 24, his משמיע ישועה [*Mashmi'a Yeshu'ah*], and commentary on Ezekiel 37 (preface to Isaiah), above all his splendid treatise in נחלת אבות [*Naḥalat Avot*] on Pirkei Avot ch. 4 (end), והמתים להחיות ["and the dead to come to life"]; also Menasseh ben Israel, נשמת חיים [*Nishmat Ḥayyim*], Section 1, ch. 15 and 16, especially his work on this subject: *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, Amsterdam 1636.

[246]Translator: The verse is Isa. 26:19; the original prints "26, 9."

269. ***But the resurrection in Ezekiel is supposed, as even appears to follow from the Talmud*[247]*, to be only the figurative representation of the political revival of Israel?***

The figurative or improper expression presupposes the existence of the proper one; had not the doctrine of an actual resurrection, as well as actual instances of this miracle through the prophets Elijah and Elisha[248], already been known to the people, the [p. 97] prophet could not have made use of the subject even as an image. —

270. ***What gives this doctrine a further special importance?***

That it has even been taken up into our prayer book, and indeed occupies there, in the prayer proper, the very second place.

271. ***But is the resurrection then so important an article of faith?***

Certainly; and the Talmud denies those who deny this article their share in bliss. (BT Sanhedrin 90a.)

272. ***How do our Sages express themselves about the*** **possibility** ***of the resurrection?***

They say: *If something that never was could come into being, then surely that which already was can all the more readily reappear.*[249]

273. ***But what does the doctrine of the resurrection presuppose?***

The continued existence of the human soul after its departure, or immortality.

274. ***But this is not mentioned in the articles of faith?***

Indeed it is alluded to in them, namely in the eleventh article of faith, where reward and punishment are spoken of.

275. ***Should not that doctrine of retribution then refer to*** **this** ***life?***

No; for in this life, as already mentioned, our deeds are not requited commensurately.

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[247] BT Sanhedrin 92a [92b]. I say *appears*; for the expressions there, באמת משל היה ["in truth it was a parable"], mean that the event really took place, precisely in order to be at the same time the prototype of the future resurrection. In this sense the *piyyut* applies the phrase אמת משל היה ["truly it was a parable"] to *Job* (זולת שבת נחמו [the Zulat of Shabbat Naḥamu], beginning). For Job himself says that God had set him up as such an *example*, משל [a byword] (ch. 17:6). Compare R. Eliezer [Ashkenazi], ס' מעשי ה' [*Ma'asei ha-Shem*] (preface), and R. Shem Tov on the *Guide of the Perplexed*, Part 3, ch. 22. A fuller treatment of this is contained in my detailed but not yet quite completed Introduction to the Book of Job. (Manuscript.)

[248] Bereshit Rabbah ch. 77 and 78 (beginning); Vayikra Rabbah ch. 27; and Kohelet Rabbah on Eccl. 3:14, 15.

[249] מה דלא הוי הוי, מה דהוי לא כ"ש ["What was not, came to be; what was — all the more so!"] (BT Sanhedrin 91a [printed 90b]). See עקרים [*Ikkarim*] 4:5 and following. Compare Zohar וארא [*Va-era*] p. 28b.

[p. 98] **276.** ***But is the continued existence of the soul then taught in Holy Scripture?***

It is presupposed there as a matter known to the whole ancient world, and therefore not specially taught as something unknown; — but it is very often touched upon there involuntarily and unmistakably alluded to.[250]

277. ***But why then are mostly*** **temporal** ***rewards and punishments promised?***

Precisely this proves the divine power of the Law[251]; since the promise of rewards and punishments *after death* can easily arouse the suspicion that the lawgiver is a man or even a deceiver, and therefore refers the adherents of his teaching to such *distant* requitals[252]; — whereas the influence of our Law already upon the *present* vouched for its infallibility and also aroused a far livelier interest in the sensuous human being. —

278. ***In what, then, might the punishments after death consist?***

In states of indescribable feelings of pain; the soul must render account before God of the conduct of its life[253], and from its sins, before it becomes ripe for the enjoyment of [p. 99] bliss, are as it were refined; these refinements are given various names.[254]

279. ***But does the soul, then, feel pain and joy even without the body?***

In its disembodied state it is far more receptive to them than in its earthly shell, which really does nothing but dull it to the finer feelings, sensations and perceptions and to every higher use of the so-called inner senses. —

280. ***But how can we know this so surely?***

The finer worshippers of God, who already here below give their soul the upper hand over the body, feel this only too often and too clearly, and need no philosophical and laboriously deduced

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[250] See Johann Meyer, *De Temp. Sacr.* etc., Part 2, ch. 6; he adduced 58 proofs that Moses taught immortality from the ground up. See also my Discourses, Year 2 (preface), p. 8, note 1. [Johannes Meyer, *Tractatus de temporibus et festis diebus Hebraeorum*, Utrecht 1724.]

[251] See my Discourses, Year 1, Discourse 24, pp. 377 and 378, and 1 Kings 17:1. — !

[252] Somewhat in the sense of that saying: הרוצה לשקר ירחיק עדותו ["He who wishes to lie sets his witnesses far off"].

[253] "Those who are born must die, the dead come to life again, those who have come to life render account, so that it may be known that God is Creator ... at the same time Knower of thoughts, at the same time Judge, Witness, Accuser, and that He therewith does no one wrong, forgets nothing, has no regard for persons, takes no bribe, for everything is His; and everything proceeds strictly according to reckoning. And so let not your evil inclination persuade you that the netherworld will be a place of refuge for you; no; without your consent you were born, without it you must live, without it die, and without it one day *render account before the King of all kings, the Holy One, blessed be He!*" (Pirkei Avot 4:29 [4:22 in the usual numbering].) — Compare especially on this rendering of account by the dead: R. Menasseh ben Israel, נשמת חיים [*Nishmat Ḥayyim*] 1, ch. 17. See BT Berakhot 28b; BT Ḥagigah 4[b] and 5[a].

[254] E.g. the punishment of hell, restlessness [of the wandering soul], and the like. Cf. the excellent treatise (on the existence of future punishments; worked out from biblical sources) חקור דין [*Ḥakor Din*] by H. Wessely; cf. also Nachmanides, שער הגמול [*Sha'ar ha-Gemul*], and ראשית חכמה [*Reshit Ḥokhmah*], in the שער היראה [*Sha'ar ha-Yir'ah*, "Gate of Fear"]; also R. Menasseh b. Israel, נשמת חיים [*Nishmat Ḥayyim*], Section 1, ch. 12 and 13; and R. Moses Zacuto, תפתה ערוך [*Tofteh Arukh*].

proofs at all for teachings such as the existence of God, immortality and the like.[255] Now, however, [p. 100] Holy Scripture, too, gives the most unmistakable indications of the continued existence or immortality of the soul.

281. ***Can you cite such indications for me?***

Already the existence of *angels*,[256] as well as the *prophetic apparitions*, prove that there is a state in which immortal spirits live; to this are added the clear passages that *God created man in His image and in His likeness*; that out of Himself[257] He breathed into him a *spirit of life*; that He created a *tree of eternal life*; that God did not let Enoch and Elijah die, but *took them to Himself* (לקח); in particular the passage Gen. 5:9[258] presupposes the continued existence of the soul: "Yet your blood of your own selves (suicide) will I avenge; at the hand of every living soul (חיה) will I avenge it."[259] To punish a *suicide* undeniably presupposes the continued existence of the human soul.

282. ***Can you not give me still other biblical indications of continued existence and bliss?***

Several; e.g. the expressions: to be *gathered to one's fathers*; [p. 101] the soul will be *bound up in the bundle of life* (1 Sam. 25:20);[260] it will *see light* (Job 33:28); *apart from the body it will see God* (Job 19:26); it will be *received into God's glory* (Ps. 74; Isa. 58); *the righteous man trusts in his death* (Prov. 14:32); *the light of the righteous will rejoice* (ibid. 13:9); *it will laugh at the last day* (Prov. 31:25); *it will enjoy pleasantness at God's right hand forevermore* (Ps. 16:11); *it will walk among angels* (Zech. 3:7); in particular the well-known passage: The dust returns to the earth whence it came, but the *spirit returns to God* who gave it. (Eccl. 12:7[261])

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[255]See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 32, and in the present book p. 2. It is rightly said in R. Joseph Caro's מגיד [*Maggid* (*Maggid Mesharim*)] on בראשית [*Bereshit*]: ומאי דלא אכיר באורייתא אגרא דעלמא דאתי, היינו, משום דאורייתא מתלבשא בלבושא דפשטא דאתגליא, והכי אגרא דילה באורח פשטא באתגליא, אבל מאן דינדע לה באורח דאתכסי, הכי נמי ידע דאגרא דיליה באתכסיא. ["And the reason the reward of the World to Come is not mentioned in the Torah is this: because the Torah is clothed in the garment of the plain, revealed sense, and so its reward too is given after the manner of the plain sense, in what is revealed; but whoever knows it after the manner of what is hidden, knows likewise that its reward lies in what is hidden."] —

[256]See R. Shem Tov's ספר אמונות [*Sefer ha-Emunot*], Gate 4, and the *Sermons* of Dr. Harnisch, the sermon: "*That there are angels*."

[257]Job 32:8, a book which everywhere betrays its *Mosaic* origin.

[258]Translator: A misprint for Gen. 9:5, the verse quoted.

[259]Wessely, יין לבנון [*Yein Levanon*] (p. 50) on Avot 3:18. See, to be sure, against the question raised there, Exod. 19:3; Mishnah Sanhedrin 7:4; Mishnah Eduyot 6:1; Genesis Rabbah on Gen. 6:3; Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu ch. 24, p. 126; Sifra and Yalkut קדושים [*Kedoshim*], §624; ספר חסידים [*Sefer Ḥasidim*], §802; but also R. Menasseh ben Israel, נשמת חיים [*Nishmat Ḥayyim*], Section 1, ch. 5, p. 12b.

[260]Translator: The verse is 1 Sam. 25:29. Of the following references, "Ps. 74" probably means Ps. 73:24 ("and afterward Thou wilt receive me with glory") and "Isa. 58" Isa. 58:8 ("the glory of the Lord shall gather you in").

[261]Cf. Ps. 49 and my explanation of it in my *Sermons*, vol. 2, pp. 371 and 401–401 [*sic*]. See also numerous passages on the Old Testament doctrine of immortality in נשמת חיים [*Nishmat Ḥayyim*] by Menasseh ben Israel.

283. ***In what might bliss consist?***

In an enjoyment of joy by the soul, indescribable to us and satisfying all its wishes, which this life with all its pleasures can never procure for us.

מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך

> "How great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for those who revere Thee." (Ps. 31:20)

יפה שעה אחת של קורת רוח בעה"ב מכל חיי העולם הזה

> "Better is one hour of delight in that life than this whole earthly world." (Pirkei Avot 9:22)[262]

העולם הבא אין בו לא אכילה ולא שתיה ..... אלא צדיקים יושבים ועטרותיהם בראשיהם ונהנים מזיו השכינה

> "The other world, to be sure, offers no physical food and drink[263] .... but the righteous delight — crowned with their virtues — in the radiance of God's glory." (BT Berakhot 16[:]6)[264]

284. ***Do you know of an example in which nearness to God already here below afforded such an enjoyment, taking the place of physical means of nourishment?***

Moses lived forty days and nights without food and drink, and the spiritual nourishment of nearness to God sustained him; likewise the prophet who resembled him (Pesikta Rabbati ch. 2), *Elijah* (1 Kings 9:8[265]);[266] and the Psalmist sang:

כמו חלב ודשן תשבע נפשי ושפתי רננות יהלל פי

> "As with fat and marrow my soul is sated, when with ringing lips my mouth sings praise."[267] (Ps. 63:5)

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[262]Translator: "9" is a misprint for 4. Plessner numbers the mishnayot of Avot as in the prayer-book editions; in the standard numbering this saying is Avot 4:17. Likewise below, his Avot 4:7 = standard 4:5, 5:25 = 5:22, and 2:9 = 2:8.

[263]These animal nutritive substances afford only a fleeting enjoyment; indeed, they even in a certain measure dishonor *man*. The spiritual nourishment of the other life affords an enjoyment like the best enjoyments of food, without, however, troubling us with the animal grinding, chewing and digesting of coarse masses, or with removing them from us again in a still more dishonoring manner. — There we enjoy, as it were, the *strength* and *spirit* of the foods, similar to what, apart from the physical need of stilling hunger, is properly the only real enjoyment even of earthly substance. — Think of the manna-food in the wilderness. — See Deut. 8:3; Wisdom of Solomon 16:20 ff.

[264]Translator: The passage is BT Berakhot 17a.

[265]Cf. also the Targum on Exod. 24:11; also the passage Neh. 9:6, "*Thou nourishest all, and the hosts of heaven worship Thee*," i.e. Thou nourishest the hosts of heaven *by this*, that they *worship* Thee. See Midrash Rabbah פנחס [*Pinḥas*], middle; Pesikta Rabbati ch. 10; my *Edifications*, vol. 2, Sermon 5, p. 75. My sermon "*Divine Service, a Food of the Soul*," delivered on Sabbath משפטים [*Mishpatim*] 5597 (manuscript), treats this at length. See especially the מדרש הנעלם [*Midrash ha-Ne'lam*] on Zohar תולדות [*Toledot*], p. 135 ff. — ! —

[266]Translator: The verse is 1 Kings 19:8.

[267]See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], Lecture 5.

[p. 103] **285.** ***But do our Sages not teach of certain physical enjoyments in the state of bliss?***

They use these expressions figuratively, to designate certain especially sublime enjoyments of the soul which the other life offers.[268]

286. ***What is the future abode of the enjoyment of bliss called?***

It is called *Paradise*[269] (גן עדן [*Gan Eden*]), because this was once on earth the seat of all the delights of innocence. Moreover, the whole creation will one day be such a seat of felicity and a sanctuary of the Lord. (See also שערי אורה [*Sha'arei Orah*], Gate 9, p. 104 ff.)

לא ירעו ולא ישחיתו בכל הר קדשי כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים

> "No evil and destruction shall any more be done on all My holy mountain, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9)[270]

[p. 104]

ולא ילמדו עוד איש את רעהו .... דעו את ה' כי כולם ידעו אותי למקטנם ועד גדולם

> "And no one will any longer need to teach another: Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least to the greatest."[271] (Jer. 31:34)

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[268]Cf. BT Bava Batra fol. 74 ff.; Leviticus Rabbah ch. 13; the hymn אקדמות [*Akdamut*] (towards the end: בתכתכי דהב וכו' ["on couches of gold," etc.]); my *Sermons*, vol. 2, Sermon 6, p. 96 ff. See also Zohar שמיני [*Shemini*], p. 39; especially Maimonides, הל' תשובה [*Hilkhot Teshuvah*] ch. 8; with Maimonides (ibid. 8:3) the מדרש הנעלם [*Midrash ha-Ne'lam*] on Zohar תולדות [*Toledot*], p. 135a and b, agrees almost word for word.

[269]See Zohar בראשית [*Bereshit*] p. 38a, תרומה [*Terumah*] p. 150a, ויקהל [*Va-yak'hel*] p. 209b, פקודי [*Pekudei*] p. 220a, אחרי [*Aḥarei*] p. 70b, בלק [*Balak*] p. 43a; Zohar Ḥadash נח [*Noaḥ*] p. 19; R. Menasseh b. Israel, נשמת חיים [*Nishmat Ḥayyim*] 1:10; especially R. Jacob Daniel Olmo, עדן ערוך [*Eden Arukh*]. — Already Holy Scripture, in figurative passages, designates *wisdom* by food and *reason* by drink (wine) (see Wessely, גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], part 1, Section 5, ch. 6; part 2, Section 9, ch. 15; יין לבנון [*Yein Levanon*], p. 127b. See further the passage from Philo in R. Azariah [de' Rossi], אמרי בינה [*Imrei Binah*] ch. 4; also יין לבנון p. 76b, and רוח חן [*Ruaḥ Ḥen*] on the Book of Wisdom 3:7.

[270]Translator: The print reads ומלאה ("and … shall be full") for the Masoretic כי מלאה ("for … shall be full").

[271]See the present Religion-book, pp. 51 and 52. In order to raise some misgivings about the *reducing* of the thirteen articles of faith, now so very customary, and to recommend caution, I permit myself to close my explanation of them here with the words of Maimonides. [Translator: The close of Maimonides' exposition of the Thirteen Principles in his Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin ch. 10 (*Ḥelek*).] "Behold," he said, "I have been somewhat expansive and have strayed from the theme of my work; but I did so because I found it beneficial for faith. I have here gathered together useful, scattered matters *from great writings*; therefore *note them well, repeat them often*, (1) and reflect on them properly; and should *your inner self perhaps wish to persuade you that you have grasped them after reading them through once or ten times*: God knows! *it deceives you*; therefore do not read hastily; *for I have not composed something here just as it happened to come to hand, but after great and mature study and reflection; and after I had determined the clear and true views and convinced myself what is to be believed* of them, I supported each matter with the necessary proof-texts." [Plessner's sub-note 1): Hence also the inclusion of the articles of faith in the prayer book, to be read through daily.]

[p. 105] # Sixth Section[272]

Doctrine of Duties, or Religious and Moral Life according to Jewish-Mosaic Principles

על שלשה דברים העולם עומד על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים

"On three things the world stands: on the Torah, on divine service, and on deeds of lovingkindness." (Pirkei Avot 1:2)

(תורה) The Study of the Law

תלמוד תורה כנגד כלם

"The study of the Torah outweighs them all." (Mishnah Pe'ah 1:1)

287. ***Which is the first of all duties?***

Occupation with the divine Word, or the study of the Law.[273]

[p. 106] **288.** ***Where is this taught?***

In many passages of Holy Scripture, and in almost countless ones among our Sages.

289. ***Cite some such passages for me?***

לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפיך והגית בו יומם ולילה

"Let the book of this teaching never depart from your mouth, and meditate on it day and night." (Josh. 1:9)[274]

אשרי האיש .... בתורת ה' חפצו ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה

"Happy the man who .... delights in the teaching of God and meditates on His Law day and night." (Ps. 1:2)

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[272]The above Section should have been headed *Second Part*, since here the second and *practical* part of the book begins, while what has gone before constituted the *theoretical* part, as the foundation of religious life.

[273]The Law, as the will of God, represents, as it were, the majesty of God on earth; for this reason alone the duty of the study of the Law rightly takes first rank in the register of our duties. Think of the Talmudic letter-by-letter interpretation of the word אנכי [*Anokhi*, "I"], BT Shabbat fol. 103 [i.e. 105a]: אנא נפשי כתבית יהבית ["I Myself wrote and gave (it)"]; of the Zoharic saying קב"ה ואורייתא כלא חד ["the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Torah are all one"]; of the teaching אין להקב"ה בעולמו אלא ד' אמות של הלכה ["the Holy One, blessed be He, has in His world only the four cubits of the halakhah," BT Berakhot 8a]; and so the Law also takes the place of divine Revelation through prophecy, Mal. 3:22–23 together with Prov. 29:18, and my *Sermons*, vol. 2, p. 352. The value of the study of the Law is indescribable. Cf. the Baraita קנין תורה [*Kinyan Torah*, Avot ch. 6]. A single word of the Law surpasses in value the whole world, Jerusalem Talmud, Pe'ah ch. 1, [on] Prov. 31:15 [read: 3:15]. Hence almost every moment spent without the study of the Law is regarded as an irreparable loss. BT Shabbat fol. 83b. Cf. my *Sermons*, vol. 1, Sermon 4, penultimate point, and vol. 2, Sermon 13, p. 213.

[274]Translator: The verse is Josh. 1:8.

מה אהבתי תורתך כל היום היא שיחתי

"How I love Thy teaching; it is my converse all the day." (Ps. 119:97)

ותלמוד תורה כנגד כלם

"The study of the Law surpasses everything." (Mishnah Pe'ah 1:1)

גדול תלמוד שמביא לידי מעשה

"Great is the study of the Law, for it leads to good deeds." (BT Kiddushin 40[b])[275]

[p. 107] **290.** ***But can one not fulfil one's duties as an Israelite even without knowledge and study of the Law?***

Without knowledge of the Law the Israelite can satisfy the demands of virtue and Religion only very indifferently; progress in those perfections is not to be thought of at all without constant searching of the Law; rather, there is here to be feared a going backward in the good, at the least a very dangerous *self-sufficiency*[276] in the practice of the duties, which is usually wont to be the companion of ignorance.

אין בור ירא חטא ולא עם הארץ חסיד

"An empty man cannot fear sin, and one ignorant of the Law cannot be pious." (Pirkei Avot 2[:5])

291. ***Must, then, everyone occupy himself with the Law?***

"*Upon every Israelite* lies the duty of the study of the Law, be he poor or rich, healthy or sickly, young or of great age and enfeebled, yes, so poor that he begs at the doors, or the father of ever so many children: each must set aside a time for the study of the Law by day as well as by night." (Maimonides, הל' ת"ת [*Hilkhot Talmud Torah*] 1:8)

292. ***But is everyone endowed with the abilities for this duty?***

The incapable can and should search the Law with the help of a [p. 108] teacher and friend, or join societies devoted to the study of the Law. And the Law has, after all, various components; the incapable may choose the easier ones, and may of course also make use of the translations.

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[275]Since the divine teaching is usually designated by the word חכמה [*ḥokhmah*, "wisdom"] (present Religion-book, pp. 8 and 9), it follows that the constant exhortations to occupy oneself with wisdom contained in the Proverbs of Solomon are likewise exhortations to the study of the Law, and that all the praises there bestowed on this subject refer to it alone. Cf. also the Midrash and the Yalkut on Proverbs.

[276]See my *Sermons*, vol. 2, Sermon 14, pp. 357–360.

293. ***But is not only boyhood and youth intended for the learning of the divine Word?***

Here we are meant, as it were, only to become acquainted with the aids for the later, dutiful study of the Law; the older a man becomes, the riper he becomes for the Law; with the thirteenth birthday the study of the Law should not cease, but rather properly begin. —

294. ***But our worldly calling stands considerably in the way of this duty?***

For that very reason we should set aside for the study of the Law a time in which we are free from the business of our calling, such as early morning, evening, at table, and especially immediately before going to sleep, as also a little before and after prayer; and as often as we can win a free hour from our calling, we can certainly fill it no more wholesomely than with the duty under discussion. —

295. [277] ***But if our calling in life makes too heavy demands on us, or we are occupied and overburdened with other duties beneficial to mankind?***

Then we are indeed still not released from the duty of searching the Law, but in such cases we must make use of the days of rest and the festivals, keep to the public discourses, and above all support with our means those who, sacrificing [p. 109] temporal calling and pleasure, devote themselves solely to the study of the Law.

296. ***What else is closely connected with the study of the Law, and is especially to be recommended to those who cannot properly devote themselves to that duty?***

Association with wise and God-fearing men — a means to the salvation of the soul that cannot be recommended enough.

הדבק בחכמים ובתלמידיהם ומעלה אני עליך כאלו עלית למרום ונטלתה

> "Cleave to the wise and their disciples, and I will regard it as though you had fetched the Law for yourself from heaven." (Sifre on Deut. 11:22)

297. ***With what intention should we search the Law?***

That it may make us wiser and better, but not in order to reap honor and temporal gain thereby.

אל תעשה עטרה להתגדל בה ולא קרדום לחפור בה

> "Make of the Law no crown with which to strut about, no spade with which to dig." (Pirkei Avot 4:7; also Shabb. 151 on Deut. 11:21[278])[279]

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[277] Translator: Misprinted "395" in the original.

[278] "Say not: I will apply myself to the science of the Law in order to be called *Rabbi*, etc.; only learn, and honor will come of itself in the end." See, however, also my *Edifications*, vol. 2, Sermon 8, p. 122, note 1.

[279] Translator: So printed ("Sabb. 151"). The saying quoted in Plessner's note is found in Sifre Deut. §41 (on Deut. 11:13) and BT Nedarim 62a; "Sabb." may be a misprint for Sifre.

298. [280] ***But what benefit, then, has such a nobler intention (לשמה [lishmah, "for its own sake"]) in the study of the Law?***

The study of the Law, pursued with that better intention, sanctifies the whole man, enlightens the understanding, ennobles the heart, weakens the enticement to sin,[281] [p. 110] keeps deception and untruth far from us, and is therefore an incomparably mighty bulwark of our innocence and purity; it lets us advance daily in the good and fits us especially for the future life and true bliss;[282] it gives our life its true direction and lets us attain its goal: *nearness to God*. (Cf. the Baraita קנין תורה [*Kinyan Torah*].)

299. ***But how does it come about that precisely this duty is so neglected, and that we would rather accomplish the most difficult things than bring ourselves to a daily study of the Law?***

That is the power of the enticement to sin, and the inner awareness that the more we know, the more is *demanded* of us. — We therefore prefer the more comfortable life of ignorance; but precisely this *general aversion* to the study of the Law betrays that it is the most important of the duties. —!

300. ***Can one fulfil the duty of the study of the Law by silent reflection on the Law?***

No; we must pronounce it aloud, like *prayer*, and this alone makes it a meritorious *duty*;[283] for otherwise it would only be the means of learning one's duties, but not yet *itself* an actual duty. —

301. ***Cite for me a few more passages from our Sages on the value of this duty!***

הפך בה והפך בה דכלה בה, וסיב ובלה בה, ומנה לא תזוע, שאין לך מדה טובה הימנה

> "Again and again, again and again repeat the Law; for you find *everything* in it; grow old and gray in it, and still do not leave it; for there is no better quality than this." — (Pirkei Avot 5:25)

אם למדת תורה הרבה אל תחזק טובה לעצמך כי לכך נוצרת

> "If you have learned much Torah, take no credit to yourself for it; for to this end were you created." (Ibid. 2:9)

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[280] Translator: This question is unnumbered in the original; the number 298 is supplied from the sequence.

[281] In particular, the study of the Law in youth, גרסא דינקותא [*girsa de-yankuta*, "the learning of childhood"], figuratively called (BT Bava Metzia fol. 107b) פת שחרית [*pat shaḥarit*, "the morning bread"], has the most unspeakably beneficial consequences.

[282] The more holy things our soul has come to know and experience here below, the more is it *soul* and capable of bliss. — The Law is also called חיי עולם [*ḥayyei olam*, "eternal life"]; cf. אשרי מי שבא לכאן ותלמודו בידו ["Happy is he who comes here with his learning in his hand," BT Pesaḥim 50a].

[283] See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 15 and 16. Cf. also Sifra on Lev. 26:3, שתהיו עמלים בתורה ["that you shall labor in the Torah"], and BT Sanhedrin 99[b], אדם לעמל נברא ["man is born for toil"]; also BT Eruvin fol. 54[a], שנא' פתח פומך וכו' ["as it is said, Open your mouth," etc.].

תורה בין בעדנא דעסיק בה בין בעדנא דלא עסיק בה מגינה ומצילה

"The Law protects and shields, while one studies it and at other times as well." (BT Sotah fol. 21[a])

Addenda

To the Introduction, p. 4, line 4: cf. ראש אמנה [*Rosh Amanah*], ch. 28, beginning. — Introduction, p. 13: as further proofs that *women*, too, attended instruction in the Law, cf. Jerusalem Talmud, Sotah ch. 1; see Leviticus Rabbah ch. 9, תניא, and ר' מאיר הוה יליף וכו' הוה תמה וכו' ["R. Meir used to expound … she was waiting …"]; ch. 18 (in עמק ברכה [*Emek Berakhah*], ch. 17, p. 110a): ומצוה להקהל בבה"כ לדרוש מענין היום לנשים וכו' ["and it is a commandment to assemble in the synagogue to expound the subject of the day to the women," etc.]. — Introduction, p. 25, line 9: the expression *week* there designates, as often in the Talmud, a period of 7 years (see Maimonides, הלכות תפלה [*Hilkhot Tefillah*] 14:10), and is therefore unsuitable there; but that in that instruction there was an *explanation* of the holy Name, and thus an instruction about the essence of God, see *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:62.

To p. 21, note 1. — See further Exod. 16:6; 22:9. To p. 45, note 2 (conclusion also p. 46), compare further *Herder*, *Adrastea*, vol. 4, part 1 (Leipzig ed.), p. 161: "Who surpassed .... so many excellent sayings and parables of the Rabbis, which are founded on the *finest observations*? Will any man of understanding read them without respect? To the *rabble* of writers, to be sure, the most ingenious parables were often, out of *hatred* and *perversity*, now ridiculous, now contemptible; but why? because he did *not grasp the sense* in them, and wantonly *clung to their often childish-seeming dress*." —

[p. 112] Seventh Section

(עבודה) Divine Service

1. Inner Worship of God[284]

דע את אלהי אביך ועבדהו בלב שלם ובנפש חפצה

"Know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and with a willing soul." (1 Chron. 28:9)

[284]Cf. my *Sermons*, vol. 2, Sermon 19. Already the Book of the Zohar (ויקהל [*Va-yak'hel*] 201a) distinguishes *inner* and *outer* divine service: .... תא חזי אית פולחנא דקב"ה דקיימא בעובדא ... ואית פולחנא דקב"ה דאיהו פולחנא פנימאה יתיר ["Come and see: there is a service of the Holy One, blessed be He, that consists in deed … and there is a service of the Holy One, blessed be He, that is a more inward service …"]. Cf. from R. Bahya, חובות הלבבות [*Ḥovot ha-Levavot*], Introduction.

302. ***What does Holy Scripture understand by the word*** **divine service*****?***

The practice of *all* the duties which we fulfil for the glory of God, first of all directly, and then also indirectly, i.e. toward ourselves or other people.

303. ***Is it not prayer alone that is designated by the name divine service?***

Prayer is divine service in the *narrowest* sense, and [p. 113] indeed it is called *divine service of the heart* (עבודה שבלב [*avodah she-ba-lev*]).[285]

304. ***What, then, is understood by*** **inner** ***divine service?***

All pious dispositions and feelings,[286] especially those through which we seek to enliven our outward divine service.

305. ***Is this inner divine service important?***

It is the life, the power of the outward; it is the chief matter[287] in the worship of God: "*Know* the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and a willing soul." "God desires the heart." (BT Sanhedrin 106.) "Things are judged according to the dispositions." (BT Berakhot 13.[288])

306. ***Of what kind might those dispositions, thoughts or feelings be which make up the inner divine service?***

They are partly of a *serious*, partly of a *joyful* kind, partly also *calm occupations of the understanding*.[289]

[p. 114] **307.** ***Which might make up the first kind?***

Fear of God, *thoughts of repentance*, a *serious disposition* in general, and the great virtue — the crown of all worship of God: — *self-conquest*.

308. ***Which might be the chief dispositions of the second kind?***

Love, *attachment*, *submission to God's will*, *trust*, *grateful acknowledgment of the divine benefits and dispensations* in general, *alacrity* and real *joyfulness* in the worship of God, or *religious enthusiasm*.[290]

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[285] In contrast to the older, conspicuously outward sacrificial service.

[286] Earnest, living ones, of course; for *involuntary, fleeting* affects are no meritorious divine service. See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 114 and following.

[287] Cf. Zohar, Va-yakhel 201: "The divine service within is the chief matter." (עקרא דכלא ["the root of everything"]).

[288] "*Religion knows no action without disposition, no word without spirit, no agreement without agreement in meaning. Religious actions without religious thoughts are empty puppetry, no divine service.*" Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, Section 1, p. 27.

[289] See Kuzari 2:50: וכללו של דבר כי תורתנו נחלקת בין היראה והאהבה והשמחה וכו' ["and the sum of the matter is that our Torah is divided among fear, love and joy, etc."]. See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 83.

[290] See my *Reden* [Sermons], year 1, sermon 5.

309. ***And the third kind would consist?***

In *faith*, in *reflection on the Law*, in a constant *direction of the spirit* toward the *life's task* to be accomplished, or the striving to walk always in the *ways of God*.

310. ***Why did you name fear of God first?***

Because it is the foundation of all religiosity, particularly according to our Religion, and because it expressly says:

ראשית חכמה יראת ה'

"The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God." (Ps. 111:10)

יראת ה' ראשית דעת

"The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge." (Prov. 1:7)

את האלהים ירא ואת מצותיו שמור כי זה כל האדם

"Fear God and keep his commandments, that is the whole man." (Eccl., end [12:13])

אין להקב"ה בעולמו אלא אוצר של יראת שמים בלבד

"God has nothing (dearer) in his world than the treasure of the fear of God." (BT Shabbat 31b)

אין בכל המדות גדולה מן היראה

"Among all qualities none is greater than the fear of God." (Bamidbar Rabbah ch. 18[291])

[p. 115] **311.** ***Explain to me the biblical expression "fear of God."***

Fear of God is an awe before God, the All-exalted, which in its manner and mode, its strength and weakness, conforms to the knowledge we have of the being of God. Beginners in this knowledge are accustomed to fear God partly *too little*, partly *too much*, i.e. to fear only his wrath and punishment; more mature worshippers of God *do not indeed cease* to fear God as a strict, incorruptible judge who is earnest every day (Deut. 10:17; Ps. 7:10–11);[292] yet before him, since

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[291]The nearer we stand to God, the more we also need the fear of God; for with his intimates he deals strictly! See my *Erbauungen* [Edifications], year [?], sermon 17, p. 269, note; and Mekhilta (בשלח [Be-shallaḥ]): הקב"ה מוראו על הקרובים יותר מעל הרחוקים ["the fear of the Holy One, blessed be He, is upon those near him more than upon those far off"]. See also Tanḥuma, חקת [Ḥukkat], end. It was precisely because Judaism deems men worthy of *true nearness to God* that it had to be based on the *fear of God*, which, remarkably enough, is so greatly misunderstood and censured. — ! —

[292]Zohar, Introduction, pp. 11 and 12; Zohar, ואתחנן [Va-eṯḥannan] 263. Wessely, גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], part 1, section 6, ch. 7, and section 10, ch. 4; his ספר המדות [*Sefer ha-Middot*], part 1, ch. 4 and following. Cf. my *Erbauungen*, year 1, sermon 21. This is also treated at length in two more of my manuscript sermons: "*The perfect Israelite*," עקב [Ekev] 5591; "*Fear and Reverence*," ויצא [Va-yetse] 5595. The Talmud already alludes to *reverence* in the words: ירא אלהים האמור באברהם מאהבה וכו' ["the 'God-fearing' said of Abraham is out of love, etc."] (BT Sotah 31a). Upon this probably also rests the passage (Piyyut תוצאת משרת in the מוסף יום א' של שבועות [Musaf of the first day of Shavuot]) ונתיב יראה לעשותו מאהבה ["and the path of fear, to perform it out of love"]. —

they have also recognized his engaging, respect-commanding attributes, they at the same time feel a *nobler awe*, which holds, as it were, the *middle between fear and love* and is called *reverence*.

312. ***Can you tell me anything more precise about this reverence?***

[p. 116] It can only be the result of great effort both in *knowledge* and in the *fear of God* in the former sense. For thus it says:

אם תבקשנה ככסף וכמטמונים תחפשנה אז תבין יראת ה' וכו'

> "If you will seek it like silver and search it out like treasures, then you will comprehend the fear of God, etc." (Prov. 2:4[–5])

313. ***By what do we recognize the God-fearing man?***

By a certain modest caution and anxious conscientiousness in the choice of his undertakings, especially where a profanation of the Name of God is to be feared.

314. ***How then do*** **feelings of repentance** ***as such come to belong to inner divine service? These feelings are surely to be restricted to the*** **sinner** ***alone?***

Repentance, since no man is without sin, and the inclination of our heart is evil even from youth, is the task of everyone; we all depart daily further from childlike innocence and especially from the original standpoint of our soul, and must therefore *return*; hence all Religion is also in the truest sense *return*[293] and must be bound up with thoughts of repentance. "Return one day before your death," it says in the Sayings of the Fathers [Pirkei Avot 2:10]. "But surely we do not know the day of our death?" "Precisely for that reason we should spend *all our days in repentance*" (BT Shabbat 153[a]; Zohar, ויחי [Va-yeḥi] 220a.)

תכלית חכמה תשובה ומעשים טובים

> "The goal of wisdom is repentance and good deeds." (BT Berakhot 17[a])

315. ***In what respect is the*** **serious** ***disposition inner divine service?***

[p. 117] In that the seriously disposed person is far less susceptible to sin than the gay-spirited one; already the wise man teaches:

טוב כעס משחוק כי ברע פנים ייטב לב

> "Better seriousness than a merry mood, for by a sad countenance the heart is made good." (Eccl. 7:3)

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[293] See the present religion book, p. 4, questions 13–16. My *Erbauungen*, year 2, sermon 3.

אשרי אדם מפחד תמיד

"Happy the man who is always apprehensive." (Prov. 28:14[294])

316. ***But why should*** **self-conquest** ***hold so very high a place among the pious dispositions, or the inner divine service?***

Because self-conquest is the *proximate aim* of all Religion; inasmuch as it is precisely a struggle against ourselves and a mastery of the passions.

317. ***Explain yourself more fully on this.***

Judaism rightly recognizes as *divine service* only that which is a *service* — which costs us some exertion or the overcoming of some passion. Only in self-conquest are those religious qualities and states such as *purity*, *abstinence*, *holiness* and the like possible; whoever shuns self-conquest is not at all fit for a worship of God in the true sense, such as Judaism teaches it. —

בטל רצונך מפני רצונו

"Set aside your will before the will of God." (Pirkei Avot 2:4[295])

[p. 118] **318.** ***But does such an unpleasant resistance against ourselves then give God pleasure?***

It is for our own good: a very beneficial, even if only later rewarding, resistance against our sinful impulse, which, to our greatest harm, prefers momentary comfort to the infinitely more salutary labor for the Lord. That is the beneficial *discipline* (מוסר [*musar*]) of Religion, in whose praise the wisest of men cannot exhaust himself.

319. ***What is*** **love of God*?***

An inclination, awakening in us out of a *right knowledge* of God and his benefits, toward a *willing observance* of his holy Law without any regard to a temporal or eternal reward.

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[294]Cf. the expression: הלוך קדורנית מפני ה' ["walking mournfully before the Lord"] (Malachi 3:9 [recte 3:14]). [Translator: Plessner prints "Maleachi 39"; the phrase (in the Bible הלכנו קדרנית מפני ה' צבאות) is Mal. 3:14.]

[295]The above teaching is a fundamental teaching of Judaism. In the overcoming, in the force we do to ourselves, consists the merit. This is what those principles teach: לפום צערא אגרא ["according to the pain is the reward"] (Sayings of the Fathers, ch. 5, end); לא נתנו המצות אלא לצרף בהן את הבריות ["the commandments were given only to refine human beings through them"] (Tanḥuma, שמיני [Shemini]); גדול המצווה ועושה ממי שאינו מצווה ועושה ["greater is one who is commanded and acts than one who is not commanded and acts"] (BT Kiddushin 31[a]) (precisely because one does not like to be commanded); מצות שלא ליהנות נתנו ["the commandments were not given for enjoyment"] (BT Rosh Hashanah 28[a]); תעשה ולא מן העשוי ["you shall make it, and not from what is already made"] (BT Sukkah 12a); for comfort is here contrary to the purpose: אין צו אלא במקום שיש בו חסרון כיס ["'command' is said only where there is loss of money"] (Sifra on Lev. 6:2). Cf. מורה נבוכים [*Moreh Nevukhim*, Guide of the Perplexed] 3:51: ודע שמעשה העבודות האלו כלם וכו' ["and know that the performance of all these acts of worship, etc."], and רשב"א [Rashba] on BT Sukkah 28: דבר גדול מעשה מרכבה ["a great matter — the Account of the Chariot"]. My sermon "*Self-Conquest*" (manuscript) treats this fundamental law of Judaism at length. See also my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 119–122.

ואהבת את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך וכו'

"You shall love the Eternal your God with all your heart," etc. (Deut. 6:5)

320. ***Why then is love of God commanded only in the last discourses of Moses?***

Precisely because it can only come after a mature knowledge of God. But since seldom does anyone pass through the preparatory school of fear of God and knowledge, *those who love God* are very rare phenomena; when people often boast of it, they confuse a certain *pious enthusiasm* with that noble, rare and lofty quality.

[p. 119] **321.** ***But if someone has reached the stage of love, can he then already dispense with the fear of God?***

No; precisely because love of God is not a love for our equals; — one can easily go too far out of love and let oneself be carried away too soon into steps that, however well meant, are yet dangerous; the fear of God and the keeping of all his commandments, however ordinary, must therefore always stand at the side of love as a means of protection.[296]

[p. 120]

עשה מאהבה ועשה מיראה ....

"Serve God out of love and out of fear, etc." (Sifre on Deut. 6[:5], and Sotah ch. 5; JT Berakhot ch. 9)

אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב על מנת לקבל פרס .... ויהי מורא שמים עליכם

"Be not like servants who serve the master for the sake of reward … but at the same time let the fear of Heaven be upon you." (Pirkei Avot 1:3)

322. ***What is*** **attachment** ***to God?***

It is an inward love for him, a constant longing for God and divine things, a being bound to God. Such inward love and attachment was the spirit in which Solomon, the *lover of God*, composed

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[296]Therefore, immediately upon the highest religious tasks (Deut. 10:12) there follows the quite ordinary one: לשמור את מצות וכו' ["to keep the commandments, etc."] (ibid., v. 13), with the addition לטוב לך ["for your good"]; for it is precisely the all-ordinary that renders the higher harmless and orients us again and again in the advance of our spirit. (See my *Reden*, year 2, sermon 19, p. 326 — ! —). A warm *zeal of loving service* without *fear* of God can cost us our life in an instant (Lev. 10; 2 Sam. 6). God is *good*, but also *strict*, *holy*, *unapproachable*, and must be *feared* (Ps. 89:8). — To this *double attribute of God*, which as such made itself known in the last-mentioned event (2 Sam. 6) through the Ark of the Covenant, *punishing* (v. 7) and *blessing* (v. 11), the very *opening* of that narrative (v. 2) seems already to allude in the double designations of God: שם שם ה' צבאות and יושב הכרובים, and so, as it were, to prepare us for the surprising contradiction. ה' צבאות ["Lord of Hosts"] namely designates the *benevolent ruler among his hosts* (my *Erbauungen*, year 2, p. 296, and Zohar, פקודי [Pekudei], p. 258b), יושב הכרובים ["enthroned upon the cherubim"], on the other hand, the *One enthroned in mystery*, the hidden, *unapproachable* One; as the former his nearness was *blessing*, as the latter *perilous*, *terrible*. — *Solomon loved God* (1 Kings 3:3), and in this love believed he had less need of a strict observance of the commandments (BT Sanhedrin 21[b]; Midrash [Rabbah], וארא [Va-era], beginning); but how strongly the better, sounder experience, long since set down in the Law, at last expresses itself in that wise man's well-considered results of life and inquiry: "*Fear God and keep his commandments! That is the calling of the whole man!*" Thus *wisdom*, after long doubting, had finally to subscribe to what *prophecy* (Revelation) had long taught and declared to be the task of mortals.

the Song of Songs,[297] and to which so many images and expressions in his other writings also point; and such attachment is the true spiritual life.

ואתם הדבקים בה' אלהיכם חיים כלכם היום

"You who cleave to the Eternal your God are alive, all of you, this day." (Deut. 4:4)

דבקה נפשי אחריך

"My soul cleaves after you." (Ps. 63:9)

323. Patience *or* submission *to the will of God is also supposed to be an inner divine service?*

A very significant one; and as long as we still resist trials, our service is not a service with a perfect heart and a willing soul; but it says, after all:

[p. 121]

מוסר ה' בני אל תמאס ואל תקץ בתוכחתו

"Do not despise, my son, the discipline of God; do not loathe his correction." (Prov. 3:11)

דום לה' והתחולל לו

"Be still before the Lord, and wait for him." (Ps. 37:7)

324. *Who in particular can with a joyful conscience abandon himself to the guidance of Providence?*

Whoever always honestly fulfills his duties, or who, after committing missteps, has done the required repentance and become a better person.

325. *But how does* trust[298] *in God, which is likewise supposed to be an inner divine service, differ from this submission?*

Precisely in this: partly that it, more than the other, holds a place in the inner *joyful* divine service; partly that submission usually extends only to the moment, but trust extends to the future as well.

ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה' והיה ה' מבטחו

"Blessed is the man who trusts God, for God will be his support." (Jer. 17:7)

בטחו בו בכל עת עם שפכו לפניו לבבכם ....

"Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts before him." (Ps. 62:9)

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[297] See the preface to my *Reden*, year 1, sermons 18 and 21, and the preface to year 2, p. 11 and following.

[298] I let this point of *trust* follow immediately upon that of *submission* or *patience*; just as in Psalm 86:2 the הבוטח ["who trusts"] follows as a parallel upon חסיד — the patient, good-natured man, properly the *reviled one*, the one who *bears reproach*. This חסיד אני ["I am ḥasid"] would therefore present no difficulty. (See my *Reden*, year 1, sermon 9, p. 145.)

326. ***Who makes himself guilty of misusing trust in God?***

[p. 122] Whoever idly lays his hands in his lap and counts on divine miracles,[299] in general lays claim to a divine intervention in his circumstances without being worthy of such through a special piety. Whoever trusts God in this way offends against the warning:

לא תנסו את ה' אלהיכם

"You shall not tempt the Eternal your God." (Deut. 6:16)

327. ***Do we need trust only in the circumstances of our life?***

It is almost more necessary to us in religious ones; for the observance of our Law presupposes, quite especially, our trust in God, particularly in the case of precepts that seem to disadvantage us.[300] — Here we must be able to trust in Him who is able, and has indeed promised, to make good such losses to us.

יראי ה' בטחו בה'

"You worshippers of the Lord, trust in the Lord." (Ps. 115:12 [recte 115:11])

ויבטחו בך יודעי שמך

"Those who love your name shall trust in you!" (Ps. 9:11[301])

[p. 123] **328.** ***What else is connected with trust?***

Pious courage and *religious enthusiasm*[302] (הדרת קדש [*hadrat kodesh*]) (עז [*oz*][303]), which is needed especially in difficult undertakings for God by which a public glorification of his Name (קידוש השם [*kiddush ha-Shem*]) is intended, and particularly in unbelieving ages. (See the present religion book, Section 8, end.)

אשרי אדם עוז לו בך

"Happy the man who is inspired through you!" (Ps. 84:6)

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[299] See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 36.

[300] Think of the pilgrimages to Jerusalem. See the present religion book, p. 72 (of the observance of the days of rest and festivals, and the like.

[301] True trust in God is a very exalted virtue, seldom to be met with; in the well-known formula על הצדיקים [*Al ha-tsaddikim*] it is therefore not only counted *last*, as the highest stage, but the request for a good reward is expressly added for it. The passage כי בשם קדשך הגדול והנורא בטחנו ["for in your holy, great and awesome name have we trusted"] means: we have trusted in you both in circumstances that taught us to know you as a *good, kindly* being, and in those that taught us to know you as a *fearsome* being. —

[302] עז [*oz*]: see my *Reden*, year 1, sermon 5. Cf. also גן נעול [Wessely, *Gan Na'ul*], part 1, section 5, ch. 4; רוח חן [Wessely, *Ruaḥ Ḥen*] on the Book of Wisdom 12:17. The expression, however, also means *song of praise*, inasmuch as song is a song of enthusiasm: Ps. 29:1; 68:35. Cf. my sermon, year 1, sermon 1, p. 6.

[303] The order in which the faculties of the soul under discussion are treated has been somewhat altered from their listing on p. 114.

כי בך ארץ גדוד ובאלהי אדלג שור

"For with you I run through troops, and with my God I leap over the wall." (Ps. 18:30)

ויאחז צדיק דרכו וטהר ידים יסיף אמץ

"The righteous holds fast to his way, and the guiltless strives for courage." (Job 17:9)

329. ***What is the aforementioned*** **alacrity*****, which is also supposed to be a branch of the*** **inner** ***divine service?***

It is a constant *readiness* — overcoming the sluggishness proper to us in the performance of our duties — indeed a lively *nimbleness* and *indefatigability*; a religious virtue on which very much depends in our Religion; indeed, that quality is therefore rightly regarded as the *mother* of all virtues and perfections at the stage of our spiritual-religious development.

הוי עז כנמר וקל כנשר ורץ כצבי וגבור כארי לעשות רצון אביך שבשמים

"Be bold as the leopard, light as the eagle, swift as the hart and strong as the lion, to do the will of your Father in Heaven." (Pirkei Avot 5:20 [Plessner: 5:23])

זריזות מביאה לידי נקיות וכו'

"Alacrity leads to cleanliness, etc." (Mishnah Sotah, end[304])

330. ***In what respect does the aforementioned*** **acknowledgment of the divine benefits** ***also belong to the inner divine service under discussion?***

It takes a chief place in this inner divine service of the *second* kind, inasmuch as it should and can be in the truest sense the mainspring of those joyful inner stirrings; for the grateful acknowledgment of the benefits that befall us awakens manifold joyful feelings in us, which establish a right relation of the recipient to his benefactor; feelings such as those pious men felt in their grateful outbursts:

קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל האמת אשר עשית את עבדך

"I am too small for all the grace and truth which you have shown your servant." (Gen. 32:11)

[304]Following JT Shabbat ch. 1:3; [JT] Shekalim ch. 3; BT Avodah Zarah 20; Sifre, שופטים [Shofetim]; Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah (beginning). See ראשית חכמה [*Reshit Ḥokhmah*], Portal אהבה [Love], ch. 11. My sermon "*Alacrity in Divine Service*," on Sabbath תבא [Ki Tavo] 5594, explains the above quality at length, and especially the one entitled "*The Ladder to Heaven*," on Sabbath יתרו [Yitro] 5595. Cf. JT Mo'ed Katan (end): חברין זריזין הן ["they are diligent fellows"]; Midrash Rabbah, נשוא [Naso]: כל מעשה הצדיקים במהירות ["all the deeds of the righteous are done with haste"]; and passages such as Ps. 119:32; לעולם ירוץ אדם לדבר הלכה ["a man should always run to a matter of law"], and מצוה לרוץ לבה"כ ["it is a commandment to run to the synagogue"]; also ינהגנו עלמות ["he will guide us *almut*" (Ps. 48:15)] — בזריזות כאלין עלימתא ["with alacrity, like these maidens"]; Tanḥuma on בלק [Balak]: הן עם כלביא יקום וכו' ["behold, a people that rises up like a lioness, etc."]. See also Wessely, ס' המדות [*Sefer ha-Middot*], part 2, ch. 6. See especially ראשי' חכמה [*Reshit Ḥokhmah*] in פרקים המצוות, Portal 3. [Translator: this last reference is printed obscurely (the Hebrew words are split across a line break); it appears to point to a section of *Reshit Ḥokhmah* (or a work abridged from it) dealing with the commandments.] —

מה אשיב לה' כל תגמולוהי עלי

"How shall I repay the Lord all his benefits toward me? etc." (Ps. 116:12)

331. ***By what do we especially recognize the importance and the general concern of the virtue under discussion?***

By the very significant place that the *formulas of thanksgiving* at the enjoyment of the divine gifts and the like take in our Religion. (See Section 8, toward the end.)

כל הנהנה מן העולם הזה בלא ברכה כאלו גוזל להקב"ה וכו'

"Whoever enjoys anything without a blessing robs, as it were, the Deity, etc." (BT Berakhot 35a[305])

332. ***Should we be grateful only for the good?***

We should thank God no less for the *seemingly* evil. God's chastisements are no less benefits than his other heavenly gifts.

אודך ה' כי אנפת בי

"I thank you, Lord, that you were angry with me …." (Isa. 12:1)

גם את הטוב נקבל .... ואת הרע לא נקבל

"Shall we receive only the good, and not the evil?" (Job 2:10)

ביום טובה היה בטוב וביום רעה ראה

"On the good day be of good cheer, and on the evil day look to it!" … (Eccl. 7:14[306])

[p. 126]

טוב לי כי עניתי למען אלמד חקיך

"Happy am I that I am afflicted, that thereby I may learn your statutes." (Ps. 119:71)

חייב אדם לברך על הרעה כשם שהוא מברך על הטובה

"Man must give thanks for the evil as he gives thanks for the good." (Mishnah Berakhot 9:5[307])

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[305]Cf. also the passage: "*Whoever offers thanksgiving honors me*" (Ps. 50:23), as well as: "Even if all sacrifices one day cease, *thank-offerings* will not cease." (Vayikra Rabbah ch. 9.)

[306]ראה [*re'eh*]: *look to it*, *endure*. Thus must also שמר תם וראה ישר וכו' (Ps. 37:37) be taken: "*Wait*, upright one! *endure*, honest one! for only the *future* belongs to the peaceable man." (v. 38) ופושעים יכו' אחרית רשעים נכרתה ["and transgressors, etc.; the future of the wicked is cut off"]. But can the righteous man then live to see this future? Can he not perish in his trials? No! (v. 39) ותשועת צדיקים מה' מעוזם בעת צרה, "*Even* in distress God stands by the righteous," even before their happy future arrives; — they can therefore wait calmly. — See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 183 and 184.

[307]The formulas מודים [*Modim*] and נודה לך [*Nodeh lekha*] therefore rightly close with ועל הכל וכו' ["and for everything, etc."] and ועל כלם יתברך וכו' ["and for all of them may [your name] be blessed, etc."]. See also my explanation of the difficult Mishnah Berakhot 5:3 and Megillah 4:9, האומר וכו' מודים מודים וכו' ["one who says … 'we give thanks, we give thanks,' etc."], in my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 114. Our Sages were so convinced of the necessity of this gratitude that they taught (Mishnah Berakhot

333. ***But should, finally, the*** **joyfulness in divine service** ***mentioned last above also form a special branch of the inner divine service, and not rather be already contained in the earlier ones already mentioned?***

No; joyfulness in divine service is a duty that especially characterizes the *Israelite* divine service; in the hours of the performance of the divine precepts, particularly in those of devotion, we should take pains to suppress every care, and to rejoice in the thought of *being able to serve the Almighty*[308]

[p. 127]

עבדו את ה' בשמחה.

"Serve the Lord with joy!" (Ps. 100:2)

שמחו צדיקים בה'.

"Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous!" (Ps. 97:12)

ישמח לב מבקשי ה'.

"Let the heart of those who seek God rejoice." (Ps. 105:3)

334. ***But why does so much depend on joy here?***

Joy is the means of placing us not only in a heartfelt, fervent devotion, but at the same time in a *disinterested devotion*, and thus in a *true service of God*, one that is not concerned with reward (Pirkei Avot 1:3); a service which, as it ought to be, is performed *with a whole heart and a willing soul* (בלב שלם ובנפש חפצה, 1 Chron. 28:9[309]) and is therefore the mightiest key to the treasures of heaven[310] —!

335. ***Who is especially obligated to serve God with joy, and punishable if he neglects it?***

He who is conscious of being in possession of heavenly gifts, of bodily or spiritual goods. — For those terrible punishments threatened in the Law (Deut. 28:47) almost no other reason is given than:

[p. 128]

9:5): בכל מדה מדה שהוא מודד לך הוה מודה לו במאד מאד ["for every measure that He metes out to you, give thanks to Him exceedingly"] — ! —

[308]See my *Reden*, year 1, sermon 18 (beginning). Vayikra Rabbah ch. 34. עושה מצוה יעשה אותה בלב שמח וכו' ["one who performs a commandment should do it with a joyful heart, etc."]; my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 82, 83. Maimonides, הל' לולב [Hilkhot Lulav] (end). Treated at length also in my manuscript lecture "*Joy before God*," on the Feast of Tabernacles 5595, and in several others.

[309]See an explanation of these expressions in גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*, by Naphtali Herz Wessely], Part 1, Section 10, Chapter 2.

[310]Tears, for example, also open the gates of God's grace (my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 74); but they are (unless they be tears of love and of being wholly permeated by God) in a certain sense self-interested means, by which we are seeking our own advantage. — Indeed, the song of praise in itself is, because joy is its source, the purest and worthiest service of God (הבוחר בשירי זמרה ["who chooses songs of melody"]). Compare my אבן טובה, the division on the *Piyyutim*.

תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלהיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרב כל.

> "Because you did not serve the Eternal, your God, with joy and a glad heart, out of the abundance of everything." [Deut. 28:47]

336. ***Which prayers in particular must be performed in such a feeling of joy?***

The songs of praise, which prepare for the prayer proper; but in the prayer proper, too, we should not be entirely lacking in joy; rather, it should always be before our minds what grace we have been deemed worthy of: to open our inmost being to the Most High, and so to draw from the source of all blessing for the present or the future. —

337. ***What can bring into religious joy those for whom gratitude for temporal goods cannot be its source?***

Innocence, *trust in God*, *knowledge of God*, a *study of the Law* immediately preceding divine service; these are no less — indeed they are — mainsprings of genuine religious joy. —

338. ***And now the* third *kind of inner worship of God?***

This is more an occupation of the *understanding* with the divine, whereas the previous ones constituted only the divine service of the *heart*.

339. ***And what do you understand by such worship?***

Faith, *reflection on the Law*, a *constant striving for religious perfection*, or the endeavor to walk constantly *in the ways of God*.

340. ***What is religious* faith*?***

Holding to be true and acknowledging what the holy documents of Religion, the written as well as the transmitted Law, communicate to us.

[p. 129] **341.** ***But faith is surely not commanded?***

The more strongly the works of God, nature and Revelation in general, proclaim it, the less did it need to be commanded directly; and therefore, although it is no law, the lack of it in later generations (who, over a longer time, must have attained a mature knowledge of God) was censured all the more severely (Num. 14:11; Ps. 78:22, 32), the more it had been reckoned to earlier generations as a free, magnanimous virtue (צדקה) (Gen. 15:6). —

342. ***What must we guard against with regard to* faith*?***

Against believing too much, or so-called superstition; the Law already calls for this caution through its frequent insistence on the *knowledge of God*, but especially through its clear admonitions (Deut. 13:2 ff.; 18:15 ff.) to trust no signs and wonders, and no appearance of a prophet or dreamer, however venerable, as soon as he preaches apostasy from the Law.

343. ***But what is no less dangerous, indeed even more dangerous, than superstition?***

Unbelief. — — The most enlightened in divine matters cannot comprehend everything and must *believe*. Indeed, the more enlightened and the nearer to God a person is, the more he learns to believe things that one would not suspect in the remotest sense from lower standpoints. —

344. Reflection on the Law ***is supposed to be inner divine service as well?***

Certainly; and indeed one to which Holy Scripture expressly and frequently summons us.[311]

[p. 130] **345.** ***But is this duty not already contained in the duty of*** **study of the Law,** ***which has already been treated?***

No; here the subject is not study in our dwelling, but a constant meditation on what has already been learned from the Law[312]; for since we cannot always be searching the Law, we should at least diligently reflect upon it, which we can often do in the midst of our occupations without thereby incurring any loss of time.

346. ***In what respect is reflection on the Law divine service?***

Insofar as it is already an application of what has been learned, but especially insofar as it sanctifies our inner being and protects it from errors and particularly from evil thoughts. This *inner cultivation of the Law* and its beneficial consequences are clear teachings of Holy Scripture.

והיו הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על לבבך.

"And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart." (Deut. 6:6)

תורת אלהיו בלבו לא תמעד אשריו.

"The law of his God is in his heart; therefore his steps do not slip." (Ps. 37:31. See also Ps. 40.)

בלבי צפנתי אמרתך למען לא אחטא לך.

"In my heart I keep your word, that I might not sin against you." (Ps. 119:11[313])

347. ***Where must one refrain from this meditation on the Law, and even seek to avoid it?***

[p. 131] In unclean places, as also during prayer; for the study of the Law has its time, and prayer has its time.

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[311] הגה [*hagah*, "meditate"] designates this *inner occupation*; but since, as is well known, יומם ולילה ["day and night"] is added to it, that occupation is consequently meant to be a constant one.

[312] Thus Isaiah calls Israel עם תורתי בלבם ["the people in whose heart is my law"] (Isa. 51:7). To this inner occupation with the Law refers, for example, that passage in Sotah 21 [BT Sotah 21a], that the Law *always* affords protection. See also the present religion-book, Question 108. —

[313] Compare Wessely, יין לבנון [*Yein Levanon*], p. 2, on על התורה.

348. ***But if someone possesses no knowledge of the Law and cannot perform the divine service under discussion?***

Such a person must hold all the more to the one which consists in a *constant striving* for religious perfection.

349. ***What about this striving?***

Since man's *chief task* on earth is the perfecting of his soul, or the endeavor to become ever more like *him* in whose image he was created, but this task is no easy one, and yet can and should fill the whole of a human life: his attention must *always* be directed to that chief task, to walk *in the ways of God*; or the striving for perfection must become the *ruling idea* within him. —

היום קצר והמלאכה מרובה וכו'.

> "The day is short and the work is much, etc." [Pirkei Avot 2:15]

בקשו פניו תמיד.

> "Seek his face continually." (Ps. 105:4)

350. ***Might not this constant striving after the Eternal have a detrimental effect on our temporal circumstances?***

It can only have a most beneficial effect on us, not only because these interruptions of the everyday course of life, very reasonable in themselves, preserve our zest for it, but also because, in the midst of our occupations and especially our *pleasures*, they remind us of our true destiny in life, so that in the whirl of worldly, sensual intoxication we do not lose sight of the goal and become [p. 132] unhappy. Thus a wise teacher or father calls the children who are absorbed in play, and often in dangerous play, back to their duty, and thereby saves for them body, soul, and the most precious good of all, time, rescuing it from *idle* for *purposeful* activity. —

דורות ראשונים עשו תורתן קבע ומלאכתן עראי, וזה וזה נתקיימו בידן וכו'.

> "The ancients regarded religion as their chief task, and their worldly calling as a secondary one; and both prospered in their hands, etc." (BT Berakhot 35b)

ודע שמעשה העבודות האלו כלם.... אין תכלית כונתם רק להתלמד ולהתעסק במצות ה' ית' ולהפנות מעסקי העולם וכו'.

> "Know that the occupations of divine service, such as study of the Law, prayer, and the performance of other duties, have no other purpose than precisely to accustom us to the divine tasks, and at times to tear us away from worldly occupations, etc.[314]" (Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed 3:51)

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[314] See my אבן טובה, p. 91, and Kuzari 3:3, regarding the beneficial purpose of praying three times daily.

351. ***But what proves especially that God intended this*** **constant remembrance** ***of those higher tasks?***

The commandments of the *fringes* and of the *phylacteries*[315], which, as is known, were always worn, and also the weekly *day of rest*, were meant to remind us constantly of our higher calling and to interrupt our temporal occupations and enjoyments; as such symbols the latter two are called *signs* (אות), and of the former it is even said expressly: you shall *look upon them*[316] and remember, etc.

[p. 133] **352.** ***Cite for me some further passages about this inner divine service of constant orientation toward God!***

שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד וכו'.

"I have set the Lord always before my eyes, etc." (Ps. 16:8)

אם זכרתיך על יצועי באשמרות אהגה בך.

"I think of you upon my bed; in the night watches I am occupied with you." (Ps. 63:7)

353. ***But do we then know all the ways of God, so as always to take them as our standard?***

We need only, in every undertaking, keep God in mind and earnestly wish for his influence, and he then shows us the right ways. Thus David prayed:

דרכיך ה' הודיעני .... באמתך ולמדני .... אותך קויתי כל היום.

"Your ways, O Lord, teach me. … Let me walk in your truth and teach me … ; in you I hope all the day." (Ps. 25:5)

למדני לעשות רצונך .... רוחך טובה תנחני בארץ מישור.

"Teach me to do your will. … Let your good spirit lead me on level ground." (Ps. 143:10)

354. ***Do you know the principal passage in Holy Scripture concerning the duty under discussion?***

בכל דרכיך דעהו והוא יישר ארחתיך.

"In all your undertakings be mindful of him, and he will make your paths level." (Prov. 3:6. 3:16)

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[315] To which we shall return in the present religion-book in connection with *external* worship.

[316] וראיתם אותו ["and you shall see it"], precisely because they are a *sign*; compare the same expression with אות in Exod. 12:13 and 23. —

355. ***Do you also know the remark of our Sages on this passage?***

Certainly; they call it a *small passage on which all the essentials of the Law depend*.[317]

[p. 134] **356.** ***This admonition is supposed to be such a fundamental teaching?***

Certainly; for it recommends precisely the constant looking to God, the steady striving for religious perfection, which is indeed the *trunk* of all religiosity, on which all acts of divine service hang like branches and leaves.

357. ***But God did expressly make his ways known to Moses?***

He did indeed (Exod. 34:6[318]) instruct him, but only in general, about his attributes;[319] for the ways of the Lord are, after all, innumerable; yet Moses was at that time deemed worthy of the *great communication* that *goodness*[320] and benevolence lie at the basis of *all the ways of God*, even if this is not always evident to us.

[p. 135] **358.** ***Did God then give us no other opportunity to come to know his ways?***

Certainly, in his works, in *nature* (מעשים), but especially in his supernatural mighty deeds described in Holy Scripture (called עלילות, מפעלות, also נפלאות, and so on), as well as through the divine *names* founded on his deeds, the understanding of which is of very great importance for the knowledge of God.[321]

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[317] איזו היא פרשה קטנה, שכל גופי תורה תלויין בה? בכל דרכיך דעהו והוא יישר אורחותיך ["Which is the small passage on which all the essentials of the Torah depend? 'In all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight'"] (BT Berakhot 63a). — On the difference between דרך [*derekh*] and ארח [*oraḥ*] (see the present religion-book, p. 47, note 1) see further Zohar, מקץ [Miketz] 197b, and ויקהל [Vayakhel] 215a; — also גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], Part 2, Section 10, Chapter 4.

[318] See also (Ps. 103:1 [Translator: evidently Ps. 103:7, "He made known his ways to Moses"]) מגיד מישרים [*Maggid Meisharim*, by R. Joseph Karo] on תשא [Ki Tissa], and Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, Section 2, p. 110 ff.

[319] And this, too, only after Moses — because at that time he was to represent the place of God entirely before the people — had felt the need for that *knowledge of God* and had urgently entreated for it (see the present religion-book, Introduction, p. 17, but especially my Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 14, p. 230, note, and R. Shem Tov on מורה נבוכים [*Guide of the Perplexed*] 1:15 (כי מי שרצה וכו' ["for whoever wished …"])). My *exposition* of Exod. chs. 33 and 34, as a contribution to the *Book of Wisdom*, ch. 11, verse 26, treats this in detail (manuscript).

[320] He calls his attributes in general טוב [*tov*, "good"] (Exod. 33:19); compare ובטוב העולם נדון ["and the world is judged with goodness"], Pirkei Avot 3:11 [3:15 in the usual numbering]; thus the name *God* (*Gott*) is said to be connected, already in Persian, גדא [*Khudā*] (compare the idol גד [Gad], Isa. 65:11), with *good* (the Good One).

[321] For which reason the author also hesitates to touch upon the subject more closely in a popular book such as the present one. Compare also the very important passage: לפי מעשי אני נקרא, פעמים שאני נקרא וכו' ["I am called according to my deeds; at times I am called …"] (Shemot Rabbah ch. 3). — The passage (Bava Batra 14) השם וכל כנוייו מונחים בארון ["the Name and all its epithets were placed in the Ark"] states precisely that all the attributes of God are communicated and alluded to in the Law; compare also the passage (Nachmanides, Introduction to the Pentateuch): כל התורה כלה שמותיו של הקב"ה. ["The whole Torah consists of the names of the Holy One, blessed be He."]

359. ***What, then, would be gained through such constant orientation toward God?***

That *all* our circumstances, even the temporal ones, would be ennobled and as it were raised to divine service; that life in all its relations would receive its true worth and bear the stamp of that most important principle:

וכל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים.

"Let all your deeds aim at the glory of God!" (Pirkei Avot 2:17)

[p. 136]

Eighth Section

II. External Worship of God[322]

לא המדרש עיקר אלא המעשה.

"Not study is the main thing, but deed." (Pirkei Avot 1:17)

1. Daily Life

360. ***Is* external *divine service necessary?***

Certainly; for only through it does the inner receive its worth, in that only through the external does it *take effect in life*.

361. ***But does God then need a visible worship?***

God does not need even our *inner* service; but we, as sensuous beings, need the inner as well as the outer.[323]

[p. 137] **362.** ***Explain yourself more fully on this!***

The chief idea of all divine service is the *public glorification* of God (קדוש השם); public glorification, however, presupposes a visible divine service. But external worship also awakens or enlivens the inner; it is the best bond among fellow believers; the strongest resistance to religious fanaticism, in that it gives the believer, as it were, occupation; and since as such it costs us effort, it is this that first makes our divine service truly worthy of the name.[324]

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[322] Our body, too, is a higher image (see the present religion-book, Question 195, note), and is to be ennobled by our soul, as well as to contribute to its perfection. On this are founded those teachings that the precepts of the Law were aimed especially at the human body: Makkot 23b; Jerusalem Berakhot ch. 9: אין לך אחד מישראל וכו' ["There is not one of Israel …"]; Tanḥuma שמיני [Shemini]: אשריכם ישראל! שבכל אבר ואבר שבכם נתן מצוה וכו' ["Happy are you, O Israel! For upon every single limb of yours He has placed a commandment …"]. Compare also Kallir's piyyut ואתה אזן וכו' in the קדושת מוסף יום א' דר"ה [Kedushta of the Musaf for the first day of Rosh Hashanah]. Compare the Introduction to the present religion-book, p. 21.

[323] See my אבן טובה, Lecture 4, beginning.

[324] See my Sermons [*Erbauungsreden*], vol. 2, Sermon 19.

363. ***But it is wont, after all, to have its opponents too?***

Because harmful abuse was often practiced with it, and ignorance, indolence, hypocrisy, and self-deception, very wrongly, found their account in it.[325]

364. ***What lesson follows from this for us?***

That inner divine service without the outer, and *especially* the outer without the inner, has no worth.

את האלהים ירא ואת מצותיו שמור .... כי את כל מעשה האלהים יבא במשפט על כל נעלם ....

> "Fear God and keep his commandments; … for God will bring every deed into judgment, as well as everything hidden." — ! — (Eccl. 12:14)

365. ***But if we feel ourselves incapable precisely of inner worship, should we on that account also neglect the external duties?***

No; for we have been taught, and rightly so:

[p. 138]

לעולם יעסוק אדם בתורה ובמצוות אפילו שלא לשמה שמתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה.

> "In any case let one occupy oneself with the study of the Law and the performance of the commandments, even without the corresponding disposition; for through this one usually arrives at the corresponding disposition as well." (BT Pesachim 50b[326])

366. ***Can you perhaps also give me the external worship of God in certain divisions?***

One could well divide the duties of external worship — leaving aside the holy days, which have their own particular duties — into

1. *personal*

2. *domestic*

3. *those of the house of God.*

367. ***Which would be the first?***

Circumcision (with which the *redemption of the firstborn* is in part connected); *fringes*; *phylacteries*; the precepts concerning the *hair*, *clothing*, and *food*.

368. ***What does circumcision signify?***

In it the newborn boy receives his consecration to Judaism.

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[325] See the lecture cited, p. 329 ff.

[326] My Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 8, p. 122.

369. ***What makes it especially important?***

That it was already commanded to Abraham, and is accordingly a very ancient law, one that arose together with Hebraism itself.[327]

[p. 139] **370.** ***What about the redemption of the firstborn?***

Every firstborn is to be consecrated to the Lord, in remembrance that God once caused the Egyptian firstborn to die. The redemption of a firstborn *boy* takes place on the 30th day after his birth, for a sum of 5 pieces of money which the boy's father hands to a priest. (See Exod. ch. 13 and Yoreh De'ah ch. 205.[328][329])

371. ***What do the*** **fringes** ***(ציצית) signify?***

In general they, like the *phylacteries* (תפלין), are meant to remind us of the Exodus from Egypt and of the duties incumbent upon us (Num. 15:35 ff.; Deut. 22:12).

372. ***But of what might they remind us in particular?***

They raise the garment of the Israelite, as it were, to a *priestly* one, and recall that God, precisely through that redemption, chose Israel to be a *kingdom of priests* and a holy people.[330]

[p. 140] **373.** ***Of what do the*** **phylacteries** ***(תפלין) remind us in particular?***

That God, at the redemption from Egypt, raised Israel from the condition of slavery to *kingship* (מלכות), and made especially *mastery over oneself*, or *self-conquest*, its chief law, which in Judaism is a principal requirement and first gives true worth to our worship of God.[331]

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[327]That circumcision is not of Egyptian origin, but was rather transplanted to Egypt by Abraham, has long since been demonstrated by very learned men. See the present religion-book, Introduction, p. 17, note. Herodotus, who is a thousand years younger than Moses, doubtless deserves to be ranked below him. Compare Lilienthal's *Gute Sache* [Translator: Michael Lilienthal, *Die gute Sache der in der heiligen Schrift … enthaltenen göttlichen Offenbarung*], Part 4, p. 1032; Stackhouse's *Vertheidigung* [Translator: the German translation of Thomas Stackhouse's *Defence of the Christian Religion*], Part 2, p. 268 ff. — The benefit of circumcision, however, is not only a bodily but also a spiritual one. I refer to the following passages: Shabbat 130 ff.; Nedarim 31 ff.; Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 29; Tanḥuma משפטים, ויקרא [Mishpatim, Vayikra] and צו [Tzav] (end); Zohar לך לך [Lekh Lekha], p. 93 ff., and ויקרא [Vayikra], p. 14 (also Midrash Bereshit Rabbah chs. 46 and 48); Introduction to the Tikkunei Zohar, p. 10b, and ch. 70, p. 129b; Zohar Ḥadash רות [Ruth] (Amsterdam ed., p. 69a); גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*] 1, 9, 3 (end). Compare *Philo*, *On Circumcision*.

[328]Translator: i.e. Shulḥan Arukh, Yoreh De'ah 305; "205" is a misprint.

[329]Priests and Levites are exempt from this duty (Yoreh De'ah, loc. cit., §18).

[330]Compare my Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 13, p. 216, note 2. See also Zohar שלח [Shelaḥ], p. 174, ר' חזקיה וכו' ["Rabbi Ḥizkiyah …"]; see also ibid. b, in the ר"מ [*Ra'aya Meheimna*]. Since the fringes recall the priesthood, they are at the same time a symbol of *love* (אהבה), which we owe to God as our *Father*.

[331]See the present religion-book, Question 316. See especially my Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 13, p. 221, note 1. Accordingly the phylacteries on the *arm* would signify *strength*; those on the *forehead*, *diadem*, *crown* [פאר [*pe'er*, "headdress, splendor"]: Sukkah 25; Mo'ed Katan 15.]; — and as such they will also remind us of the chief law of Judaism, *fear* (אימת מלכות, יראה ["dread of royalty, awe"]), which we owe to God as the *King* of all kings. (The תפלין also require far more anxious care and cleanliness than the ציצית.) Since they signify self-mastery, the phylacteries (רצועות ["straps"]) will, as it were, represent the image of *binding oneself* through the divine commandments. See the present religion-book, Questions 15 and 16. Compare Ps. 2:3 (עבות, מוסרות ["cords, bonds"] for commands). Since they signify such a *yoke*, it is rightly said (Berakhot 15): כל הקורא ק"ש

[p. 141] **374.** ***What, then, lies in the cases (*בתים *[*battim*]*) of the tefillin?***

Small parchment scrolls, containing the four passages whose content the tefillin are meant to bring to our remembrance: שמע [*Shema*] (Deut. 6:4–9), והיה אם שמע [*Ve-hayah im shamoa*] (ibid. 11:13–21), קדש [*Kaddesh*] and והיה כי יביאך [*Ve-hayah ki yevi'akha*] (Exod. 13:1–27).[332]

375. ***But should not the words "you shall bind them for a sign" be taken* figuratively*, and in the same sense as that figurative saying (Prov. 7:3; see also Song of Songs 8:6): "bind them upon your fingers," etc.?***

By no means. In favor of actual tefillin speaks first of all the *Tradition*; then the frequent recurrence of that teaching in the Law; then, above all, the expression אות [*ot*, "sign"], which, as is well known, denotes precisely something *visible*. — Solomon in his Proverbs gives, as usual (see Prov. 3:10;[333] גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], pt. 2, sec. 3, ch. 10),[334] only the *sense* of the biblical law, which is to be carried out literally. Thus not only the Psalmist had already offered such interpretations of the divine Law (see יין לבנון [*Yein Levanon*], p. 90b;[335] my Sermons, vol. 2, p. 371, heading to Psalm 49), but even Moses himself (see, e.g., on circumcision, Deut. 10:16), without this interpretation being meant in the remotest sense to abolish the literal force of the Law. — On the contrary, with the abolition of the literal, the figurative too, whose support it is, would sooner or later have to destroy itself. —

[p. 142] **376.** ***But do those signs have no value at moments when we are not paying attention to them?***

They *always* have value; they are protective means recommended to us by Religion, especially against inner dangers, such as evil impulses and harmful opinions.

בלא תפלין כאלו מעיד עדות שקר בעצמו! ["Whoever recites the Shema without tefillin is as if he bore false witness against himself!"] For the ק"ש [Shema] is עול מלכות שמים [the yoke of the kingdom of heaven], while the תפלין are the symbol of this *yoke*. — — Only now does the explanation of the Zohar and the Tikkunim make sense (see ראשית חכמה [*Reshit Ḥokhmah*], Gate of קדושה [Holiness], ch. 6): that through this duty the kingdom of sin is, as it were, *bound*, *laid in chains*! — (See also Megillah 16; Menaḥot 35: וראו כל עמי וכו' ["And all the peoples … shall see"].) The Talmud (Ḥullin 88b) has Israel become worthy of the fringes and phylacteries through the merit of Abraham on that occasion (Gen. 14:23). On that occasion, namely, Abraham was deemed worthy of *kingship* and *priesthood*. — (Ps. 110. Nedarim 32 and the *Seliḥah* את הברית [*Et ha-Berit*] (כ"י מוסף עקדה [the *Akedah* hymn of the Musaf of Yom Kippur])! It is therefore highly probable that my view of the meaning of these two duties, which I had formed before I became aware of these proof-passages, is, however new it may seem, correct and deserves attention.

[332]Translator: Thus printed; Exod. 13 has only 22 verses. The two tefillin passages are Exod. 13:1–10 (*Kaddesh*) and 13:11–16 (*Ve-hayah ki yevi'akha*).

[333]Translator: Thus printed; the verse meant is probably Prov. 3:3 ("bind them about your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart").

[334]Translator: *Gan Na'ul*, Naphtali Herz Wessely's work on Hebrew synonyms (1765–66).

[335]Translator: *Yein Levanon*, Wessely's commentary on Pirkei Avot (1775).

כל שיש לו תפילין בראשו ותפילין בזרועו וציצית בבגדו ומזוזה בפתחו הכל בחזוק שלא יחטא

"Whoever has the tefillin on his head and arm, fringes on his garment, and the doorpost inscription (מזוזה [mezuzah]) on his door, is almost certain not to fall into the hands of sin," etc. (BT Menaḥot 33b; see also ibid. p. 44)[336]

377. ***But what duty is incumbent on us with regard to these signs?***

To think of them very often (especially since the ארבע כנפות [*arba kanfot*, the four-cornered fringed garment] is worn constantly); in particular, not to let our attention wander from them during prayer; and to have them examined quite often to see whether they have suffered any damage; for with their outward fitness for use, their inner power and purpose would also be lost.[337] As is well known, the tefillin are not put on on the Sabbath and festivals, because these days *themselves* remind us of God.

378. ***In what respect did you name the*** **hair,** ***too, as subject to the personal precepts?***

Inasmuch as we may not cut the hair round, and may not bring a *razor* (תער) especially to the front corners (פאה [*pe'ah*]), including the beard (see Yoreh De'ah ch. 181:11) (Lev. 19:27); for this sin has been shown to be a transgression of a fivefold prohibition (Yoreh De'ah ch. 181[338]). See the *Ḥinnukh* on the said biblical passage.)

[p. 143] **379.** ***What law is to be observed with respect to*** **clothing***?*

It is written: "A garment of mingled weave shall not come upon you" (Lev. 19:19); "You shall not wear a weave in which wool and linen are together" (Deut. 22:11).[339] — An exchange of clothing between the two sexes is also forbidden (Deut. 22:15).[340]

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[336]Translator: The passage is in BT Menaḥot 43b.

[337]As regards the other duties connected with this, I refer the teacher to the Shulḥan Arukh (ארח חיים [Oraḥ Ḥayyim]), ch. 8–45. See also BT Shabbat 32a.

[338]*Uncovering the head* might not exactly be called a sin outside the times of divine service; yet a certain scruple is always felt against it. BT Kiddushin 31[a]. See also זרע אברהם [*Zera Avraham*] on the Sifrei to Deut. 11:13. At *table*, only *ignorance* could put an indifferent propriety in the place of a religious duty. Zohar פנחס [Pinḥas], p. 245b. — The table is indeed the Israelite's *altar*. See my Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 13, p. 220.

[339]See the very reasonable statement of the ground of this prohibition in Zohar קדושים [Kedoshim], p. 86a. Compare also my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 30, note 1. A still more remarkable expression with regard to clothing is found even in the Prophet (Zeph. 1:8): מלבוש נכרי [*malbush nokhri*, "foreign apparel"], for which so very harsh a punishment is threatened. The context, however (ibid. vv. 4 and 5: כמרים, כהנים [*kemarim, kohanim*, "idol-priests, priests"]), seems to point to *priestly vestments borrowed from heathen temples*. See Yoreh De'ah ch. 178.

[340]Translator: Thus printed; the verse is Deut. 22:5.

380. ***But what duty might further be recommended in the respect under discussion?***

Not to be vain in the dressing of the hair and in clothing, and thereby violently to stir up passion against ourselves.[341]

381. ***What would be the personal duties that come into consideration in partaking of food?***

[p. 144] First of all, personal *cleansing*, the *washing of the hands* (נטילת ידים [*netilat yadayim*]).

382. ***Are the hands washed only for meals?***

Washing of the hands takes place: on *rising*, as before *prayer*, as well as after relieving oneself or touching unclean places (Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 4:19); but that before the *meal* is the more important (Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 157–165), and this precept (although the priestly one already took place in the Temple, Exod. 30:18) is ascribed to *Solomon* (BT Shabbat 14b).[342]

383. ***Which foods are they that are forbidden?***

Among *plants*, the fruit of a tree that has been planted from seed is forbidden for three years (Lev. 19:23; Yoreh De'ah 294); among *animals*, none is permitted for consumption that does not, on the one hand, have the *signs* stated in Holy Scripture (Lev. 11 and Deut. 14), and, on the other, has not been *slaughtered* according to the prescription (Yoreh De'ah ch. 23 ff.). Besides these, there are forbidden: the *sinew of the thigh* (גיד הנשה [*gid ha-nasheh*]) (Gen. 32:33); *blood* (Lev. 7:26; Yoreh De'ah ch. 65 ff.); the *fat* in several parts of the animal's flesh (Lev. 7:24; Yoreh De'ah 64); the flesh of a *living* animal (Gen. 9:4; Yoreh De'ah 62), or also of one that has *died of itself*, been *torn*, or that through *illnesses* or through *incorrect slaughtering* has fallen into the class of torn animals (נבלות וטרפות [*nevelot u-terefot*]); likewise meat that has not been *salted* [p. 145] according to the prescription (Yoreh De'ah 60 ff.), and meat that *has passed out of our sight* (בשר שנתעלם מן העין [*basar she-nit'allem min ha-ayin*]) (Yoreh De'ah 63); but above all, all mixtures of *milk* and *meat* (בשר בחלב [*basar be-ḥalav*]) (Yoreh De'ah 87 ff.) and whatever has been prepared from them; indeed *every kind of use*, even the *cooking* of them, is forbidden. —

384. ***What further is connected with what has just been said?***

On the one hand, *moderate* enjoyment of food and drink in general — because moderate enjoyment is of almost incredible importance for one's fitness for divine service; on the other hand, also complete *abstention* from food on the *fast days* instituted by Religion. —

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[341] See BT Nedarim 9[b]; Zohar וישלח [Va-yishlaḥ], p. 166a; Zohar פקודי [Pekudei], p. 266b. On the latter passage see also Jerusalem Talmud Shabbat ch. 6, that only the family of רבי [Rabbi] (R. Judah ha-Nasi) was permitted the use of a *mirror*. (See also Bereshit Rabbah ch. 67, beginning.)

[342] See my lecture "The Day of Atonement" (*Der Versöhnungstag*), p. 15 — and אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 61–63.

385. ***But was it not harsh that not everything other peoples eat was permitted to the Israelite for consumption?***

Quite apart from the *moderation*[343] that such a restriction necessarily brings with it, it was for the Israelite's greatest good. The bodily and spiritual advantages of those laws restricting enjoyment cannot be reckoned;[344] and he can be nothing less [p. 146] than an Israelite who, with regard to the enjoyments forbidden him, will not resist his sensual natural impulse.

386. ***But what will be the*** **domestic** ***duties of outward divine service?***

Those that are strictly or especially bound up with our *dwelling* and with *domestic life*.

387. ***Name some to me!***

First of all, a special *reverence* for God, before whose gaze no room, however remote and hidden, protects us (Guide of the Perplexed 3:52, beginning), must lay the foundation for these duties (see especially BT Ta'anit 11a: אבני ביתו וכו' ["the stones of his house," etc.]). Our house, moreover, should not be built on *injustice* (Jer. 22:13).

[p. 147] **388.** ***But name to me the more specific outward duties of domestic life!***

Active care that no one in our dwelling suffer *harm* (Deut. 22:8; Job 11:14);[345] — also, harboring *many* or even *evil* people in the house (Ps. 101; בן סירא [Ben Sira] 11:34–41; BT Yevamot p. 63) is a source of great misfortune.[346] A chief duty is affixing the *doorpost inscription* (מזוזה [mezuzah]) to the doors of our houses and dwellings (Deut. 6:9; Yoreh De'ah ch. 285 ff.).

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[343]Sifrei on Deut. 32:15; Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu Rabbah ch. 29; and Sotah ch. 3, beginning; Mishnah Bava Metzia 7:5; BT Ḥullin 10.

[344]Let the teacher here read to the pupil the important passages on the *abstinence* of Daniel and his friends at the Babylonian court (Dan. 1:5 ff.); also the very important parable in Tanḥuma שמיני [Shemini]: לרופא שהלך לבקר שני חולים וכו' ["(It is like) a physician who went to visit two sick people," etc.]. See the Midrash on Lev. 11; Zohar שמיני [Shemini], pp. 40–42; also רקנטי [Recanati] on this portion. See also גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], pt. 1, sec. 9, ch. 8, middle. — "The divine gifts for enjoyment, too, are a *trial*. Here in life we find ourselves at a richly laden table; but not *everything* with which this table is laden is offered precisely for enjoyment. Some things stand there only for ornament, some only for certain persons and not for others. *Nothing can or may be lacking* on this table, for it has been prepared by an *Omnipotence*. But by this very Omnipotence a greedy appetite for enjoyment has at the same time been placed within us; and so at that table we are to *stand our trial*! Let the great multitude *reach out*; whoever would be a true image of God, let him hold back, and fear the cruel *serpent* that is found on the trees of forbidden enjoyment! — The orchard of enjoyments, too, is a school of trial for man, and especially for the Israelite." — (From one of my addresses at confirmation ceremonies: "Life a School of Trial," [Sabbath] ויקרא [Va-yikra] 5598.) Treated more fully in my lecture "*The Most Salutary Virtue*, or: *Resisting the Inclination to Enjoyments* is the most effective means of attaining *moral perfection*," Sabbath בא [Bo] 5594.

[345]Here also belongs the prohibition לא יגדל אדם את הכלב וכו' ["a man may not raise a dog," etc.], Mishnah Bava Kamma 7:7. See תוס' י"ט [Tosafot Yom Tov] there; also BT Shabbat p. 63: כל המגדל וכו' ["whoever raises," etc.] and the story there; compare מהרש"א [Maharsha] there.

[346]To such so-called *friends of the house* we must ascribe, especially in recent times, the moral decay of countless pious Jewish houses, beneath whose ruins *Religion* and *morality* lie buried. —

389. ***What is this door inscription meant to accomplish?***

Like the fringes and the tefillin, it is a *sign of remembrance* of God and of our duties, and a *means of protection*, particularly against domestic misfortune.[347]

[p. 148] **390.** ***What further duty is incumbent on us with regard to that doorpost inscription?***

To speak the blessing (לקבוע מזוזה ["to affix a mezuzah"]) when it is fastened, and to have it examined now and then to see whether it has suffered damage and become unfit for use — a duty which, as is well known, also applies to the fringes and the tefillin.

391. ***What duties would still be counted among the domestic ones?***

Study of the Law (Deut. 6:7); furthermore, setting aside a *fixed place* in the house for this as well as for prayer;[348] above all, the high duty of a pious *upbringing of children* (Deut. 6:7; my Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 7, pp. 106 and 107). Especially belonging here is the ordering of the household according to the precepts of the Law, as regards the *food*, its *preparation*, the *vessels* and their *cleansing*;[349] and, in doubtful cases, making inquiry of one learned in the Law; the *separation of the dough-offering* (חלה [*ḥallah*], Num. 15 ff.; Yoreh De'ah ch. 322 ff.); the *kindling of lights* on Sabbath and festival eves; the ערוב [*eruv*] (Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 345 ff.); and finally the *table duties*.

392. ***What are these?***

Washing the hands before the meal,[350] the blessing [p. 149] before eating, *study of the Law* or *conversation about the Law*, in particular the great, genuinely Israelite duty of *hospitality* (הכנסת אורחים [*hakhnasat oreḥim*]) (Job 31:32; BT Shabbat 127a — !); the *blessing after the meal*, which must be spoken after no long pause and in the same place where we have eaten.[351]

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[347]"In the passage שמע [*Shema*]," says the author of the סמ"ג [*Semag*] very excellently, "end and beginning hang together. וקשרתם לאות על ידך ['you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand'], which denotes the hand-tefillin (תפלין של יד), refers back to בכל לבבך ['with all your heart']; for the hand-tefillin are כנגד הלב [opposite the heart]. — The והיו לטוטפות וכו' ['and they shall be for frontlets,' etc.], by which the head-tefillin (תפלין של ראש) are meant, refers to בכל נפשך ['with all your soul']; for the head-tefillin are כנגד הנשמה שבמוח [opposite the soul, which is in the brain]. Finally, וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך ['and you shall write them on the doorposts of your house'] hangs together with ובכל מאדך ['and with all your might'], inasmuch as the מזוזה [mezuzah] is meant to protect our *property*, which as such is in our *dwelling*." — On the doorpost inscription see Zohar בא [Bo], p. 36a, and ואתחנן [Va-etḥanan], p. 265.

[348]See אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 60; R. Jonah, אגרת התשובה [*Iggeret ha-Teshuvah*], on the second day of the week. —

[349]Especially the *immersion* of vessels not yet used (טבילת כלים [*tevilat kelim*]), Yoreh De'ah ch. 120.

[350]מים ראשונים [*mayim rishonim*, the "first waters"]. A very important *preparation* for the *blessing after the meal* (ברכת המזון [*birkat ha-mazon*]), to which, when it is spoken in joyful devotion, a very beneficent influence is ascribed (see *Reshit Ḥokhmah*, Gate קדושה [Holiness], ch. 15), but which is *usually*, especially after excessive enjoyment, babbled off sleepily and thoughtlessly; [a preparation for it] are the מים אחרונים [*mayim aḥaronim*, the "last waters"]. — On the table duties compare Zohar פנחס [Pinḥas]; R. Baḥya, שלחן של ארבע [*Shulḥan shel Arba*]; Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 157 ff.; *Reshit Ḥokhmah*, loc. cit.; יסוד ושרש העבודה [*Yesod ve-Shoresh ha-Avodah*], Gate 7.

[351]The table is our *altar* (BT Berakhot 54 [55a]; Ḥagigah 37 [27a]); here precisely we should employ everything that sets certain bounds to the appetite for enjoyment, bounds that guard against its dangers. See also Pirkei Avot 3:8 [3:3].

393. ***But should not the satisfaction of our bodily needs be separated from divine service? Must the latter mix itself into our enjoyments of life as well, and, as it were, disturb us in them?***

Certainly; precisely where man satisfies his animal needs, his higher destiny must hover before him, so that he does not sink entirely to the level of the beast. At the table, as indeed in the *house* generally, Religion is almost more necessary to us than in the synagogue, because *there* everything reminds us of it, whereas *here* everything makes us forget it. —

394. ***What is required if nothing contrary to the Law is to happen in the house?***

Not only the watchful care of the *housewife*, to whom domestic matters are chiefly entrusted, but also, frequently, that of the *master of the house*; yet in fulfilling this duty he should not make himself guilty of any *tyranny*, but should proceed humanely and calmly. בן סירא [Ben Sira] 4:30; BT Gittin 6b: אל יטיל אדם אימה יתירה וכו' ["A man should not impose excessive fear," etc.]; and BT Shabbat 34a — !

[p. 150] **395.** ***What would be the duties toward the*** **house of God*?***

Frequent attendance there, if possible at each of the three daily prayers; *reverent conduct* in it; *devotion* during the service; *support* with our means.[352]

לביתך נאוה קדש

"Holiness befits your house." (Ps. 93:5)

שמחתי באמרים לי בית ה' נלך

"I rejoice when they say to me: Let us go to the house of God." (Ps. 122:1)

ולא נעזב את בית אלהינו

"We will not forsake the house of our God." (Neh. 10:40)

396. ***Why is such value attached precisely to prayer in the synagogue, or to public divine service?***

Because the very effort of going to the house of God, and the preparations, are almost more divine service than the prayer itself; and because the most important components of the prayer presuppose an assembly;[353] for the chief task of praying in particular is precisely its *publicness*, or the public glorification of God (קדוש השם [*kiddush ha-Shem*]).

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[352]See my Sermons, vol. 1, Sermon 2, second division; my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], lecture 13.

[353]Such as עליית התורה [the calling-up to the Torah] and קדושה, ברכו, קדיש [*Kedushah, Barekhu, Kaddish*], for which at least ten persons are required.

397. ***Is prayer so important a duty?***

It is called, in the most proper sense, עבודה [*avodah*, "service"] (Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 16, beginning), and it is *divine service* (the inner, and in part also the outer) in the narrowest sense of the word.

398. ***How is prayer divided?***

[p. 151] 1. Into *prayers proper* (petitions to God: תפלות, תחנות, סליחות [*tefillot, teḥinot, seliḥot*]).

2. *Hymns of praise* (e.g. פסוקי דזמרה [*Pesukei de-Zimrah*] and פיוטים [*piyyutim*] or קרובות [*kerovot*]).

3. *Prayers of thanksgiving*, among which the ברכות הנהנין [*birkhot ha-nehenin*, blessings over enjoyments] are especially to be reckoned.[354]

399. ***How is prayer in the narrower sense divided?***

Into the *morning prayer* (תפלת שחרית [*Shaḥarit*]), the *afternoon prayer* (מנחה [*Minḥah*]), and the *evening prayer* (ערבית [*Arvit*]).[355]

400. ***What are the most important components of the daily prayer?***

In general, the *hymns of praise*, as the most disinterested;[356] but among the prayers proper, the *Shema* (קריאת שמע [*Keri'at Shema*]) and the Eighteen Benedictions (שמנה עשרה [*Shemoneh Esreh*]).

[p. 152] **401.** ***What duties are connected with prayer, in particular with morning devotion?***

Putting on and looking upon the already mentioned fringes (ציצית [*tzitzit*]) and tefillin (תפלין [*tefillin*]).

402. ***What duties are connected with prayer in general?***

Preparation, outward *cleanliness*, *clean clothing*, *study of the Law* before and after prayer.[357]

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[354]Prayer proper contains all three of the components mentioned above. Maimonides (הל' ברכות [Hilkhot Berakhot], ch. 1) divides the blessings of thanksgiving into blessings over enjoyments, blessings on performing divine precepts, and thanksgivings on various occurrences. The Israelite ought not to forget such prayers of thanksgiving especially at the *family celebrations* now so customary, such as *birthdays*, *jubilees*, *silver weddings* and the like. Such days ought to be devoted more to quiet devotion and consecration of the soul than to family feasts, in which, instead of a feeling of gratitude to God, the most ungrateful lawlessness often shows itself, and which inscribe precisely *those* days as the most reprehensible in the book of our life. — Such days, strictly speaking, are better suited to be days of fasting, penitence and prayer than festivals. — — !

[355]One should also think of the *prayer before going to sleep* (ק"ש על המטה [*Keri'at Shema al ha-mittah*]), but especially of the מוסף [*Musaf*] for Sabbath, festival and New Moon, and of the נעילה [*Ne'ilah*], customary with us only on the Day of Atonement.

[356]Compare p. 127, note 2 of the present religion book.

[357]See the detailed treatment in my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*]: "The Precious Pearl, or Prayer," etc., Berlin 1837. — Compare also גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], pt. 1, sec. 10, ch. 14.

403. ***What influence does devout prayer have?***

It gladdens, elevates, purifies the heart, strengthens, and protects for a number of hours against the temptations of sin. — A considerable share in this influence belongs also to the *language* of our prayers, the *Hebrew*.[358]

404. ***So the public glorification of God (*קדוש השם ***/kiddush ha-Shem/) should be the purpose of synagogue worship?***

This high and highest task is the purpose of *all* virtue and Religion,[359] but in particular of the outward divine service under [p. 153] discussion, which as such is precisely a *public*, *visible* one, in which we, as it were, make our profession of Judaism before all the world.

ושמרתם מצותי ועשיתם אתם .... ולא תחללו את שם קדשי ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל

> "You shall keep my commandments and do them, and .... you shall not profane my holy name; yea, for I will be glorified in the midst of the children of Israel. ...." (Lev. 22:31–32) (See also Lev. 10:3; Isa. 8:11–14; 29:22–24.)

ולא נתנה התורה אלא לקדש שמו הגדול

> "The Law was given only for the glorification of the great name of God." (Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu ch. 28)[360]

[p. 154] Addenda

On p. 13, note, and p. 49, note 2, end, of the present religion book: compare already *Philo*'s treatise *De Decalogo*, *quod est Juris summarium* (κεφάλαια νόμων). —

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[358] See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], lecture 7, pp. 147 ff.; — also the work of Sal. Pappenheim: *Etwas zum Schutz des angegriffenen Gebrauchs der hebräischen Sprache bei den Gebeten der Juden* ["Something in Defense of the Attacked Use of the Hebrew Language in the Prayers of the Jews"], Breslau 1812.

[359] And at certain times it is absolutely necessary to give one's religiosity this direction above all. — See also Song of Songs 5:7. — Among the feelings of devotion belongs — and especially when pronouncing the first verse of the *Shema*, in which the whole dignity of the Israelite is contained, and of which the following second verse, ואהבת [*Ve-ahavta*], plainly reminds us — also the מסירת הנפש על קדושת שמו הגדול ית' [*mesirat ha-nefesh*, the readiness to give one's life for the sanctification of His great Name, blessed be He]. See the excellent יסוד ושרש העבודה [*Yesod ve-Shoresh ha-Avodah*], Gate 4, or שער המזרח [*Sha'ar ha-Mizraḥ*], ch. 5. — ! Also שער העליון [*Sha'ar ha-Elyon*], ch. 10, on קדושת נעריצך [the *Kedushah* "Na'aritzkha"].

[360] See Mishnah Berakhot ch. 9. The particulars of this duty are taught by Maimonides, הל' יסודי התורה [Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah], ch. 5. — Wessely's splendid words, גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], pt. 1, sec. 10, ch. 12. — Compare also the prayer קדש את שמך וכו' ["Sanctify your name," etc.]. Only to *man*, to the *son of earth*, is this great service possible, because he has a sinful impulse to overcome and must sacrifice *sensual enjoyment*, *property* and *life*. — That is why the Seraphim, when they are to glorify God through קדוש וכו' ["Holy," etc.], *cover* not only *face* and *feet* (signifying the lack of senses and of property), but *fly* away altogether; — indeed, they even call out: Holy, etc. .... the *earth* is full of his glory (Isa. 6:3). — ! This God lets the prophet behold, so that, although those heavenly *messengers* surround His throne, He can ask: את מי אשלח וכו' ["Whom shall I send?" etc.] (Isa. 6:8). — — Man, therefore, is in that respect more than the angel. — Profound, therefore, is the remark of the Tanḥuma (see Rashi there, v. 7) that the prophet bore the glow of the coal better than the angel. — This is also what that aggadah (BT Ḥullin p. 91[b]) means, that Israel glorifies God *first*, and the angels follow only afterward. For the glorification of God can, *originally* and in *reality*, arise only through *man*; the angel can only imitate it in *words*, can in this be only the echo of the mortal. — See also BT Shabbat p. 88b: למצרים ירדתם וכו' תורה למה לכם וכו' ["Did you go down to Egypt? … Why should you have the Torah?" etc.].

On p. 40, last note: compare especially *Wessely* in the commentary mentioned there (beginning), the explanation of the verbs דבר and אמר, and his more detailed treatment of this in a reply addressed to M. Körner (printed in the latter's זרע קדש [*Zera Kodesh*], pp. 29b ff.). This does indeed seem to be contradicted by the שערי אורה [*Sha'arei Orah*], Gate 1, p. 16b; but it is supported by Zohar ואתחנן [Va-etḥanan], p. 264a, and the *Tikkunei Zohar*, Introduction, p. 10b.

On p. 45, note 1, end (*aggadot* in Josephus): compare the Rabbis on Gen. 47:33[361] with Josephus, *Antiquities* 2.6.9; — the Rabbis on Num. 24:14 with Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.13; — the aggadah of the Temple gates, BT Yoma 39 (my Sermons 2, 2, p. 22), with Josephus, *Jewish War* 6.5; the aggadah of the meeting of Simon the Just and Alexander, BT Yoma 69, *Megillat Ta'anit* ch. 9, with Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.8, and the like. That the *Apocrypha* in particular were such sources of aggadah has been shown by my Introduction to them, especially my commentary on the first or Syriac Book of *Baruch*, but frequently also by Wessely in his commentary on the Book of Wisdom.

On p. 45, note 2: compare R. Azariah [de' Rossi], אמרי בינה [*Imrei Binah*], but quite especially R. Leva (מהר"ל מפראג [the Maharal of Prague]) in באר הגולה [*Be'er ha-Golah*].

On the note belonging to Question 191 (p. 57, note 2), compare even BT Berakhot p. 10a (ולא תחיה לעה"ב ["and you shall not live in the world to come"]); Zohar וישב [Va-yeshev], p. 187a and b. — ! — but also BT Pesaḥim 113a: 'על רווק וכו ["over a bachelor," etc.]. —

On Q. 195, note (on צלם [*tzelem*]): see *Bochart*, *Phaleg*, p. 392.

Correction. P. 119, note, line 16: read *in Gott* [in God].

Ninth Section

External Worship

2.

The Days of the Lord

זכר עשה לנפלאותיו[362]

["He has made a memorial of his wonders."] (Ps. 111:4)

[361] Translator: Thus printed; Gen. 47 has only 31 verses, so the reference is probably misprinted.

[362] קבע לישראל שבתות ומועדים.... לפי שהוא חנון ורחום על בניו וחפץ להצדיקם ["He established Sabbaths and appointed seasons for Israel .... because He is gracious and merciful toward His children and desires to make them righteous."] (Rashi ad loc.)

405. ***To what extent do the festival days deserve to be treated as a special division of divine worship?***

They deserve it, partly because Holy Scripture, too, treats them separately, partly because they are suited more than other days to *inward* worship, and for that very reason *outward* worship is also bound up with them,[363] and because they are in particular the means to the end of all worship, the glorification of the Name of God (קדוש השם [*kiddush ha-Shem*]).[364] —

[p. 156] **406.** ***But are not all days alike?***

No; the wisdom of the Lord has distinguished certain days essentially from others;[365] indeed, He has even made distinctions among the holy days themselves.

המבדיל בין קדש לקדש

> "He distinguishes between holy and holy." (Mishnah Hullin 1:7)

407. ***Do we perceive this holiness of the divine days unconditionally?***

We must make ourselves receptive to it through a *conduct* befitting these days.

408. ***In what would this conduct consist?***

1. In *rest from work and everyday occupation*,

2. in an *especially devout and increased worship of God*,

3. in certain *outward distinctions which awaken festive feelings*.[366]

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[363]This may well be what that admonition (Lev. 19:30; 26:2) means: את שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו ["You shall keep my Sabbaths and revere my sanctuary"], inasmuch as the *festival days* were bound above all to the *Temple* of the Lord, were suited to divine worship and were also appointed for it.

[364]That is why the section on the festivals [Lev. 23] is preceded by the teaching ולא תחללו את שם קדשי ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל ["You shall not profane my holy name, and I will be sanctified among the children of Israel"] (Lev. 22:32). See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 105.

[365]Compare בן סירא [Ben Sira] 33:6–9: מה יום מימים, והלא על כלם יורח שמש? אך אלקים הבדילם בחכמה, ויעש מהם זמנים ומועדים. מהם ברך וקדש, ומהם הניח במספר הימים ["Why is one day better than another, when all the light of the year comes from the sun? Yet God distinguished them in His wisdom and made of them seasons and festivals; some of them He blessed and hallowed, and some He left among the ordinary number of days."] — See my *Sermons* (*Reden*), vol. 1, sermon, p. 140 (note). On the fixing of the festivals in the time of the Temple, compare Rosh Hashanah ch. 1 and Maimonides, הל' קדוש החדש [Hilkhot Kiddush ha-Ḥodesh]. [Translator: The Ben Sira passage is 33:7–9 in modern numbering (Hebrew text as Plessner prints it). The volume and sermon number in "Reden Jahrg. 1. Rede S. 140" are as printed (sermon number missing).]

[366]See this religion book on the fourth commandment. Might not the three expressions customary in connection with Sabbath rest, שבת, נוח, נפש [*shabbat*, *nuaḥ*, *nefesh*] (see גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], Preface, p. 9b), stand in connection with that threefold conduct? Just as שבת signifies the *ceasing from work* (Tikkunei Zohar ch. 20, p. 49a), so נוח could signify rest in its higher *spiritual* meaning, and נפש, finally, *thriving* with pleasure and a sense of well-being. — Many things recall this essential holiness and power of those divine days to raise us up to God, and even to make us partakers of a higher spirit: e.g., the doctrine of the נשמה יתירה [*neshamah yeterah*, the "additional soul"]; the interpretation of the Midrash on Ps. 116:2, ובימי אקרא, בימים טובים וכו' ["'And in my days I will call' — on the festival days, etc."]. But in particular the *difficult* Midrash (אספה) in the Yalkut on בהעלותך [Beha'alotekha], §736, receives light from this: אספה לי שבעים איש, כנגד שבעים ימים טובים שנתן להם הקב"ה ["'Gather for me seventy men' — corresponding to the seventy festival days that the Holy One, blessed be He, gave them"]. The possibility, namely, that even people from among the *common folk* are capable of the holy spirit already shines forth from the *days of the Lord*, which can make *every* Israelite a partaker of a *higher spirit*. — ! —

[p. 157] **409.** ***Which days of the year, then, are distinguished above others?***

1. The Sabbath,[367]

2. High Festivals,

3. Half-festivals,

4. Fast days.

1. The Sabbath

410. ***What do we learn already from the form of the name*** שַׁבָּת ***[*****shabbat****]?***

That resting from work is the essential[368] meaning of this day, and is strictly bound up with it.

[p. 158] **411.** ***If the Creation is given as the reason for the day of rest (Exod. 20:8 [–11]), how can the deliverance from Egypt (Deut. 5:15) at the same time be laid down as the ground of its institution?***

Each of the commandments has such a twofold foundation, a *natural* one and a *higher* one; but in particular the day of rest received its full meaning with the Exodus from Egypt, since this was precisely a *transition from labor to rest*;[369] the day of rest is thus meant to let the Israelite feel anew that rest and freedom which came about for him, and to carry him back into those memorable days.

412. ***But why, then, is the day of rest instituted so*** **often** ***altogether?***[370]

This was required not only by its great importance (this religion book, p. 21, Q. 83), but above all by the necessity of a *step-by-step, progressive communication of its meaning*.

413. ***Explain the latter more fully.***

The day of rest was first instituted as a day of merely sensuous recreation for *man* and *beast* alike; the people were not yet capable of grasping its *higher* idea; but gradually God caused the *higher*

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[367]This religion book, in treating the fourth commandment, conveyed only what was most necessary, but promised the more exact treatment in a separate section — the present one. In just this way, in the Law itself, the institution of the day of rest was one that *advanced step by step*. See *Sermons*, vol. 2, sermon 12, p. 193 ff., and the present Section, Q. 407 ff. The day of rest derives its origin already from the Creation. — Thus Tradition has it observed already in Egypt, indeed already by the Patriarchs; compare the aforementioned sermon, p. 194, note 2, and the prayer אתה אחד [*Attah Eḥad*]. —

[368]My *Sermons*, vol. 1, sermon 9, p. 133.

[369]Hence, in particular, the phrase זכר ליציאת מצרים ["a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt"] is used in connection with the festivals. To this belongs also the much-interpreted שבת הגדול [*Shabbat ha-Gadol*], for which designation I have given — as I believe — the simplest and most correct reason, אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 228.

[370]See Exod. 16:23, especially [v.] 31 [:13 ff.], and the like.

meaning of that day, its influence on the soul, as a day of *divine worship*, to be communicated;[371] and so it says also in that passage:

[p. 159]

אך את שבתתי תשמרו כי אות הוא ביני וביניכם לדרתיכם לדעת כי אני ה' מקדשכם

> "But my Sabbaths you shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may perceive that I, the Eternal, sanctify you." — (Exod. 31:13)

414. *But if the* Creation *is the first foundation of the Sabbath observance, then surely* all the world *ought to hold this day in honor?*

Indeed, there seems to be given here to all peoples a hint, if not toward strict *observance*,[372] then at least toward *regard*[373] for the Sabbath. And it is indeed a clear teaching, namely with respect to the future (end of Isaiah), that on every Sabbath and New Moon *all flesh* shall bow down before God; [p. 160] and in fact non-Israelite confessions, too, celebrated this day together with Israel for centuries,[374] and only *later* moved it to another day.

415. *Could the Sabbath, then, accordingly be moved to another day?*

No; even Luther says: "Although the Sabbath has been abolished among Christians, it is nevertheless necessary *that one keep a particular day in the week*; *nature also requires that one day in the week be kept quiet, and that one refrain from work, both man and beast*. But whoever would make of the Sabbath a necessary commandment,[375] *as a work required by God*, *must keep Saturday and not Sunday*, for *Saturday was commanded to the Jews, and not Sunday*, etc." (Luther's Works, part 3, p. 643.)

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[371] To this first, sensuous idea of the day of rest, and to the latter, spiritualized one, the two Sabbath prayers ישמח משה [*Yismaḥ Mosheh*] and תכנת שבת [*Tikkanta Shabbat*] seem to allude. The latter is the picture of the *improved, refined* (תכנת) day of rest, as a day of the worship of God (רצית קרבנותיה וכו' ["You took pleasure in its offerings, etc."]) and of the sensation of a supersensuous pleasure (מענגיה וכו' טועמיה חיים וכו' ["those who delight in it ... those who taste it [merit] life, etc."]). This emerges most clearly, however, from the conclusion: *long ago it was instituted at Sinai* (אז מסיני וכו' ["then from Sinai, etc."]); *yet You commanded us (later) to bring offerings on it* (ותצונו להקריב וכו' ["and You commanded us to offer, etc."]). This latter now clearly recalls the *ennobled* day of rest, or its significance for worship. —

[372] שמור ["Keep"] — a commandment which, because here the *Exodus from Egypt* is its foundation, applies only to *Israel*. —

[373] Our Sages, indeed, felt this long ago and taught (Pesikta Rabbati ch. 25): זכור לאומות העולם, ושמור לישראל ["'Remember' is for the nations of the world, and 'Keep' is for Israel"]. So already Isa. 56:2: "Happy is the *man* (אנוש, בן אדם — thus not specifically the Israelite) who keeps the Sabbath"; accordingly the Talmud (Shabbat 118b) rightly interpreted: כל השומר שבת וכו' אפילו עובד ע"ז כדור אנוש וכו' ["Whoever keeps the Sabbath, etc., even if he worships idols like the generation of Enosh, etc."] — thus a clear reference to the *non-Israelite*. —

[374] See Joh. Meyer, *De Temp. sacr. etc.* 2, 9 and 10, §11: *A multis tamen Christianorum ecclesiis Sabbathum ... una cum Judaeis ad trecentissimum usque post Chr. annum fuit etc.* ["Yet by many churches of the Christians the Sabbath ... was [kept] together with the Jews up to the three-hundredth year after Christ, etc."] ... Moreover, even *very great and learned men* (*magni et literati viri*) of the Christian religion have made the Jewish Sabbath observance a duty for their fellow believers (see Benj. Otto, *De flumine Sabbathico*, §10). See my *Sermons*, vol. 2, sermon 12, p. 181, note 2. —

[375] That is, whoever regards it not from the standpoint of reason but according to its *divine origin*; but that is precisely how it *must* be regarded in Israel. Compare in particular the passage יכירו בניך וידעו כי מאתך היא מנוחתם וכו' ["Let Your children recognize and know that their rest comes from You, etc."]. *Sermons*, vol. 2, p. 202, note.

416. ***Was it perhaps only the Talmud that raised the observance of the day of rest to such strictness?***

Already the Prophets cannot warn enough against any [p. 161] transgression of it (Jer. 17:21–27[376]) (Neh. 13:15–22). They even forbade the very simplest commercial dealings, indeed even *speaking* of them (Isa. 58:13[377]).

417. ***How does the Talmud divide the kinds of work with respect to the day of rest?***

Into principal and original kinds of work, and those derived from them (אבות ותולדות [*avot ve-toladot*]); it counts 39 of the former (Maimonides, הל' שבת [Hilkhot Shabbat] 7:1).

418. ***What punishments followed upon the transgression of the Sabbath?***

Wanton transgression was followed by the punishment of כרת [*karet*, "cutting off"]; if it took place *before witnesses* and *after a warning had been given*, death by *stoning* followed; but even unintentional transgression, committed in *error*, likewise had first to be atoned for by a *sin offering*.[378] —

419. ***What duties does the later-communicated, or higher, meaning of the day of rest lay upon us?***

To dedicate it to the welfare of our soul, to the study of the Law, to divine [p. 162] worship, to public religious discourses, to the instruction of our own, but above all to quiet reflection upon ourselves and to good resolutions.[379]

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[376]For abstaining from work the Prophet promises ובאו מלכים וכו' ["then kings shall enter, etc."; Jer. 17:25], a most fitting reward for the duty of the Sabbath. See *Sermons*, vol. [2?], p. 198, note 1.

[377]See my *Erb.* [devotional discourses?], vol. 2, p. 199. On the Sabbath laws in detail compare Maimonides and Caro, הלכות שבת [Laws of the Sabbath].

[378]Even where the Talmud uses the word פטור [*patur*, "exempt"] of a kind of work, this only signifies exemption from the punishments mentioned above and from the sin offering; but the work is nonetheless *forbidden* by our Sages (פטור אבל אסור ["exempt, but forbidden"]), and whoever does it wantonly incurs the penalty of lashes of the lesser degree (מ' מרדות [*makkat mardut*, disciplinary flogging]). — A proof, then, of how strictly the Sabbath is to be taken. (See Mishnah Hagigah 1:18 [Translator: Mishnah Hagigah 1:8 ("the laws of the Sabbath ... are like mountains hanging by a hair").] and Maimonides, הל' שבת [Hilkhot Shabbat] (end): המחלל שבת בפרהסיא הרי הוא כעובד עבודת כוכבים ומזלות, ושניהם כגוים לכל דבריהם ["Whoever desecrates the Sabbath publicly is like one who practices idolatry, and both are like gentiles in all respects"].)

[379]That the day of rest is best suited, and suited indeed to *true repentance*, that is, repentance with a joyful disposition of mind and pious enthusiasm, is not only a teaching of the later writings, e.g. Genesis Rabbah ch. 22, end; — Leviticus Rabbah ch. 10; Ecclesiastes Rabbah on Eccl. 1:2; Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer chs. 19 and 20; — that remarkable Midrash in ארחות צדיקים [*Orḥot Tsaddikim*], Gate of תשובה [Repentance], beginning; — ! — כוזרי [Kuzari], part 2, §50, especially part 3, §1; — ! Ibn Ezra in that passage of his song: על כן אכבס בו לבי כבורית ["Therefore I wash my heart on it as with lye"]; R. I. Hurwitz in ש"ה של [*Shelah*] (מס' ראש השנה [Tractate Rosh Hashanah], beginning [See especially דברי חכמים [*Divrei Ḥakhamim*] in שער השבת [Gate of the Sabbath], ch. 6. —]); — R. Salomon, תניא [*Tanya*], p. 71; — יסוד ושרש העבודה [*Yesod ve-Shoresh ha-Avodah*], Gate 8, ch. 12. See also Tikkunei Zohar ch. 24, but especially ch. 69, p. 113b (that the *penitent* (מארי דתיובתא [*marei di-teyuvta*]) partake daily of that higher soul (נשמה יתירה) which falls to the lot of other men only on Sabbaths and festivals); but already the *Prophet* Isaiah concludes his famous *sermon of repentance*, ch. 58, with a stern admonition concerning the *Sabbath observance* (ibid. vv. 13 and 14). — Compare on this my *Sermons*, vol. 2, sermon 15, p. 190, and the passage Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu ch. 25 (beginning): כל המענג את השבת מכבד להקב"ה ["Whoever delights in the Sabbath honors the Holy One, blessed be He"]. — See also Mishnah דמאי [Demai] 4:1, Bartenura.

420. ***In what does the worship of the day of rest consist?***

In the prayers prescribed for it (which are mostly songs of praise and not prayers in the proper sense; see Maimonides, הל' שבת [Hilkhot Shabbat] 30:12), and in still other worshipful observances customary in the house of God and in our dwellings, which distinguish the Sabbath.[380]

[p. 163] **421.** ***What are the outward distinctions which are meant to let us enjoy the Sabbath bodily as well?***

They consist in the *rest* itself, in the three meals so rich in influence (Shabbat 118a and b; Zohar (אדרא [Idra]) האזינו [Ha'azinu], p. 288b — !),[381] and in better clothing (see Mekhilta on the fourth commandment). A small change from the weekdays suffices — in straitened circumstances — for the fulfillment of these duties.[382]

422. ***But what is in any case required for heightening the delight of the Sabbath?***

A *reduction of enjoyment on the sixth day*,[383] with which there should also be combined, if our occupation in any way permits, preparations for the day of rest made with our own hands.

[p. 164] **423.** ***What, then, is the principal task for the Sabbath?***

To keep ourselves holy from its entrance to its departure in deeds, words and thoughts, and to distinguish it in every respect from the days of the week. See Zohar בשלח [Beshallaḥ], p. 64a.

424. ***Can the Sabbath laws not be transgressed under any condition?***

The more quickly one profanes the Sabbath in cases of danger to life, the more praiseworthy he is.[384]

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[380]On the Temple worship on the day of rest compare R. Abraham in שלטי גבורים [*Shiltei ha-Gibborim*], p. 117b. — To our Sabbath worship belong the preparations to be made on the sixth day; the somewhat *earlier opening* of the day of rest; bodily and spiritual (compare Oraḥ Ḥayyim 285 and the תקוני שבת [*Tikkunei Shabbat*], especially the work סדורו של שבת [*Siduro shel Shabbat*]) *purification*; the *welcoming* of the Sabbath with the prayers prescribed for it, and in particular with the *Kiddush prayer* over at least two loaves (לחם משנה [*leḥem mishneh*], Shabbat 117b) and by a *burning light*. The morning service consists in the augmented פסוקי דזמרה [*Pesukei de-Zimrah*], etc., the reading of the *weekly portion* and of the *prophetic portion* belonging to it (הפטורה [*haftarah*]), and the *Musaf prayer*. The partaking of food is again preceded by the Kiddush. The Sabbath meals, and especially festival meals, are to be hallowed above all by feeding the poor, by conversation on the Law and by praises of God. The afternoon hours are to be celebrated in a manner worthy of the holy day, partly through occupation with the Law, partly through the afternoon prayer, and the day is then to be concluded with the Havdalah.

[381]See a most excellent view of these three meals in אבודרהם [Abudarham]. — —

[382]And to this refers the well-known teaching עשה שבתך חול וכו' ["Make your Sabbath like a weekday, etc."]. See Shabbat 118b; Maimonides on the Sabbath, ch. 30:7; — Oraḥ Ḥayyim 242. See טורי זהב [*Turei Zahav*]; hence also לשון חכמים [*Leshon Ḥakhamim*], p. 95b; — especially מגיד מישרים [*Maggid Mesharim*] on אמור [Emor]. — !

[383]The holding of a set meal [on the sixth day] is regarded as a sin (Gittin 38 [b]); — it is not only a slighting of the day of rest, but in our days, when it is unfortunately almost universal, it has considerably diminished Sabbath *hospitality*, which was once so common a virtue in Israel. — My sermon "*Hospitality*," Sabbath וירא [Vayera] 5599, treats this at length. — Several of our Sages even abstained from all enjoyment on the sixth day. Ta'anit ch. 2. See especially Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 249; של"ה [*Shelah*], מס' שבת [Tractate Shabbat], beginning.

[384]Compare on this very important passages in Mekhilta כי תשא [Ki Tissa]; Maimonides, הל' שבת [Hilkhot Shabbat] ch. 2; — Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 328.

425. ***Will the Sabbath perhaps one day be abolished or moved?***

No; it is an explicit teaching (Mekhilta כי תשא [Ki Tissa]).

אות היא לעולם, מגיד שאין שבת בטלה מישראל

"'It is a sign forever': this declares that the Sabbath will never cease in Israel."

426. ***Was there not also a so-called Sabbath of the land (שבת הארץ)?***

Indeed; this name was borne by the seventh year, or year of release (שמטה [*shemittah*]; Exod. 10:11 [read: 23:10–11]; — Lev. 25; — Deut. 15); after seven such Sabbatical years the year of *Jubilee*, or of *freedom*, was celebrated (Lev. loc. cit.).

[p. 165] **II. The High Festivals**

427. ***What festival days besides the Sabbath are further commanded to us?***

Festival days commanded *in the Law*,[385] or high festival days, are:

1. חג המצות [*Ḥag ha-Matsot*], the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, also called פסח [*Pesaḥ*], the *Feast of Passover*, on the fifteenth of the first month, or month of the ears of grain (ניסן; אביב [Nisan; Aviv]) (lasts eight days among us).

2. חג השבועות [*Ḥag ha-Shavu'ot*], the *Feast of Weeks*, also called the Day of the *First Fruits*, בכורים [*Bikkurim*], or simply עצרת [*Atseret*]; it is at the same time the *Feast of the Giving of the Law* (מתן תורה [*Mattan Torah*]), on the sixth of Sivan (lasts two days among us).

3. יום הזכרון [*Yom ha-Zikkaron*], the *Day of Remembrance*, also called יום תרועה [*Yom Teru'ah*], the *Day of Sounding the Alarm*, also ראש השנה [*Rosh ha-Shanah*], *New Year's Day*; on the first of Tishri (איתנים [Etanim]) (2 days).

4. יום הכפורים [*Yom ha-Kippurim*], the *Day of Atonement*; on the tenth of Tishri (*one* day).

5. חג הסכות [*Ḥag ha-Sukkot*], the *Feast of Tabernacles*, also called the *Feast of Ingathering* (אסיף [*Asif*]); on the fifteenth of Tishri (seven days), with which, however, is connected the important concluding feast of the Tabernacles celebration, called:

6. שמיני עצרת [*Shemini Atseret*] (and שמחת תורה [*Simḥat Torah*]) (2 days).

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[385] I would call them, with Ezra (3:5), מועדי ה' המקודשים ["the hallowed appointed seasons of the Lord"], to distinguish them already from the *New Moons* (חדשים, ibid.) and especially from the later festivals! — As is well known, we (with the exception of our coreligionists in Palestine) now celebrate *every* festival day twice. Maimonides, הל' י"ט [Hilkhot Yom Tov] 1:21–22, and הל' קדוש החדש [Hilkhot Kiddush ha-Ḥodesh] 5:6.

428. ***Of what do these festivals remind us in general?***

They remind us in general of the Exodus from [p. 166] Egypt; hence the expression זכר ליציאת מצרים ["a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt"] is used in all the festival prayers (Zohar בא [Bo], p. 38a; Kuzari 2:50).

429. ***But which festival reminds us of it most directly?***

The first, or the Feast of Passover, since Israel was redeemed from Egyptian slavery precisely on that day, the fifteenth of Nisan.

430. ***In what do the festivals differ from the day of rest?***[386]

Only in this, that the preparation of food is permitted on them.

אין בין יום טוב לשבת אלא אוכל נפש בלבד

> "There is no difference between the festival day and the day of rest except only what belongs to the enjoyment of life." (Mishnah Megillah 1:5)

431. ***Are we perhaps to spend the festivals more in sensuous enjoyment than in the enjoyment of the soul through divine worship?***

We are, as it were, to *divide* the festival day, and spend it *half* in religion and *half* in joyful enjoyment.

432. ***Do we not also have so-called intermediate festival days?***

Yes indeed; these are the days that lie in the middle between the first and last principal festival days of the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, and are called חול המועד [*Ḥol ha-Mo'ed*], or the weekdays of the festival; their observance is not [p. 167] as strict as that of the festivals proper, inasmuch as kinds of work and occupations that cannot be postponed are permitted (see Maimonides, הל' י"ט [Hilkhot Yom Tov] ch. 7 ff.). A day of rest falling on these days is called שבת חול המועד [*Shabbat Ḥol ha-Mo'ed*].

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[386] In the time of the Temple the well-known *pilgrimages* took place at the three principal festivals. These preparations are in our days to be replaced partly by the arrangements made for the festival, but especially by the study of the Law (and in part also by certain prayers on the days of rest preceding the festivals). See Megillah 29b, and my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], p. 227 ff.; — especially my *Sermons*, vol. 1, sermon 1.

1. The Feast of Passover

433. *What duties are bound up with the Feast of Passover?*

Already *before* its arrival[387] to clear away all leaven (חמץ [*ḥamets*])[388] and to abstain from it entirely until the end of the festival, not even to have it in the house (Exod. 12 and 13); on the festival to eat unleavened bread (מצה [*matsah*]), and this in particular on the *first* evening of this festival, with the eating of bitter herbs (מרור [*maror*]) and amid still other table customs that are observed on the first evenings.[389]

[p. 168] ### 434. *What duty is further connected with this festival, as one that ends only with the arrival of the next following festival and at the same time prepares for it?*[390]

The duty of *counting the Omer* (ספירת העמר [*sefirat ha-omer*]; Lev. 23:10 [ff.] and Oraḥ Ḥayyim 489 and 491), or the counting of all the days from the 16th of Nisan to the 5th of Sivan. — This counting takes place every evening, when the stars become visible.[391]

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[387]The Sabbath preparing for this festival month is called שבת החדש [*Shabbat ha-Ḥodesh*]; the Sabbath preceding the festival, שבת הגדול [*Shabbat ha-Gadol*] (see this religion book, p. 158, note 1).

[388]See Oraḥ Ḥayyim, הל' פסח [Hilkhot Pesaḥ], especially chs. 431–434 and 445, for בדיקה [*bedikah*, searching] and בעור [*bi'ur*, removal] are to be distinguished. Here the teacher may communicate the moral applications which the של"ה [*Shelah*], the אלשיך [Alshekh] and the טור ברקת [*Tur Bareket*] make of these duties to life, in particular to the entry upon the 14th year of life. —

[389]Called סדר [*seder*] or סדור פסח [*siddur Pesaḥ*] (opened with the Kiddush), at which the *telling of the Exodus from Egypt* to one's household (my *Sermons*, vol. 2, sermon 11, beginning, note 2) is the main thing. Zohar בא [Bo], p. 40b; in גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*]; ר"מ 1, 10, 15. See Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 472 ff. and the הגדה של פסח [Passover Haggadah]. — As for the festival service, the Feast of Passover was introduced already on the 14th of Nisan by the splendid ceremony of the *slaughtering of the Passover offerings* (קרבן פסח [*korban Pesaḥ*]) (Mishnah Pesaḥim ch. 5; especially שלטי גבורים [*Shiltei ha-Gibborim*] 1, ch. 65, and the *fragment* in שבט יהודה [*Shevet Yehudah*], no. 63, §10, pp. 51 and 52; see also סדור יעבץ [*Siddur Ya'bets*], part 2, on ערב פסח [the Eve of Passover]). On the service of the festival itself see שלטי גבורים [*Shiltei ha-Gibborim*], p. 121 ff. The service of the festivals is at present similar to that of the Sabbath, except for the distinctive changes in the festival liturgy, the portion from the Torah, the Priestly Blessing by the priests themselves, and especially the *piyyut* characterizing each festival. On the first day of this festival, prayers for a blessed dew are inserted into the Musaf prayer (תפלת הטל [*Tefillat ha-Tal*]; see Targum Jonathan on Gen. 27:1 and 6; Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 32). The reading of the Song of Songs (שיר השירים), which, according to the interpretation of the ancients, sings of the youthful history of Israel, in particular of the Exodus from Egypt, on this festival is a very ancient custom. — Occupation with the study of the regulations of a festival on that festival is likewise an ancient ordinance (Megillah 4 [a] and 32 [a]). An especially strict duty of the festivals, and of this one in particular, is to feed and gladden the poor and the needy (see my *Sermons*, vol. 1, p. 14). The festival has *four* half-holy days.

[390]Translator: The question is misnumbered "134" in the print; it is Q. 434.

[391]On the Omer offering see Mishnah Menaḥot ch. 10; שלטי הגבורים [*Shiltei ha-Gibborim*], ch. 74 and p. 121b. — Later Judaism knows the Omer days as days of *gravity*. They recall a plague which once, at about this time, robbed the famous R. Akiva of almost all his disciples (Yevamot 62 [b], and R. Isaac ha-Parḥi's splendid כפתור ופרח [*Kaftor va-Feraḥ*], ch. 7, p. 32b); at this time, too, came the bloody assaults upon the Jewish people in the years תתנ"ו and ת"ח. [Translator: [4]856 = 1096 (the massacres of the First Crusade) and [5]408 = 1648 (the Chmielnicki massacres). Plessner's note continues on the next printed page (p. 169).] Compare, however, also טור ברקת [*Tur Bareket*] on Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 494. My sermon "*The Seven Weeks of Counting*," קדושים [Kedoshim] 5597, treats these weeks at greater length. The 33rd day of the Omer, ל"ג בעומר [*Lag ba-Omer*] (15th of Iyyar), … on which the dying of those disciples had ceased, the Synagogue celebrates as a minor festival. See the section on the half-holidays.

[p. 169] **435.** ***In what frame of mind should we spend the Feast of Passover?***

In a constant, gratefully joyful remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt and of its so infinitely beneficial consequences. If this remembrance is our duty every day, it will surely be incumbent upon us all the more on this festival.

2. The Feast of Weeks

436. ***What does the Feast of Weeks signify?***

It takes this name from those very seven *weeks* that were counted toward it from Pesach onward; and it was also the festival of the wheat harvest.[392]

437. ***As what is this festival further celebrated?***

As that of the *greatest event* in history, as the *day of the Lawgiving at Sinai*.

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

> "Inquire, then, about the first days that were before you, since God created man upon the earth, and from one end of heaven to the other, whether there has ever happened so great a thing, or anything like it been heard? Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the fire, and remain alive?" (Deut. 4:32[–33])

[p. 170] **438.** ***How does Maimonides express himself about this festival?***

ושבועות, הוא יום מתן תורה.. נמנו הימים מן המועד הראשון אליו כמי שממתין בו הנאמן שבאוהביו, שהוא מונה היום וגם השעות, וזאת הוא סבת ספירת העומר מיום צאתנו ממצרים עד יום מתן תורה שהוא היה הכונה ותכלית ביציאתם וכו'.

> "And Shavuot is the day of the Lawgiving, and on account of the greatness of this day the days from the earlier festival (פסח) up to this one are *counted*, as when one awaits the arrival of the best of one's friends and counts the days and the hours; and this was the reason for the counting of the Omer from the Exodus from Egypt to the day of the Lawgiving, which was the intent

[392] In the Temple, on this festival, the first wheat-offering was brought to the Eternal in two loaves (שתי לחם) (Mishnah Menaḥot 11, and שלטי הגבורים [*Shiltei ha-Gibborim*] [Translator: Abraham Portaleone, *Shiltei ha-Gibborim* (Mantua, 1612), an encyclopedic work on the Temple, its service and its antiquities.], ch. 74 and p. 122). Even after the close of this festival, on account of its brevity, offerings were still made up afterward, namely on the following day, which was called יום טבוח [*Yom Tevo'aḥ*, "day of slaughtering"]. The service in the synagogue is, apart from a few peculiar variations, that of the other festivals. The Book of Ruth is read, because its story took place around the time of the wheat harvest. — The name עצרת [*Atzeret*, "closing assembly"] belongs to the festival especially insofar as it forms, in a certain sense, the conclusion of its predecessor, Pesach.

and purpose of that Exodus, etc." (Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed 3:43. Cf. something similar in Kuzari 3:5.)[393]

439. ***In what mood should this festival be celebrated?***

In a joyful and at the same time solemnly earnest mood, in which we should, as it were, feel along with our ancestors at Sinai as they received the Law, now drawn toward the majesty of God, now startled back by it.[394]

[p. 171] **3. The New Year Festival**

440. ***What does the New Year festival signify?***

Scripture calls it merely יום תרועה [day of sounding the alarm] or זכרון תרועה [remembrance of sounding the alarm]; it says, without giving any further reason:

בחדש השביעי באחד לחדש יהיה לכם שבתון זכרון תרועה מקרא קדש. כל מלאכת עבדה לא תעשו והקרבתם אשה לה'.

"In the seventh month, on the first of the month, there shall be for you a solemnity, a remembrance of the sounding of the alarm, a holy convocation. You shall do no servile work of any kind, and you shall bring a fire-offering to the Eternal." (Lev. 23:24–25)

441. ***Does Tradition, then, tell us nothing more about the significance of this festival?***

It reports to us that the first day of the seventh month is the *day of Creation*, the festival therefore a celebration of Creation, but at the same time a divine day of judgment over the whole universe, on which He determines destinies for the entire year; and that therefore this day, like all those following it (עשרת ימי תשובה [the Ten Days of Repentance]) up to the Day of Atonement, on which the divine decrees are irrevocably fixed, is appointed and suited for *repentance*.[395] According to this Tradition, then, [p. 172] *these two festivals* would be *connected* in their significance. —

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[393]Just as the following festivals, or those of the seventh month (the first in the calendar year), are festivals of *Creation* or of *Nature*; — so those of the first month (in the synagogal year), the *Festival of Liberation* (פסח) together with the *Festival of the Lawgiving* (שבועות) connected with it, are, as it were, *festivals of Revelation*. —!

[394]On *the essence of this festival and how it must be spent*, see my Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 20. Another one, still in manuscript, "The Eternally New Law," Shavuot 5598, is no less instructive on this subject. The fewer outward customs this festival has, the more we must seek to give ourselves the fitting impression by our own efforts; and this is done most surely through a devout reading of those passages of the Law that depict the lofty standpoint of our fathers at Sinai and carry us back into it; namely, through the *nocturnal* study of the Law on this festival. — —

[395]See Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:2; Zohar *Va-yeḥi* 226b; Zohar Ḥadash *Bereshit* p. 14, 2; BT Rosh Hashanah 18; Maimonides, Hilkhot Teshuvah 2:6, 3:4. A detailed demonstration of these teachings of the Rabbis from Holy Scripture itself is given in my lecture, still in manuscript, "*Israel's Correct View of the New Year and the Days of Repentance*," delivered on the Sabbath of תבוא [*Ki Tavo*] 5595. Also belonging here are "*The Three Parties to the Judgment*," on the New Year festival 5598, and an especially interesting and instructive lecture, "*The Celebration of Creation*," Rosh Hashanah 5599. Also my treatise on the aggadah שלשה ספרים ["three books"], BT Rosh Hashanah 16b, in my lectures on Maimonides, הל' תשובה [Hilkhot Teshuvah], on ch. 2:6.

442. ***Might these teachings of Tradition indeed be demonstrable from Holy Scripture?***

Certainly; for

I. the name of the seventh month (ירח האתנים) (1 Kings 8:2) recalls the *coming-into-being of the elements*. (See Wessely on Lev. 23:24.)[396]

II. The New Year and the Day of Atonement are not counted among the festivals of joy, or the so-called שלש רגלים [three pilgrimage festivals][397]; they must therefore have been regarded less as festivals of joy. — (Neh. 8:10 ff. proves nothing.)

III. The name יום תרועה, and especially זכרון תרועה, really proves that on *this* New-Moon [p. 173] *festival day* we come into *remembrance* before God in a quite special way and are, as it were, *mustered* by Him! — otherwise (according to Num. 10:10) *every* New Moon and festival day would have had to be called יום הזכרון [day of remembrance]. —

IV. The so *immediate sequence* of the Day of Atonement upon the New Year makes it probable that the two festivals are connected and that the New Year's day is the *forerunner and preparer* of the Day of Atonement. —

V. The connection of these two festivals is also proven, however, by the similar *customs* of the New Year festival and those of the *Day of Atonement of the Jubilee year*. (Lev. 25. See Sifra.)

VI. Also the prescribed *Temple service* of both festivals remained fairly alike, apart from some peculiarities of the Atonement service. —

VII. In the prophet Ezekiel (40:1) the Day of Atonement is directly called *New Year*. —

443. ***But what speaks for the doctrine of the*** **Days of Repentance** ***(ימי תשובה) between those two festivals?***

The correct inference that the biblically grounded connection of the two festivals is possible only if the intervening days, too, have a purpose similar to those festivals and do not form an empty

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[396]Translator: Naphtali Herz Wessely's commentary on Leviticus in Moses Mendelssohn's *Biur* (Netivot ha-Shalom); the name *Etanim* is connected with *etan*, "enduring, firm."

[397]As the Zohar, *Emor* p. 95a, already remarks in the words: כלהו מועדין מקראי קדש קרינן בהו, אבל נפקי ר"ה ויומא דכפורי, דלא אשתכח בהו חדוותא וכו' ["All the festivals we call 'holy convocations'; but Rosh Hashanah and the Day of Atonement are excluded, for no rejoicing is found in them, etc."]. Compare, however, my Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 4. — The seventh month actually has *two* festivals in its midst that are opposed to each other in their significance: the *mortifying Day of Atonement* and the *high festival of joy of Tabernacles*. This doubleness the month announces at once through its *New-Moon day*, which stands partly as a *solemn day of remembrance*, partly as a *festival day*. — Compare something similar in the present Religion book, p. 182, on the conclusion of the Tabernacles celebration. In general it should be noted that (in order that we may become worthy of atonement on the Day of Atonement) the New Year, as a celebration of Creation, is meant to begin carrying us back to the first standpoint of the world, that of innocence. That is why Rosh Hashanah (ר"ה) is also the *first day of repentance*; for repentance (תשובה) is *return* to the first state of life. — —

interval.[398] — Repentance is all the more our duty on these days, since it is incumbent upon us daily even outside this time. (Present Religion book, Q. 314.)

444. ***In what does repentance consist?***

In *sorrow and remorse* over faults committed, in *prayer and confession of sins*, in works [p. 174] of *love of one's fellow man*, and especially in *refraining* from the sins committed. (See Joel 2:12–14. — !)

445. ***What duties***[399] ***are connected with the New Year festival?***

The sounding of the shofar (תקיעת שופר[400]) and the prayers connected with it (מלכיות, זכרונות, שופרות [Sovereignty, Remembrances, Shofar verses][401]). (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 4:5.)

[p. 175] **446.** ***In what mood should the festival be spent?***

In an earnest one; yet at the same time in a joyful trust that we shall be deemed worthy of a benevolent remembrance before God. Since this festival is not properly a festival of joy, and so that we may not be hindered in that earnest mood, our bodily enjoyments on this festival should be especially very moderate.

447. ***Is it only on this festival that we come into a mustering remembrance before God?***

God examines and judges us *every moment* (Job 7:18; BT Rosh Hashanah 16a); but on this festival there takes place a special, exact *remembrance*, after which the festival has its name.

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[398] See Kuzari 4:7. — Maimonides, Hilkhot Teshuvah 2:6, 3:4. — The Sabbath in these days is called the *Sabbath of Repentance* (שבת תשובה).

[399] Already with the month of Elul (Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 46) the preparations for the festivals of repentance begin. In the week before the New Year festival *Seliḥot* (סליחות), or prayers for the forgiveness of sins, are prefixed to the morning prayer; which is also done on the actual days of repentance. The last day of the year, the 29th of Elul, or ערב ר"ה [the eve of Rosh Hashanah], is a day of earnest repentance and amendment (של"ה [*Shelah*], p. 213b). It must be dedicated to outward as well as to inward purification, and especially to looking back over the past year, with the aim of repenting all the faults committed in it and amending them in the coming year. (See my Sermons, vol. 1, Sermon 10, p. 161.) The prayer leaders and those who blow the shofar in the congregation especially need conscientious preparation. Zohar *Va-yikra* p. 18.

[400] R. Saadiah gives several reasons for this sounding of the shofar. Maimonides holds it to be a summons to repentance (הל' תשובה [Hilkhot Teshuvah] 3:4). The *main* reason, however, seems to be the one that our next note will give. —

[401] Sifrei on Num. 10:10, and תקיעתא דבי רב [*Teki'ata de-Vei Rav*] (JT Avodah Zarah ch. 1); Va-yikra Rabbah ch. 29. Since God on this day created the *world* and, as it were, brought *subjects* into existence and became King over them, we pay homage to Him yearly as such. But God is not only King but also Father of His creatures, and lovingly *remembers* them. The shofar is thus partly a *signal of homage* (cf. Job 38:7 and 1 Kings 1:39), partly also the means of awakening God's fatherly remembrance of us (Num. 10:9–10). — — With this, surely, coheres the passage אם כבנים אם כעבדים ["whether as children, whether as servants"] occurring in the very ancient prayer formula היום הרת עולם ["Today the world was conceived"], composed for the תקיעות מעומד [shofar blasts sounded standing]. — The service must be extended until noon (see Neh. 8:3). The reading from the Law and the Musaf prayer are quite peculiar to the festival and suited to it; Hallel is not said on the festivals of repentance. On the first day, after the afternoon prayer, a short prayer (תשליך [*Tashlikh*]) (Micah 7, end) for the forgiveness of sins is recited at a river. On the other customs of the festival see Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 581 ff. — For the description of the former *Temple service* on this festival see שלטי הגבורים p. 118b. The blessing of thanks for having lived to see one of the festivals (שהחיינו) is said at the entry of the festival, at the close of the Kiddush.

4. The Day of Atonement[402]

448. ***What is the Day of Atonement?***

The holiest among the *Sabbaths*, on which all [p. 176] work is strictly forbidden; it is the goal of the weeks of repentance and the purpose of the whole year, and the proof of God's greatest grace toward Israel.

449. ***What does it actually signify?***

As all the festivals of the seventh, or Repentance, month are meant to carry us back into the primeval time of the world, so this one in particular into the first *state of innocence* of man. —

כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם .... מכל חטאתיכם לפני ה' תטהרו.

> "For on this day He will forgive you ..... of all your sins shall you be clean before the Eternal." (Lev. 16:30)

450. ***What has been made our duty for it?***

A sustained *fasting* and *persevering in divine service* from the entry of the Day of Atonement until its departure.

ועניתם את נפשתיכם בתשעה לחדש בערב מערב עד ערב..

> "You shall mortify your vital spirits on the ninth day of the month in the evening, from evening to evening." (Lev. 23:32)

451. ***But does the expression*** ועניתם את נפשותיכם ***mean "to fast"? Should not the expression*** צום ***[fast] have been used there?***

The latter expression denotes merely abstinence from food and drink; the former, however, the mortification of *all* drives toward sensual enjoyment; and our Sages have indeed received by Tradition that *fivefold* mortifications (probably denoting the principal drives) are contained in that expression. (See also Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 29.)

452. ***But is not this mortification of the soul, lasting a whole day, a far too severe duty with respect to the forgiveness of sins?***

No; there can be no easier means[403] for attaining [p. 177] that high purpose than this fast, which is connected with no further exertion, indeed even with the pleasant lingering in pious devotion before God.

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[402] Compare my sermon "*The Day of Atonement, or Life, Death and Immortality*," Berlin 1833, and Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 5. —

[403] "For this fast of a single day, forgiveness of our sins is promised us. Is there any easier remedy for the soul? What laborious journeys and pilgrimages, exertions and hardships do believers not undergo in order to obtain forgiveness of sins; and we obtain it in a few hours, in a state of the most pleasant repose in the house of God!" — גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*] [Translator: presumably Naphtali Herz Wessely's *Gan Na'ul* (Amsterdam, 1765–66).] 1, 9, 2.

כי טוב יום בחצריך מאלף.

"One day in Thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere." (Ps. 84:11)

453. ***What duty follows from this for us?***

To persevere in this fast by no means with weariness, but even with true *joy*; and rather to feel a certain pain *at this*: that it is granted us only for so *short* a time, only *once* a year, to linger thus before the Eternal and to be free from all worldly follies and pleasures.

454. ***Is no one exempted from the fast of the Day of Atonement?***

Indeed there are exceptions here; for God means *well* by us through His precepts, but does not mean to *hurt* us; and if a *hundred* physicians, it is said, and the sick person himself affirm his ability to fast, but only *two* physicians deny it; or also if the sick person, together with *one* physician, finds the fast doubtful, while a *hundred* physicians do not, food is nonetheless given to the sick person. — (Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 618.) A girl becomes subject to the fast only with her twelfth year, a boy with his thirteenth.

455. ***What thought can ease the fast for us, and should therefore always be before our minds?***

The thought of its great purpose, of the *forgiveness of our sins*.

[p. 178] **456.** ***Are all sins forgiven us on this day?***

Our Sages say:

עבירות שבין אדם למקום יום הכפורים מכפר עבירות שבין אדם לחבירו אין יום הכפורים מכפר עד שירצה את חבירו.

"Only sins which a person has committed against God[404] does the Day of Atonement forgive; but sins against one's fellow man the Day of Atonement does not forgive until one has become reconciled with one's fellow man." (Mishnah Yoma 8:9)

457. ***In what does the service of the Day of Atonement consist?***

In the usual three prayers, שחרית, מוסף, מנחה [*Shaḥarit*, *Musaf*, *Minḥah*], and a concluding prayer (נעילה [*Ne'ilah*]). These prayers are further augmented, in order to fill the day, with additional prayers and readings from the Law and the Prophets.[405]

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[404] An exception is made by the public desecration of the Name of God. (BT Yoma 86a.)

[405] On the service in the Temple compare the Mishnah Yoma; שלטי הגבורים pp. 119–120b; R. Jacob Emden, Prayer Book, part II, in שער העליון [*Sha'ar ha-Elyon*], p. 120 ff. Compare also שבט יהודה [*Shevet Yehudah*] [Translator: Solomon ibn Verga's chronicle *Shevet Yehudah* (16th century).], Amsterdam ed., p. 52a and b. The eve of the Day of Atonement (עי"כ) is regarded as a festival, and bodily enjoyment on it even as divine service. See my sermon "*The Day of Atonement*." (On the so-called custom of *Kapparot* and the like, see Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 605 ff.) The Day of Atonement is thus ushered in early by an earlier afternoon prayer and confession of sins. Outward preparations are especially the cleansing of the body, the putting on of clean clothing, and actual reconciliation with one's offended brother. Since the main thought of this day is the forgiveness of sins, the making of

[p. 179] **458.** ***What duty is incumbent upon us at the departure of the Day of Atonement?***

To preserve ourselves with the greatest possible vigilance in this purified state of soul and not to fall again into significant missteps. Of this duty we are to be reminded especially by the half-festive intervening days between the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles, which are at the same time meant to prepare us for the latter.[406]

5. The Feast of Tabernacles

459. ***What does the Feast of Tabernacles signify?***

It is the greatest festival of harvest and of the year's close, and of it is said (Deut. 16:12):

חג הסכת תעשה לך... באספך מגרנך ומיקבך.

> "The Feast of Tabernacles shall you make for yourself .... when you gather in from your threshing floor and your winepress."[407] (Deut. 16:12 [recte 16:13])

[p. 180] **460.** ***How is this festival connected with the other festivals of the seventh month that precede it?***

Just as the New Year festival is meant to carry us back into Creation, and the Day of Atonement into the childlike innocence of the first human beings, so the Feast of Tabernacles into the first *simple* and carefree state in *Paradise*; which was, as it were, a dwelling of peace, a sojourn under the protection of God. —

461. ***What duties are connected with this festival?***

First, that of religious *joy*[408]; then the use of the so-called four species (*citron*): [409]ארבע מינים ("Paradise apple"), *palm branch*, *myrtle* and *willow of the brook*; and *dwelling in booths*. It is said (Lev. 23:40–43):

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confessions of sin with earnest remorse over what has been done and the firm resolve to amend it in the future is the main thought of the service. The evening prayer is called כל נדרי [*Kol Nidrei*] after the formula with which it is opened and which deals with vows. Compare, on the correct understanding of this often misunderstood formula, *Jeschurun* by Aron Wolfssohn. [Translator: Aaron Wolfssohn (Halle), *Jeschurun* (Breslau, 1804), a defense of traditional Judaism.] Of particular importance in the Musaf prayer is the so-called עבודה [*Avodah*]; the intercession for the deceased (הזכרת נשמות) seems originally to have taken place *only* on the Day of Atonement. (See Tanḥuma *Ha'azinu*, beginning.) Overcoming the bodily weakness that has arisen from fasting, one should in particular recite the concluding prayer נעילה. The festival is closed like every other by Havdalah, and indeed with grateful joy for the high purpose attained in the day just spent.

[406]The difficult piyyut verse referring to these intervening days (in the piyyut of the second day of Sukkot, ארחץ בנקיון): כארבעת יום שת גבול שיחה means: "The four days He (God) has set as the goal of penitential devotion (time of repentance and prayer)." שיחה denotes an earnest prayer. The other interpretations are very forced.

[407]Indeed, precisely with this is connected also the dwelling of our ancestors in booths during their wandering through the wilderness; for precisely this simple and carefree nomadic life of the ancestors leads back to the days of Paradise. See my Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 6, pp. 85 and 88.

[408]Which took place in an incomparable manner especially in the Temple at the ceremony of the water-drawing, שמחת בית השואבה (Mishnah Sukkah ch. 5, and שלטי הגבורים p. 122 ff.; R. J. Emden, סדור [Siddur], part 2, p. 140 ff.).

[409]At this festival of thanksgiving these signs may well have been the symbols of fourfold benefits worthy of thanks: for fertility, peace, wisdom and the prosperity of all classes of the people. See, in the appendix to my *Apocrypha*, the sermon "*The Festivals*

ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר כפת תמרים וענף עץ עבת וערבי נחל .... בסכת תשבו שבעת ימים .... כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציאי אותם מארץ מצרים.

> "You shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of the tree *hadar*, palm branches, boughs of the myrtle tree and willows of the brook. . . . In booths shall you dwell seven days. . . . For in booths I made the children of Israel dwell when I brought them out of the land of Egypt." (Lev. 23:40–43)

[p. 181] **462.** ***How, then, are these duties usually observed at present?***

The use of those species is usually restricted to the *service*, just as dwelling in booths is, for many, restricted to the time of the fixed meals; although the duty requires a constant sojourn in the booth, just as formerly it required a constant handling of the said species. (BT Sukkah 41b, and Maimonides, Hilkhot Lulav 7:24.)

463. ***Is dwelling in the booth a duty that can be waived under no condition?***

Everyone who fears harm from it is exempt from this duty, especially in its stricter sense. According to Oraḥ Ḥayyim §639:2, 6, and especially §640, even small indispositions exempt one from that duty. But where such hindrances do not exist, love of comfort does not excuse a neglect of that high duty, so closely bound up with the festival.[410]

[p. 182] **6. The Concluding Festival**

464. ***What does this festival signify?***

It is partly an independent festival of its own, partly the closing celebration of Tabernacles and at the same time of all the festivals of the seventh month. —

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of Our Forebears," p. 152. Compare also my Sermons, vol. 1, Sermon 12. On the meaning of the booth, see my Sermons, vol. II, Sermon 6, "*The Seven Remembrances*."

[410]Peculiar to the service of this festival, besides the said duties of the species and the booths, would be the full Hallel; the so-called *Hoshanot* at the end of the Musaf prayer, during which a circuit (procession) is made with the species; the reading of Ecclesiastes (קהלת) [The reason seems to me to lie *in the name of the book*, and to be meant to recall the so-called הקהל [*Hakhel*, "assembling"], or the ceremony which took place on the Feast of Tabernacles of the year of release, when the King read the Law before the *entire nation* (Deut. 31:10–13). On the reading of the five Megillot on the festivals see מס' סופרים [Tractate Soferim] ch. 14.] on the Sabbath of the festival; and the *piyyutim* for this festival. On the Temple service, in which the water-libation (נסוך המים) upon the altar was a peculiar ceremony, see my Sermons 1, 12, p. 193. The festival has five half-holidays (חול המועד). The last of these half-holidays is called the Day of the *Great Hoshanah* (הושענא רבא); it forms a celebration of its own and has, with regard to the willow (ערבה) customarily used on it, a prophetic foundation (BT Sukkah 44). On it one prays especially for rain and fertility; and this service, coming at the close of this festival of joy, is meant in general to remind us once more of the festivals of repentance, so that their purpose may not be lost through their joyful conclusion. On this day, after the Musaf prayer, seven circuits are made in the house of God and a larger number of so-called Hoshanot are prayed. Since this day is in a certain sense a solemn one, inasmuch as according to the teaching of the ancients it is, as it were, decisive with regard to the penitential festivals already past and their significance, the night before it, like that of the Feast of Weeks, is also spent in communal devotion, study of the Law and prayer. —

465. ***Of what peculiar character, accordingly, will the celebration of this festival be?***

It will be a festival celebration partly *earnest*, partly *joyful*, because the penitential festivals and the joyous Tabernacles celebration, as it were, dissolve into this concluding festival; and the joy of this festival will therefore be more a spiritual one, devoted to reflection, than a bodily one. —

466. ***What vouches for this characterization of the festival?***

Its manifold *resemblance to the Feast of Weeks*, especially with regard to the lack of outward customs on it.[411] —

[p. 183] **467.** ***In what way is the festival of the*** **Rejoicing of the Torah** ***also connected with this festival?***

At the close of the Feast of Tabernacles the weekly reading of the five books of Moses, divided into 25[412] sections, is each year concluded and begun anew; this subject of the spiritual celebration at the festival's close also lends it the significance of a bodily gladness.[413]

468. ***What main rule holds for the holidays?***

That they are indeed to be regarded as days of joy and recreation, but always especially as days of spiritual strengthening and of the satisfaction of higher needs. — Of the *eves of the festivals* (ערבי ימים טובים)[414] [p. 184] the same holds on the whole as was remarked regarding the eves of the Sabbath: unnecessary work in the later afternoon hours, and especially the holding of set meals on them, is regarded as a sin (Maimonides, Hilkhot Yom Tov 6:16; 8:17).

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[411] See my Sermons, vol. 2, Sermon 20, p. 341. — It is rightly regarded by our Sages as the festival of the most intimate union of Israel with God: BT Sukkah 55b; Midrash on פנחס [*Pinḥas*], end; Zohar תצוה [*Tetzaveh*] p. 187a; Tikkunei Zohar ch. 20, p. 48a.

[412] Translator: So printed; the Pentateuch is in fact divided into 54 weekly portions (*parashiyyot*).

[413] This joyful closing celebration held in the synagogue seems to have been instituted in memory of the שמחת בית השואבה [*Simḥat Beit ha-Sho'evah*, the Rejoicing of the Water-Drawing]. Because of the distinct character of the festival, שהחיינו [*Sheheḥeyanu*] is said again at its onset. The use of the booths, and especially of the plant species, no longer takes place; besides the usual festival prayers, on the festival of Shemini Atzeret intercession is made for the departed (הזכרת נשמות [*Hazkarat Neshamot*]), and prayers for rain (תפלת גשם [*Tefillat Geshem*]) are inserted into the *Musaf*. The *Rejoicing of the Torah* is celebrated in the temple especially through the *processions* (הקפות [*hakkafot*]) with the scrolls of the Law. — I note in passing that in the prayer of this festival the phrase את יום השמיני עצרת החג הזה ["this day of the Eighth Day, the Festival of Assembly"] is most probably the correct one. In my טל שבים [*Tal Shevim*] (notes on the prayer book) I have justified it on three grounds. See meanwhile Azulai, ברכי יוסף [*Birkei Yosef*] on Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 668, and the learned Mr. M. B. Friedenthal's essay מאמר מרדכי [*Ma'amar Mordekhai*], p. 36 ff.

[414] The so-called ערוב תבשילין [*eruv tavshilin*] (see Maimonides, Hilkhot Yom Tov 6:2, and ראב"ד [Rabad] ad loc.) is the means by which one may prepare on the festival for the day of rest, and it takes place on the *eve* (ערב י"ט) of the festival when the latter [the day of rest] falls immediately upon the former. See also my *Reden* [Discourses], year 2, discourse 17, p. 281 ff. — On ערובי חצרות [*eruvei ḥatserot*] and התחומין [*teḥumin*, Sabbath limits] see א"ח [Oraḥ Ḥayyim] ch. 345 ff.

469. *What are* half-holidays*?*

Days whose festive influence extends little or not at all to work and trade, but rather merely to prayer and the house of God, and on which fasting is in part regarded as not quite permissible, in part even forbidden.

470. *Can you name these days to me more precisely?*

Certainly; there are *more important* and *less important* ones among them.

471. *The more important ones would be?*

1. The *intermediate festival days*.[415] (חול המועד)

2. *New Moon day* (ראש חדש)

3. The *Feast of Lots*, (פורים)

4. The *Dedication of the Temple*, (חנוכה)

472. *And the less important ones?*

1. The 15th of *Shevat* (חמשה עשר בשבט)

2. The 15th of *Av* (חמשה עשר באב)

3. The 33rd of the *Omer* (18th of Iyar)[416] ל"ג בעומר.

473. *What is the meaning of the* New Moon celebration*?*

The renewal of the moon is a phenomenon especially important and influential for nature and *religion*,[417] and [p. 185] was therefore celebrated festively, besides the fact that the blessing was pronounced over it as over other natural phenomena.[418]

474. *In what did the celebration of New Moon day consist?*

In an augmented divine service (Num. 28:11–15), at which, as on the festivals, the silver trumpets were also blown; and then also in certain outward festive distinctions, so that New Moon day is already commonly mentioned by the prophets alongside the days of rest and the festivals.[419]

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[415] See the present religious textbook, p. 166.

[416] Further distinguished days are the 15th of Adar, and the Purim of the first month of Adar in a leap year (פורים קטן [*Purim Katan*]); אסרו חג [*Isru Ḥag*], or the day *after each of the three principal festivals*; — the שלשת ימי הגבלה [*the three days of setting bounds*], or the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of Sivan; the 11th–14th of Tishri; — the *afternoons of the Sabbath eves* (ערבי שבתות) and the *eves of the festivals* (ערבי ימים טובים), on the eve of which no תחנון [*Taḥanun*] is already said.

[417] Namely, for the fixing of the festivals.

[418] Called קדוש לבנה [*Kiddush Levanah*, the sanctification of the moon]; see BT Sanhedrin p. 42, Rosh Hashanah 24. On the New Moon celebration see *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* ch. 45 and 51, especially Tractate *Soferim* 17, 18 and 20, *Pesikta Rabbati* ch. 1 ff.

[419] Cf. שלטי הגבורים [*Shiltei ha-Gibborim*] p. 118. — As regards the New Moon celebration at present, the new moon is already blessed on the day of rest preceding it (ברכת החדש [*Birkat ha-Ḥodesh*]), as it were in memory of its former public consecration

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ראשי חדשים שקולין כמועדות ושבתות.

"The New Moons are placed on a par with the festivals and days of rest, etc." (Pesikta Rabbati ch. 1. See Midrash פנחס [*Pinḥas*], end.[420])

475. *When is the Feast of Lots, or* Purim*, celebrated?*

On the fourteenth day of the twelfth month, or of the month of Adar.

476. *On what is this festival based?*

It was instituted in remembrance of the memorable history of our forefathers under the reign of Ahasuerus[421] [p. 187] and of Esther; in which Haman, the king's first minister, had conceived a cruel plan of murder against the Jewish people, which, however, was frustrated by a most wondrous divine intervention, by means of the said queen and her uncle Mordecai.

477. *What duties are connected with this festival?*

The *fast* (תענית אסתר [*Ta'anit Ester*, the Fast of Esther]) which precedes the festival day;[422] the *reading of the Book of Esther*, both on the eve of the festival and on the following morning, with the blessings belonging to it; the insertion of the prayer על הנסים [*Al ha-Nissim*] into the prayer

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(Soferim ch. 19). — The *eve* of the New Moon (cf. on this purpose of the New Moon celebration itself Kuzari 3:5), or ערב ראש חדש [*Erev Rosh Ḥodesh*], has long been instituted as a minor day of penitence and is known as such under the name יום כפור קטן [*Yom Kippur Katan*, "Minor Day of Atonement"] (cf. מעבר יבק [*Ma'avar Yabbok*], section קרבן תענית [*Korban Ta'anit*], part 2; ראשית חכמה [*Reshit Ḥokhmah*], Gate of התשובה [Repentance], ch. 4); nor was this significance unknown even to the של"ה [*Shelah*] (as one of our more recent translators of the prayer book erroneously believes). The New Moon celebration now consists in a divine service augmented by part of the הלל [*Hallel*], by a reading from the Law, but especially by the מוסף [*Musaf*], and also in certain outward distinctions of gladness, both in food and in dress. See Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 417 ff. More precise directions as to how this celebration, at present almost wholly *misunderstood*, ought to be observed in God's house and in our own, for the elevation of devotion and of religious joy for young and old, are given in a separate discourse of mine: "*The New Moon Celebration*," delivered on Sabbath וארא [*Va'era*] 5597. (Manuscript.)

[420] In the book *Zohar* the New Moon celebration is, in almost countless passages, set beside the *days of rest* and *festivals* also in respect of its higher influence (of which the Talmud, Bava Metzia 85b, already gives an account in an important aggadah), and to it, no less than to the day of rest, the influence of the so-called נשמה יתירה [*neshamah yeterah*, the "additional soul"] is ascribed, and rightly so; — only here, as regards the more or the less, much depends on us, or on the manner in which we prepare for and observe the New Moon celebration. — Of distinguished New Moon days the Mishnah reports, Rosh Hashanah beginning and Shekalim beginning. The famous aggadah (חולין [Ḥullin] p. 60b) on the reason for the שעיר ר"ח [he-goat of the New Moon] rests on a figurative meaning, and this, in my opinion, is set out in one of my discourses.

[421] Xerxes. See my *Reden*, year 1, discourse 19, p. 295. — I merely recall here the names occurring under the reign of Xerxes, which could easily have been confused with the biblical ones through the similarity of letters, in the inexact reports of Herodotus; especially since Herodotus here expressly states that he follows the accounts of the Persians (Herod. 7.12). Thus, e.g., the name *Mardonius* may have been confused with *Mordecai*, the female name *Atossa* with *Hadassah* (Esther 2:7), *Achaemenes* or *Artabanus* perhaps with *Haman*; so, too, e.g., the restless nights of Xerxes, which urged him on to the Persian wars and which induced him to send for Artabanus, to communicate his unrest to him, and, since Artabanus would not believe him, to ask him to put himself wholly in his place and to mount the royal bed, etc. (Herodotus book 18 and 19) [Translator: i.e. Herodotus, *Histories* 7.12–19], strongly recall that night of Ahasuerus which decided the fate of the Jewish people (Esther 6:1–10). —

[422] The festival is preceded, as a preparation, by the most important of the four days of rest that prepare for the Passover festival (ארבע פרשיות [the Four Portions]; see my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*] p. 134), namely שבת זכור [*Shabbat Zakhor*], on which the short section Deut. 25:17–19 is read, since Haman, according to the Talmud, is said to have been of the blood of Amalek. But cf. also my הוספה למגלת אסתר [*Supplement to the Scroll of Esther*], Breslau 1819, note on ch. 16:10. Translator: Chapter 16 belongs to the Greek Additions to Esther, where (16:10) Haman is called a Macedonian.

and into the grace after meals; the distribution of alms to the needy, and the mutual sending of portions of food (משלוח מנות [*mishloaḥ manot*]); as well as the small after-celebration on the following day, the fifteenth of Adar.

מוטב לאדם להרבות במתנות אביונים מלהרבות בסעודתו ובשלוח מנות לרעיו שאין שם שמחה גדולה ומפוארה אלא לשמח לב עניים ויתומים ואלמנות וגרים וכו׳.

> "It is better that one distribute more gifts to the needy than that one enlarge one's own meal or send gifts to friends; for there can be no greater and more glorious joy than to gladden those in need of help" .... (Maimonides, Hilkhot Megillah 2:17)

[p. 188] **478.** ***Who instituted the festival of Purim?***

Esther and Mordecai — the latter, as is well known, a member of the Great Assembly[423] — but with the help of the members of this assembly of scholars.

479. ***What lessons may well be drawn from that festival history?***

That we should not despair in misfortune; that God creates the remedy before He even strikes the wound; that He can perform very great miracles[424] even in post-prophetic times; that repentance and amendment can accomplish infinitely much over our destinies; and finally, how precisely the so greatly misjudged Jewish people can render very beneficial services to the state.

480. ***What especially remarkable thing is said of this festival?***

It is said:

כל המועדים עתידין ליבטל וימי הפורים לא בטלים לעולם.

> "And even if all the festivals should one day cease, the days of Purim will never cease." (Midrash on Proverbs 9:2[425])

[p. 189] **481.** ***When do we celebrate the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, or* Ḥanukkah*?***

On the twenty-fifth of the ninth month, or month of כסליו [Kislev], and it lasts eight days.[426]

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[423] See my present religious textbook, p. 37 and p. 148. See Megillah p. 16b and 7a.

[424] See Talmud Megillah p. 11a on Lev. 26:44. This is why the blessing שעשה נסים וכו׳ [*she-asah nissim*, "who wrought miracles," etc.] and the formula על הנסים [*Al ha-Nissim*] were instituted precisely and only for those two festivals of the *post-prophetic* period. See my explanation of this blessing in my *Reden*, year 1, discourse 15, p. 232, note.

[425] See my *Reden*, year 1, discourse 18, p. 284, note 1, with *Mekhilta* בשלח [*Be-shallaḥ*], end; ספר חסידים [*Sefer Ḥasidim*] §369; ספר החיים [*Sefer ha-Ḥayyim*] section 3, ch. 7; Kunitz, מצרף [*Ha-Metsaref*] p. 49, who also cites *Yalkut* part 2, §944; *Tikkunim* ch. 20, p. 49.

[426] According to the Talmud (Shabbat 21b) mention is made of yet another miracle, on which the eight-day festival of dedication is said to rest. But see also מגלת תענית [*Megillat Ta'anit*] ch. 9. — According to 2 Macc. 10:9 (see ch. 1:22), the choice of an *eight-day* celebration was a deliberate imitation of the Feast of Tabernacles, so that at the Maccabean dedication of the Temple even *willows of the brook* and *palm branches* were used.

482. ***What led to the institution of this festival?***

The remarkable, wondrous victories of the Maccabees over the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes,[427] who subjugated the Jewish people and with the harshest cruelties forced them to apostatize from their Law; but in particular the festival was instituted in memory of the splendid *dedication of the Temple* arranged by Judah Maccabee after several victories had been won, and of the restoration of public worship after an interruption of three years. This dedication of the Temple took place on the twenty-fifth of the month of Kislev (1 Macc. 4:42 ff.[428])

[p. 190] **483.** ***What duties are connected with this festival?***

First of all the *kindling of the lights*[429] (הדלקת נרות חנוכה), of which one more is kindled each evening (after sunset), and so on up to eight lights on the last evening; the full הלל [*Hallel*] (Ps. 113–118) in the prayer service; a daily reading from the Torah; and the insertion of the formula על הנסים into the prayer of the Eighteen Benedictions and into the grace after meals.[430]

מצות נר חנוכה חביבה היא עד מאוד, וצריך אדם להזהר בה, כדי להודיע הנס ולהוסיף בשבח האל והודיה לו על הנסים שעשה לנו.

> "The commandment of the Ḥanukkah lights is a very lovable duty; one should observe it carefully, in order to draw attention to the miracle (of which they remind us) and to *increase* the praise of God and thanks to Him for the wondrous deeds He has shown us."[431] (Maimonides, Hilkhot Ḥanukkah 4:12)

484. ***Who instituted this festival?***

Judah Maccabee himself, with the help of the scribes of that time. It is said:

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[427]The history of this fateful period is described in the books of the Maccabees, in Josephus's *Antiquities*, and in part also in his separate treatise *De rationis imperio* [Translator: i.e. 4 Maccabees, then ascribed to Josephus].

[428]Antiquity connects with this yet another occasion of the festival of dedication, namely the well-known story of *Judith*. See the *Yotserot* אודך כי אנפת [*Odekha ki anafta*] for the first שבת חנוכה [Sabbath of Ḥanukkah]; also חמדת הימים [*Ḥemdat ha-Yamim*], section חנוכה [Ḥanukkah], ch. 2: נמצא במדרש אגדה בכ"י וכו׳ ["it is found in a midrash aggadah in manuscript," etc.]; but see in the same place the actual story of Judith in summary. Cf. especially Zunz, *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, p. 124, especially note d. On p. 125, note a, of the same work, I refer to the town בתול [Bethul], Josh. 19:4, 1 Chron. 4:3[0]. See also Josh. 15:30.

[429]On the rules of this duty see Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 670 ff.; Soferim ch. 20.

[430]The day of rest that falls in the week of this festival is an especially solemn one and is called שבת חנוכה [*Shabbat Ḥanukkah*]; there are two of them in this festival when its first day falls on a Sabbath.

[431]That is, so that everyone may be moved by the sight of the lights to remember the miracle and to praise God. At the same time, the conclusion of the above passage may support the teaching of those who proposed that, while the Ḥanukkah lights are being kindled or are burning, other hymns of praise and psalms should be sung besides the customary blessings. One should also occupy oneself with the Law during this time. Suitable material: Shabbat p. 21 ff., *Pesikta Rabbati* ch. 1 ff., מנורת המאור [*Menorat ha-Ma'or*] ch. 133, של"ה [*Shelah*] 249b, especially חמדת הימים [*Ḥemdat ha-Yamim*] loc. cit., and the like.

ויצו יהודה ואחיו וכל עדת ישראל לחוג את חנוכת המזבח בחמשה ועשרים לחדש כסליו מדי שנה בשנה שמונת ימים בהודות והלל לה׳.

"Judah and his brothers and all Israel commanded that the dedication of the altar be celebrated yearly on the 25th of Kislev for 8 days with songs of praise and thanksgiving to the Eternal." (1 Macc. 4:57; 2 Macc. 1:10; 10:1–11)

[p. 191] **485.** ***What lessons follow from the history of this festival?***

That God can do great things even through a small number; that the truth, too, is truly preserved only among the few, while the great multitude follows only what promises momentary pleasure; that the wicked man does not in the end escape punishment; and again, that whole peoples, like individual persons, must not despair in the most perilous circumstances; especially, that Israel may under no condition consent to apostasy from the Law, if it is not to be doubly unhappy, but must endure everything for its sake, and above all must educate its youth in this and walk before it as an example.[432]

[p. 192] **486.** ***What is the meaning of the half-holiday of the fifteenth of Shevat (*** חמשה עשר בשבט***)?***

This day is the *New Year* with respect to *trees* (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1; see the Talmud thereon), as their planting is reckoned from this day for the purpose of the *tithing* of the fruits;[433] and the powers of nature, benumbed in winter, now also begin to unfold again.

487. ***What underlies the celebration of the fifteenth of Av (***חמשה עשר באב***)?***

Several things. On this day, according to the report of Tradition, the tribes of Israel are said to have reunited with the tribe of Benjamin, which had been cast out and had come near to total dissolution (Judg. 21); the dying of our forefathers in the wilderness is said to have ceased; the guards who, under the reign of Jeroboam, kept the pilgrims from the Temple are said to have ceased; the numerous corpses that had long lain unburied in the city of Bethar are said to have been brought to burial; and finally, on this day the felling of wood for the fire of the altar was usually ended, from which the day also received the name *Day of the Breaking of the Axe* [p. 193] (יום תבר מגל).

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[432] On the latter see 1 Macc. 2:52 ff., 2 Macc. 30, 7:22 ff. [Translator: so printed; probably 2 Macc. 6:30 and 7:22 ff.]; cf. also my *Reden*, year 1, discourse 15, and year 2, discourse 9. The author of the second book of Maccabees (6:14–19) also finds in the aforementioned history the conclusion that Israel is not, like the nations, destroyed after a long accumulation of sins, but is soon punished for them. This passage seems to be the source of the similar remark among the rabbis: Sotah 8b, Avodah Zarah p. 5; my דת משה ויהודית [*Dat Mosheh vi-Yehudit*, i.e. the present book] p. 16, note. — What might still come into consideration as not unimportant in our festival history (because it would, as it were, sanction the festival as biblically grounded) is its precise prediction by the prophet Daniel (Dan. 9 to 11). Nachmanides (רמב"ן [Ramban]) even finds our festival history, or rather the duty of kindling lights connected with it, already alluded to in the Law. See his commentary on Num. 8:2, and Aboab, מנורת המאור [*Menorat ha-Ma'or*] ch. 133.

[433] No further duties are connected with this day, except perhaps the *custom* of eating all sorts of fruits on it.

According to the report of the Mishnah, there were in Israel no greater festivals of joy than the fifteenth of Av and the Day of Atonement.[434]

488. ***Are any special duties connected with this day?***

Since with this day the nights already begin to grow longer, the Talmud obliges us to open with this day the lofty divine service of nocturnal study of the Law.[435]

489. ***What may well redound particularly to the distinction of the Israelite holidays?***

That they begin not only on the day itself, but already on the evening before. This is not only in accordance with nature, but also of importance for the preparation for the festivals and for their higher influence. — The prophet therefore says, with particular enthusiasm, of that great future when *at evening* there shall be light, when such a *festival eve* hovered before him:

השיר יהיה לכם כליל התקדש חג וכו׳.

> "You shall have a song as in the night when a festival is consecrated," etc. (Isa. 30:29)

490. ***But are these holidays not all disruptive to our life's task as human beings and Israelites?***

[p. 194] They are not so for the former, because work is forbidden only on the holidays ordained by the Law; and still less are they so for the latter; rather, Religion — or rather *we*, in relation to it — needs such resting points in life more often.

ואין כניעתך בימי התענית יותר קרובה מן האלקים משמחתך בימי השבתות והמועדים כשתהיה שמחתך בכונה ולב שלם.

> "Your dejection on a fast day is no more worthy of nearness to God than your joy on days of rest and festivals, provided it is a devout and sincere one."[436] (Kuzari 2:50)

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[434]See Ta'anit 30b, Jerusalem Ta'anit ch. 4, end; my *Reden*, year 2, discourse 5, p. 74, and the supplements to that discourse. See at length *Megillat Ta'anit* p. 5.

[435]Ta'anit ibid.; Bava Batra p. 121; Maimonides, Hilkhot Talmud Torah 3:13; my *Reden*, year 2, discourse 7, p. 105. — On the celebration of ל"ג בעומר [*Lag ba-Omer*] see the present religious textbook, p. 168, note. About the half-holidays added in the note on p. 184 there is nothing special to remark.

[436]It is not for the sake of the small surplus of five festival days (י"ט שני של גלויות [the second festival day of the Diaspora]), over which for some years now so lamentable an outcry has been raised, with constant talk of abolishing them, that we need so anxiously fear the judgment seat of conscience on account of the resulting neglect of business; but rather for the festive high living on all the days of the year, from which those very accusers are often least free. It is these pleasure-seekers, forever going about from banquet to banquet, who are meant by that Talmudic passage (Shabbat p. 151) in the words: "'I will spread the dung of your festivals upon your faces' — *by this are meant people who let the study of the Law lie idle and spend all their days like festivals*." One does not want festivals merely in order to have nothing but festivals; and behind the pretended good intention which people claim to have in abolishing that second festival day there is concealed, in many, partly the mere craving to reform, partly a decided aversion to religious life as such. Granted that this second festival day stands for Israel, in a certain measure, as a punishment (Pesikta in *Yalkut* on Ezekiel 20; Jerusalem Eruvin ch. 3; Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on Song of Songs 1:6), we would have to bear it as a well-deserved one; but this festival day is nevertheless not without high significance and importance (Zohar אמור [*Emor*] p. 28; טור ברקת [*Tur Bareket*] on Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 496), just as, in general, God's punishments are usually blessings in the background. — —

[p. 195] IV. The Fast Days

491. ***What are Israelite fast days?***

Days of *complete* abstention from food and drink.

492. ***For what purpose were such days instituted?***

First of all in remembrance of sad events, but with the intention of being mindful of their causes, namely sins, of guarding ourselves against them and of amending ourselves; so that *repentance* is thus the main purpose of the fast days. —

493. ***But could these thoughts of repentance not occur without fasting?***

On an ordinary day and with an uninterrupted everyday way of life they would occur either not at all or not powerfully enough. On the fast day the *soul* is more master of itself, freer from the burdens of animal pleasures, and more capable of the holy. In earlier times, for this purpose, a certain abstention from occupations was also joined to the fasting, and the fast day was at the same time a *solemn assembly* (עצרה).

494. ***But do not the prophets and even the Talmudists censure fasting?***[437]

Certainly; when one regards this mere means as already the end, and believes that by it *alone* one already pleases God.[438]

[p. 196] **495.** ***But in the Talmud (Ta'anit p. 11a) fasting is expressly censured, is it not?***

This censure aims, as the Talmud clearly remarks there, partly at the fasting of weak persons, partly at the excessive voluntary fasting of men learned in divine things, whom it hinders in the study of the Law; but by no means at fasting on the days *appointed* for it, nor at a *moderate* fasting by persons who are conscious of violent impulses toward sin, which can be weakened only by such renunciation.[439]

496. ***How might the fast days be divided?***

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[437] Translator: The question is misnumbered "491" in the print.

[438] Only in this sense does Isaiah censure fasting. See my *Reden*, year 2, discourse 5, p. 73, note 2. In this sense, too, Zechariah ch. 7 is to be taken; verse 9 ff. and ch. 8:16 and 17 are a proof of this. The prophets could not censure fasting as such, not only because it is already grounded in the Law itself, and particularly in the life of Moses, but because the prophets themselves fasted and even regarded fasting as an unfailingly powerful means against circumstances however critical. See e.g. Exod. 34:28, 1 Sam. 14:24, Esther 4:16, and the like. Cf. also my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*] p. 76, also notes 3 and 4 there.

[439] To this extent the one who fasts is also called a *holy one* in the above-mentioned Talmudic passage. How the Talmud does not contradict itself in that passage has been splendidly demonstrated by R. I. Aboab, מנורת המאור [*Menorat ha-Ma'or*] ch. 285, and by the author of ראשית חכמה [*Reshit Ḥokhmah*], Gate of תשובה [Repentance], ch. 4. But that diligent study of the Law, combined with moderation in pleasures, is the best means of repentance was taught long ago by R. Jonah in יסוד התשובה [*Yesod ha-Teshuvah*]; note especially a remarkable passage in R. I. Luria (in מעבר יבק [*Ma'avar Yabbok*], section קרבן תענית [*Korban Ta'anit*], ch. 1, p. 153 ff.; see also Rosh Hashanah 18). Especially relevant here are ס׳ חסידים [*Sefer Ḥasidim*] §§617 and 618.

1) strictly obligatory,

2) less strictly obligatory,

3) voluntary ones.

[p. 197] **497. *Which will be the former?***

Besides the *Day of Atonement*, already discussed, which is founded in the Law, Religion counts as strict fast days:

1) *the ninth of the month Av* (תשעה באב),

2) *the tenth of Tevet* (עשרה בטבת),

3) *the seventeenth of Tammuz* (שבעה עשר בתמוז),

4) *the third of Tishri*, or the Fast of *Gedaliah*[440] (צום גדליה).

498. *Which are the less obligatory ones?*

The Fast of *Esther* (תענית אסתר) on the 13th of Adar; — the Fast of the *Firstborn*[441] (תענית בכורים) on the 14th of Nisan.

499. *What does the fast day that is the strictest after the Day of Atonement, that of the fifth month, or the 9th of Av, commemorate?*

It was instituted in remembrance of *several* unfortunate events, but in particular of the *destruction of both Temples* (2 Kings 25:8; Josephus, *Jewish War*, Book 6, ch. 4, § 8[442]).

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[440]Compare, on these four fast days, Zohar וישלח [*Vayishlaḥ*], p. 170b.

[441]To this category I would also reckon the fast of the *first* Selichot day and that of the *last day of the year* (ערב ראש השנה [eve of Rosh Hashanah]). — Among the *voluntary* fast days I would count, for example, the eve of the New Moon (ערב ראש חדש); the anniversaries of the death of deceased parents; — the fast of the (שני חמישי ושני [Monday, Thursday and Monday]) *after* the close of the Feast of Passover and of the Feast of Tabernacles, and the like more, among the fast days partly ancient and partly of later origin (*Megillat Ta'anit*, p. 10; see Oraḥ Ḥayyim 288 and 588).

[442]BT Rosh Hashanah 18[b], BT Ta'anit 29[a]; Maimonides, Hilkhot Ta'aniyot (הל' תענית) 5:2. Already with the beginning of the fifth month the mourning for Jerusalem is to begin through manifold renunciations (Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 551). For the aforementioned fast day is the strictest among the four (ibid. 550). Indeed, in part even the intervening weeks between this fast and the fast of the 17th of Tammuz (בין המצרים [*Bein ha-Metzarim*, "between the straits"]) are regarded as weeks of solemnity, and amusements are forbidden during them. The aforementioned fast day begins, like the Day of Atonement, already on the evening before. After the evening prayer the Lamentations of Jeremiah (איכה) (Tractate Soferim מס' סופרים, ch. 18) are chanted, and on the following day likewise elegies (קינות [*kinot*]); a portion of the Law (Deut. 4:52 ff.) [Translator: Misprint for Deut. 4:25 ff., the Torah reading of the morning of Tisha be-Av.] and of the Prophets (Jer. 9) is also read. The study of the Law (with the exception of such passages as are of sorrowful content) is forbidden. The putting on of the prayer shawl and the phylacteries, too, takes place only at the afternoon prayer (מנחה [*Minḥah*]). If the fast day begins at the close of the day of rest, the Havdalah prayer is postponed until the close of the fast. The day of rest preceding the fast is called שבת חזון [*Shabbat Ḥazon*] on account of the Haftarah read on it (Isa. 1). The Sabbath *after* the fast, on the other hand, is called שבת נחמו [*Shabbat Naḥamu*], likewise on account of the Haftarah read on it, Isa. 40; this is the first of the so-called seven *Haftarot of Consolation* (שבעה דנחמתא [*shiv'ah de-neḥemata*]), which are read from this Sabbath until the New Year festival.

[p. 198] **500.** ***What is the meaning of the fast day of the third of Tishri, or the Fast of Gedaliah (צום השביעי [the fast of the seventh month])?***

It was instituted in remembrance of the assassination committed against Gedaliah, the governor in the Jewish land, with which Israel's last hope under the dominion of the Babylonians had perished (2 Kings 25; Jer. 41; and the commentators on Lam. 4:20). This fast day, however, takes its place among the strict fast days all the more rightly, as it is at the same time one of the *Days of Penitence*.[443]

[p. 199] **501.** ***What does the fast of the fourth month, or the 17th of Tammuz, commemorate?***

Several sad historical events,[444] especially that on this day, before the destruction of the first Temple, the divine service ceased, and that at the second siege, that is, the one by the Romans, the city wall was breached.

502. ***Finally, what occasioned the fast on the tenth of Tevet?***

That on this day the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:1; Jer. 39:10;[445] Ezek. 24), and with it all the terrible consequences that arose from it, had their beginning.

503. ***Is fasting permitted on all days of the year?***

Neither on days of rest and high festivals, nor on the more important half-holidays; unless it should give the faster pleasure or be conducive to his health (Maimonides, Hilkhot Ta'aniyot הל' תענית 1:6, 7; Oraḥ Ḥayyim 288).

504. ***But should we, without necessity, exclude ourselves from our fasting brethren on the appointed and obligatory fast days?***

We should do so all the less, as *God* reserved it to Himself one day to abolish them, and to transform them, for those who kept them, into joyful festivals.

כל הצומות האלו עתידים ליבטל לימות המשיח. ולא עוד אלא שהם עתידים להיות יום טוב וימי ששון ושמחה, שנאמר כה אמר ה' צבאות צום הרביעי וצום החמישי וצום השביעי וצום העשירי יהיה לבית יהודה לששון ולשמחה ולמועדים טובים, והאמת והשלום אהבו.

> "All these fasts will one day cease, and will even pass over into days of joy and delight; for thus it is said (Zech. 8:19): Thus says the Lord …. The fast of the fourth, fifth, seventh and

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[443] As on every other fast day, ויחל [*Va-yeḥal*] (Exod. 32:11 to 15; [Translator: The print reads "11 bis bis 15"; the customary fast-day reading is Exod. 32:11–14 and 34:1–10.] 34:1–10) and the Haftarah דרשו [*Dirshu*] (Isa. 55) are read; only some *Selichot* express what is particular to this fast day.

[444] BT Ta'anit 28b; Maimonides, Hilkhot Ta'aniyot (הל' תענית) 5:2.

[445] Translator: The beginning of the siege is recorded in Jer. 39:1 (and 52:4); 39:10 appears to be a misprint.

tenth (months) shall be turned for the house of Judah into delight, joy and joyful festivals; — only love truth and peace." (Maimonides, Hilkhot Ta'aniyot, end)[446] [p. 200]

Addenda

On p. 90, note 2: see ראשית חכמה [*Reshit Ḥokhmah*], the appendix חופת אליה רבה [*Ḥuppat Eliyahu Rabbah*], Porta 7 (beginning): שבעה דברים עתיד מלך המשיח וכו' ["Seven things the King Messiah will in future …"]; compare also Kohelet Rabbah on Eccl. 11:8: תורה שאדם למד בעה"ז הבל היא לפני תורתו של משיח ["The Torah that a person learns in this world is vanity compared with the Torah of the Messiah"], and the well-known Talmudic passage: עתיד מלך המשיח לדרוש דברים שלא שמעתן אוזן מעולם ["The King Messiah will in future expound things that no ear has ever heard"].

On p. 95, on the *resurrection*: compare the Book of Wisdom, chs. 2, 3, 4; 2 Macc. 7:15; Josephus, *Discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades* [on the resurrection], where Josephus has almost literally the Talmudic parable ק"ו מחטה וכו' [the *a fortiori* argument from the grain of wheat]; and *Jewish War*, Book 2, ch. 7, § 11. —

On p. 98, on *immortality*: compare Sirach 42:9, and the treatise: Philo, *On Immortality*. A very remarkable passage is found in Zohar משפטים [*Mishpatim*], p. 116b. —

On p. 103, note 1, on the delights of blessedness: see Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on Song of Songs 1:4, where *secrets* (הדרי) of *Behemoth* and *Leviathan* are spoken of. Compare also M. Konitz (בר יוחאי [*Bar Yoḥai*]), מענה 126. —

On p. 171 (beginning): The *obscure presentation* of the New Year festival, which left us in deep ignorance about its meaning, might well also be alluded to, beyond the literal sense of these words, in that Talmudic remark, Beitzah 15,[447] about כסה [*keseh*] (Ps. 82:4; see also Yalkut on the passage): שהירח מתכסה בו ["on which the moon is covered"]; which my discourses discuss at length: "*Israel's Correct View of the New Year and the Days of Penitence*," Sabbath תבא [*Ki Tavo*] 5595, and: "*The Just Mistrust*," on the Sabbath שופטים [*Shofetim*] 5596 (manuscript). —

On page 48, note, line 18 (from below): This R. Abba therefore also transmits teachings after R. Simeon's death, and says expressly that he wrote them down *under* his great teacher. Zohar משפטים [*Mishpatim*], p. 123b. — —

[446]Translator: Maimonides, Hilkhot Ta'aniyot 5:19.

[447]Translator: The verse is Ps. 81:4 (Plessner's "82, 4" is a misprint); the Talmudic remark is at BT Beitzah 16a.

[p. —] # Tenth Section

גמילות חסדים Love of Humanity

I. Self-Love

אם אין אני לי, מי לי?

(Pirkei Avot 1:14)

505. ***To what extent do the duties toward ourselves deserve a place among those of love of humanity?***

Inasmuch as they are the foundation of the latter, and inasmuch as Holy Scripture itself often indicates their close connection.

506. ***Make this more comprehensible to me!***

He who does not love himself can seldom love another; he who is harsh toward himself will be all the more so toward his fellow men; and indeed the teaching: Love your neighbor *as yourself*, undeniably presupposes *loving oneself*. — —

גמל נפשו איש חסד ועכר שארו אכזרי.

> "He who does good to his own person is a *kindly* man; he who *afflicts* his body, a *cruel* one."[448] (Prov. 11:17)

[p. 202] **507.** ***Does the duty of self-preservation, then, take precedence over the duties of love of neighbor?***

Certainly; he who wishes to preserve others must first preserve himself; and therefore we are expressly taught, and indeed by the very same Rabbi[449] who (JT Nedarim 9:4; Sifra on Lev. 19:18) calls love of neighbor a chief principle of the Law:

וחי אחיך עמך — חייך קודמין לחיי חברך.

> "Your brother shall live *with* you; that is, *your* life takes precedence over that of your fellow man." (Sifra on Lev. 25:35[450] and BT Bava Metzia 62a)[451]

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[448] Compare also Sirach 14:5. — ! See also *Kuzari* 2:50; 3:1; *Ḥovot ha-Levavot* 3:3; 8:3. My discourse "*The Day of Atonement*," p. 7, the explanation of the Aggadah: לעולם ישלים וכו' שנים מקרא וכו' ["A person should always complete … twice the Scripture …"].

[449] R. Akiva.

[450] Translator: The words וחי אחיך עמך are Lev. 25:36.

[451] Compare BT Bava Metzia 33a: אפס כי לא יהיה בך אביון, שלך קודם לשל כל אדם ["'Save that there shall be no needy among you' (Deut. 15:4) — yours takes precedence over anyone else's"].

508. ***What important teaching follows from this?***

That a person may not say: violations of duty against myself surely do no harm to society; — on the contrary, it is only too certain that we thereby injure our fellow men, and above all our family; and for the sake of these alone, whose life and happiness depend on the individual, the individual owes it to himself to preserve himself. —

509. ***But are there not examples of people who sacrificed their self-love to love of neighbor?***

These examples were rare occurrences, and were given only by great men, and that in especially pressing circumstances which demanded such sacrifices.[452]

[p. 203] **510.** ***What else obliges us to the strict observance of the duties toward ourselves?***

The quite simple reason that, as regards our obligations toward our fellow men and the State, we are reminded of these by *others*; the world *demands* what is due to it from us; but no one reminds us of so many duties that we owe to ourselves. Therefore we must demand these of ourselves all the more strictly, and here it is said:

אם אין אני לי, מי לי. —

> "If I am not for myself, who can be for me?" (Pirkei Avot 1:14)

511. ***But Religion, it seems, teaches nothing in particular about the duties toward ourselves?***

It teaches nothing in particular about them in individual passages precisely because *the whole Law consists almost entirely of duties toward ourselves*.

512. ***How is this meant?***

Apart from the teaching that love of humanity (which we owe first of all to ourselves) is the chief idea of the Law,[453] all the divine precepts were indeed aimed only at the *welfare of those who observe them*, and are accordingly nothing but duties of love toward ourselves.

ושמרתם את חקתי ואת משפטי אשר יעשה אתם האדם וחי בהם.

> "You shall keep my statutes and ordinances, which a person shall carry out and thereby be happy." (Lev. 27:5)[454]

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[452]Compare my Discourses, year 1, Discourse 19, pp. 299 and 300. Otherwise, those very brave men were concerned for their self-preservation, and rightly so (e.g. Exod. 17:4; Num. 11:15; 1 Sam. 16:2); for it was precisely this that put them in a position to be able to love their fellow men as well. —

[453]Compare BT Sotah, p. 13: תורה תחלתה גמילות חסדים וסופה גמילות חסדים ["The Torah begins with acts of loving-kindness and ends with acts of loving-kindness"]; explained in my lecture "*The Friends of God, Your Support*," delivered at the general meeting of the Burial Society (גמילות חסדים) in Berlin, on the 6th of Nisan 5596 (manuscript).

[454]Translator: The verse is Lev. 18:5; "27, 5" is a misprint.

ויצונו ה' לעשות את כל החקים האלה ... לטוב לנו כל הימים.

"The Lord commanded us to practice all these statutes …. that it may go well with us all the days." (Deut. 6:24)

[p. 204]

לשמר את מצות ה' וחקתיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום, לטוב לך.

"To keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes, which I command you this day, *for your good*." (Ibid. 10:13)

שמר מצוה שמר נפשו.

"He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul." (Prov. 19:16)

נפש עמל עמלה לו.

"The soul of the one who toils toils for himself."[455] (Ibid. 16:26)

513. ***What, then, follows from this?***

That he who wishes to do himself good needs a conscientious observance of the Law.

514. ***But are there not also specific teachings in Holy Scripture that impose upon us the duties toward ourselves?***

Indeed there are; for example, the passage:

ואך את דמכם לנפשתיכם, אדרש.

"Surely the blood that you shed of yourselves I will avenge." (Gen. 5:9)[456]

ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם.

"You shall take great care with regard to yourselves."[457] (Deut. 4:15)

[p. 205]

אל תעש מום בעצמך.

"Inflict no bodily blemish upon yourself." (BT Pesaḥim 112b)

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[455]Compare Vayikra Rabbah ch. 4 on Eccl. 6:7; BT Menaḥot, p. 99: כל המשמר התורה נשמתו משתמרת וכו' ["Whoever guards the Torah, his soul is guarded …"]. Ps. 119, and in particular the Book of Proverbs, deal mostly with this beneficial effect of the Law upon those who observe it. Compare also the so-called 6th chapter of the Sayings of the Fathers, or the Baraita קנין תורה [*Kinyan Torah*, "the Acquisition of Torah"].

[456]Translator: The verse is Gen. 9:5; "5, 9" is a misprint.

[457]Thus the Talmudic principle: חמירא סכנתא מאיסורא ["danger is graver than prohibition"]: the Law is stricter about abstaining from what is dangerous than about abstaining from what is forbidden in general.

515. ***How may the duties toward oneself — like the duties of love of neighbor already in general — be divided?***

Into duties:

1) for the body,

2) for the mind,

3) for our temporal circumstances.

516. ***What will we need first of all to attain these aims?***

To maintain ourselves always in a clear consciousness, or to guard ourselves against all *violent emotions*, inasmuch as these have a harmful effect on body, soul and the circumstances of life. Such calm *presence of mind* and *sober reflection* upon oneself is *the first condition of all happiness*.[458] —

ארח חיים למעלה למשכיל למען סור משאול מטה.

> "The path of life leads upward for the prudent, so that he escapes the netherworld." (Prov. 15:25)[459]

אדם תועה מדרך השכל בקהל רפאים ינוח.

> "A person who strays from the way of prudence already rests in the company of the shades." (Ibid. 21:16)

517. ***But what is necessary in order to become master of such emotions?***

To avoid persons, objects and occasions whose sight, speech or nearness in general can produce such emotions in us.

[p. 206]

תנה בני לבך לי ועיניך דרכי תצרנה.

> "Give me your heart, my son, and let your eyes observe my ways." (Prov. 23:26)

מכל משמר נצר לבך.

> "Above every other watch, guard your heart …" (Ibid. 4:23)

518. ***But what gives us the strength and skill to be able to exercise this caution?***

Keeping constantly before our eyes the *evil consequences* that *violations of self-love* bring in their train. —

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[458]Hence also, in Hebrew, the kinship of השכיל [*hiskil*, to be prudent] and הצליח [*hitzliaḥ*, to prosper]. — !

[459]Translator: The verse is Prov. 15:24.

ונהמת באחריתך בכלות בשרך ושארך.

"You will lament at your end, when flesh and marrow are consumed in you," etc. (BT Tamid 32)[460]

איזהו חכם? הרואה את הנולד.

"Who is wise? He who perceives the consequence." (Pirkei Avot 3:1)[461]

בכל מעשיך זכור אחריתם ולא תחטא לעולם.

"In all your actions remember the *end*, and you will never sin." (Sirach 7:34)

519. ***Why, too, should care for the*** **body** ***be so incumbent upon us?***

Because it is partly the dwelling and instrument of the soul, partly itself built in a form befitting the divine, or is a shadow (of the body is the condition of all *Health*) or image of God. [462]צלם, צל *enjoyment of life*[463] and *cheerfulness*.

[p. 207]

טוב מסכן וגיו בריא מעשיר ונגוע בשר. חיי בשרים נבחרים מזהב ורוח טובה מפנינים.

"Better poor with a healthy body than rich with a sickly frame; a healthy body is better than money, and a cheerful spirit more than pearls." (Sirach 30:14 ff.)

520. ***In what will the care due to our body consist?***

In the *nourishment* of food and drink to be given to it, but *not in excess*; in *exercise*; but also in *rest* and *recreation*, first of all through *sleep*; also in occasional innocent diversions, particularly in the observance of the *days of rest and festivals* for this purpose; further, in avoiding everything that is harmful to health, such as, for example, unbridled passion, excessively strenuous exertion (BT Shabbat 112), sudden change from heat to cold (BT Ketubbot 30), foolhardiness in dangers, excessive worrying, and the like; as also in careful *care*, prescribed under *medical* direction, when states of illness have set in, for the restoration of health; and finally, above all, in the *observance* of the Israelite *laws of abstinence*, which are very wholesome for body and soul, particularly those concerning food. —

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[460]Translator: The Hebrew words are Prov. 5:11, quoted in the passage cited.

[461]Translator: The saying is found in BT Tamid 32a and Pirkei Avot 2:9 (2:13 in some editions).

[462]See the present book of religion at Question 195, the note. The passage of Vayikra Rabbah ch. 34 cited there concerning Hillel's care of his body seems already to have its basis in the Talmud, Shabbat, p. 51b [50b]: רוחץ אדם פניו ידיו ורגליו בכל יום בשביל כבוד קונהו וכו' ["A person washes his face, hands and feet every day for the sake of his Maker's honor …"]; see Rashi — and especially Maharsha on this passage — ! — which entirely justifies my remarks on צלם [*tzelem*, image]. See also BT Yoma 38a. — Compare further the description of the divine care in the creation of the human body, Job 10, and the well-known passage הנשמה לך והגוף פעלך וכו' ["The soul is Yours and the body is Your work …"].

521. ***Cite for me some passages from our religious writings on what has just been said!***

ידעתי כי אין טוב בם כי אם לשמוח ולעשות טוב בחייו. וגם כל האדם שיאכל ושתה וראה טוב בכל עמלו.

"I know that there is nothing better than to rejoice and to do good in life, and that every person should eat and drink and have enjoyment in all his toil." (Eccl. 3:12, 13)

[p. 208]

אל תהי בסבאי יין בזללי בשר למו.

"Be not among the wine-bibbers and among the gluttonous eaters of meat," etc. (Prov. 23:20, 21[464])

לא ילמד אדם את בנו בשר ויין.

"A person should not accustom his child to meat and wine." (BT Ḥullin 84[a])

522. ***What is especially harmful to our body with regard to nourishment, and can rob us in a short time of health, happiness and honor?***

The vice of *drunkenness*,[465] which is a mighty obstacle to our presence of mind, and thus to all means of self-preservation.

למי אוי למי אבוי ... למאחרים על היין ...

"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? … those who tarry over wine," etc. (Prov. 23:29–35)

לץ היין המה שכר וכל שגה בו לא יחכם.

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink a confounder, and whoever is led astray by it will never become wise." (Prov. 20:1)

[p. 209]

הוי משכימי בבקר שכר ירדפו, מאחרי בנשף יין ידליקם.

"Woe to those who early in the morning already pursue strong drink, and late in the evening still glow with wine." (Isa. 5:11)

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[464]Youths who gave themselves over to the vice of gluttony had to be handed over by their own parents to the court, which carried out the death by stoning upon them — by which the Law sought to prevent the later inevitable, still greater degeneration of the young voluptuary (Deut. 21:18–21 and BT Sanhedrin 71). — See further, on wholesome rules concerning the enjoyment of food, BT Ḥullin 84a on Deut. 12:20; especially Sirach ch. 31 and ch. 37:28–32 — ! Detailed treatment is found in Maimonides, Hilkhot De'ot (הל' דעות); R. Meir in שבילי אמונה [*Shevilei Emunah*], section 5; and R. Menahem ben Zeraḥ's excellent צידה לדרך [*Tzedah la-Derekh*], section 1, division 3. — The Hebrew שבע [*sava'*] means not so much to be *sated* as rather to be *content*. Zohar תרומה [*Terumah*], p. 153b; Wessely, רוח חן [*Ruaḥ Ḥen*], p. 99b; his commentary on Lev. 25:19 and 26:5. See also Bava Metzia 7:5.

[465]See BT Eruvin 64[a], BT Pesaḥim 113; Vayikra Rabbah ch. 12; my Discourses, year 2, Discourse 7, p. 111, note; especially Isa. 28, and my commentary אבן מגבה [*Even Megabbeha*], pp. 257 and 258.

זנות, ויין, ותירוש יקח לב.

"Unchastity, wine and new wine rob the heart." (Hos. 4:11)[466]

523. ***What will be the most wholesome exertion for the body?***

That which is at the same time a useful *work* and puts the body into a beneficial relaxation.

כי אדם לעמל יולד.

"Man is born to exertion." (Job 5:7)

ויניחהו בגן עדן לעבדה ולשמרה.

"He placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to tend it." (Gen. 2:15)

מתוקה שנת העבד.

"Sweet is the sleep of the laborer." (Eccl. 5:11)

עצלה תפיל תרדמה ונפש רמיה תרעב.

"Sloth casts into slumber, and a negligent soul must go hungry." (Prov. 19:15)

524. ***Is seeking medical help in illnesses also made a duty for us in the Law?***

Certainly; already in the regulations concerning leprosy and the like, which had to be submitted to the treatment of the priest.

השמר בנגע הצרעת לשמר מאד ולעשות ככל אשר יורו אתכם הכהנים הלוים.

"Take heed with regard to the plague of leprosy, to observe carefully and to act according to all that the priests …. shall instruct you." (Deut. 24:8)

[p. 210]

כבד את הרופא טרם יבקש לך כי מאלהים הוא שלוח. אלהים העלה סמים מן הארץ וגבר חכם לא יקוץ בם.

"Honor the physician before you need him; for he is appointed by God …. God created the remedies, and the wise man does not abhor them." (Sirach 38; JT Ta'anit 3:6; Bereshit Rabbah ch. 10)

[466]Compare the remarkable passage in the *Moreh Nevukhim* [Guide of the Perplexed] 3:8: הקבוץ על השתיה המשכרת וכו' ["gathering together for intoxicating drink …"].

525. ***What care, beneficial to the body but at the same time influential upon the mind — and forming, as it were, the transition from care of the body to care of the mind — shall we owe the body?***

That of frequent *bathing* and of *cleanliness* in general, particularly with regard to clothing, as well as the observance of the Israelite *dietary laws*.

נקיות מביאה לידי טהרה.

"Cleanliness brings purity." (Sotah, end)

רוחץ אדם פניו ידיו ורגליו בכל יום.

"A person should wash his face, hands and feet daily." (BT Shabbat 51b)

בכל עת יהיו בגדיך לבנים.

"At all times let your garments be clean." (Eccl. 9:5)[467]

אל תשקצו את נפשתיכם .. ולא תטמאו את נפשתיכם ....

"You shall not make your souls abominable …. You shall not defile your souls …" (Lev. 11:43, 44)

526. ***What will be the duties of self-love with regard to our*** **mind,** ***or the true inner man?***

To provide, as far as is possible for us, for our *ennoblement* and *mental cultivation*, above all in the knowledge of *the divine Word*,[468] and indeed in the [p. 211] intention of solving our true life's task and of becoming ever more like our *Creator*, whose image the human soul is; to guard ourselves against all states harmful to the inner life, whether they stem from the *lower* or the *higher powers*, the powers of feeling or of understanding, as for example against *impure thoughts*, *violent passions*, such as those of anger, avarice, envy, the *sensual desires*, *melancholy* and *frivolity*, especially against *indecent speech* and *association with the wicked*; in particular one should *flee idleness* and rather always be *usefully occupied*. Among the duties toward the soul belongs especially that of *qualifying* it *for the state of bliss*, to which end, here below, partly *Religion* in general, partly an only *moderate enjoyment* of earthly life is required.

527. ***Cite for me proof-texts from Scripture with regard to the aforementioned duties toward the nobler part of our being, the soul.***

קנה לב אהב נפשו וכו'

"He who acquires understanding loves his soul." (Prov. 19:8)

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[467]Translator: The verse is Eccl. 9:8; "9, 5" is a misprint.

[468]The famous Jewish historian Flavius Josephus says (*Antiquities* 20.11.2): "*Among us Jews those are not esteemed at all who learn the languages of many nations …. Only those are held to be wise who* [know] *the Law* understand, and be able to explain the force of the Holy Scriptures. —

גם בלא דעת נפש לא טוב

"Also to be without knowledge of the soul is not good."[469] (ibid. 19:2)

[p. 212]

אם למדת תורה הרבה אל תחזיק טובה לעצמך כי לכך נוצרת

"If you have learned much in the Law, do not take credit for it, for that is what you were created for." (Pirkei Avot 2:9)

יהי ביתך בית ועד לחכמים

"Let your house be a meeting-house for the wise," etc. (ibid. 1:4)

528. ***But what shall we have to observe with regard to the duty under discussion?***

That we do not inquire *too much*, and in general do not venture upon things that are *too mighty* for us; also, *over-educated* people are not usually among the best.

כי ברב חכמה רב כעס...

"The more wisdom, the more vexation ...." (Eccl. 1:18)

ולא הלכתי בגדלות ובנפלאות ממני

"I did not venture upon things that were too great and too wondrous for me." (Ps. 131:1)

במופלא ממך אל תדרש..

"What is too wondrous for you, do not inquire into," etc. (Sirach 3:18[470] and BT Ḥagigah 12)

529. ***Which sins and sinful thoughts are more dangerous to the soul—those that have their source in the sensual desires, or those that have it in the understanding?***

The former make us unhappy for *this* life, the latter for eternity, and, strictly speaking, for this life as well.

הקנאה התאוה והכבוד מוציאין את האדם מן העולם

"Self-interest, sensual desire and ambition[471] drive a person out of the world." (Pirkei Avot 4:21)

[p. 213]

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[469]See Zohar Ḥadash on the Song of Songs (Amsterdam edition), p. 56a, דאצטריך ליה לבר נש ["for it is necessary for a person"]; Tikkunei Zohar ch. 70, p. 123a, צריך בר נש למנדע כלא וכו' ["a person must know everything," etc.]. Compare *Ḥovot ha-Levavot*, שער הבחינה [*Sha'ar ha-Beḥinah*, "Gate of Examination"], and especially Wessely, Commentary on the Book of Wisdom 6:18. — [470]Translator: The saying is quoted from Ben Sira in BT Ḥagigah 13a.

[471]The three chief passions, which one of my own discourses, "*The Three Fundamental Evils*," delivered on Shabbat Parah 5594, treats.

והנפש אשר תעשה ביד רמה.... כי דבר ה' בזה.... הכרת תכרת הנפש ההוא עונה בה

"But a soul that does something with insolence .. this one despises God's word .... it shall be utterly cut off; its sin is upon it itself." — (Num. 15:30, 31[472])[473]

תאוה נהיה תערב לנפש

"To suppress a desire is pleasant to the *soul*."[474] (Prov. 13:19)

530. ***In what way is*** **anger** ***an offense against the nobility of our soul?***

It throws us out of our composure and thereby robs us of the sobriety so necessary for love of our neighbor, besides doing us real harm.

כי לאויל יהרג כעש וכו'

"Anger kills the fool" .... (Job 5:2)[475]

אל תבהל ברוחך לכעוס כי כעס בחיק כסילים ינוח

"Be not hasty in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools" ... (Eccl. 7:9)

[p. 214]

הקורע בגדיו בחמתו והמשבר כליו בחמתו.... יהא בעיניך כעובד עבודה זרה

"Whoever tears his garment in his fury, or breaks a vessel and the like, let him be regarded by you as an idolater." (BT Shabbat 105b; Zohar תצוה [*Tetzaveh*] 182b)

כל הכועס, אם חכם הוא, חכמתו מסתלקת, אם נביא הוא, נבואתו מסתלקת....

"Whoever is angry loses, if he is a sage, his wisdom; if a prophet, his gift of prophecy." (BT Pesaḥim 66b)[476]

כל אדם הכועס, אפילו שכינה אינה חשובה נגדו... אף משכח תלמודו ומוסיף טפשות

"To the angry man even the *Deity* counts for nothing; — anger makes one forget one's knowledge of the Law and become a fool." (BT Nedarim 22b)

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[472]See BT Sanhedrin 99 and following, especially Wessely's excellent interpretation in יין לבנון [*Yayin Levanon*], p. 44, his Commentary on the Book of Wisdom 12:17, and my Discourses, Year 2, Discourse 1, p. 1.

[473]Translator: The print's chapter number is unclear (it may read 18); the verses quoted are Num. 15:30–31.

[474]The satisfaction of desire grants only a *momentary* pleasure; but overcoming it grants a *lasting joy*; the pleasure of a desire indulged, moreover, usually leaves behind discomfort, not seldom pain, sadness and tormenting remorse. See Prov. 5:9–14; 14:12, 13; 30:17. — Well worth heeding, therefore, is that important teaching of our Sages (Pirkei Avot 2:1): "Always reckon the momentary loss of virtue against its later gain, and the momentary advantage of vice against its later harm." —

[475]Translator: Printed as Job 5:12.

[476]The *teacher* in particular must refrain from the passion under discussion, for *the hot-tempered man cannot be a teacher*. (Pirkei Avot 2:6)

531. *Should* avarice *and* envy*, too, belong among the passions dangerous to ourselves?*

Certainly; with these passions we consume ourselves, and while we think we are harming *others*, we *ourselves* bear the greatest harm from them.

יש רעה.... ורבה היא על האדם. איש אשר יתן לו האלהים עשר... ולא ישליטנו האלהים לאכל ממנו....

"There is an evil ... which is very common among men: to many a one God gives riches ..., but not the power to enjoy them" .... (Eccl. 6:[1–]2. See also Isa. 32:4–8.)

ורקב עצמות קנאה

"Envy is a rot of the bones." (Prov. 14:30)

532. *But what virtue is opposed to the vice just mentioned?*

Contentment, which is in general a fundamental virtue and the source of a willing observance of the divine precepts.

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אם רוח המושל תעלה עליך, מקומך אל תנח כי מרפא יניח חטאים גדולים

"If the lust for power rises over you, do not leave your standpoint, for contentment keeps great sins down." (Eccl. 10:4)

צדיק אכל לשבע נפשו ובטן רשעים תחסר

"The righteous man enjoys to the contentment of his soul; the belly of the wicked always lacks." (Prov. 13:25)

איזה עשיר? השמח בחלקו

"Who is rich? He who rejoices in his lot." (Pirkei Avot 4:1)

אל יקל המצער בעיניך

"Despise not what is small," etc. (Sirach 6:2)

533. *What else is connected with this subject?*

The above-mentioned keeping away from *melancholy*, i.e. that, for our own sake alone, we must take good care to guard ourselves against a sullen, gloomy mood, especially against despair, against excessive grief in misfortunes, against too many worries and the like.

בנים אתם לה' אלהיכם לא תתגדדו וכו'

"You are children of the Eternal your God; do not wound yourselves .... for one dead."[477] (Deut. 14:1)

רוח איש יכלכל מחלהו ורוח נכאה מי ישאנה

"The spirit of a man bears his sickness, but what can bear a downcast spirit?" (Prov. 18:14)

לא תתן לדאגה לבך כי גבור בגבורים תפיל

"Do not give yourself over to worry, for worry can kill the strongest man, etc." (Sirach 30:21 and following; BT Sanhedrin 100)[478]

התרפית ביום צרה צר כחכה

"You are weak if your strength fails on the day of distress." (Prov. 24:10; Sirach 2:12–14)

[p. 216] **534.** ***What virtues are to take the place of those harmful vices?***

A *cheerful disposition*, *courage* and *trust in God*.

לב שמח ייטב פנים ובעצבת לב רוח נכאה

"A joyful heart gives a good countenance;[479] sadness of the heart, a dejected spirit." (Prov. 15:13. See also ch. 17:22.)

[p. 217]

אל כל החיים יש בטחון

"For all the living there is hope ...." (Eccl. 9:4)

חרדת אדם יתן מוקש ובוטח בה' ישגב

"The fear of man lays snares for him; he who trusts in God feels himself strong." (Prov. 29:25)

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[477] See also Sirach 38:16 and following. —

[478] See BT Sanhedrin 26[b], מחשבה מועלת אפילו לדברי תורה ["worry overpowers even words of Torah"] (see Rashi).

[479] This ייטיב פנים sheds light for us on the difficult passage הלא אם תיטיב (Gen. 4:7). To this תיטיב supply the preceding פניך. The infinitive שאת refers—as often in Hebrew—to the *following* noun, which here is the word חטאת. To this שאת חטאת, *to remove sin*, a well-known idiom, the expression immediately following, חטאת רובץ, *the lying-in-wait of sin*, forms the contrast. — The expression לפתח refers to the door of the *tent* in which God spoke with Cain. The sense seems to me to be the following: God knew that Cain's ill humor, into which he had fallen through envy of his brother, would have dire consequences for the latter. God's address to Cain was meant to rouse him out of that dangerous melancholy: "Why are you so sullen? why do you let your countenance fall so? Truly, if you rather *brightened* it (תיטיב פניך etc.), a crime would be *lifted away*; but if not, the crime lies in wait before the door; its desire is toward you, yet you can overpower it." — Thereupon (verse 8) Cain—outwardly obeying God's voice and forcing a show of friendship—spoke to his brother Abel (אמר, to address someone without particular warmth, without emphasis). But when they were in the *field*, Cain set upon Abel and slew him. In the *tent*, that is, Cain spoke to his brother; but the monster of the terrible misdeed lay in wait, as God had said, before the *door*, i.e. in the *field*; — for *there* the sight of the place of sacrifice reminded the not yet appeased Cain anew of the favor Abel had enjoyed; — and the misdeed was done.

535. ***But against what must we be on guard with such cheerfulness?***

That it not degenerate into frivolity and unbridled merriment, but rather keep a wise measure through a certain seriousness.

טוב כעס משחק כי ברע פנים ייטב לב

> "Better seriousness than merriment, for with a sad countenance the heart remains good." (Eccl. 7:3)

שחוק וקלות ראש מרגילין את האדם לערוה

> "Laughter and levity accustom one to lewdness." (Pirkei Avot 3:13)

536. ***What contributes much to such sobriety of mind, and is in itself very wholesome for the soul?***

Attentiveness to our *speech*, especially abstaining from *much* talk, and above all from *unclean* talk, the latter being above all a grave of all morality and of all nobility of soul, for speakers and listeners alike. —

בפשע שפתים מוקש רע

> "In the transgression of the lips lies an evil snare." (Prov. 12:13. See 13:3.)

שמר פיו ולשונו שמר מצרות נפשו

> "He who guards mouth and tongue guards his soul from sufferings." (ibid. 21:23)

כל ימי גדלתי בין החכמים ולא מצאתי לגוף טוב אלא שתיקה

> "I grew up among the wise and found nothing more wholesome than silence." (Pirkei Avot 1:17)

[p. 218]

שוחה עמקה פי זרות זעום ה' יפול שם

> "A deep pit is a loathsome mouth; he who angers God falls into it." (Prov. 22:14)[480]

לעולם יספר אדם בלשון נקיה

> "Let a person make use of clean expressions." (BT Pesaḥim 3[a])

537. ***What else is closely connected with this sparingness in speech?***

A certain *modesty* (sense of shame), which well becomes a human being as such, and which is to be in particular the mark of the Israelite. (BT Yevamot 79)

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[480]The interpretation (BT Shabbat 33[a]): "*Whoever defiles his mouth, for him Gehenna is dug deep*," is a very fitting one, for defiling the mouth with an evil thought is only a *deeper* entering into it; the word *fans* the fire of the inner glow of sin all the more. — The punishment must therefore correspond to the deed.

גם בוש לא יבשו והכלם לא ידעו

"They are not ashamed and know not how to blush." (Jer. 8:12)

לא חרבה ירושלים אלא בשביל שלא היו להם בשת פנים זה מזה

"Jerusalem perished because mutual shame had ceased." (BT Shabbat 119)[481]

סימן טוב לאדם שהוא בישן. כל המתביש לא במהרה הוא חוטא

"Modesty is a good sign; whoever is bashful will not soon commit a sin." (BT Nedarim 20a)

538. ***Is there not also a*** **harmful shame*****?***

Indeed there is: a so-called false shame, which is especially harmful to the learner when he timidly holds back his question.

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ולא הבישן למד

"The bashful man learns nothing." (Pirkei Avot 2:5)[482]

דבר נער לעת תבקש ובשכל טוב השב מענה

"Speak, young man, when it is asked of you; reply with propriety and deliberation." (Sirach 32:11)

539. ***How does Scripture express itself about*** **association with the wicked*****?***

אשרי האיש אשר לא הלך בעצת רשעים וכו'

"Happy is he who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked ...." (Ps. 1:1)

בני אם יפתוך חטאים אל תבא

"My son, if sinners talk you round, do not follow."[483] (Prov. 1:10)

ורעה כסילים ירוע

"He who keeps company with fools is *shattered*." (Prov. 13:20)

כהתחברך עם אחזיהו פרץ ה' את מעשיך

"Because you allied yourself with Ahaziah, God has broken up your undertakings." (2 Chron. 20:37)

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[481] See the explanation in my Discourses, Year 1, Discourse 9, pp. 139–140.

[482] Compare, on noble and false shame, Sirach 4:21 and following; ch. 20:28; ch. 42:19–31. —

[483] פתה: to *talk someone round*, as it were to lure a credulous, weak-minded person with promises. — הסית (from the noun סות, covering, veil) presupposes that the one addressed has understanding and must be persuaded by rational arguments. השיא is related to the latter, a *beguiling* of the understanding, or else combines *both* tricks. — הדיח denotes merely the *leading away* from something, which the seducer intends without being able or willing to replace it with something better. —

אוחז בזפת ידבק בידיו ומתחבר לרשע ילמוד מדרכיו

"Whoever touches pitch soils his hands, and whoever keeps company with the evildoer learns his ways." (Sirach 13:1)

540. ***But how does Scripture express itself about association with the*** **good*****?***

עיני בנאמני ארץ לשבת עמדי

"My eyes look to the faithful of the land ... that they may dwell with me." (Ps. 101:6) (Zohar בשלח [*Beshallaḥ*] 45b)

[p. 220]

חבר אני לכל אשר יראוך

"I join myself to all who fear you." (Ps. 119:63) (Zohar תרומה [*Terumah*] 182a)

541. ***In what respect do we also owe our*** **soul** ***occupation?***

It is one of the greatest benefits to ourselves in all three respects of self-love; it is not only, next to the study of the Law, the most wholesome remedy against an idly wandering imagination, evil impulses and moods, but it actually qualifies one for the study of the Law, inasmuch as it offers change and recreation from it, and is in general very conducive to health.[484]

הבטלה ראשית כל חטאת

"Idleness is the beginning of all vices." (Sirach 33:26)

גם מתרפה במלאכתו אח הוא לבעל משחית

"Whoever neglects even his calling is already the squanderer's brother." (Prov. 18:9)

יפה תלמוד תורה עם דרך ארץ שיגיעת שניהם משכחת עון וכו'

"Beautiful is study of the Law together with worldly occupation, for occupation with both makes one forget to sin." (Pirkei Avot 2:2)[485]

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[484]Compare R. Hirschel's rebuke of the perpetual motionless sitting of the Talmud students of recent times, in R. J. Emden, לחם שמים [*Leḥem Shamayim*] (on Avot 1:10), Berlin 1834, p. 6b, note. — Translator: Jacob Emden's commentary on the Mishnah; "R. Hirschel" is presumably Ẕevi Hirsch Levin (Hirschel Lewin, 1721–1800), chief rabbi of Berlin, whose remarks were printed in that edition.

[485]See the present religious book, p. 26, note 2, together with Song of Songs Rabbah, beginning, and Pesikta Rabbati ch. 6, in which I found my remark there confirmed. — Important on the value of occupation and labor under discussion are the following passages: the Midrash in ראשית חכמה [*Reshit Ḥokhmah*], in the appendix אור עולם [*Or Olam*], ch. 14: לא שרתה שכינה על משה אלא מתוך מלאכה, שנאמר ומשה היה רועה, וכתיב וירא מלאך ה'.... גדולה מלאכה שכל הנביאים התעסקו בה.... גדולה מלאכה שלא שרתה שכינה בישראל, עד שעשו מלאכה שנאמר וירא משה את כל המלאכה... ויברך וכו'. גדול... המתפרנס ממלאכתו, שבמדה הטובה זאת נצול מכמה עבירות.... ["The Shekhinah rested on Moses only through work, as it is said, 'Now Moses was shepherding,' and it is written, 'And the angel of the Lord appeared' .... Great is work, for all the prophets engaged in it .... Great is work, for the Shekhinah did not rest upon Israel until they had done work, as it is said, 'And Moses saw all the work ... and blessed,' etc. Great ... is he who lives by his own work, for by this good quality he is saved from many transgressions ...."] Compare further the teaching אהב את המלאכה ["love work"] (Pirkei Avot 1:10); גדולה מלאכה שמחממת את בעליה ["great is work, for it warms the one

[p. 221]

כשם שהתורה נתנה בברית כך המלאכה נתנה בברית

"As the Law was given as a covenant, so too was occupation." (Avot de-Rabbi Natan ch. 11)

חביבה היא המלאכה... מלאכה הצילה נפשות

"Important is occupation; it has already saved souls." (Bereshit Rabbah ch. 71; Tanḥuma ויצא [*Vayetze*], end)

542. ***By what does Holy Scripture make the value of the arts and crafts unmistakably known?***

By naming the inventors of several arts and crafts (Gen. [4:]21 and 22),[486] and [p. 222] especially by having God *himself* supply models of works of art, and appoint artists to their calling and inspire them for it. —

ככל אשר אני מראה אותך את תבנית המשכן.... כל כליו וכן תעשו

"According to all that I shall show you, the model of the dwelling and the model of all its furnishings, so shall you make them." (Exod. 25:9)

ראה קראתי בשם בצלאל... ואמלא אתו רוח אלקים בחכמה.. ובכל מלאכה

"I have called by name Bezalel ... filled him with a divine spirit ... for every craft," etc. (Exod. 31:1–6. See also ch. 35:30–35.)[487]

543. ***Must it be only nobler crafts or arts for which we should destine ourselves?***

No; no work may be too lowly and too degrading for us, so long as it protects us from want.

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who does it"] (BT Gittin 67[b]); גדולה מלאכה שמכבדת את בעליה ["great is work, for it honors the one who does it"] (BT Nedarim 42 [*sic*; 49b]); במטותא מנייכו וכו' כי היכי דלא תטרדו במזונייכו ["I beg of you, etc., so that you will not be troubled about your livelihood"] (BT Berakhot 35b); פעמים שאין אדם עושה מלאכה ומתחייב מיתה לשמים ["sometimes a person does no work and becomes liable to death at the hands of Heaven"] (Avot de-Rabbi Natan ch. 11); קנה לך אומנות עם התורה ["acquire a trade for yourself along with the Torah"] (Kohelet Rabbah on Eccl. 9:9); כשם שחייב ללמד בנו תורה כך חייב ללמדו אומנות ["just as one is obliged to teach one's son Torah, so one is obliged to teach him a trade"]; כל שאינו מלמדו אומנות כאלו מלמדו לסטות ["whoever does not teach him a trade is as if he taught him robbery"] (Mekhilta בא [*Bo*] ch. 18; BT Kiddushin 30[b]). See the next division, on the duties toward ourselves with regard to temporal circumstances. Not uninteresting, too, is the following passage, Zohar Ḥadash בראשית [*Bereshit*], p. 8: צריך האדם להשתדל בדרך ארץ ולעשות עתים לתורה ולהיות עמלו בשני הדרכים האלו וכו' ["A person must exert himself in worldly occupation and set times for the Torah, and let his toil be in both these ways," etc.]. But whoever might be inclined to misunderstand the saying of that famous (BT Eruvin 13b) Rabbi (Mishnah Kiddushin 4, end), מניח אני כל אומנות וכו' ["I set aside every trade," etc.], in the belief that it contradicts the principles stated above, let him read the remarkable section Sirach 39. — With this, however, compare also BT Berakhot 16b, אני מלאכתי בעיר וכו' ["my work is in the town," etc.]. — Translator: The "famous Rabbi" is R. Nehorai, whom BT Eruvin 13b identifies with R. Meir; his full saying ends "and I teach my son only Torah." The Yavneh saying "my work is in the town" stands in current editions at BT Berakhot 17a.

[486]Translator: Printed "1 Mos. 21 u. 22"; the chapter, Gen. 4 (Jubal and Tubal-cain), is omitted.

[487]Translator: In the Hebrew column the word אותו is printed twice across the line break; it is given once here.

טוב נקלה ועבד לו ממתכבד וחסר לחם

"Better to hold oneself lowly and be one's own servant than to act the grand gentleman and suffer want." (Prov. 12:9)[488]

בכל עצב יהיה מותר

"Every industry has its advantage in the end." (ibid. 14:23)

לעולם ישכיר אדם עצמו.... ולא יצטרך לבריות

"Let a person hire himself out for work however unbefitting him, only so that he need not depend on any human being." (BT Bava Batra 110[a]) (Sirach 42:32)

[p. 223] **544.** ***But should the*** **qualifying** ***of our soul for the enjoyment of*** **bliss** ***also belong among the duties of self-love?***

Certainly; and this qualifying is indisputably the most sublime benefit we can confer upon it.

545. ***By what does one confer it most surely?***

By study of the Law, a religious life, and moderate enjoyment of the goods of life. For of the immoderate man, who revels in abundance, it is said:

כי נפשו בחייו יברך ויודך כי תיטיב לך תבוא עד דור אבותיו עד נצח לא יראו אור

"He did well by his soul in his lifetime; you will be applauded if you did yourself good thereby; — the soul comes into the dwelling of his fathers, who will never see light." (Ps. 49:19 and 20) (See my Discourses, Year 2, p. 103. See, on the other hand, also Isa. 30:20, 21[489] —)

546. ***In what respect, finally, do we also owe ourselves duties with regard to*** **temporal circumstances*****?***

Inasmuch as it is indisputably incumbent upon us to preserve the life God gave us, and to make it as pleasant for ourselves as possible—if only because an uncomfortable life, struggling with want and need, makes it harder for us to attain the true purposes of life.

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[488]Compare BT Pesaḥim 113a: פשוט נבלתא בשוקא וטול אגרא ולא תימא כהנא רבא אנא.... וזילא בי מלתא ["Flay a carcass in the market and take your wage, and do not say, 'I am a great priest' .... and the thing is beneath me"]. See also Zohar Ḥadash בראשית [*Bereshit*], p. 8: ושמא יאמר אדם הריני בן אבות העולם ממשפחה גדולה, איני ראוי לעשות מלאכה, ולא להתבזות? אמור לו שוטה! כבר **קדמך יוצרך**! שנאמר בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ.... שנאמר מכל מלאכתו אשר ברא אלקים לעשות, קרא אותה מלאכה.... אמר לו לאדם, עד כאן הייתי אני משתדל במלאכה, מכאן ואילך אתה תשתדל בה.... ויברא.... בצלמו.... לעשות כל צרכי העולם ותיקוניו כאשר הוא עשה בתחלה. ["And perhaps a person will say, 'I am a son of the fathers of the world, of a great family; it is not fitting for me to do work and to demean myself.' Say to him: Fool! Your *Creator has already preceded you*! as it is said, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth' .... as it is said, 'from all His work which God created to do'—He called it work .... He said to man: Up to here I was the one exerting myself in work; from here on you shall exert yourself in it .... 'And He created ... in His image' .... to do all the needs of the world and its improvements, as He did in the beginning."] — —

[489]Translator: Printed "30, 20, 213."

טובה חכמה עם נחלה

"Beautiful is wisdom paired with possessions." (Eccl. 7:11)

ופן אורש וגנבתי ותפשתי שם אלהי

"Lest I become poor, and steal, and lay hands on the name of my God."[490] (Prov. 30:9)

[p. 224]

אם אין קמח אין תורה

"No flour, no study of the Law." (Pirkei Avot 3:17)

547. ***Should we then strive after riches, or after abundance in our enjoyments of life?***

No—if only because this would wholly occupy our short span of life, and would not only entirely frustrate the true purpose of our existence but would also lead us into manifold transgressions.

אל יתהלל חכם בחכמתו... כי אם בזאת... השכל וידע אותי...

"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom ... but ... that he wisely knows me ...."[491] (Jer. 9:22[–23])

אל תיגע להעשיר...

"Do not toil to become rich." (Prov. 23:4)

ואץ להעשיר לא ינקה

"Whoever presses to become rich cannot remain guiltless."[492] (ibid. 28:20)

מרבה נכסים מרבה דאגה

"Many goods, many worries." (Pirkei Avot 2:7)

לא כל המרבה בסחורה מחכים

"Not everyone who carries on much business can become wise." (ibid. 2:5) (See my note on Baruch 3:21 and Sirach 11:11.)

548. ***What would be the chief*** **duties** ***toward ourselves with regard to temporal circumstances?***

They will consist in *acquiring*, *saving*, and the *purposeful use* of what has been acquired.

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[490]Compare Sirach 31; BT Bava Metzia 59[a], לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בתבואה בתוך ביתו וכו' ["a person should always take care that there is grain in his house," etc.]; especially Shemot Rabbah ch. 31. — —

[491]For the connection of this passage with the preceding one, see the exegetical appendix to my Apocrypha, p. 81, note.

[492]Compare Sirach 11:13; BT Pesaḥim 50[b], יש זריז וכו' ["there is one who is diligent," etc.]; and BT Eruvin 13[b], כל הדוחק את השעה וכו' ["whoever presses the hour," etc.].

549. ***To what will the first duty, that of acquiring, summon us?***

To a conscientious use of our time or [p. 225] to untiring activity in our calling; for without effort there is no gain.[493][494]

עבד אדמתו ישבע לחם ומרדף רקים ישבע ריש.

> "He who tills his soil shall have his fill of bread; he who pursues empty things shall have his fill of want." (Prov. 28:19)

ראש עשה כף רמיה ויד חרוצים תעשיר.

> "An idle hand makes poor; a diligent one, rich." (ibid. 10:4)

וברכך... יכול יושב בטל? תלמוד לומר בכל אשר תעשה.

> "Does God grant His blessing even to one who sits idle? No, he must *do* something." (Sifre, *Re'eh*)

550. ***What does the said*** **thrift** ***require?***

The avoidance of unnecessary expenditure, of all extravagance, luxury and love of display, and especially of all reckless ventures.

האלהים עשה את האדם ישר והמה בקשו חשבנות רבים.

> "God made human beings simple, but they invented a multitude of needs." (Eccl. 7:29)

אהב יין ושמן לא יעשיר.

> "He who loves wine and ointments cannot become rich." (Prov. 21:17) (BT Bava Metzia 29 and BT Hullin 84.)

לעולם ישליש אדם מעותיו שליש בקרקע ושליש בפרקמטיא ושליש תחת ידו.

> "Let a person divide his property into three parts: with one third let him buy landed property, with the second let him carry on a business, the last let him keep in hand as ready money." (BT Bava Metzia 42a)

551. ***What has a particularly damaging effect on our temporal circumstances of property?***

Public display of our wealth, [p. 226] a numerous staff of servants, and wrongfully acquired goods. The first directs the unfavorable glance of envy upon us, the second brings about a manifold diminution of blessing, and the last already carries its curse within itself.

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[493] See BT Sanhedrin 29a: שב שני הוה כפנא ואבבא דאומנא לא חלף. [Seven years the famine lasted, yet it did not pass by the craftsman's door.] —

[494] Translator: No note marker is visible in the text of this page; the note has been attached here by sense.

אין הברכה מצויה אלא בדבר שאין העין שולטת בו.

"Blessing rests only on that over which the public eye holds no sway." (BT Bava Metzia 42a)

ברבות הטובה רבו אוכליה ומה כשרון לבעליה כי אם ראות עיניו.

"Where there is much good fortune, there are also many who consume it; the owner has no further benefit from it than a mere feast for the eyes." (Eccl. 5:10)

מרבה עבדים מרבה גזל.

"The more servants, the more robbery." (Pirkei Avot 2:7)

פעל אוצרות בלשון שקר הבל נדף מבקשי מות.

"Treasures gathered by a lying tongue are a breath blown hither, and they seek out death." (Prov. 21:6) (See Jer. 17:11; 22:13.)

552. ***What should especially urge us to earning and saving?***

The thought of the future, and in particular of advancing age.

לך אל נמלה עצל ראה דרכיה וחכם.

"Go to the ant, sluggard ... she prepares her food in summer ..." (Prov. 6:6)

אגר בקיץ בן משכיל.

"He who gathers in summer is wise." (ibid. 10:5)

553. ***What belongs to a purposeful and at the same time blessed management of our property?***

To support those in need, and in general to practice beneficence.[495]

[p. 227]

יש מפזר ונוסף עוד.

"One man gives freely, and it becomes ever more ..." (Prov. 11:24)

נותן לרש אין מחסור....

"He who gives to the poor suffers no want ..." (ibid. 28:27)

טוב עין הוא יברך.

"The charitable man shall be blessed." (ibid. 22:9)

[495] See my explanation of Ps. 49, and my Sermons, Year 2, pp. 371 and 401–404.

מלח ממון, חסר.

"The salt of money is its diminution."[496] (BT Ketubot 66b)

554. ***May almsgiving exceed the circumstances of our means?***

No; God does not wish us to give more than we are able; rather it is said:

מה אם לגבוה אין אדם רשאי להחרים את כל נכסיו, על אחת כמה וכמה שיהא אדם (חייב להיות) חס על נכסיו. —

"Even to Heaven a person may not devote all his goods; how much less, then, in life, where he is obliged to take care of what is his own." — (Mishnah Arakhin 8:3[497]) (Cf. Mishnah Pe'ah 3:7, 8.)

המבזבז, אל יבזבז יותר מחומש.

"Even the lavish benefactor should give at most the fifth part of his property." (BT Ketubot 50a)

צדיקים, ממונם חביב עליהם.... לפי שאין פושטים ידיהם בגזל.

"The pious take care of their property, because they have not acquired it dishonestly." (BT Sotah 12a)

555. ***What is indispensably necessary for the blessed management of our calling and the conduct of our business?***

Order, and conscientious bookkeeping and reckoning of expenditures and income; such order is a daily, sure gain.

כל מוצא כסף ומובאו ספור ומנה, וכל מעשיך יכתבו בספר...

"Keep account of your expenditures and income; count and weigh what you give out or receive, and write down all your dealings in a book."[498] (Sirach 42, end)

[p. 228] **556.** ***What rule of prudence is further incumbent upon us with regard to our temporal circumstances?***

Not to think of large expenditures, for instance of founding a household of our own, until we first have a calling that provides us with the necessities of life.

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[496] Cf. עשר בשביל שתתעשר ["Tithe, so that you may become rich"] (Sifre, *Re'eh*).

[497] Translator: In modern editions of the Mishnah this saying stands at Arakhin 8:4.

[498] See BT Hullin 105a: מאן דסייר נכסיה כל יומא ויומא משכח איסתרא. [He who inspects his property every single day finds an *istira* (a small coin).] —

הכן בחוץ מלאכתך.... אחר ובנית ביתך.

"Prepare your calling outside ... afterwards build your house." (Prov. 24:27)[499]

557. ***Against what must we be on our guard in our temporal gains and dealings?***

That we place no trust in such transitory goods, and likewise that in less blessed circumstances we do not lose our trust in God.

חיל כי ינוב אל תשיתו לב.

"When wealth flourishes, do not concern yourselves with it." (Ps. 62:11)

ושית על עפר... בצר כי אז על שדי תתענג.

"Let the gold lie in the dust ... then you will delight in the Almighty." (Job 22:24 [–26]; see also ch. 31:24.)

ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה'.... ובשנת בצרת לא ידאג....

"Blessed be the man who trusts in God ... in the year of drought he has no care ..." ([Jer. 17:7–8][500])

[p. —] **Eleventh Section**

גמילות חסדים [*Gemilut Ḥasadim*, the practice of loving-kindness]

II. Love of Neighbor

כשאני לעצמי, מה אני?

["And when I am for myself alone, what am I?"] (Pirkei Avot 1:14)

558. ***What is the fundamental teaching concerning the duties toward our fellow human beings?***

The teaching:

ואהבת לרעך כמוך.

"Love your neighbor as yourself."[501] (Lev. 19:18)

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[499]BT Sotah 44a. The remark of Maimonides (הל' דעות [*Hilkhot De'ot*] ch. 5:11) was already made by the Pesikta Zutarti on Deut. 28:30 and by the Zohar Ḥadash, בראשית [*Bereshit*], p. 7b: שלשה דברים צריך לעשות בדרכי העולם.... לבנות בית.... ואח"כ.... לקחת לו אשה.... [Three things one must do according to the way of the world .... to build a house .... and afterwards .... to take a wife ....]

[500]Translator: No reference is printed for this verse; it is Jer. 17:7–8.

[501]Cf. my Sermons, Year 2, Sermon 18: "*Love of Neighbor*."

559. ***And this teaching is supposed to belong among the*** **religious** ***duties as well?***

Already on the tablets of the Covenant, that is, in the Ten Commandments, the duties toward our fellow human beings stood over against the duties of worship proper, or religious duties.

560. ***But the duty of love of neighbor is even regarded as the*** **most important** ***in the Law?***

One duty is as much a duty as another; we can make no distinction among the divine precepts. Only, love of neighbor is regarded partly as a means toward the observance of the Law; partly, God has magnanimously often renounced His own honor for the sake of that of human beings; [p. 230] and partly, a person, even if he were lacking in knowledge of the Law and in religiosity, ought at least to be a morally good human being.[502] —

561. ***But did not that Rabbi say expressly (BT Shabbat 30b): "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man either (Tobit 4:16); that is the*** **whole Law,** ***and the rest is commentary; go and learn"?***

Hillel was speaking, in part, with a *heathen* who wished to profess Judaism and to learn the whole Law in *one* principle; the wise Rabbi therefore bade him first pass the test that was *hardest* for the heathen, namely, to love those whom he now wished to join[503] — and then everything else would become easy for him! In part, love of neighbor is a very important principle for the Israelite as well; and in this sense R. Akiva also teaches (JT Nedarim 9:4; Sifra, קדושים [*Kedoshim*]): "*Love your neighbor as yourself is a great principle in the Law.*"[504]

562. ***But in what respect might this be the case?***

Our conduct toward our fellow human beings, as something *constant*, becomes habitual to us, and therefore [p. 231] becomes our own before God as well;[505] — a certain kindness and obligingness is necessary for the observance of the Law;[506] — the *public* glorification of God (see p. 159 of this religion-book) presupposes a worship of God in *community* with our fellow human beings; and the greatest part of the precepts of the Law brings us into contact with our fellow human beings. —

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[502]Cf. Mishnah Kiddushin 1:10: כל שאינו לא במקרא וכו' ולא בדרך ארץ אינו מן היישוב. [Whoever has neither Scripture, etc., nor proper conduct (*derekh eretz*) is not part of civilized society.]

[503]Cf. קשים גרים לישראל וכו' [Proselytes are as hard for Israel, etc.] BT Yevamot 47b. It surprised me to find: טור ברקת [*Tur Bareket*] on הל' י"ט [*Hilkhot Yom Tov*], ch. 527, p. 185. The sense would then be like that of the well-known Aggadah that finally reduces the whole Law to *one* quality (BT Makkot 24a). See my explanation in my Sermons, Year 2, Sermon 17, p. 284 ff. — A proof: at the end Hillel says, *go, learn*; so even *after* love of neighbor something still remains to be done, or rather the learning of the doctrine of duties only then properly begins. —

[504]See my sermon "*Love of Neighbor*," pp. 301 and 302.

[505]Cf. the passage (Jer. 9:5): "*In their deceit they refuse to know me*," i.e., their deceit in life also has an influence on their conduct toward *me*. —

[506]Cf. Midrash on Psalms, on Ps. 7:10: — אין אדם נקרא צדיק, אא"כ הוא טוב. [No one is called righteous unless he is good.] — Cf. my explanation, Sermons, Year 2, Sermon 18, p. 313, on נביאים טובים [good prophets], whereby it also becomes intelligible (BT Sotah 12a): כי טוב הוא, הגון היה לנביאות. [That he was good: he was worthy of prophecy.] — Cf. further the passages Prov. 11:23, 27; 12:2; 22:9; 2:20; 12:26; Pirkei Avot 2:9.

563. ***As what, accordingly, are the duties of love of neighbor to be regarded?***

As inseparably bound up with religion, indeed as its foundation and purpose, as that passage also indicates:

תורה, תחלתה גמילות חסדים וסופה גמילות חסדים.

"The Law begins and ends with acts of loving-kindness." (BT Sotah 14a)[507][508]

564. ***What, then, will be incumbent upon us with regard to the duties under discussion?***

To fulfill them with the same conscientiousness as those toward God, and carefully to avoid the error of those who think that by fulfilling the duties toward [p. 232] God they can spare themselves those toward their fellow human beings; and in many respects religion is even stricter with the human duties than with the duties of worship.[509]

565. ***Cite me some passages from Holy Scripture about the importance of moral virtue with regard to nearness to God!***

ה' מי יגור באהלך... הולך תמים ופעל צדק... לא עשה לרעהו רעה... כספו לא נתן בנשך.

"Lord, who may dwell in Your tent ...? He who walks uprightly, does what is right ... does no evil to his neighbor .... does not lend his money at interest." (Ps. 15)

הלך צדקות ודבר מישרים מאס בבצע מעשקות... מלך ביפיו תחזינה עיניך...

"He who walks uprightly, speaks truth, despises unjust gains ...: your eyes shall behold the King in His beauty." (Isa. 33:15, 16[510]) (See also Ezek. 18:5 ff.)

566. ***But what might speak especially for the religious grounding of the social duties?***

[p. 233] That our Sages even recommend friendship and more intimate sociability to us.

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[507]Translator: Printed "Sota 13, b"; the saying stands at BT Sotah 14a.

[508]A moral tendency is precisely what underlies the teaching והלכת בדרכיו ["and you shall walk in His ways"]. The Sifra and the Midrash on קדושים [*Kedoshim*] call the moral teachings contained in that portion גופי תורה [the essentials of the Torah]; so too the Talmud (BT Berakhot 63a) calls דרך ארץ [*derekh eretz*, proper conduct] a center that unites all the essentials of the Law. —

[509]Cf., for example, passages of Holy Scripture such as those in my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], pp. 28–30; Mishnah Yoma 8:9: עבירות שבין אדם למקום וכו' [Transgressions between a person and God, etc.]; Yevamot 1:7; BT Bava Batra 88b: קשה עונשין של מדות... קשה גזל הדיוט מגזל גבוה. [Heavy is the punishment for false measures ... robbery of a common person is graver than robbery of the Sanctuary.] Thus our Sages have the *first* question put to us before God's judgment seat (BT Shabbat 31a) be whether we were honest in our dealings with people! Thus humanity and moral virtue are declared (BT Berakhot 16b [17a]: מרגלא בפומיה דאביי וכו' [A favorite saying of Abaye, etc.]), and *quite especially and expressly* in BT Yoma 86a, to be the one thing that gives value to our knowledge of the Law and our religiosity. — Compare with this also passages according to which vice and unseemliness darken our fear of God, e.g. BT Sukkah 30a, BT Sanhedrin 6, Vayikra Rabbah ch. 1. Cf. also my Sermons, Year 1, Sermon 12, p. 184 ff.; Sifre on Deut. 12:28; Zohar, שמות [*Shemot*], p. 5. Indeed, even the daily prayer must be preceded by the well-known formula of preparation: הריני מקבל עלי לקיים מצות ואהבת לריעך כמוך. [I hereby take upon myself to fulfill the commandment "Love your neighbor as yourself."] —

[510]Translator: The second half of the quotation ("your eyes shall behold the King in His beauty") is Isa. 33:17.

קנה לך חבר.

"Acquire a friend for yourself." (Pirkei Avot 1[:6])

או חברותא או מיתותא.

"Companionship or death!" (BT Bava Batra 16b[511]) (Sirach 6:36–38; ch. 37. Maimonides, הל' דעות [*Hilkhot De'ot*] 6.)

567. ***But what is incumbent upon us with regard to social intercourse with people?***

Partly, not to overdo it; partly, not to confide in any friend who has not been tested.

הקר רגלך מבית רעך פן ישבעך ושנאך.

"Make your visits to your neighbor's house seldom, lest he have his fill of you and hate you." (Prov. 25:17) (See Sirach 29:23.)

568. ***What does "Love your neighbor as yourself" actually mean?***

In all the respects in which we assert the duties of *self-love*, to do good to our fellow human beings as well; and this would therefore be with regard to their *body*, their *soul*, and their *temporal circumstances*.[512]

569. ***How else might the duties of love of neighbor be divided?***

They might be divided in general into

1) general,

2) particular,[513] [p. 234] but in particular again into duties:

1) of *thought*,

2) of *speech*,

3) of *action*.

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[511]Translator: The saying "Either companionship or death" is found at BT Ta'anit 23a.

[512]The deviation of *Hartwig Wessely* in the explanation of כמוך [*kamokha*, "as yourself"] (see גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*] Part 1, 10, 18; יין לבנון [*Yein Levanon*] on Pirkei Avot 3:14, and in the Commentary on Lev. 19) is justified in sense, but not as to the word. For in any case כמוך here stands like כנפשך [as your own soul]; anything else would be un-Hebraic and artificial.

[513]I.e., duties owed always and to *all* people, and those, in turn, to which certain relationships to other people bind us *particularly*. —

570. ***Which might be the chief duties, among the*** **general** ***duties to be performed toward all people, of the*** **first** ***division, that is, those in*** **thought***?*

To *love* all people as images of God;[514] by no means to *hate* them; to bear them no *grudge*; still less to brood on *revenge*; not to violate mutual *respect*; in all circumstances to *feel with* our fellow human beings; not to deceive them through *falsehood*; to be *forgiving*; not to think oneself *higher* than one's fellow human beings; and especially not to reject their *instruction* and *reproof* arrogantly.

571. ***Cite me some supporting passages from the holy documents with reference to what has just been said!***

לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך.... ולא תשא עליו חטא...

"Do not hate your brother in your heart ... and bear no sin against him." (Lev. 19:17[515])

לא תקם ולא תטר את בני עמך.

"Take no revenge and bear no grudge against your fellow man." (ibid. 19:18) [p. 235]

האחיכם יבאו למלחמה ואתם תשבו פה.

"Shall your brothers go to war, and you would sit quietly here?" (Num. 32:6[516])

בזמן שהצבור שרוי בצער אל יאמר אדם אלך לביתי ואוכל ואשתה ושלום עליך נפשי... אלא יצטער אדם עם הצבור.... וכל המצער עצמו עם הצבור זוכה ורואה בנחמת צבור.

"When some misfortune prevails in the community, let the individual not think: I will go to my dwelling, eat, drink, and concern myself with nothing ... but let him share the pain with the community ... and then he will also enjoy the consolation with it."[517] (BT Ta'anit 11a)

מצר בצרת רעהו גם בשמחתו יתערב.

"He who takes part in his friend's misfortune will also share his joy." (Sirach 22:25; 37:5–7)

לבלתי רום לבבו מאחיו.

"That his heart be not lifted up above his brothers!" (Deut. 17:20)

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[514]This is the ground of the general love of humanity, as Wessely rightly remarked, and he even wishes to find it in כמוך; it goes without saying, however, that closer relationships of people to one another also oblige them to correspondingly *greater sacrifices* of love of neighbor. Cf., e.g., עניי עירך קודמין וכו' [the poor of your own city take precedence, etc.] and the like; but these, of course, are the said *particular* duties, which rightly form a division of their own.

[515]Translator: Printed "3 Mos. 19, 7"; the verse is Lev. 19:17.

[516]Translator: Printed "5 Mos. 32, 6" (Deut.); the verse is Num. 32:6.

[517]Here the teacher should make use of the story in the Book of *Ruth*: how the house of *Elimelech*, through its separation from the starving community of Bethlehem, very nearly perished altogether.

מרמה בלב חרשי רע.

"Falsehood is in the heart of the evil-minded." (Prov. 12:20[518])

שכל אדם האריך אפו ותפארתו עבר על פשע.

"It is sensible to be patient, and praiseworthy to forgive offenses." (ibid. 19:11) (Sirach 28:1–6.)

[p. 236]

ושנא תוכחת בער.

"He who hates reproof is a fool." (Prov. 15:10[519])

בז לרעהו חסר לב.

"He who despises his neighbor is senseless." (ibid. 11:12)

572. ***Which further duty surely belongs among those under discussion as the*** **most important*, and therefore also deserves special*** **mention*?***

Always to *judge* our neighbor *fairly*, and to interpret his conduct, however striking it may be, in his favor.

זבובים במקום צרעת יאספו, ואיש און אחר כל מום יבקר.

"Flies gather where there is leprosy; the evil-minded track down faults."

ודן רעהו לטוב... גם הוא לטובה ישפט.

"He who judges his neighbor fairly ... of him too good will be spoken." (Sirach 6:7, 8)

הוי דן את כל האדם לכף זכות.

"Judge every person fairly."[520] (Pirkei Avot 1:6)

אל תדין את חברך עד שתגיע למקומו.

"Do not judge your neighbor until you are in his situation." (ibid. 2:4)

573. ***And what general chief duties shall we owe our fellow human beings with our*** **speech*?***

To refrain, toward them, from *slander*, from *mockery*, from *wounding*, *deceiving*, *insulting*, *shaming* and *seducing* speech; to meet them in a *friendly* manner, to *instruct* them, to *calm* them, to *support* them with good *counsel*, to *intercede* for them with *God* and *men*; as far as possible to

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[518]Here too belongs the vice of a kind of גניבת דעת [*geneivat da'at*, "theft of the mind," i.e. deception], namely, silently omitting services that we could render to our *neighbor*, counting on the fact that he is, after all, *unaware* of our thoughts. (See Prov. 24:11, 12.)

[519]Translator: The Hebrew quoted is Prov. 12:1; Prov. 15:10 has a similar saying ("he who hates reproof shall die").

[520]Cf. the stories belonging here (BT Shabbat 127b; Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu Zuta ch. 16).

refrain from bearing *evil tidings*; [p. 237] not to *disclose* a *secret* entrusted to us; and not to make ourselves guilty of *hypocrisy*. —

574. ***I should also like to hear some proof-texts from Holy Scripture about the duties just named!***

ארור מכה רעהו בסתר.

"Cursed be he who strikes his neighbor in secret!" (Deut. 27:24) (BT Arakhin 15b.)[521]

לא תשא שמע שוא.

"Do not accept slander." (Exod. 23:1) (Sirach 19:20.)

נצר לשונך מרע.

"Guard your tongue from evil." (Ps. 34:14)

נכונו ללצים שפטים.

"For mockers punishments are prepared." (Prov. 19:29)

כל לצנותא אסירא.

"*All* mockery is forbidden." (BT Sanhedrin 63b)

לא תונו איש את עמיתו.

"Let no one wound his fellow man."[522] (Lev. 25:17)

ולא תשקרו איש בעמיתו.

"Let no one deceive his fellow man (especially with false promises)." (ibid. 19:11; see also Prov. 25:14 and Isa. 32:6.)

בני אדם שאוכלין ושותין זה עם זה, ודוקרין זה את זה בחרבות שבלשונם.

"Some eat and drink with one another and at the same time stab one another with the daggers of their tongues." — —! (BT Yoma 9b)

כל המלבין פני חברו כאלו שופך דמים. — ואין לו חלק לעולם הבא.

"He who shames his fellow man is to be regarded as a murderer, and forfeits his salvation." (BT Bava Metzia 55 [58b]) (Pirkei Avot 5 [3:11].)

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[521] My lecture already mentioned, "*The Three Fundamental Evils*," treats this in detail. See also JT Pe'ah ch. 1.

[522] "One should not say to a penitent: Remember your former deeds," etc. (Mishnah Bava Metzia 4:10).

נוח לו לאדם שימסור עצמו לתוך כבשן האש, ואל ילבין פני חבירו ברבים.

"It is better to give oneself up to a glowing lime-kiln than to shame one's fellow man publicly." — (BT Ketubot 67b [printed 66b])

חמד רשע מצוד רעים.

"The wicked man longs to catch evil." (Prov. 12:2[523])

המחטיא את חברו קשה מן ההורגו.

"He who seduces someone to sin is worse than his murderer." (Sifre on Deut. 23:8)

הוי מקבל את כל האדם בסבר פנים יפות.

"Receive every person with a friendly countenance." (Pirkei Avot 1:14 [1:15])

הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך.

"Set your fellow man right." (Lev. 19:17) (See Sirach 19:18–20.) (Pirkei Avot 1:12.) (Zohar, תרומה [*Terumah*], p. 128a and b, and גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*] 1, 10, 17.)

מענה רך ישיב חמה.

"A gentle word subdues anger." (Prov. 15:1)

מלאך רשע יפל ברע.

"A malicious messenger himself falls into misfortune." (ibid. 13:17)

איש טוב זה ואל בשורה טובה יבוא.

"This is a good man, and he will come only with good tidings." (2 Sam. 18:27)

הולך רכיל מגלה סוד.

"A slanderer uncovers secrets ..." (Prov. 11:13) (See 20:19; 25:9.)

[p. 239]

וגם אנכי חלילה לי מחטא לה' מחדל להתפלל בעדכם.

"Also as for me, far be it from me to sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you."" (1 Sam. 12:23)[524]

גדול המעשה יותר מן העושה.

"He who moves others to acts of charity is greater than the benefactor himself." (BT Bava Batra 9a)

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[523]Translator: Printed "Spr. 12, 2"; the verse is Prov. 12:12.

[524]Abraham was the first to pray even for sinners (Gen. 18:20[ff.]). See Ps. 35:13–14. My אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], Discourse 3, pp. 42–45.

בפה חנף ישחית רעהו.

"With his mouth the hypocrite[525] destroys his fellow man." (Prov. 11:9)

הכר פנים לא טוב ועל פת לחם יפשע גבר.

"To have respect of persons is not good; and that a man should transgress for the sake of a piece of bread!" (Prov. 28:21)

575. ***Finally, what may be the chief duties, among the general ones, that we owe our fellow men in*** **actions*?***

To do nothing to them that impairs their *health*, *honor* and *property*; not to *overreach* them in business, nor to *deceive* them with bad *wares*, false *measure* and *weight*; not to practice *usury*; not to *embezzle* goods entrusted to us; to [p. 240] *return* what has been lost and what has been lent; not to *hold back* when our fellow man is in *danger*; and above all not to *appropriate* to ourselves anything that is his property. —

576. ***Cite me passages from the Scriptures on this as well!***

רשע למה תכה רעך.

"Wicked one, why do you strike your fellow man?"[526] (Exod. 2:13 and BT Sanhedrin 55)[527]

יהי ... כבוד חברך כמורא רבך.

"Let the honor of your fellow man be to you like the reverence for your teacher." (Pirkei Avot 4:12)

יהי ממון חברך חביב עליך כשלך.

"Let the property of your neighbor be as dear to you as your own." (Ibid. 2:12)

וכי תמכרו ממכר לעמיתך או קנה מיד עמיתך אל תונו איש את אחיו.

"When you sell something to your fellow man or buy from him, let no one wrong his brother." (Lev. 25:14)

לא תעשק את רעך ולא תגזל.

"You shall withhold nothing from your neighbor and rob nothing." (Ibid. 19:13)

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[525]Compare especially BT Sotah 41[b]: "Since the fist of *hypocrisy* has prevailed, justice has been perverted.... Every *hypocrite* brings *wrath* into the world; his *prayers remain unheard*, etc.; every *community* in which hypocrisy reigns is deeply *abominable*, and must in the end lose its *freedom*." (Ibid. 42[a].) Four classes of men *never behold the radiance of the Divine Presence*: the *scoffer*, the *liar*, the *hypocrite* and the *slanderer*. — See *Reshit Ḥokhmah*, Gate קדושה [*Kedushah*, Holiness], ch. 12. [Translator: *Reshit Ḥokhmah* ("The Beginning of Wisdom"), the kabbalistic-ethical work of Elijah de Vidas (Safed, 16th century). The four classes are enumerated in BT Sotah 42a.]

[526]Even judicial punishments were not permitted to overstep the bounds of humanity. (Deut. 25:3.)

[527]Translator: The rabbinic teaching that one who raises his hand against his fellow is called "wicked," derived from this verse, is in BT Sanhedrin 58b.

לא יהיה לך בכיסך אבן ואבן ... לא יהיה לך בביתך איפה ואיפה.

"You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weight … in your house two kinds of measure." (Deut. 25:13)[528]

את כספך לא תתן לו בנשך ובמרבית לא תתן אכלך.

"You shall not give your money at interest, nor your food for increase." (Lev. 25:36–37)

כי יתן איש אל רעהו כסף או כלים לשמר ... חמור ... ומת ... שבעת ה' תהיה ... אם לא שלח ידו במלאכת רעהו.

"If a man gives his neighbor money or articles to keep, and something goes missing, an oath of God shall take place that he has not laid his hand on his fellow man's goods." (Exod. 22:6–10)

לא תראה את שור אחיך ... והשבתו לו ... וכן תעשה לכל אבדת אחיך אשר תאבד ממנו ומצאתה.

"You shall not make yourself look away from your brother's ox …; you shall give it back to your brother …. and so shall you deal with everything he has lost and you have found …." (Deut. 22:1–4)

לוה רשע ולא ישלם.

"The wicked man borrows and does not repay." (Ps. 37:21) (Sirach 29:1–9)

לא תעמד על דם רעך.

"Do not stand idly by at the danger of your neighbor." (Lev. 19:16) (Prov. 24:11–12)

לא תסיג גבול רעך.

"Do not move back your fellow man's boundary." (Deut. 19:14; 27:17)

577. ***But how, now, might the*** **particular** ***duties toward our fellow men be divided?***

Into duties toward those *above* us, toward those *dependent* on us, and toward those *equal* to us, or such persons as stand with us in some common relation.

578. ***To the first would belong?***

Our *parents*, *teachers*, *scholars of the divine Law*, *superiors* — namely in matters of religion — the *God-fearing*, the *wise*, the *aged*, our *benefactors*.

579. ***And to the second?***

Members of our household, namely *younger* and *weaker* persons, e.g. *pupils*, *day laborers*, helpless and *unfortunate* persons, such as the *poor*, *strangers*, *widows* and *orphans*, or even persecuted [p. 242] people who take refuge with us; especially the *sick*, *mourners*, *our debtors*.

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[528] See Prov. 20:23; Hos. 12:8; Amos 8:5–6; Mic. 6:10–12.

580. ***And finally, to the*** **third** ***and last division would belong?***

Fellow believers, *relatives*, *friends*, *neighbors*, *compatriots*, and the like.

581. ***What duties, besides those already mentioned under the Ten Commandments, are incumbent on us toward our*** **parents*****?***

These take precedence over all others in the observance of the duties toward our neighbor, and we owe them reverence even *after* their *death*, partly through *intercession* for their souls before God[529] in the year of their death and on the annual recurrence of the day of their death,[530] but above all through our good *conduct*, that is, through our morally good and pious way of life. —

582. ***What else is connected with the duty under discussion?***

Reverence for our *ancestors* in general, especially to hold in honor the customs of divine worship they have bequeathed to us.

אל תסג גבול עולם אשר עשו אבותיך.

"Do not move back the ancient boundaries that your forefathers have set." (Prov. 7:10)[531]

אל תשנו מנהג אבותיכם נוחי נפש.

"Do not depart from the custom of your forefathers." (JT Eruvin 3:9; Pesaḥim 4:1)

583. [532] ***Where does the Law command us to hold our teachers in honor?***

[p. 243] It is said:

ומורא רבך כמורא שמים.

"Let the reverence for your teacher equal that for God." (Pirkei Avot 4:12)

הלומד מחברו פרק אחד ... או אפילו אות אחת צריך לנהוג בו כבוד.

"If one learns from someone a single section … indeed even only a single letter,[533] one must show him honor." (Baraita Kinyan Torah [Pirkei Avot 6:3], and BT Pesaḥim 113b)

כל תלמיד חכם שאינו עומד בפני רבו נקרא רשע.

"Even a scholar of the divine Law who does not rise before his teacher is called a wicked man." (BT Kiddushin 33[b])

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[529] See my *Discourses*, Year 1, Discourse 15, p. 10.

[530] The so-called *Jahrzeit* [yahrzeit] day.

[531] Translator: The verse is Prov. 22:28 (cf. 23:10); Plessner's reference is a misprint.

[532] See the detailed regulations in *Shulḥan Arukh*, Yoreh De'ah ch. 240.

[533] Compare Mishnah Bava Metzia 2:11, and the detailed regulations in Yoreh De'ah 242. It should be noted that by the term *teacher* used above is meant first and foremost the teacher of *religion*, or rather of the *Law*, partly in the narrower, partly in the wider sense. (See BT Bava Metzia 33[a].)

584. ***And we would owe such reverence to the scholar of the divine Law in general as well?***

Certainly; and we must even rise before him[534] (Sifra קדושים [*Kedoshim*]), and it is said:

כל המבזה תלמיד חכם אין לו רפואה למכתו.

> "Whoever despises a scholar of the divine Law, for his soul's sickness there is no remedy." (BT Shabbat 119[b])[535]

ואין לו חלק לעולם הבא.

> "And he even forfeits his eternal bliss." (BT Sanhedrin 99b and Maimonides, הל' ת"ת [Hilkhot Talmud Torah], ch. 7)

585. ***Do we owe such reverence to*** **every** ***scholar of the divine Law?***

[p. 244] Only to him who is also God-fearing;

ותלמיד חכם המזלזל במצות, ואין בו יראת שמים, הרי הוא כקל שבצבור.

> "A man learned in the Law, however, who disregards the divine precepts and has no fear of God, is to be regarded as the most common, everyday person! —"[536] (Yoreh De'ah 243:3)

Therefore the blessing that we pronounce at the sight of a scholar of the divine Law also reads:

בא"י אמ"ה שחלק מחכמתו ליראיו —!

> "Blessed are You …. who has imparted of His wisdom to those who revere Him." (BT Berakhot 58a)

586. ***To whom among the persons mentioned do we owe*** **particular** ***respect?***

To the *religious teachers* and *judges* in the community at any given time.

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[534]For the expression זקן [*zaken*, "elder"], Lev. 19:32, means, not only according to the explanation of our Sages (יניק וחכים [*yanik ve-ḥakim*, "a youth but wise"], BT Kiddushin 32[b]) but also according to the Book of Wisdom 4:8–9 and Sirach 42:15, a *scholar of the divine Law* and a *God-fearing man*, even if he is still young.

[535]See my *Discourses*, Year 1, Discourse 9, pp. 143 and 144.

[536]Although his knowledge of the Law as such always retains its value. (See BT Ḥagigah 15 and 16.)

אלהים לא תקלל ונשיא בעמך לא תאר.

"Revile no judge, and do not curse the prince among your people."[537] (Exod. 22:26)[538]

[p. 245] **587.** ***What else is connected with this?***

The duty to provide for the *maintenance* of the appointed servants of religion, who in our day take the place of the former priests and Levites, and, as far as we can, to ease for them the burdens of life. (Deut. 12:19; Yoreh De'ah ch. 243.)

ירא את ה' וכבד את כהניו .. ואת משרתיו לא תעזב ... לתת להם מנת חלקם כאשר צוית ...

"Fear the Eternal … and honor His priests … do not forsake His servants … give them their portion …. as you have been commanded …." (Sirach 7:28–29)

588. ***Cite me some passages on the respect we owe to the God-fearing in general.***

ואת יראי ה' יכבד.

"And he honors those who fear God." (Ps. 15:4)

הבכור באחים נכבד ויראי ה' נכבד ממנו.

"The eldest is the most honored among the brothers; more honored than he is one who fears God." (Sirach 10:8, 26)

589. ***Where are we commanded to honor the*** **aged** ***as well?***

In this passage:

מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן.

"Before one who has grown gray you shall rise, and hold the old man in honor."[539] (Lev. 19:32)

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[537]Compare on this the teaching of our Sages: יפתח בדורו כשמואל בדורו ["Jephthah in his generation is like Samuel in his generation"], BT Rosh Hashanah 25[b], and (Sifrei שופטים [*Shofetim*]) אין לך אלא לשופט שבימיך ["you have only the judge who is in your days"]. Here, it goes without saying, the judge's *faith*, *fear of God* and *knowledge of the Law* are presupposed. — Of the especially important and worthy shepherds of souls in Israel it is indeed said (Mekhilta בשלח [*Beshallaḥ*] on Exod. 14, end): כל המאמין ברועה ישראל כאלו מאמין במי שאמר והיה העולם ["whoever believes in the shepherd of Israel is as though he believed in Him who spoke and the world came into being"]; and a very great deal in the life of a people does indeed depend on the practical worthiness or unworthiness of its religious teachers. — Thus it is already said in Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 42: הכל הולך אחר הראש וכו' ["everything follows the head," etc.]. Likewise Zohar בא [*Bo*] p. 36b: אי רישי עמא זכאין וכו' ["if the heads of the people are worthy," etc.]. See also Zohar ויקרא [*Vayikra*] p. 6a: ווי לדרא כד רעיין לא משתכחין וכו' ["woe to the generation when shepherds are not to be found," etc.] — — It is even remarkable that (ibid. p. 18a) it is said even with regard to a *cantor*: שליחא דצבורא, דאשתכח ביה חטאה .. ווי לאינון דסמכין עליה. ["a messenger of the congregation in whom sin is found … woe to those who rely on him"] — ! —

[538]Translator: Exod. 22:27 in the Hebrew numbering.

[539]Abaye, it is said, also rose before *heathen* elders, and used to say that he honored the *experiences* that they had gathered as men advanced in years. — [Translator: BT Kiddushin 33a.]

590. ***But we are also to owe respect to the*** **learned** ***and*** **wise** ***in general?***

[p. 246] Yes indeed; we are even to pronounce the blessing at the sight of a learned man, even one of another nation:

בא"י ... שחלק מחכמתו לבשר ודם.

"Blessed are You … who has imparted of His wisdom to a mortal." (BT Berakhot 88)[540]

591. ***What do we owe our*** **benefactors*****?***

Gratitude, and by no means to make ourselves guilty toward them of the great vice of ingratitude.

כפוי טובה! עמוד ועשה טובה למי שעשה אתך טובה. —

"Ingrate! Rise up and do good to the one who has done you good." (Yalkut Esther p. 173b)

משיב רעה תחת טובה לא תמוש רעה מביתו.

"Whoever repays evil for good, from his house misfortune shall not depart." (Prov. 17:13) (Sirach 42:24)[541]

592. ***What do we owe our*** **masters** ***and*** **employers*****?***

Obedience, high esteem, loyalty, and the endeavor to be as useful to them as possible.

ושמר אדניו יכבד.

"Whoever is attentive to his master is worthy of honor."[542] (Prov. 27:18)

593. ***What duties shall we owe the members of our*** **household*****?***

Not to treat them imperiously (see the present religious book, p. 149), to be condescending [i.e. affable] toward each, and to be a model to them of virtue and religion in teaching and example.

[p. 247]

אל תהי לביא בביתך ואיום ונורא לעבדיך. —

"Be not a lion in your house, not a tyrant and one to be feared toward your subordinates." (Sirach 4:30)

האי מאן דיהיר, אפילו אאנשי ביתיה לא מתקבל.

"Whoever is proud is not tolerated even by his own household." (BT Bava Batra 98[a])

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[540]Translator: The blessing is in BT Berakhot 58a; "88" is a misprint.

[541]Compare also R. Asher [ben Yeḥiel] (רא"ש) in ארחות חיים [*Orḥot Ḥayyim*], Teaching 129: אל תהי כפוי טובה, וכבד כל מי שפתח לך פתח לבקש די ספוקיך. ["Do not be ungrateful, and honor anyone who opened for you a door to seek your sufficiency."]

[542]Compare the present religious book, p. 29, Q. 120; also Jacob's untiring zeal in service with Laban, and Joseph's with Potiphar; Book of Wisdom 10; and my *Discourses*, Year 1, Discourse 10, p. 251, note.

כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו ... לעשות צדקה ...

"I love him because he commands his children and his household … to do what is right …." (Gen. 18:19)

594. ***What is incumbent on us especially toward*** **persons in service*****?***

Not to despise them or treat them inhumanly. Even the slave of former times in Israel was to gain his freedom in the seventh year, and might not be dismissed without a gift.

לא תרדה בו בפרך ויראת מאלהיך.

"Do not rule over him with rigor, and fear your God." (Lev. 25:43) (also Exod. 21:25–26)[543]

אם אמאס משפט עבדי ואמתי ... הלא בבטן עשני עשהו ...

"Did I ever despise the cause of my manservant or my maidservant …? Did not my Creator create *him* too …?"[544] (Job 31:13, 15)

595. ***What duty is likely contained in this as well?***

That superiors may not make themselves guilty of any tyrannical conduct toward their subordinates in general. (See BT Rosh Hashanah 16 [17a]; BT Sanhedrin 92a: כל פרנס המטיל וכו' כל פרנס המנהיג וכו' ["every leader who casts (excessive fear) …"; "every leader who guides (the community gently) …"].)[545]

[p. 248]

ובמשל רשע יאנח עם.

"Where a wicked man rules, the people sigh." (Prov. 29:2)

596. [546] ***And where is gentle treatment of*** **younger** ***persons commended to us?***

הוי קל לראש ונוח לתשחרת.

"Be obliging to the great and kindly to the younger generation." (Pirkei Avot 3:12)

יהי כבוד תלמידך חביב עליך כשלך.

"Let the honor of your pupil be as dear to you as your own." (Ibid. 4:12)

תלמידים קרויים בנים.

"Pupils are to be regarded as one's own children." (Sifrei on Deut. 6:7)

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[543]Translator: Exod. 21:26–27 in the Hebrew numbering (the freeing of a slave injured by his master).

[544]Compare Sirach 7:19–20. Nor was one permitted to hand over a runaway slave to his master. Deut. 23:16 — !

[545]See Zohar שמות [*Shemot*] p. 21. —

[546]Translator: Misprinted "506" in the original.

597. ***What duties are incumbent on us toward the*** **day laborer*****?***

Not to oppress him, and not to let his wages remain with us overnight.

לא תעשק שכיר ... ביומו תתן שכרו ...

> "Do not oppress the hired man … on the very same day (on which he has worked for you) give him his wages …." (Deut. 24:14–15, and Lev. 19:13)[547]

598. ***What will be the chief duties toward the*** **poor** ***and*** **needy*****?***

To support them with our means through charitable gifts.[548]

פתח תפתח את ידך לאחיך לעניך ולאבינך וכו'.

> "Open your hand to your poor and needy brother" …. (Deut. 15:11)

[p. 249] **599.** ***What duties are connected with this chief duty?***

To give the poor man the gift not with *ill humor* and *reproaches*, but rather with *kind words*; not to *trouble* him *unnecessarily*; to give in proportion to one's *own circumstances* and those of the *person in need*; not to *mock* the poor; not to *grow weary* of doing good; to seek out *worthy* poor and to assist them in a way that does not dishonor them; especially we should remember the poor on joyous occasions, e.g. at *festivals*.

לא תאמץ את לבבך ... ולא ירע לבבך בתתך לו.

> "Be not hard-hearted toward your needy brother, and let your heart not be grudging when you give to him." (Deut. 15:7 and 10)

ורש לא שמע גערה.

> "The poor man must hear no threat." (Prov. 13:8) (Sirach 18:15; 20:15–19; 42:25)

אל תאמר לרעך לך ושוב ומחר אתן ויש אתך.

> "Do not say …. go and come back, and tomorrow I will give, when you have it now." (Prov. 3:28)

לעג לרש חרף עשהו ...

> "Whoever mocks the poor blasphemes his Maker." (Ibid. 17:5) (Sirach 4:1–17)

נתון תתן לו, אפילו מאה פעמים.

> "Give to him, even if it be a hundred times." (BT Bava Metzia 31b)

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[547]Compare also Job 31:39; on the other hand also ch. 24:10–11; and the Mosaic laws Deut. 23:25–26. See something similar even toward the animal, Deut. 24:4. [Translator: presumably Deut. 25:4, the unmuzzled ox.]

[548]Compare, on the high value of this virtue and its rich reward, BT Sukkah 49b; BT Ketubot 66[b] ff.; BT Bava Batra 8[a] ff.; JT Pe'ah, beginning. Compare also Dan. 4:24 and Sirach 3:26; Tobit 4:8–17, ch. 12:11.

אשרי משכיל אל דל.

"Happy is he who is attentive to the poor." (Ps. 41:2)

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ושמחת בחגך אתה ... והגר ...

"Rejoice in your festival … you … and the stranger." (Deut. 16:14)

600. ***What duty, as an especially important one, is closely connected with the one under discussion?***

To help up our *sinking* brother; this is prescribed especially in this passage:

וכי ימוך אחיך ומטה ידו עמך והחזקת בו.

"If your brother becomes poor, and his hand fails, you shall support him."[549] (Lev. 25:25)[550] (Sirach 22:24)

601. ***Under what name are all other acts of love of mankind toward those in need of help and assistance comprehended?***

Under the comprehensive name of *beneficence* (גמילות חסדים [*gemilut ḥasadim*]), which in this wider sense of the word (according to Tractate Sukkah 49b) is more than the giving of charitable gifts to the poor. —

602. ***What would such acts be?***

Such acts would be, for example: to *lend* to people in need; not to *press* the debtor; to *return pledges* to him at the time of need; not to go to his dwelling for the sake of taking a pledge; also not to take from him any pledge that he needs for his livelihood; especially we should not torment *strangers*, *widows*, *orphans*, but rather strive to *gladden* them; we should *feed the hungry*,[551] *clothe the naked*, *visit the sick*, and also [p. 251] show the dead the honor due them, *comfort mourners*, provide for the *instruction* of poor *children*, and especially provide for the *settlement* and *livelihood* of forsaken women.

אם כסף תלוה ... את העני ... לא תהיה לו כנשה.

"If you …. lend money … to the poor …. do not behave toward him like a creditor." (Exod. 22:23)[552]

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[549]A special one of my discourses treats this in detail: "*The True Alms*," delivered on Sabbath בהר [*Behar*] 5597 [1837].

[550]Translator: The verse quoted is Lev. 25:35.

[551]Especially to practice the great virtue of *hospitality* (see the present religious book, p. 149). See Job 31:31–32. Compare noble examples of this virtue in Abraham and Lot, Gen. 18 and 19. To refuse this high virtue to anyone is a true *sin of Sodom*; see Ezek. 16:49; see also Mishnah Sotah 9:6 and Pirkei Avot 1:5: יהי ביתך פתוח וכו' ["Let your house be open," etc.]. —

[552]Translator: Exod. 22:24 in the Hebrew numbering.

אם חבל תחבל שלמת רעך עד בא השמש תשיבנו לו.

"If you take your neighbor's garment in pledge, give it back to him before sunset." (Exod. 22:25) (See Deut. 24:10, 13.)

וגר לא תלחץ ואתם ידעתם את נפש הגר ...

"Do not oppress the stranger; you know the heart of the stranger …." (Exod. 23:9) (Ibid. 22:20, and Deut. 10:19.)

כל אלמנה ויתום לא תענון.

"You shall not torment any widow or orphan." (Exod. 22:21) (Job 29:13; 31:17–21.)

הלא פרס לרעב לחמך ... כי תראה ערם וכסיתו.

"Break your bread to the hungry … when you see a naked man, clothe him." (Isa. 58:7)

אל תמנע מראות חולה בחליו, ואף למתים תגמל חסד.

"Do not neglect to visit the sick[553] … show kindness also to the dead …." (Sirach 7:33) (See Mishnah Pe'ah 1:1.) (BT Bava Metzia 30[b].) (See Tobit 2.)

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ואשב בראש כאשר אבלים ינחם.

"I sat at the head, like one who comforts mourners." (Job 29:25) (See also Eccl. 7:2.)

הזהרו בבני עניים ...

"Be attentive to the children of the poor …." (BT Nedarim 81[a])

והצנע לכת זו הוצאת המת והכנסת כלה.

"'Walk humbly …' — in this is contained the duty of burying the dead and of providing for poor girls [at their marriage]." (BT Sukkah 49b) (Bereshit Rabbah ch. 7.)

603. ***Now cite me some proof-texts from our Scriptures concerning the* third *division of duties mentioned above, toward persons who stand closer to us than others through common relations.***[554]

The less, alas, love of mankind — indeed, true knowledge of God — yet prevails universally, and the more people are placed behind others on account of their faith, the more must those who share the same faith support one another.

[553]The משכיל אל דל ["attentive to the poor"] of Ps. 41:2 means, according to BT Nedarim 40[a] — and probably rightly so — to visit the sick. *Mourning* we owe especially to departed God-fearing men (BT Mo'ed Katan 25[a]). Compare Isa. 57:1.

[554]Among whom especially *spouses* are to be counted (Gen. 2:24; Mal. 2:13–16; BT Yevamot 62b).

עמך עמי ואלהיך אלהי.

"Your people, my people; your God, my God." (Ruth 1:16) (BT Bava Metzia 71a.)

אך עצמי ובשרי אתה.

"You are indeed my bone and my flesh." (Gen. 29:14; Lev. 25:25, 49)[555]

ומבשרך לא תתעלם.

"Do not withdraw yourself from your own flesh." (Isa. 58:7; Sirach 17:39; 42:25.) (Vayikra Rabbah ch. 34.)

[p. 253]

טוב שכן קרוב מאח רחוק.

"Better a near neighbor than a distant brother." (Prov. 27:10)[556] (Ruth 4:17)

בכל עת אהב הרע..

"At all times love the friend." (Prov. 17:17; ibid. 27:10)

יבוש רע מבגוד בגד.

"Let the friend be ashamed of faithlessness." (Sirach 42:23)

כל בשר למינו ישכן ובן אדם לדומה לו.

"All flesh loves its own kind ... man, the one who is like him." (Sirach 13:17, 18; BT Bava Kamma 92)

604. ***How do our Sages express themselves about the duties under discussion?***

האוהב את שכניו והמקרב את קרוביו... אז תקרא וה' יענה.

"Whoever loves his neighbors, whoever draws his relatives close to him ... him God answers when he calls upon Him ..." (BT Yevamot 62b; see also BT Berakhot 15b)

Love of Enemies

605. ***Must love of one's neighbor extend also to our enemies?***

Certainly; for such enmities among human beings arise from external circumstances, whereas love of one's neighbor is grounded in the common origin of their souls. (Mal. 2:10.)[557]

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[555]Yet love of relatives must not make us unjust (Deut. 33:9). — It is a vice that dishonors us to be *ashamed of poor relatives*, Shemot Rabbah ch. 31. —

[556]Compare BT Berakhot 19 [printed "19, 13"] with BT Arakhin 15b, איכא נורא וכו׳.

[557]See שער ענוה [the "Gate of Humility"] in ראשית חכמה [*Reshit Ḥokhmah*], ch. 5, beginning.

[p. 254] **606.** ***What proves the inessential nature of such enmities?***

That they tend to vanish at the slightest change of circumstances, and that people become friends again just as quickly as they became enemies; an unbroken perseverance in our love of neighbor, even toward the enemy, is able, however, to bring about such changes and their beneficial consequences quite soon, before the hatred takes root too deeply and becomes irreconcilable.

607. ***How, then, are we accordingly to conduct ourselves toward our enemies?***

To be sure, we are to *be on our guard* against them, especially when they are lacking in humanity and virtue; but nevertheless not to hate them inwardly; nor to *repay evil with evil*; indeed, not even to *gloat* over their misfortune, but rather to *set them right* and *stand by them in dangers*. In general, love as such must overlook the faults of one's neighbor and always be ready for reconciliation. —

בשפתיו ינכר שונא.... ....אל תאמן בו....

> "With his speech the enemy dissembles .... do not believe him." (Prov. 26:24[–25]; see ch. 27:6; especially Sirach 12:9–15)

אל תאמר אשלמה רע....

> "Do not say: I will repay evil ..." (Ibid. 20:23 [22])

אל תאמר כאשר עשה לי כן אעשה לו....

> "Do not say: as he has done to me, so will I do to him ..." (Ibid. 24:29)

[p. 255]

בנפל אויבך אל תשמח.

> "When your enemy falls, do not rejoice ..." (Ibid. 24:17. Compare Job 31:29 and Wessely on Pirkei Avot 3:19,[558] also Sirach 8:8)[559]

כי תראה שור איבך... תעה השב תשיבנו לו. כי תראה חמור שנאך רבץ תחת משאו.... עזב תעזב עמו.

> "If you notice your enemy's ox wandering about, you shall bring it back to him. If you see your adversary's donkey collapsing under its burden ... you shall help him up." (Exod. 23:4, 5)[560]

אם רעב שנאך האכלהו לחם....

> "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread." (Prov. 25:21)[561]

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[558]Translator: Naphtali Herz Wessely's commentary on the Mishnah tractate Avot (*Yein Levanon*); the saying of Samuel the Small quoted here stands at Pirkei Avot 4:19 in the usual modern numbering.

[559]With the above motto of שמואל הקטן [Samuel the Small], who was a true disciple of Hillel (BT Sotah 48, Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah p. 26), the story about him in BT Berakhot 29 is probably also connected.

[560]Translator: The Masoretic text of Exod. 23:4 begins כי תפגע ("If you meet"); Plessner's כי תראה ("If you see") is carried over from verse 5, and his German follows it.

[561]It is wrongly held against the Psalmist that there are passages in the Psalms in which he curses his enemies; no one loved his enemies more than he did (see 2 Sam. 16:7). But it was partly the ingratitude shown him by his adversaries, partly the great

על כל פשעים תכסה אהבה.

"Love covers all transgressions." (Ibid. 10:12)

Conduct toward Sinners

608. *Should we also love the wicked?*

With regard to love of neighbor toward the *wicked* (if indeed a decided villain can be called our neighbor at all)[562] [p. 256] *caution* is in any case necessary for us; for just as one must not hate him who deserves love, so too he who is worthy of hatred does not deserve to be loved, at least not in the stricter sense. Yet we cannot always know who is virtuous or unvirtuous, who sins out of weakness and ignorance, or out of wantonness; and finally, hatred should be directed not so much against the sinner as rather against the sin.

נבזה בעיניו נמאס.

"The contemptible one is despised in his eyes." (Ps. 15:4)

אם היטבת לרשע כלא היטבת.... עשות טוב לרע כלא יחשב... גם לה' ישנא רשע. היטיבה לטובים ומבליעל תכלא רחמיך.

"If you do good to the wicked, you have done nothing ...; it is no good deed that one shows to the wicked; God Himself hates the wicked ... Do good to the good, and leave off from the wicked."[563] (Sirach 12:1–9; Bereshit Rabbah 19)

[p. 257]

כי אתה ידעת לבדך את לבב כל בני האדם.

"You alone know the thoughts of human hearts." (1 Kings 8:39)

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pressure of circumstances, but above all the fact that his enemies disturbed his nearness to God and his worship of Him (1 Sam. 26:19), that wrung those curses from him. Whoever believes he could be better than the Psalmist under such circumstances errs, plays the hypocrite, and fails to recognize the great truth that even the seemingly evil powers, applied at the right time, belong among the virtues. —

[562]For the teaching ואהבת לרעך כמוך ["You shall love your neighbor as yourself"] presupposes in the first place, as the ancients already remarked, in a certain sense that our fellow man is *like us*, i.e., religious or virtuous, although in the wider sense we owe this love to every human being.

[563]Whoever rejects this hatred, particularly against a decided sinner, or objects to passages such as Ps. 139:19–21 or Isa. 26:10, 11, but especially, as has often happened, to the formula ולמלשינים [*ve-la-malshinim*, "and for the informers"], let him think of that famous poet's words, "*Ruin to the brood of lies!*" — in a song, no less ("*To Joy*"), in which the poet lovingly embraces all the world and cries out: "all sinners shall be forgiven ...." Or of those verses of *Voss*: "So as not to praise the good, he praises all alike; whoever does not hate the wicked does not love the good either." Or also the similar verse of *Rauch*: "Whoever spares the wicked always harms the good." Yet, as already said, hatred must be directed only against evil, or at most against the evil person with the intention of *improving* him or of not imitating him. [Translator: The poet is Friedrich Schiller, whose "An die Freude" (1785) contains the lines "Untergang der Lügenbrut!" and "Allen Sündern soll vergeben"; Voss is the poet and translator Johann Heinrich Voss (1751–1826). The author "Rauch" has not been identified; the saying goes back to Publilius Syrus ("Bonis nocet quisquis pepercerit malis"). ולמלשינים opens the benediction against informers and heretics in the Amidah.]

חי אני... אם אחפץ במות הרשע כי אם בשוב רשע מדרכו וחיה.

> "Truly, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, but that he turn from his way and live." (Ezek. 33:11)

609. ***What, then, does love of humanity command toward the sinner?***

Not to *persecute* him *as an enemy*, if only so as not to make him worse; by no means to *wish death* upon him, if only because he may perhaps improve, or a good descendant may come from him; also not to shy away from some *slight association* with him, if his *improvement* might in any way be achieved by it — and to bring this about in any way is one of the most praiseworthy virtues according to the principles of Judaism.[564] Above all we should *call upon God* to move the sinner to a change of heart. —

ימלט אי נקי ונמלט בבר כפיך.

> "He rescues the unclean; he is delivered through the purity of your hands." (Job 22:30)

ואם תוציא יקר מזולל כפי תהיה.

> "If you form something precious out of something common, you shall be as I am." (Jer. 15:19)

[p. 258] **610.** ***When is it especially incumbent upon us to give up our hatred of the sinner, and even to turn it into love?***

When he has been punished for it, or also when he shows signs of improvement.

למס מרעהו חסד ויראת שדי יעזב.

> "To the unfortunate, compassion from his fellow man is fitting, even if he had forsaken the fear of the Almighty." (Job 6:14)

שב מחטאיו לא תחרפנו.

> "Whoever turns away from his sins, do not hold them against him." (Sirach 8:6)

Non-Israelites

611. ***Do we also owe the duties of love of neighbor to the*** **non-Israelite*****?***

Certainly; for by the expression *neighbor* (ריע) Holy Scripture also understands the non-Israelite, as e.g. Exod. 2:13; 11:2.[565]

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[564] See BT Berakhot 9 [10a] on Ps. 104:35, and the Midrash there; Sifra on Lev. 26:6, והשבתי וכו׳; Vayikra Rabbah ch. 27 on Eccl. 3:15; Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah, beginning, רשע מוליד וכו׳; Bamidbar Rabbah 19 (end); Zohar, וירא [*Va-yera*], p. 105 (in the Midrash ha-Ne'elam), מצוה לו וכו׳! Zohar, תרומה [*Terumah*], p. 128a and b. — Compare also (Keritot p. 6) כל תענית וכו׳; Eruvin 21, ושמא תאמר וכו׳; Ḥullin 92, לבעי רחמי וכו׳; Zohar, ויגש [*Va-yiggash*], p. 208a, מנהון צדיקים וכו׳.

[565] Compare Tanna debe Eliyahu 15: ריעך הרי הוא כאחיך... הא למדת שגזל העכום אסור ["your neighbor is like your brother ... thus you have learned that robbing an idolater is forbidden"]. Accordingly even the idolatrous heathen is called our neighbor. See also תוס׳ י״ט [*Tosafot Yom Tov*] on Pirkei Avot 3:14.

612. ***But does not Holy Scripture call attention still more clearly to the original equality of human beings and to the universal respect that we owe them?***

[p. 259] Indeed it does; already in the Law it says:

שפך דם האדם.... כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם.

"Whoever sheds human blood ... for in the image of God He made man."[566] (Gen. 9:6f.)

אף חבב עמים כל קדשיו בידך.

"He also loves the nations; all his holy ones are in your hand." (Deut. 33:3)

הלא אב אחד לכלנו....

"Have we not all one father? ..." (Mal. 2:10) (See BT Ta'anit 8.)

613. ***What does Holy Scripture teach with regard to non-Israelites?***

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

"Do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother; do not abhor an Egyptian, for you were a stranger in his land." (Deut. 23:8)[567]

614. ***But the Talmud is supposed to harbor loveless views toward the nations, and even to release one from all duties of love of humanity toward the non-Jew?***

[p. 260] The Talmud strictly forbids even tormenting animals; — the few passages that are striking are partly directed only against idolatrous heathenism,[568] which also always showed hostility toward Israel, and partly such passages tend to be misunderstood. On the whole, however, this book furnishes through its teachings[569] and examples[570] the most irrefutable proofs of the purest and most tolerant love of humanity, both in its views of it and in its doctrine of the duties it entails.

615. ***Cite for me some such* views *from the Talmud!***

With regard to the passage (Lev. 18:5) "Keep my statutes, which a man shall do and thereby be happy," the book Sifra remarks: Here it does not say: priests, Levites, Israelites, but *man*; so too it does not say (2 Sam. 7:19): this is the teaching of the priests ..., but of man; likewise it does not

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[566]The name אדם [*adam*, "man"] is expressly given to the whole of the nations and is used alongside ישראל [Israel] (Isa. 43:4; Jer. 32:20). The apparent contradiction in Yevamot 60 [Translator: The dictum "you are called *adam*" is found at BT Yevamot 61a.] says only that the idolatry and inhumanity of ancient heathenism degraded the human being within it, whereas Israel, through its better principles and nobler way of life, represented on earth the perfect image of its divine archetype. — Indeed, the very expression *firstborn child* (Exod. 4:22) proves that *all nations are God's children*. Only the *realm of sin*, but not the *nations*, is hateful to God (Amos 9:7, 8). —

[567]Compare also passages such as that one (Ps. 67): *Let the nations rejoice and exult* ... and the like.

[568]As the tractate Avodah Zarah and the commonly used expression עכו״ם [*akum*, "worshippers of stars and constellations"] unmistakably show.

[569]See the following questions and notes.

[570]E.g., in the well-known story of ר׳ שמעון בן שטח [R. Shimon ben Shetaḥ] and the jewel (JT Bava Metzia ch. 2); and the Talmud holds up many such stories as *models*. —

say in Isaiah (26:2): open the gates, that priests may enter, but a righteous nation ...; and so too it does not say in the Psalmist (Ps. 24:4 [125:4]): Do good, O Lord, to the priests ...., but to the good and upright ...[571] (See also Sifra בהר [*Behar*], ch. 9, beginning.)

[p. 261]

חסידי אומות העולם יש להם חלק לעה״ב.

> "The pious of all nations have a share in the world to come." (Maimonides, Hilkhot Teshuvah 3:5)

כל בר נש ובר נש זכותיה בקופתיה.

> "Every human being carries his merit in his pocket." (JT Pe'ah ch. 1)

מעיד אני עלי שמים וארץ, בין ישראל בין נכרי.. הכל לפי המעשה שהוא עושה, כך רוח הקדש שורה עליו.

> "I call heaven and earth to witness that the Israelite as well as the non-Israelite ... every human being, according to his deeds, becomes a partaker of the holy spirit." (Tanna debe Eliyahu ch. 9) (Compare Sifri on Deut. 1:24.)

ומה ששאלת על האומות, דרחמנא לבא בעי... דע וע״כ אמרו חכמי האמת.... חסידי אומות העולם יש להם חלק לעולם הבא אם השיגו.... מידיעת הבורא... והתקינו נפשם במדות הטובות.... וע״כ אמרו חכמי האמת.... אפילו גוי שעוסק בתורת משה.... הרי הוא ככהן גדול.

> "And as for what you asked concerning the nations, know that God looks at the disposition ... and therefore our Sages taught: the pious of all nations have a share in the world to come, if they have attained the requisite knowledge of God and perfected themselves through virtues .... and therefore our Sages also taught: even a heathen who occupies himself with the Law of Moses is to be compared to the high priest." (Letters of Maimonides to R. Ḥisdai, Amsterdam ed., p. 5)

616. ***But does the Talmud also oblige us to love of neighbor toward the non-Israelite?***

It makes no distinction at all in this respect between him and the Israelite, and bids us practice it conscientiously even toward the roughest heathen, who through inhumanity makes himself almost wholly unworthy of it, partly for the sake of [p. 262] *social peace*, partly for the sake of the honor of God.

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[571] ["(it does not say) 'which priests shall do' ..... it says only 'man'"]. אשר יעשה אותם כהנים..... לא נאמר אלא האדם..... The same (see the present religious textbook, p. 159, note 2); BT Sanhedrin 59a; BT Avodah Zarah 3a, אפילו גוי העוסק בתורה הרי הוא ככהן גדול..... ["even a gentile who occupies himself with the Torah is like a high priest"]; see also Zohar Ḥadash, רות [Ruth] (Amsterdam ed.), p. 64a, ...אבל אם מבקש אדם להיות צדיק אפילו הגוי יכול.... אבל אם מבקש אדם להיות כהן אינו יכול ["R. Ḥezkiah, etc.: if a man seeks to become a priest, he cannot .... but if a man seeks to become righteous, even the gentile can ...."] —

617. ***Cite for me some proofs of this.***

גזל גוי אסור.

"It is not permitted to rob a heathen." (BT Bava Batra 113)[572]

אין ממחין ביד עניי עכו״ם בלקט... ומחזיקין ידי עכו״ם בשביעית....

"One may not prevent the poor of the heathens from gleaning in the fields." (Mishnah Gittin 5:8, 9)

מפרנסים עניי גוים עם עניי ישראל ומבקרים חולי גוים.... וקוברים מתי גוים....

"One must sustain the poor of the heathens just as well[573] as the poor in Israel, and likewise visit their sick and bury their dead, exactly as those of the Israelites."[574] (BT Gittin p. 60)

אסור לגנוב דעת הבריות ואפילו דעתו של גוי.

"One may not deceive anyone, not even the idolatrous heathen." (BT Ḥullin 94)

כתיב לא תעשוק את ריעך ולא תגזול וכו׳ מה ריעך הרי הוא כאחיך, ואחיך הרי הוא כריעך, הא למדת, שגזל העכו״ם אסור.

"It says: you shall not withhold anything from your neighbor and not rob him; your neighbor is as good as your brother, and your brother as your neighbor, and from this it clearly follows that even robbery of an idolater is forbidden."[575] (Tanna debe Eliyahu ch. 15) (See the commentator.)

ירחיק אדם את עצמו מן הגזל בין מן ישראל ובין מן הגוי, ולא עוד אלא משום שכל הגונב מן הגוי לסוף הוא גונב לישראל, ואם הוא נשבע לגוי.... ואם הוא מכחש לגוי לסוף הוא מכחש לישראל ולא נתנה תורה אלא לקדש שמו הגדול.....

"Let a person beware of robbing either an Israelite or a heathen; indeed, more than that: whoever first steals something from a heathen, or forswears something to him, or denies it,

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[572]Translator: The dictum stands at BT Bava Kamma 113b; likewise the baraita cited next is found at BT Gittin 61a.

[573]Compare Shemot Rabbah ch. 1, p. 90b: אברהם אבינו ע״ה פתח לו פונדק, והיה זן את העוברים ואת השבים בני אדם ערלים. ["Abraham our father, peace be upon him, opened an inn and fed the passers-by, uncircumcised people."] —

[574]Maimonides, Hilkhot Melakhim 10:12, also cites the Bible verses as proofs for the above passage: שנאמר טוב ה׳ לכל ורחמיו על כל מעשיו, ונאמר דרכיה דרכי נעם וכל נתיבותיה שלום. ["as it is said: The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works; and it is said: Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."] According to BT Ta'anit p. 16, on the fasts mentioned there, in places where there are no Jewish burial grounds, one should even visit the *non-Jewish* ones (קברי נכרים). — Compare further passages such as Megillah 16a, כל האומר דבר חכמה אפילו באומות העולם נקרא חכם ["whoever says a word of wisdom, even among the nations of the world, is called wise"]; the principle צריך לקבל האמת ממי שאמרו ["one must accept the truth from whoever said it"]; the reproach (Sanhedrin 39), כמתוקנים שבהם לא עשיתם וכו׳ ["you have not acted like the upright among them," etc.] (see Midrash Shmuel ch. 22a).

[575]The commentator remarks there (p. 53b): משום דגזל עכו״ם הוא חלול השם, ואין לו כפרה אלא במיתה, כמו שאמרו חז״ל בארבעה חלוקי כפרה שהיה ר׳ ישמעאל דורש (יומא פ״ו) ["because robbing an idolater is a profanation of the Name, and it has no atonement except through death, as our Sages of blessed memory said regarding the four kinds of atonement that R. Ishmael expounded (BT Yoma 86)"].

ends by doing this to the Israelite as well; but the Law was given only for the glorification of the divine Name." (Ibid. ch. 28, beginning)

עתה יש לישראל להבדל מהבלי העולם ולאחוז בחותמו של הקב״ה שהוא אמת.... ושלא לשקר לא לישראל ולא לגוי ולא להטעותם בשום ענין, שנאמר שארית ישראל לא יעשו עולה ולא ידברו כזב.... וכן יש בירושלמי, חכמים הזקנים קנו חטים מן הגוים ומצאו בו צרור של מעות והחזירו להם... וכן יש הרבה מעשים שהחזירו....

"The Israelite ought at present all the more to keep himself far from the vanities of the world .. and to hold fast to the truth, this seal of God ... to lie neither to an Israelite nor to a heathen, nor to deceive them in any matter; for thus it says (Zeph. 3:13): The remnant of Israel shall do no wrong and speak no lie ... Thus the Jerusalem Talmud relates: the Sages once bought wheat from the heathens, found a purse of money in it, and they returned it to the sellers .... and many such instances occurred in Israel."[576] (שער אמת [Gate of Truth] in ארחות צדיקים [*Orḥot Tzaddikim*], end)

618. ***But the Law is supposed to permit*** **perjury** ***toward non-Jews?***

Not the slightest difference prevails, especially with respect to the oath, between the Israelite and the non-Israelite. Although Israel, after it had sworn an oath to the Gibeonites, discovered their deceit, it nonetheless kept its oath and exclaimed:

אנחנו נשבענו להם בה' אלהי ישראל ועתה לא נוכל לנגע בהם.

"We have sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them." (Josh. 9:19)[577]

אחד הנשבע אחת מד׳ מיני שבועות אלו מפי עצמו ואחד המושבע.... וענה אמן אפילו השביעו עכו״ם.... חייב....

"As regards those four kinds of oaths, one is liable to punishment whether one has sworn them *oneself* or has merely answered Amen to another's adjuring him, even if the one who adjured him was a *heathen* or a child." (Maimonides, Hilkhot Shevuot 2:1)

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[576]Compare further the following passages in Maimonides, which, based on the Talmud, enjoin the same strict morality toward the non-Jew as toward the Jew: Hilkhot De'ot 2:6 (Ḥoshen Mishpat 228:6); Hilkhot Mattenot Aniyim 7:7; Hilkhot Genevah 7:8; Hilkhot Mekhirah 18:1; Hilkhot Gezelah va-Avedah 1:2. [Translator: In the print the Hebrew titles and the chapter and paragraph numbers of this list are displaced by the mixing of Hebrew and German type (it reads approximately "De'ot 2, 6. — Genevah 7, Mattenot Aniyim 7, 7. (Ḥoshen Mishpat 228, 6) 8. — Mekhirah 1, 1. — Gezelah va-Avedah 18, 2."); the references are given here in their evident intended order.]

[577]Thus sacred history (2 Chron. 36:18 [13]; compare especially Ezek. 17:13, 21 — ! —) counts among the *crimes* of King Zedekiah that he *rebelled* against the (heathen) King *Nebuchadnezzar after the latter had made him swear by God*. — How particularly that oath of Israel to the Gibeonites was confirmed by God is proved by the inexorable vengeance that God took on their account upon the house of Saul (2 Sam. ch. 21). —!

[p. 265] **619.** ***But the Law is supposed to permit*** **usury** ***toward non-Jews?***

It scarcely permits taking moderate interest from them in commerce: because *taking* interest is not forbidden to the non-Israelite, the Mosaic Law permits the Israelite *to be allowed to pay* him interest. For thus it says:

לא תשיך לאחיך נשך כסף נשך אכל נשך כל דבר.. לנכרי תשיך ולאחיך לא תשיך....

> "You shall not give interest to your brother, neither interest on money nor on food .... to a stranger you may give interest, but not to your brother." (Deut. 23:20–22 [20–21]) (BT Bava Metzia p. 70; see Rashi.)

מרבה הונו בנשך ותרבית לחונן דלים יקבצנו.... לא נצרכה אלא אפילו רבית דנכרי.

> "It says (Prov. 28:8): whoever heaps up his wealth through interest and usury will have to gather it for one who favors the poor; which holds even of the interest *that one takes from the non-Israelite*." (BT Bava Metzia 70b)[578]

620. ***What follows, then, in general from what has been said so far?***

That the Israelite is strictly obliged to love his

[p. 266] neighbor in the non-Israelite.[579] Offenses against this duty, which the later centuries [p. 267] brought about, are not to be ascribed to the Law of the Israelite, but are to be regarded as

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[578]Even in commercial dealings only a meager interest (כדי חייו ["enough for his livelihood"]) is permitted to be taken, and this too only to the Israelite in his last dispersion, where nothing but commerce was allowed him by the nations. — (See Tosafot on Bava Metzia 70b, also Naḥmanides on Deut. 23:21.) As for the teaching of Maimonides that it is a commandment to take interest from the non-Israelite, this has, as is well known, long since been shown to be an error, founded on a misunderstood passage (in the Sifri, כי תצא [*Ki Tetze*]). See ראב״ד [Rabad] on Maimonides, Hilkhot Malveh ve-Loveh 1, and זרע אברהם [*Zera Avraham*] on the Sifri, *Tetze*, section 263. Compare, however, also M. B. *Friedenthal*, יסוד הדת [*Yesod ha-Dat*], division מגדל עוז [*Migdal Oz*], in the treatise תשובה לאפיקורס [*Teshuvah la-Apikoros*], p. 28b and following.

[579]I cannot refrain from communicating here, in extract and in translation, some passages from the celebrated R. M. Chagis's אלה המצות [*Eleh ha-Mitzvot*]. [Translator: Moses Hagiz (1671–c. 1750), *Eleh ha-Mitzvot* (Amsterdam, 1713). The note continues on printed p. 267 and is given here whole. The verse quoted is Ps. 15:5, expounded in this sense at BT Makkot 24a.] He says, with reference to the commandments not to despise the *Egyptian* and the *Edomite* (Deut. 23:7–8): "God intends by those precepts to accustom us to good qualities, in particular to gratitude. And if we are to be grateful to those two nations which so oppressed us ... how much more ought we to be grateful to the present states and ruling kings, who treat us so lovingly and grant us not only spiritual freedom, in the free exercise permitted us of our written and oral Law, but also bodily freedom, and to pray for their welfare! And so this is indeed made a duty for us in the Law ... — And every fool who believes the reverse, namely that our Law bids us deceive the nations, take advantage of them, and — Heaven forbid! — plot their misfortune, lives in a deep error and has never known the way of the Lord, who is all-righteous .... and has given Israel only righteous precepts; indeed, who surely, if only out of love for us, would never have commanded us things that would bring us into ill repute among the nations and expose us to their greatest mistreatment and persecutions ... —! Indeed, should ever an enemy of the Jews make the nations believe the opposite about us, we trust in the grace of God and in the authorities of those nations themselves, that they would surely recognize how only unbelief and ignorance of the Jewish Law can call forth such enemies of the Jews with their wholly unfounded accusations ... Already the sacrifices that were offered at the Feast of Tabernacles for the nations, and the like, prove how we are obliged to do good, and not evil, to them ..... — In a word, God has taught us ways of acting by means of which we are to *glorify* His Name among the nations .. so that it is expressly said in the Talmud, with reference to Ps. 15:4 (He does not give his money at interest): not even to a heathen. If taking interest from the non-Israelite were a commandment of the Law, the Talmud would surely never have praised the setting aside of a legal commandment in the words just mentioned ....! — It is also known that even robbery of a heathen is forbidden; in particular the commandment 'You shall not profane my holy Name' is strongly impressed upon our hearts, and a transgression of it cannot be atoned for otherwise than by *death*. — Therefore mark well what has been said so far, and take good care!...."

consequences of the inhuman oppression to which the Israelite was universally exposed in his last dispersion.

621. ***In what respect, however, is the world of the nations commended to our attention quite especially?***

In respect of the great future foretold to the Israelite, when the unity of God will be universally acknowledged and all peoples, with one accord with Israel, will call upon the Supreme Being.[580] For of this great time we read in Holy Scripture, with reference to the nations:

ברוך עמי מצרים ומעשה ידי אשור....

> "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands …" (Isa. 19:25)

וגם מהם אקח לכהנים ללוים אמר ה'... והיה מדי חדש בחדשו ומדי שבת בשבתו יבוא כל בשר להשתחות לפני.

> "And of them too I will take for priests and Levites, says the Lord …[581] and on every new moon and every day of rest all flesh shall come to worship before me." (Isa. 66:21, 23) (Isa. 44:5)

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והיה אחרי כן אשפוך את רוחי על כל בשר.

> "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." (Joel 3:1)

כי אז אהפך אל עמים שפה ברורה לקרא כלם בשם ה'...

> "For then I will give back to the peoples a pure language,[582] that they may all call upon the name of God …" (Zeph. 3:10 [= 3:9])

(See Zech. 8:20–23.)

ואת רוח הטמאה אעביר מן הארץ.

> "The spirit of uncleanness I will remove from the earth." (Zech. 13:2)

והיה ה' למלך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד ושמו אחד.

> "And the Lord shall be king over the whole earth; on that day the Lord shall be one and his name one." (Zech. 14:9)

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[580] See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], last page.

[581] See Yalkut on Ps. 87:6. —

[582] [That is,] knowledge; הפך [*ehpokh*, "I will turn back," i.e. restore], because the primeval time returns: Gen. 11:1.

Addenda

On Question 207, compare Ḥagigah p. 5 [BT Ḥagigah 5b], on בתי בראי and בתי גואי [*battei bera'ei* and *battei ga'ei*, "the outer chambers" and "the inner chambers"]: the false prophets could therefore mostly preach *what was agreeable*, such as a merely outward, superficial knowledge of God yields; the true prophets, on the other hand, owed their *earnestness* to their *deeper knowledge of God*. See my Sermons, vol. 1, p. 267; Mekhilta, Beshallaḥ: הקב"ה מורא על הקרובים יותר מעל הרחוקים ["The Holy One, blessed be He, is more feared by those near to Him than by those far off"]. —

On p. 88, note 2, compare further Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on Song 2:13, Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer ch. 30, end, Pesikta Rabbati ch. 1, end, and R. Leva, נצח ישראל [*Netzaḥ Yisrael*], ch. 33.[583] —

On [p.] 132, Question 351, end. Compare also the expression זכרון [*zikkaron*, "remembrance"] used of the tefillin (Exod. 13:9). —

On p. 135, note, end. Compare Zohar, משפטים [Mishpatim], p. 124a: אוריתא כלא שמא דקב"ה וכו' ["The whole Torah is the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He," etc.].

On p. 82, Q. 256. Remarkably in agreement, I found Midrash Rabbah on Gen. 49:10: אין ישראל צריכין וכו' ["Israel will not need," etc.]. —

[p. —]

Twelfth Section

The Israelite as Subject

המלך צל הקב"ה בארץ.

["The king is the shadow of the Holy One, blessed be He, on earth."]
(Reshit Ḥokhmah.[584])

622. ***In what, according to the teaching of our Religion, does the distinction of a king above other men properly consist?***

In this: that he is an *anointed of God*, i.e. one appointed and installed by God as ruler and as God's representative even among men.

כה אמר ה' למשיחו לכורש...

"Thus says the Lord to his *anointed*, to Cyrus …" (Isa. 45:1)

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[583]Translator: R. Judah Loew ben Bezalel of Prague (the Maharal, d. 1609), author of *Netzaḥ Yisrael*.

[584]In פרק דרך ארץ [the chapter "Derekh Eretz"] (end).

מהעדה מלכין ומהקים מלכין.

"He *deposes* kings and *sets up* kings." (Dan. 2:21)

מלכותא דארעא כעין מלכותא דרקיעא.

"The earthly kingship is a reflection of the heavenly." (BT Berakhot 58a)

623. ***What teaching, which grounds our reverence for the king, is further connected with what has just been said?***

That the king, as the head of a society, stands for that very reason under the immediate attention of God, and that his decisions are precisely a divine determination.

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לא יגרע מצדיק עיניו ואת מלכים לכסא...

"He does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous, and is especially with kings upon the throne …" (Job 36:7)

פלגי מים לב מלך ביד ה' על כל אשר יחפץ יטנו.

"Like channels of water is a king's heart in God's hand; wherever he wills, he inclines it." (Prov. 21:1)

אין המלכות מתגרה בבני אדם אלא אם כן נלחש לו מלעיל. —

"Kingship decrees nothing upon men unless it has been *whispered to it from above*." — (Midrash Kohelet on Eccl. 10:11)[585]

624. ***What, then, in consequence of these principles, does Religion make our duty in relation to the ruler?***

In relation to him it lays upon us the duty of *obedience*, of *loyalty*, of *reverence* and *love*, and also the duty *to pray* for his welfare and that of the State, and even, at the *sight* of him, *to pronounce a blessing*; and, given the requisite fitness, to render service to the State with our bodily strength as well, when circumstances demand it.

625. ***Cite for me passages in which those duties are taught.***

ירא את ה' בני ומלך ועם שונים אל תתערב.

"Fear, my son, God and the king, and do not get involved with those given to change." (Prov. 24:21)

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[585]With this is also connected the teaching (BT Rosh Hashanah p. 16a): מלך וצבור, מלך נכנס תחלה לדין וכו' ["A king and a community: the king enters into judgment first," etc.].

שום תשים עליך מלך שתהא אימתו עליך.

"'You shall set a king over you,' that is: you shall stand in awe of him." (Mishnah Sanhedrin 2:5)

דינא דמלכותא דינא.

"The law of the State is to be regarded like the divine law." (BT Bava Kamma 112 [= 113a])

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לעולם תהי אימת מלכות עליך.

"Always have fear of the ruler." (BT Zevaḥim 19, 2 [= 102a])

אני פי מלך שמור...

"I bid you observe the king's command …" (Eccl. 8:2) (See Bamidbar Rabbah ch. 14, fol. 193b and 194.)

עבדו את מלך בבל וחיו.

"Serve the king of Babylon, and you shall prosper." (Jer. 27:17)[586]

ודרשו את שלום העיר אשר הגליתי אתכם שמה והתפללו בעדה אל ה'...

"Seek the welfare of the city to which I have driven you, and pray for it to the Lord."[587] (Jer. 29:7)

הוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות, שאלמלא מוראה איש את רעהו חיים בלעו.

"Pray for the welfare of the government; for were there no fear of it, one man would swallow the other alive."[588] (Mishnah Avot 3:2)

ודוד ואנשיו עברים באחרנה עם אכיש.

"David and his men marched in the rear, with Achish." (1 Sam. 29:2; see v. 8)

626. ***How does the blessing read that is pronounced at the sight of the king?***

בא"י.... שחלק מכבודו לבשר ודם.

"Blessed are You, Lord … who has given of Your glory to a mortal." (BT Berakhot 58a)

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[586]How severely Zedekiah's breach of his oath to Nebuchadnezzar was punished, see Ezek. 17:13 ff. — ! —

[587]Baruch 1:11. Esther 6:11. Josephus, *Antiquities* 3, 6; 6, 47. Megillat Ta'anit ch. 9. Yoma p. 69a; one should think above all of the frequent *royal psalms*.

[588]Compare the passage that occurs several times in the Book of Judges: בימים ההם אין מלך בישראל, איש כל הישר בעיניו יעשה. ["In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes."] —

[p. 272] **627.** ***Is it permitted to us, perhaps, to speak or think ill of the king, to carp at the governments, or even to take part in disturbances?***

That too is not permitted; for it is said:

גם במדעך מלך אל תקלל.

"Even in your thought do not curse the king." (Eccl. 10:20)

שמים לרום וארץ לעמק ולב מלכים אין חקר.

"As the heavens in height and the earth in depth, so the heart of kings is unsearchable." (Prov. 25:13 [= 25:3])

שלש שבועות השביע הקב"ה את ישראל... שלא ימרדו באומות... ושלא ירחקו את הקץ....

"Three things God has made a duty for Israel … that they not rise up against the nations, and not press for the End … otherwise He would give them over to destruction." (BT Ketubbot 110b [–111a])

628. ***Is it permitted to us to evade the laws of the State by underhanded ways, e.g. to withdraw from paying a tax and the like?***

By no means; for we are taught:

אסור להבריח את המכס.

"One may not evade the customs duty." (Talmud, Bava Kamma 112 [= 113a]; Pesaḥim 112b. See Maimonides, הל' מלכים [Hilkhot Melakhim] 4:1; Shulḥan Arukh, Ḥoshen Mishpat ch. 369.)

629. ***Do we owe such reverence and respect to the king's officials as well?***

Certainly; for it is said:

עבד מלך, כמלך.

"Even the *king's official* is to be regarded as the *king himself*." (Sifrei on Deut. 1:7) (BT Shevu'ot p. 44)

630. ***What else is made our duty in relation to the authorities?***

Not to force ourselves upon them, nor hypocritically to beg for [p. 273] their favor, especially with the aim of obtaining distinctions and posts of honor.[589]

אל תתהדר לפני מלך ובמקום גדלים אל תעמד.

"Seek no honor before the king, and in the place of the great do not stand …" (Prov. 25:6)

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[589] Compare a remarkable passage, Ta'anit p. 20: דלא מוקמי מנן לא רישי נהרי וכו' ["for they do not appoint from among us either river-wardens," etc.].

אל תתודע לרשות.

"Seek no acquaintance with the authorities." (Pirkei Avot 1:10)

לא תבקש שלטון מאלהים ויקר תפארת מלפני מלך.

"Do not implore dominion from God, nor distinctions of honor from the king." — (Sirach 7:4)[590]

631. ***What, then, follows from the teachings thus far?***

That the Mosaic Religion fits its adherents to be truly loyal subjects.[591]

632. ***And what follows from this very remark?***

That the more faithfully the Israelite lives according to his Law, the more loyal a subject the State has in him.

633. ***Cite for me some examples.***

משה חלק כבוד למלכות והקב"ה צוה.... לחלוק.... ויוסף חלק כבוד.... יעקב חלק כבוד למלכות.....

אליהו חלק כבוד.. חנניה, מישאל ועזריה חלקו כבוד למלכות וכן דניאל.

"A *Moses* showed honor to the king, and God bade him show it … likewise Joseph … Jacob showed it to his own son as king (Gen. 48:2); likewise *Elijah*, who ran before Ahab (1 Kings 18:46); likewise Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah … likewise Daniel …" (Mekhilta, בא [Bo], ch. 13)[592] (See also Tanḥuma, וישלח [Vayishlaḥ], beginning.)

634. ***What makes the duty just mentioned especially remarkable in the men just mentioned?***

That they were, precisely, all persons who did not hesitate to defend the Law of God vigorously before the thrones of kings and to call monarchs to account for faults committed,[593] in the spirit of those words:

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[590]Compare also Prov. 23:1; Sirach 13:11 ff.; Pirkei Avot 2:3; JT Mo'ed Katan 2:3; Reshit Ḥokhmah, in פרק דרך ארץ [the chapter "Derekh Eretz"], Porta 2.

[591]Because it rests upon a *Law* and upon the *fear of God*; — see the fuller treatment in my Sermons, vol. 1, sermon 2 and sermon 19; also the special treatise in R. Azariah's אמרי בינה [*Imrei Binah*], ch. 55. [Translator: Azariah de' Rossi (c. 1511–1578); *Imrei Binah* is the third part of his *Me'or Einayim*.] Compare also the expressions ונתתם לרחמים לפני שוביהם ["and grant them compassion before their captors"], 1 Kings 8:50, Ps. 106:46; and especially Ezra 9:9: ובעבדותנו לא עזבנו אלהינו ויט עלינו חסד לפני מלכי פרס. ["yet in our bondage our God has not forsaken us, but has extended steadfast love to us before the kings of Persia"].

[592]Zevaḥim 102. Shemot Rabbah ch. 7.

[593]See e.g. 1 Kings 18:18; Dan. 3:16–18; 5:24 ff.

גם ישבו שרים בי נדברו עבדך ישיח בחקיך. ואדברה בעדתיך נגד מלכים ולא אבוש.

"Though princes sit and speak against me … your servant still speaks of your statutes. I speak of your testimonies before kings and am not ashamed." (Ps. 119:23 and 46)[594]

דברת שבועת אלהים יהיה עליון על צווי מלך בשר ודם...

"The command of the highest obligation is higher than that of the mortal ruler …" (Bamidbar Rabbah ch. 14)

[p. 275] **635.** ***But has later history, too, proved the Israelite to be such a loyal subject?***

Just as on this point we read the following testimony of honor concerning the Israelite of earlier times:

"*We have found, however, that the Jews, whom that villain destined for destruction, are no evildoers, but peaceable citizens, who live according to the most just laws*[595]" (Additions to Esther 7:15[596]), so we read also in one of the more recent writers: "*Certainly, the Jew has only seldom shown himself unworthy of the protection which the Christian states grant him.* He is a peaceable and quiet citizen, and does not criticize or carp at the constitutions and institutions in states.... If other needs of the State arise, where through support a beneficial institution is to come into being, or a seed of the good and noble is to be awakened and nurtured, then surely the Jew is the grateful citizen on whose assistance one can confidently count...." —

636. ***But might perhaps those passages of the Israelite prayer book — attacked in recent times even by some Israelites — in which the Israelite prays for the promised future, have a harmful influence on his present love of fatherland?***

That they do not in the least is a matter that has been discussed and proved more than often enough, and any repetition of this subject is unnecessary.[597] Indeed, that [p. 276] future will indeed be the time of a *universal* ennobling, when

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[594]For reverence for the king may move us to no violation of reverence for God, the highest King; just as antiquity, too, went before us as a model in this. Compare the history of the Maccabees, Megillat Ta'anit ch. 12, Massekhet כלה [Kallah] 1, end, and especially Bamidbar Rabbah ch. 14, fol. 194. — ! — That the Israelite, precisely in this genuine spirit of Judaism, can be the most loyal subject of his king is proved most surely, no doubt, by the life of a Daniel at the Babylonian court, and above all by that of a Mordecai at the Persian court, as my above-mentioned discourse, "Judaism and Civic Loyalty," delivered on Sabbath זכור [Zakhor] 5595 (in my Sermons, vol. 1, sermon 19), has shown in detail.

[595]Krämer, "Die Juden und ihre gerechten Ansprüche an die christlichen Staaten" [The Jews and Their Just Claims upon the Christian States].

[596]Translator: The Greek Additions to Esther, Addition E (Luther's "Stücke in Esther" 7:15; in modern numbering Esther 16:15).

[597]Compare especially my treatise on prayer, or אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], Discourse 7, pp. 143–144; see also Salomon Pappenheim's "Freimüthige Erklärung über die jüngst rege gewordene Kritik des jüdischen Gottesdienstes" [Candid Declaration concerning the Recently Aroused Criticism of the Jewish Divine Service], Breslau 1813, pp. 18–20; the well-known letters of the rabbis (דברי הברית [*Divrei ha-Berit*]) concerning the new divine service, as well as the German abridgment of this work, especially pp. 65, 75 and 76. The fullest treatment of this subject is by R. Abraham Emden in his צרור החיים [*Tzeror ha-Ḥayyim*], section קץ הימין [*Ketz ha-Yamin*]. [Translator: Abraham Löwenstamm, rabbi of Emden (d. 1839), whose *Tzeror ha-Ḥayyim* (Amsterdam, 1820) attacked the Hamburg reformers; *Divrei ha-Berit* (Altona, 1819) is the collection of rabbinic responses against the Hamburg Temple.] —

והלכו גוים לאורך ומלכים לנגה זרחך.

"Peoples shall walk in the light of Zion, and kings in the radiance of her rising beams." (Isa. 60:3)

וייראו גוים את שם ה' וכל מלכי הארץ את כבודך.

"The peoples shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth your glory." (Ps. 102:16) (Dan. 7:27)

(Conclusion.)

637. ***What task should we accomplish through observance of the doctrines of faith and duties treated thus far?***

To win for ourselves, through our conduct of life, the love of *God* as well as of *men*.

והנער שמואל הלך וגדל וטוב גם עם ה' וגם עם אנשים.

"The boy Samuel grew ever greater and better, both before the Eternal and before the people." (1 Sam. 2:26)

[p. 277]

ומצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני אלהים ואדם.

"You shall find favor and good pleasure in the eyes of God and of men."[598] (Prov. 3:4)

638. ***What matters above all in a religious conduct of life?***

Sincerity (תמימות); the Israelite may just as little timidly hide his piety and, out of anxious considerations, appear impious, as he may parade his virtue and fear of God proudly and cause a stir.

התהלך לפני והיה תמים.

"Walk before me and be sincere." (Gen. 17:1)

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך.

"You shall be sincere with the Eternal your God." (Deut. 18:13)

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[598]Compare Pirkei Avot 3:10: כל שרוח הבריות נוחה הימנו רוח המקום נוחה הימנו ["Whoever is pleasing to the spirit of his fellow creatures, the spirit of the Omnipresent is pleased with him"]. The passage presents no difficulty. For it does not say הבריות [the creatures], but רוח הבריות [the *spirit* of the creatures], that is, the conscience, the soul, the true self of man. רוח המקום is used instead of המקום merely for the sake of the parallel phrasing. A proof that I have explained רוח הבריות correctly is that seemingly difficult, yet very apt passage of the *Tosefta* (on Berakhot ch. 3): כל שרוח עצמו נוחה הימנו, סימן יפה לו ["Whoever's own spirit is pleased with him — that is a good sign for him"]. — Thus רוח is the better spirit in us, the conscience. So too above, at 1 Sam. 2:26, not בני אדם but the nobler אנשים is used; — and accordingly רוח הבריות could mean in general *the better people*. — Compare on the whole also Sanhedrin p. 10: כיון שנעשה אדם רש מלמטה נעשה רש מלמעלה ["once a man is made poor below, he is made poor above"] (see Rashi there).

יחד לבבי ליראה שמך.

"Unite my heart to fear your name." (Ps. 86:11)

[p. 278]

עד מתי אתם פסחים על שתי הסעפים.

"How long will you go limping on two thresholds? …" (1 Kings 18:21)

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

"It has been told you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before your God." (Micah 6:8)

בני אל תכזב ביראת ה' ולא תקרב אליו בלב ולב ולא תתפאר בה לעיני בני אדם... פן יגלה ה' מזמותיך בקהל ועדה, יען שקרת ביראת אלהים, ולבך מלא מרמה.

"My son, do not deal falsely in the fear of God, and do not come before God with two hearts.[599] Nor boast of it in the eyes of men … lest God reveal your deceit … because you were not honest in the fear of God, and your heart was full of guile." (Sirach 1:29–33)

639. ***What else belongs to a religious conduct of life?***

A certain *pious insatiability* in it, or a certain untiring striving for ever greater perfection in Religion, even as the Being whom we revere in it is *infinite*.

למען יזמרך כבוד ולא ידם ה' אלהי לעולם אודך.

"That the glorious one (the soul) may praise you and never be silent; Lord my God, without end will I thank you." (Ps. 30:12 [= 30:13])

[p. 279]

כל מה שיפעל האדם עם נפשו אינו יוצא ידי חובתו למה שהיא מלמעלה.

"Whatever a man may do for his immortal soul cannot suffice it, as a heavenly being." (Vayikra Rabbah 4)[600]

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[599] We read this almost literally in Tanḥuma, כי תבא [Ki Tavo]: בשעה שאתם מתפללים לפני הקב"ה לא יהיו לכם שתי לבבות וכו' ["When you pray before the Holy One, blessed be He, you shall not have two hearts," etc.]. That *parents* in particular cause irreparable harm in their children's upbringing through such double-mindedness, my discourse "*The Unforgettable Voices of Awakening*," delivered on Pesaḥ 5594 (in my Sermons, vol. 1, sermon 21, p. 238), has already touched upon.

[600] See my sermon "*The Dangerous Self-Satisfaction*," vol. 2, sermon 14. — And this also seems to me to be the secret of that passage at the close of the Song of Songs (Song 8:8): אחות לנו קטנה וכו' ["We have a little sister," etc.]. It deliberately presents the figurative bride, who has already *reached the goal*, as one still *unripe*, precisely in order thereby to draw attention to the *infinity* of those spiritual strivings in the Song of Songs, *with which one can never reach the goal*. — ! —

640. ***But what is the*** **purpose** ***of all virtue and religion that God intended?***

To dwell among us (השראת השכינה [*hashra'at ha-Shekhinah*]), to be *always near* us, and to pervade us with His spirit, which no one[601] and at no time can do without; and so long as this purpose has not been attained, there can scarcely be any talk of having attained the *true* and final purpose in Religion.

ואני קרבת אלהים לי טוב.

> "And as for me, nearness to God is my highest good." (Ps. 73:28)

ילך נא אדני בקרבנו.

> "May the Lord, I pray, walk in our midst!" (Exod. 31:9 [= 34:9]; see 33:15)

מי יתן כל עם ה' נביאים כי יתן ה' את רוחו עליהם.

> "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:29)[602]

[p. 280] **641.** ***Can you cite for me a saying which states the purpose just mentioned as the goal of Religion, and at the same time contains in few words*** **all religious instruction*?***

Indeed I can, and it may well be the following[603] saying of the famous R. Meir (BT Berakhot 17a):

גמור בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך לדעת את דרכי ולשקוד על דלתי תורתי, נצור תורתי בלבבך, ונגד עיניך תהיה יראתי, שמור פיך מכל חטא, וטהר וקדש שמך מכל אשמה ועון, ואני אהיה עמך בכל מקום.

> "Resolve with all your heart and all your soul to know my ways and to wait at the doors of my teaching; keep my teaching in your heart; have reverence for me before your eyes; guard your mouth from every sin; purify and separate yourself from all guilt and transgression: and *I will be with you everywhere*." —

Addenda

On p. 140, note 1. Thus the remark of our Sages (concerning the connection of the *section on the fringes* with the *rebellion of Korah*, Num. 15:16 [–16:1]) — namely, that that rebel based his claim to the *priesthood* on the *law of the fringes* (see BT Sanhedrin p. 109 and Tanḥuma, קרח [Koraḥ]) — would become clear and intelligible; see my Sermons, vol. 2, p. 216, note 2. — But inasmuch as the priesthood represented *love* (compare Zohar, נשא [Naso], p. 145 ff., and the *blessing before*

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[601] Book of Wisdom 7:22. See Wessely in his commentary. See also his גן נעול [*Gan Na'ul*], part 1, 5:4 and 5; 7:12; 10:1. [Translator: Naphtali Herz Wessely (1725–1805), who wrote a Hebrew commentary on the Wisdom of Solomon; *Gan Na'ul* is his treatise on Hebrew synonyms.]

[602] Compare the important aggadah of R. *Pinḥas ben Ya'ir* (Mishnah Sotah, end), which closes with the *holy spirit* (רוח הקדש) as the goal of the virtues there mentioned. On this saying rests Luzzatto's precious מסלת ישרים [*Mesillat Yesharim*].

[603] My נוזלים מן לבנון [*Nozelim min Levanon*], ch. 34, contains a detailed and instructive interpretation of this aggadah. Wessely, on the Book of Wisdom 7:28, calls this saying מאמר נכבד ["an honored saying"]; in the *Mekhtavim*, מכתב [letter] 2, he says of it: והוא מאמר עמוק מאד למתבוננים בו ["and it is a very profound saying for those who contemplate it"].

the priestly benediction: לברך את עמו ישראל באהבה ["to bless His people Israel with love"]), the fringes will also be the symbols of that quality. — That the tefillin (see the note mentioned), however, are the symbols of *fear*, is already evident from that answer of Rav to R. Jeremiah (BT Berakhot 30 [b]): he feared no danger from his gaiety because he had the *tefillin* on. For these, as reminders of the *fear of God*, are a protection against gaiety degenerating. —

[p. —] # Appendix

Blessings[604]

בכל יום ויום תן לו מעין ברכותיו

"Each and every day give Him [praise] according to His blessings." (BT Berakhot 40a)

The blessings are usually divided, following Maimonides (see the present religious textbook, p. 125 and p. 151 note 1), [p. 282] into three parts: 1) *blessings over the enjoyment of God's gifts*, 2) *blessings on performing religious precepts*, and 3) *blessings of thanksgiving on various occasions*, as for example natural phenomena and the like.

I. Blessings of enjoyment

(ברכות הנהנין)

The blessings of enjoyment, or ברכות הנהנין proper, fall into six preliminary blessings and three after-blessings.

1. Preliminary blessings

(ברכה ראשנה)

a) המוציא; — b) בורא מיני מזונות; — c) בורא פרי הגפן; — d) בורא פרי העץ; — e) בורא פרי האדמה; — f) שהכל נהיה בדברו.

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[604] An important component of Jewish worship. See Yalkut on Ps. 37:21; Midrash on Ps. 53; also the not uninteresting passage in BT Nedarim 38 and BT Sotah 38, טוב עין וכו' ["He who has a good eye," etc.]: Sirach 31:31 (according to the Greek, verse 23, or also verse 26), עינא טבתא על לחמא מברכא ["A good eye blesses over bread"]; also the Introduction to the present religious textbook, pp. 30 and 31. Not knowledge and a dead faith, but application to life is Jewish religion. It was always a most disagreeable phenomenon to me, one that almost spoiled my own religious teaching for me, when boys could answer all the questions of the customary religious textbooks, only not *the one*: *how one says the blessing over an apple?* — What is the use of all the reasoning about God, what is the use of all the words — religion, faith, fear of God — *in the mouth*, if religion and faith and fear of God do not penetrate into life? Our Sages rightly let the instructed and the uninstructed Israelite be recognized by his blessings: מברכותיו של אדם ניכר וכו' ["By a man's blessings it is recognized," etc.] (BT Berakhot 50a). A proof of how important the blessings are is that they fill four chapters in the Talmud and a long series of chapters in the Shulḥan Arukh, as are, further, the explicit teachings (BT Berakhot 35): it is forbidden (אסור) to enjoy anything without a blessing; whoever enjoys thus *robs*, as it were, God (כאלו גוזל וכו') and Israel; and every blessing must have the name of *God* at its head; see BT Berakhot 40; Mishnah Ma'aser Sheni 5:11. To be compared on our subject are: Maimonides, הל' ברכות [Hilkhot Berakhot]; R. Baḥya, שלחן של ארבע [*Shulḥan shel Arba*]; Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 302 [Translator: recte ch. 202] ff.; R. Menaḥem ben Zeraḥ (צדה לדרך [*Tzedah la-Derekh*]) Section 1, Rule 3, ch. 21 ff.; אבודרהם [*Abudarham*]. See especially עמק ברכה [*Emek Berakhah*] pp. 1–20; של"ה [*Shelah*] p. 88b ff.; חיי אדם [*Ḥayyei Adam*] ch. 49 ff.; also the extract in the appendix to ארחות צדיקים [*Orḥot Tzaddikim*]. *The present Appendix will communicate only a few principal teachings on this subject.* —

a) Over *bread* (from one of the *five kinds of grain*: wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt) which as such has been kneaded only with *water*, and to which nothing further has been added, one says:

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

"Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, Lord of the world, who bringest forth bread from the earth."[605]

[p. 283] b) Over the aforementioned *five kinds of grain*, whether they have been crushed into *groats* or otherwise prepared into dishes; as also over *cakes* and *baked goods* of every kind:

בא"י אמ"ה בורא מיני מזונות.

"Blessed .. who createst nourishing foods of various kinds."[606][607]

c) Over *wine*, whether *raw*, *cooked* or mixed with *spices*, provided only that it is not entirely *sour* or otherwise undrinkable:

בא"י אמ"ה בורא פרי הגפן.

"Blessed … who createst the fruit of the vine."

d) Over *fruits of trees* that are generally edible, and in particular properly ripe (also over *grapes*), one says:

בא"י אמ"ה בורא פרי העץ.

"Blessed … who createst the fruits of the tree."

e) Over *produce of the ground* (fruits whose stem dies off in winter), thus over *herbs* and *vegetables*:[608]

בא"י אמ"ה בורא פרי האדמה.

"Blessed … who createst the fruits of the earth."

[p. 284] f) Over all other foods, e.g. *meat*, *fish* and the like, as well as over all dishes prepared from them, and in particular over all *beverages* (with the exception of wine):

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[605]This blessing *exempts us from the blessings over all the dishes that are served at the table*; with the exception, however, of various delicacies taken to aid digestion, e.g. drinks, raw fruits. — The eating of bread, even of the size of an olive, must be preceded by the washing of hands and followed by the ordinary after-blessing (ברכת המזון).

[606]Also the blessing over *wine* makes unnecessary any blessing over other beverages, if these are either already standing before us or we have at least thought of them in the manner mentioned. Likewise the after-blessing over *wine* makes unnecessary that over other beverages that are taken together with the wine.

[607]Translator: Although its marker stands after the blessing for grain dishes (b), Plessner's note that follows concerns the blessing over wine (c).

[608]Over *mushrooms*, *wild fruit*, *rose hips* and similar less generally edible kinds of plants, שהכל is said.

בא"י אמ"ה שהכל נהיה בדברו.

"Blessed … by whose word *all things* came into being."[609]

2. After-blessings

(ברכה אחרנה)

a) The ordinary *Grace after meals* (ברכת המזון)[610] is expressly commanded in the Law (Deut. 8:16)[611] and has become a source of all blessings over bodily and spiritual enjoyments. This Grace (consisting of three blessings) is said after eating bread, whose preliminary blessing is המוציא. (A considerably shorter formula of this blessing than ours is given by Maimonides, סדר התפלה [*Seder ha-Tefillah*], toward the end; see also Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 187.)

b) The *abstract* of the last-mentioned blessing (ברכה מעין שלש) is said after enjoyments whose preliminary blessing is בורא מיני מזונות, as well as after eating those *fruits* that are mentioned in the description of Palestine (Deut. 8:10).[612]

[p. 285] c) The after-blessing בורא נפשות is said after all other enjoyments, foods as well as drinks, that do not belong to the seven species for which the Promised Land is praised; it runs:

בא"י אמ"ה בורא נפשות רבות וחסרונם על כל מה שבראת להחיות בהם נפש כל חי, ברוך חי העולמים.

"Blessed … — Creator of so many beings and their needs — for all that Thou hast created to sustain the life of all the living; blessed art Thou, Ever-living One."[613]

II. Blessings on performing religious precepts

(ברכות המצות)

From this class we single out the following blessings:

On *washing the hands* in the *morning* and before eating:

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[609]This blessing is declared valid as a general one for *each and every* enjoyment, if it has been said by mistake instead of the specific blessing; it is also to be used in doubtful cases where, e.g., the specific blessing for some enjoyment is momentarily unknown to us.

[610]Also called ברכת הזמון [*Birkat ha-Zimmun*], namely when several — at least three — persons have eaten *together* and one *invites* the others to the after-blessing and recites it aloud, usually over a cup (כוס של ברכה) of wine or another beverage.

[611]Translator: The commandment to bless after eating is Deut. 8:10 ("You shall eat and be satisfied, and bless the Lord your God"); the description of the land's seven species, cited in the next paragraph as Deut. 8:10, is Deut. 8:8. The two references appear to have been confused.

[612]*Figs*, *wine* (also *grapes* and *raisins*), *pomegranates*, *olives* and *date honey*.

[613]To the blessings of enjoyment belongs also the blessing over fragrant herbs: בורא עשבי בשמים; over dry spices, e.g. cinnamon: בורא עצי בשמים; over cloves, and especially over several kinds of spice together: בורא מיני בשמים.

בא"י אמ"ה אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על נטילת ידים.

"Blessed … who has sanctified us through His commandments and obligated us to the washing of hands."[614]

On putting on the *fringed garment* (ארבע כנפות):

בא"י אמ"ה אק"ב וצונו על מצות ציצת.

"Blessed ….. w. s. u. t. H. c.[615] and obligated us to the commandment of the fringes."

[p. 286] On putting on the *prayer shawl* (טלית):

בא"י אמ"ה אק"ב וצונו להתעטף בציצת.

"Blessed … w. s. u. t. H. c. and commanded us to wrap ourselves in fringes."

On putting on the *phylacteries* on the arm (תפלין של יד):

בא"י אמ"ה אק"ב להניח תפלין.

"Blessed … w. s. u. t. H. c. and commanded us to put on the phylacteries."

On putting on the *phylacteries* on the *head* (תפלין של ראש):

בא"י אמ"ה אק"ב וצונו על מצות תפלין.

"Blessed … w. s. u. t. H. c. and obligated us to the commandment of the phylacteries."

The person called up to the *scroll of the Law* (ספר תורה),[616] *before* the reading from it, says aloud:

ברכו את ה' המברך.

"Bless the Lord, the One worthy of praise!"

(ברוך ה' המברך לעולם ועד)

(After the congregation has responded:) "Praised in Himself already[617] is the Lord, the One worthy of praise, without end!"

[p. 287]

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[614]The prayer "Who hast formed man in wisdom …" (אשר יצר) is said after relieving oneself. See the explanation of this important prayer in the Tur, א"ח [Oraḥ Ḥayyim] ch. 6, and צידה לדרך [*Tzedah la-Derekh*] 1, 1, 6.

[615]Translator: Plessner abbreviates "der uns durch seine Gebote geheiligt" ("who has sanctified us through His commandments"), rendering the Hebrew abbreviation אק"ב (אשר קדשנו במצותיו); the English keeps his abbreviation.

[616]To this reading (קריאת התורה) are called, on every day of rest in the morning (besides the מפטיר, who concludes this part of the service), at least *seven* persons; on the Day of Atonement *six*; on the high festivals *five*; on the intermediate festival days and New Moons *four*; on Sabbath afternoons, Purim, Ḥanukkah, the fast days, and on the second and fifth day of the week *three* persons (קרואים). The Sabbath reading consists of an entire portion (סדרה), that of other days of smaller sections (פרשיות), from which verses, at least three, are recited. Whoever has completed his thirteenth year should often have himself called up to the scroll of the Law.

[617]See my Apocrypha, note on the Prayer of Azariah, verse 3.

בא"י אמ"ה אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים ונתן לנו את תורתו בא"י נותן התורה.

(the person called up continues:) "Blessed art Thou, Lord …. who once chose us from among all peoples and gave us His Law; blessed art Thou, Lord, Giver of the Law."

After the reading is finished:

בא"י אמ"ה אשר נתן לנו תורת אמת וחיי עולם נטע בתוכנו בא"י נותן התורה.

"Blessed … who has imparted His Law to us and (thereby) planted eternal life among us; blessed art Thou, Lord, Giver of the Law."

On *removing the leaven* (בעור חמץ) in the night before the fourteenth of Nisan:

בא"י אמ"ה אק"ב וצונו על בְעור חמץ.

"Blessed … w. s. u. t. H. c. and obligated us to the removal of the leaven."

In the *booth*, before eating:

בא"י אמ"ה אק"ב וצונו לישב בסכה.

"Blessed … w. s. u. t. H. c. and commanded us to *dwell* in the booth."[618][619]

On taking up the *palm bundle* customary at the last-mentioned festival, for the service:

בא"י אמ"ה אק"ב וצונו על נטילת לולב.

"Blessed … w. s. u. t. H. c. and obligated us to the taking up of the palm bundle."

On kindling the *dedication lights* (נרות חנוכה) at the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple:

בא"י אמ"ה אק"ב וצונו להדליק נר של חנכה.

"Blessed … w. s. u. t. H. c. and commanded us to kindle the light of the Dedication of the Temple."

בא"י אמ"ה שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

"Blessed … who did public[620] miracles for our fathers in those days, at *this* time."

[p. 288] The priests, before beginning the priestly blessing on the festivals:

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[618] לִישַׁב, not לְשֶׁבֶת. See מאסף [*ha-Me'assef*] for the year 5546 [1785/86], p. 57, and J. Jeitteles, מבוא הלשון [*Mevo ha-Lashon*], Introduction (on the fourth benefit of Chaldaic).

[619] Translator: Judah Jeitteles (1773–1838), *Mevo ha-Lashon ha-Aramit* (Prague, 1813), a grammar of Aramaic ("Chaldaic"); *ha-Me'assef* was the Hebrew journal of the Berlin Haskalah.

[620] The above-mentioned blessing is also said on Purim before the *reading* of the Book of *Esther*, namely *after* the blessing על מקרא מגלה. See the reason for this, and at the same time the explanation of the formula itself, in my Sermons, year 1, sermon 15. — To this blessing is also added, both on Purim and on the *first evening* of *Ḥanukkah*, the blessing formula שהחיינו (see the next division of the blessings).

בא"י אמ"ה, אשר קדשנו בקדשתו של אהרן, וצונו לברך את עמו ישראל באהבה.

"Blessed … w. sanctified us with the holiness of Aaron, and commanded us to bless His people with love."

III. Blessings of thanksgiving and praise[621]

(ברכות הודיה ושבח)

We ought to praise God *for everything*; for *everything* happens for the sake of human beings and their happiness; and we ought therefore to seize upon the manifold phenomena of life which remind us of God's power, wisdom, goodness and justice as occasions for praising God, for this very reason: in order *always to have Him before our eyes*. But the more certain phenomena and events are *rare* and *grand*, and make a *stirring*, *pleasant* or *shattering impression* on the senses, the more necessary it is to give that impression, through the blessing, a higher, influential, *sanctifying* direction. — For God created all things for His glory. — And it is this blessing, then, through which we, if it is spoken [p. 289] from the heart, could most beautifully and worthily accomplish the great task set before the Israelite: to *unite nature* and *religion*, the two great sources of instruction in the school of life. (See my Sermons, year 1, sermon 7, introduction — sermon 13 — sermon 18, pp. 279 and 280, and אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*] p. 107.) —

Since we owe God thanks for every *breath* (Bereshit Rabbah ch. 14, end), all the more do we owe it upon *waking* each day;[622] and for this purpose the following formula of thanksgiving, based on Midrash איכה [*Eikhah*] on Lam. 3:23[623] and well worth heeding, is to be said at the moment of awakening:

מודה אני לפניך, מלך חי וקים, שהחזרת בי נשמתי בחמלה, רבה אמונתך.

"I thank Thee, infinite King, that Thou hast in mercy given back my soul to me; great is Thy faithfulness."[624]

On seeing the *new moon* (present religious textbook, p. 185):[625][626]

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[621] One could call them (and in part the ברכות המצות too, were it not said: מצות שלא ליהנות נתנו ["the commandments were not given for enjoyment"]) blessings for *spiritual* enjoyments, and so divide the whole body of blessings into blessings for *bodily* and for *spiritual* enjoyments. —

[622] See my Sermons, year 1, sermon 20, introduction.

[623] על שאתה מחדשנו בכל בקר ובקר אנו יודעין שאמונתך רבה וכו' ["Because Thou renewest us every morning, we know that Thy faithfulness is great," etc.]. See also Midrash on Psalms on Ps. 67.

[624] With rising are connected the daily *thanksgiving blessings* that open the *morning prayer* (ברכות השחר), each of which is based on an occasion worthy of thanks. (See Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 46.)

[625] This קדוש לבנה [sanctification of the moon] is a very important duty. Well known is the error that called into being that verse of Juvenal (14, 102) concerning the Jews: "Nil praeter nubes et coeli numen adorant;" ["They worship nothing but the clouds and the divinity of the sky"].

[626] Translator: On Plessner's note: the verse of Juvenal he cites as 14, 102 is *Satires* 14.97 in modern numbering.

בא"י אמ"ה אשר במאמרו ברא שחקים וכו'.

"Blessed … who by His word created the clouds, etc."

On seeing the *rainbow*,[627] which God established as a covenant:

[p. 290]

בא"י אמ"ה זוכר הברית נאמן בבריתו וקים במאמרו.

"Blessed … who remembers the covenant, is faithful in His covenant and steadfast in His promise."

On seeing *lightning* (not sheet lightning) and other atmospheric phenomena, also on seeing very high *mountains* and *deserts*:

בא"י אמ"ה עושה מעשה בראשית.

"Blessed ….. who ever makes the works of creation."

At *thunder*, *earthquakes* and great *storms*:

בא"י אמ"ה שכחו וגבורתו מלא עולם.

"Blessed …. whose might and strength fill the world."

On seeing the *open* sea:

בא"י אמ"ה שעשה את הים הגדול.

"Blessed .. who made the ocean."

On seeing the trees *budding* in spring:

בא"י אמ"ה שלא חסר בעולמו דבר, וברא בו בריות טובות ואלנות טובות ליהנות מהם בני אדם.

"Blessed … who lets nothing be lacking in His world, and created therein such beautiful creatures and pleasant trees, that human beings might take delight in them."

Over a *new garment*, *new fruits*, the arrival of a *festival*, *rain* after *drought*, and similar joyful occasions recurring after a *long* time:

בא"י אמ"ה שהחיינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

"Blessed … who has let us reach this present time alive and well."[628]

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[627]See Wessely, יין לבנון [*Yein Levanon*] p. 95; but already Zohar בראשית [*Bereshit*] p. 18a: את קשתי נתתי, מן יומא דאתברי עלמא ["I have set My bow" — from the day the world was created]. —

[628]The same blessing (see my explanation of it, Sermons, year 1, sermon 10, p. 159) is also said over good news. If the matter is beneficial to more than *one* person, the blessing הטוב והמטיב is said; over sad news, on the other hand, דין האמת; but since God intends our welfare through everything (BT Berakhot 61), this blessing too should be said with heartfelt sincerity. — Compare, on all the cases and rules of the above blessing, the work composed specially on this subject, ברכת משה [*Birkat Mosheh*], by the late M. Körner (Berlin 5593 [1833]).

[p. 291] Especially important is ברכת הגמל, or the *public* thanksgiving for happy escape from the *fourfold* dangers (Ps. 107): *illness*, *imprisonment*, *deserts* and *sea voyages*. This blessing is said in the presence of 10 persons, because they have to answer it with a wish. (Oraḥ Ḥayyim ch. 219.)

בא"י אמ"ה הגומל לחייבים טובות, שגמלני כל טוב.

> (The one rescued:) "Blessed ….. who does kindnesses to the guilty; He has shown me nothing but goodwill."

מי שגמלך כל טוב והוא יגמלך כל טוב סלה.

> (The congregation:) "May He who has now done thee nothing but good always show thee only good."

Maimonides, although *unnecessary* blessings are a sin (see present religious textbook, p. 17), concludes the chapters on blessings as follows:

כללו של דבר, לעולם יצעק אדם על העתיד לבוא.... ויתן הודיה על מה שעבר, ויודה וישבח כפי כחו, וכל המרבה להודות את ה' ולשבחו תמיד הרי זה משובח.

> "In a word! A person should always entreat God *concerning the future*, and render Him thanks for *the past* (Mishnah Berakhot 9:4); he should thank and praise according to his powers; and the more one *thanks the Eternal* and always praises Him, the *more praiseworthy* is he himself." (Maimonides, Hilkhot Berakhot 10:26)[629]

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[629] See my אבן טובה [*Even Tovah*], lecture 8, lecture 11, p. 236, and in other places besides. —

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[p. —] Corrections

[Two pages of corrections to the German typesetting (page, line, misprint, correction) follow in the original; they are not reproduced here.]