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English translation by Claude from the Dutch of M. M. Cohen, Jr., religion teacher at Pekela: Berit Adonai, of Geloofsbelijdenis voor Israëliten (The Covenant of the Lord, or Confession of Faith for Israelites) (Coevorden: D. H. van der Scheer, 1849). The front pages carry no printed numbers and are marked [p. —]. Proof-texts are printed inline in the original and are kept inline here. Several printed Scripture references appear to be wrong. Each is kept as printed, with the likely correct reference given in a note. Notes beginning "Translator:" are the translator's; the others are the author's.

[p. —] ברית ה׳ [*Berit Adonai*, "The Covenant of the Lord"]

or

Confession of Faith for Israelites,

by

M. M. Cohen, Jr.,[1]

Israelite Religion Teacher at Pekela.

Coevorden, published by D. H. van der Scheer.

1849.

[p. —] *Dear Coreligionists!*

In this little work I offer you a Confession of Faith, composed briefly and comprehensibly. I have treated our religion as the main subject, and regarded moral teaching as its outflow.

By the added letters a, b, c, I have at the same time made it usable for the highest classes in the schools.[2]

I gladly acknowledge that it has been worked up on the basis of a High German little work.

[p. —] May it at the same time further the knowledge of God and of our religion; may the blessing of the Lord descend upon the noble philanthropists who, by furthering the publication of this little work, had a noble aim in view; then most happy will count himself

the Author.

[p. —] Chapter I. The Covenant.

1. Who are you?

I have been created as a human being, whose earthly part, *the body*, was born, lives and dies, and whose divine part, *the soul*, continually develops during life in the body and continues to exist after its death.

At the same time I have been born as an Israelite into the divine covenant, which, concluded with Abraham, was fulfilled at Sinai, is being realized up to the present day, and will endure without

[1] Translator: The title page reads "M. M. Cohen, Jr."; the place is Pekela in the province of Groningen. "Godsd. Israël. Onderwijzer" = Israelite religion teacher (teacher of religion to the Jewish community).

[2] Translator: The address is printed entirely in italics, with "a Confession of Faith" and the letters "a, b, c" set off in roman type.

end. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccl. 12:7).

[p. 6] **2. What purpose does this covenant serve?**

This covenant shall lead those born into it upward to God, by teaching them to know God and to lead a godly life. As Holy Scripture says: "For I have chosen him (Abraham), that he may command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Eternal, to practise righteousness and justice; that the Eternal may bring upon Abraham that which He hath promised him." (Gen. 18:19.)

3. In what does that covenant consist?

That covenant consists:

a. On God's side, in the revelation of His being and of His will, founded upon the direct utterances of the Ten Commandments at Sinai, and carried out in the communications through Moses and the prophets;

b. on the side of the Israelites this covenant consists in the fulfilment of that which this revelation contains. "I will be your God, and ye shall be My people." (Lev. 12:26.)[3]

[p. 7] Chapter II. God.

4. What does this revelation teach of God?

This revelation teaches that God is an almighty Spirit, who called the world out of nothing into existence; that He is the One, since apart from Him no God exists; and that He is a self-subsistent Being, since He consists of no other parts nor of plurality. God says to Moses: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: the Eternal Being who calls Himself I am, the Eternal!" (Exod. 3:14.)

5. How do you know that?

I know this because Holy Scripture says: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1). — "The Eternal is God, in heaven above and upon the earth beneath." (Deut. 4:39). — "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One." (Deut. 6:4).

6. By what is this confirmed?

This is confirmed by the observation that all the works of God have one cause and one origin of their existence, and must have been created according to a highest and single will by a highest and single power. (Isa. 40:26; Job 12:7–9.)

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[3]Translator: Printed "III B. M. 12: 26"; Leviticus 12 has only eight verses. The words are Lev. 26:12.

[p. 8] **7. Can you behold God?**

I behold God after death only with the spirit, which is His breath, because God has no form and clothes Himself in no form, as Holy Scripture says: "Ye saw no manner of form on the day that the Eternal spoke unto you in Horeb." (Deut. 4:15). לא יראני האדם וחי (Exod. 33:20); "for no man can see Me and remain alive."

8. What does revelation say God is for man?

This revelation teaches that God is indispensable for man, so that he is not merely a creature in His world but is even joined in spirit with the Spirit of God, whereby God makes Himself known to the human spirit, directs the deeds of men, and brings his soul to eternal bliss. (Deut. 24:36).[4]

9. How do you know this?

I know this because Holy Scripture says: "If there be a prophet among you, I the Eternal do make Myself known unto him in a vision, I do speak with him in a dream." (Num. 12:6). — "A prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, will the Eternal thy God raise up unto thee." (Deut. 18:15). — "The Eternal of hosts is a righteous Judge." (Isa. 11:20);[5] — "for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or evil." (Eccl. 12:14); — "Perfect [p. 9] is His work, for all His ways are just." (Deut. 32:4). — "Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, because they fear before Him." (Eccl. 8:12).

10. How does Holy Scripture express that relationship between God and men?

Holy Scripture indicates that relationship by the expression: "Ye are the children of the Eternal your God." (Deut. 14:1)

11. What follows from this?

From this it follows that God directs the lot of men and of the whole human race, not merely so that it may exist, as with the other creatures, but toward a more exalted end, which leads to perfection. (Ps. 37:5).

Chapter III. Sanctification.

12. What, therefore, is the most important commandment?

The most important commandment of all is: "Sanctify yourselves, for I the Eternal your God am holy." Lev. 11:14; 19:2; 20:7).[6]

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[4]Translator: Printed "V B. M. 24: 36"; Deuteronomy 24 has only 22 verses, and the intended passage is uncertain (perhaps Deut. 4:36, "Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He might instruct thee").

[5]Translator: Printed "Jes. 11:20"; Isaiah 11 has only 16 verses. The words are Jer. 11:20.

[6]Translator: Printed "III B. M. 11: 14"; the verse is Lev. 11:44. (The opening parenthesis is missing in the original.)

[p. 10] **13. What does that mean?**

This makes known that, just as God is holy, i.e. the most perfect Spirit, in whom all qualities are present in the highest degree, so we too shall sanctify ourselves, i.e. strive to make the divine qualities our own in an ever higher degree. (Deut. 8:6; 10:12; 11:22; 19:9).

14. What is conducive to this?

Conducive to this is that we fill our spirit with the thought of God and bring all our actions into relation with God. King David rightly says: שויתי ה׳ לנגדי תמיד (Ps. 16:8). "I set the Eternal always before me." (Further Deut. 18:13; Gen. 17:1).

15. By what does Holy Scripture make this known?

Holy Scripture teaches us this by adding the pithy saying: *I am the Eternal!* to every weighty commandment.

16. What are the chief elements of sanctification?

These are *love*, *righteousness*, *abstention from sin*, *atonement*, and the *sanctifying means*.

[p. 11] Chapter IV. Of Love.

17. What do you know of God's love?

I know that God is infinite love, since He created and sustains the world, and has revealed the truth to men for the sake of their own welfare. (Ps. 145:9.)

18. How does man sanctify himself through love?

Through love man can sanctify himself

a) in that, first, he loves God with all his faculties above all things, as Holy Scripture says: "Thou shalt love the Eternal thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might." (Deut. 6:5);

b) in that, second, he loves his neighbour just as God has implanted in him to love himself, i.e. above all things that are not the true welfare of his soul; as [p. 12] Holy Scripture says: "Love thy[7] neighbour as thyself" (Lev. 19:13).[8]

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[7]Under the Hebrew word רעך "thy neighbour" we understand every human being, without taking any difference whatsoever into account. Holy Scripture substantiates this with sufficient proofs, e.g. איש מאת רעהו (Exod. 11:2), "let every man ask of his *neighbour*"; חושי הארכי רעה דוד (II Sam. 16:16), "Hushai the Archite, David's friend." — Although they were idolaters, they are called in Hebrew רעה [*re'ah*, neighbour/friend]; for more on this see פחד יצחק 3, p. 7; ס׳ הברית M[a'amar] 13, section 5, ח״ב [part 2]; but especially the excellent preface to הגיון לב by H. Edelman, Königsberg 1845. [The Hebrew of II Sam. 16:16 is printed with הערכי for הארכי. The works cited are Isaac Lampronti's Talmudic encyclopedia *Paḥad Yitzḥak*; Pinchas Elijah Hurwitz's *Sefer ha-Berit*; and *Hegyon Lev*, the prayer book with commentary by Hirsch (Zvi Hirsch) Edelmann, Königsberg 1845.]

[8]Translator: Printed "III B. M. 19, 13"; the commandment is Lev. 19:18.

19. What are the principal works of love?

The principal works of love are: "*peaceableness* and *mercy*: בקש שלום ורדפהו (Ps. 34:15)." "Seek peace and pursue it. — If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou heapest glowing coals upon his head, and the Eternal will reward thee." (Prov. 25:21).

[p. 13] Chapter V. Righteousness.

20. What do you know of God's righteousness?

I know that God is perfectly good, and requires the good of men, as it was revealed to them; therefore He judges the deeds of men and leaves no evil action unpunished, but on the other hand no good one unrewarded, as it is said in Holy Scripture: "God repays man according to his work, and causes every man to find according to his ways." (Job 34:11).

21. How do reward and punishment take place?

Reward and punishment do not always follow upon the deed, but according to God's wise views concerning us, at an earlier or later age, sometimes even *after* death. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. But though a sinner do evil a hundred times [p. 14] and obtain forbearance, yet I am firmly convinced that it shall be well with them that fear God, because they fear before Him." (Eccl. 8:11, 12).

22. How does man sanctify himself through righteousness?

Man can sanctify himself through righteousness in that he,

a. fearing God as the omniscient Judge, both in public and in secret, refrains for His sake from every evil deed, as Holy Scripture often says: "Thou shalt fear the Eternal thy God!" and likewise the Preacher: "Fear God, and keep His commandments." (Eccl. 12:13). — In that man

b. refrains from every unrighteousness against his neighbour, and lets each have his due, and withholds from no one anything that belongs to him. — See the 15th Psalm and its conclusion: "*He that doeth these things shall never be moved.*"

In connection with *love*, *sanctification* and *righteousness*, compare our translation of *The Eight Chapters of Maimonides'* Psychology, the 4th, 5th and 6th chapters, together with the Notes. (Groningen, Gebr. Oppenheim, 1845.)[9]

[9]Translator: Maimonides' *Shemonah Perakim* ("Eight Chapters"), the introduction to his commentary on Mishnah Avot; the author's Dutch translation appeared at Groningen in 1845.

[p. 15] ## Chapter VI. Abstention from Sin.

23. Do all men sanctify themselves through love or through righteousness?

Not all men attain that perfection. Through *a voluntary transgression* of God's commandment (sin) they often let themselves be governed by their sensual lusts and desires, so that reason goes astray and conscience is miserably trodden underfoot. "The thoughts of the righteous are right; but the counsels of the wicked are deceit." (Prov. 12:5.)

24. Can man also offer resistance to sin?

a. God has granted man a divine will, in order to preserve his innocence through perseverance in the good. Let us think of the virtuous Joseph and his saying: ואיך אעשה הרעה הגדלה הזאת וחטאתי לאלהים (Gen. 39:9). "How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God!"

[p. 16] *b.* God has proclaimed to man His word, which will safeguard him as a guide against going astray. Rightly does King David say: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105). "If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? — But if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door: unto thee is its desire: *but thou mayest* rule over it."[10]

25. What evil consequences does that have for man?

The evil consequences of committing a sin man carries about with him immediately after the deed: *conscience*, the voice of God within us, reproaches us for every transgression against God or man. "And they heard the voice of the Eternal God, ... and Adam and his wife hid themselves" (Gen. 3:8). — The wicked are like a troubled sea; they can come to no rest (Isa. 48:22; 50:27).[11] — "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting reproach and shame." (Dan. 12:2).

26. Since God has created man for sanctification and perfection, what purpose then does sin serve?

Since God wishes to educate man for a holy end, free will had to leave the choice to man, in order to prepare him for an eternal life; for, if there [p. 17] existed no struggle, there would be no victory. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse! Choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed." (Deut. 30:19).

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[10] Translator: Gen. 4:7; no reference is printed.

[11] Translator: Printed "Jeschaj. 48:22; 50:27"; Isaiah 50 has only 11 verses. The image of the troubled sea is Isa. 57:20 (cf. 57:21 and 48:22).

Chapter VII. Of Atonement.

27. What do you know of God's atonement?

I know that God gladly forgives the repentant sinner and blots out his guilt when he amends his ways, as Holy Scripture says: "The Eternal, the Eternal, God almighty, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and of infinite lovingkindness and truth; who keepeth His lovingkindness unto thousands of generations, who forgiveth iniquity, transgression and sin; who yet leaveth nothing unpunished, but visiteth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation." (Exod. 34:6, 7).

[p. 18] **28. How can God forgive, since as Judge He must punish?**

God can forgive man in that He unalterably causes the consequences to follow upon the evil deed, both in temporal disadvantages and in the torment of a restless conscience, here and hereafter, but on the other hand frees the soul from its guilt and lets it draw near to Him again through purification. "If thou direct thy heart toward Him, and stretch out thy hands toward Him, then put away the evil that is in thy hand, and let no unrighteousness dwell in thy tents: then canst thou lift up thy face without blemish, stand firm, and fear nothing." (Job 13–15).[12]

29. How does man sanctify himself through atonement?

Man can sanctify himself through atonement if he

a. draws near to God through sincere remorse, penance and amendment, and obtains His forgiveness, as Holy Scripture says: "When the wicked turneth from his wickedness, and doeth justice and righteousness, he shall live thereby." (Ezek. 33:19);

b. if man makes reparation for the damage and disgrace that he has caused his neighbour. The divine prophet rightly says: "When the wicked turneth from his sins, and doeth justice and righteousness, so that the wicked restoreth the pledge, maketh good again what he had robbed, and walketh in the statutes [p. 19] of life, and committeth no more iniquity: then he shall live and not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be remembered against him; he hath done justice and righteousness: he shall live!" (Ezek. 32:14–16).[13]

30. Does God need any means in order to reconcile the repentant sinner?

God needs no means in order to reconcile the repentant sinner, since God's mercy is infinite, and He looks down kindly from heaven upon the sinner, in order to reconcile him through Himself, as Holy Scripture says: "I, even I, blot out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and I will not

[12] Translator: Printed "Ijob 13—15"; the passage is Job 11:13–15.

[13] Translator: Printed "Jechesk. 32: 14—16"; the passage is Ezek. 33:14–16.

remember thy sins. (Isa. 43:25). — I make thy transgressions vanish as a cloud, thy sins as a mist; return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee." (Isa. 44:22).

31. Does man need any special means in order to obtain God's atonement?

Man indeed needs no special means whatsoever to obtain God's atonement, since repentance and amendment suffice to attain God's atonement; but he does need some means to awaken in his soul the need for this atonement, *and* to lead him on the way of repentance and amendment. For the Israelite the *Great Day of Atonement* has been instituted for this, on the 10th day of the 7th [p. 20] month, with fasting and devotional prayers and supplications, as Holy Scripture says: "On this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Eternal." (Lev. 16:30).

Chapter VIII. Of the Sanctifying Means.

32. What are the means that religion employs and offers for the awakening and furthering of this sanctification?

These means are, first:

the *Sabbath* and the *Festivals*, as chosen times in which, out of ordinary life, an approach to the life in God is given, through release from all earthly labour, in order to consecrate them to God.

(The festivals are: 1) *Pesach* — on the eve of the 15th of Nisan — as the festival of an ever-renewing consecration of the Israelites as [p. 21] confessors of the One God, founded as the celebration of the exodus at the *redemption* from Egypt; 2) *Shavuot* — on the eve of the 6th of Sivan — as the festival of the proclamation of the law at Sinai and of the Israelite confession; 3) *Rosh Hashanah* — on the eve of the 1st of Tishri — as the festival of self-examination and self-confession of guilt[14]; 4) *Sukkot* — on the eve of the 15th of Tishri — as the festival of God's benefactions in nature and history, founded in remembrance of the journey through the wilderness.

They are, secondly:

Prayer and *divine service*, in which an elevation out of the ordinary state of the soul, and an approach to God, is given through a direct elevation to Him, for which the *four* principal fasts in particular offer a fitting occasion.

They are, thirdly:

Precepts, מצות עשה ולא תעשה [positive and negative commandments], standing in relation to the outward manner of life, which have as their content and aim partly a perpetual remembrance of

[14]Concerning *Yom Kippur* see the chapter *on Atonement*. — The other fast days and the half-festivals likewise belong to the means of awakening to sanctification.

God and of revelation; partly the furthering of self-control and of more practised virtues; partly the purity of soul and body.

[p. 22] Chapter IX. Of the Future.

33. What future has been revealed to us?

It has been revealed to us that in the future the members of this covenant will together devote themselves wholly to Him; — that one day the whole human race will acknowledge and confess the One God; — that then, too, there will dawn for Israel a time of complete freedom and restoration, and for the whole human race a time of universal peace and universal godliness. "*But it shall be one day which is known unto the Eternal; — it shall be neither day nor night: then at evening time it shall be light. — Then shall the Eternal alone be King over all the earth.* [p. 23] *On that day the Eternal shall be acknowledged as One Being, and His name shall be: the Eternal!*" (Zech. 14:7 and 9.)[15] Further, the prophets have proclaimed all this at length; partly as the development of human circumstances — virtue, piety, and universal acknowledgment of God's unity; — partly as clearly and plainly bound up in those prophecies with the coming of a special divine envoy — משיח [Messiah] — *God's kingdom on earth*! — אשרי המחכה ויגיע (Dan. 12:12.) *Happy is he that waiteth and cometh!*

[p. 24] Chapter X. The Ten Commandments.

The First Commandment.

I am the Eternal, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

What does this mean?

We shall acknowledge and confess the eternal, unchangeable Being as the One God, as a Redeemer from every oppression, before Whom the lowliest and the most eminent are equal, and Who has revealed Himself *to* and *through* Israel.

The Second Commandment.

Thou shalt have no other gods before My face. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness of that which is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them, for I the Eternal thy God am a jealous God, who visiteth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and the fourth

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[15] On this one should read, besides the prophets themselves, *Maimonides*, the *Ikkarim*, etc., *Abarbanel's* commentary on Isaiah and the other prophets, but above all the excellent treatise written on it in the well-composed Hebrew work צרור החיים by the Very Reverend, Most Learned Mr. *A. Löwenstam*. [Translator: Joseph Albo's *Sefer ha-Ikkarim*; Isaac Abarbanel's commentaries on the Prophets; *Tseror ha-Ḥayyim* by Abraham Levi Löwenstamm (1775–1839), Chief Rabbi of Emden.]

generation, of those — namely — that hate Me. But showing mercy unto thousands of generations, of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

What does this mean?

[p. 25] a.) We shall worship and honour the One God alone, and no beings as divine beside Him, since this would be vain religion; —

b.) we shall honour and worship the One God only in the spirit, but never in any image or likeness, since this too would be vain religion; —

c.) we shall also know that God will not let this, any more than evil, go unpunished, without further harmful consequences that will still make children or children's children unhappy; but on the other hand rewards the faithful servant, so that his merits spread blessing over many generations; — for the Eternal has confirmed it by His word, and watches over His pious ones: but whoever denies Him, denies his own eternal salvation.

The Third Commandment.

Thou shalt not utter the name of the Eternal thy God in vain; for the Eternal will not leave him unpunished who uttereth His name in vain.

What does this mean?

a.) We shall keep the name of the All-Holy holy, and neither lie nor deceive, nor utter God's name in confirmation of a lie, i.e. not swear falsely, nor commit perjury. [p. 26] Do not believe that, because it is only the name of God that you use, it would remain unpunished: but know that you profane the All-Holy, *and* deny loyalty *and* faith.

b.) Only when we must take an oath before the judge in confirmation of the truth are we free to utter that name. Moses says very wisely: "The Eternal thy God shalt thou fear, Him shalt thou serve, to Him shalt thou cleave, then thou mayest swear by His name." (Deut. 10:20; Jer. 4:2; Zech. 8:17; Mal. 3:5.)

c.) And where, in our prayers, the name of the Eternal must be uttered, the same reverence and sanctity must animate us, in order to acknowledge Him as One and eternal in word and in thought.

The Fourth Commandment.

Remember always the day of rest — Sabbath — to keep it holy. Six days thou mayest labour and do all thy work. But the seventh day is a day of rest in honour of the Eternal thy God; then thou shalt do no work, neither thou thyself, nor thy son or thy daughter, nor thy manservant or thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is therein, and on the seventh day He rested; [p. 27] therefore the Eternal blessed the sabbath day and declared it holy.

What does this mean?

a. So that man may not wholly lose himself in ordinary life devoted to civic occupations, and thereby lose sight of the way of sanctification and of all religious, spiritual life, — therefore the day of rest has been instituted, which we shall consecrate to the Eternal with prayer and meditation, abstaining from all labour. The prophet Isaiah says: "If on the Sabbath thy feet rest; if thy lusts are silent on My holy day; if thou call the Sabbath a *delight*, to hallow the honoured name of the Eternal, and honour Him by abstaining from thy earthly occupations; if the soul is silent of vain wishes, the mouth of idle chatter, — oh! then shalt thou delight thyself in the Eternal." (Isa. 58:13, 14a).

b. Through this we come to the conviction that God created the universe out of nothing; and that, just as He, at the end of the creation which He completed for ever, brought His work to an end, so we too shall have completed our earthly work on the seventh day, and devote ourselves to the life in God. For thus says the Eternal: "Every one that keepeth the Sabbath, so that he profaneth it not, and holdeth fast by My covenant, him will I bring to the mountain of My holiness, and make him joyful in My house of prayer." (Isa. 57:2, 4, 5 and 6).[16]

[p. 28] **The Fifth Commandment.**

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

What does this mean?

a. We shall revere the holiest bonds of nature, those of filial love, i.e. we shall *love and fear*, in the fullest sense of the word, our parents, who next to God have the greatest claim on our respect, love and gratitude. Solomon says: "Hearken unto thy father that begot thee; and despise not thy mother, even when she is old." (Prov. 23:22).

b. Thus we shall not deny the prompting of our hearts, and shall show and pay reverence to that divine love which we observe in the care and upbringing given by our parents' love, also toward our other blood relations, our teachers, educators, toward old age and the authorities: so that in social life the bonds of love may already make us happy among ourselves, and bring us to bliss.

The Sixth Commandment.

Thou shalt not murder.

What does this mean?

a. This divine utterance teaches us: to bring no injury whatever upon the person of our neighbour, [p. 29] neither directly to the body, much less such as could result in death, — nor any insult that

[16] Translator: Printed "Jes. 57: 2, 4, 5 en 6"; the passage is Isa. 56 (verses 2, 4–7).

could deliberately cause him any vexation or sorrow. Holy Scripture says: "And surely your blood, on which your life depends, will I require; at the hand of every living thing will I require it; and at the hand of man..... Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man." (Gen. 9:5, 6).

b. It teaches us at the same time to honour our own body as a temple of God; in no way to undermine our own health; but to revere our own person as well as that of every human being, since, being created in God's image, it likewise has a claim on our love and respect. Let us remember the saying of Holy Scripture: "*Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves!*" (Deut. 4:15).

The Seventh Commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

a. We shall keep our thoughts far from all unchastity and lewdness, not defile ourselves in word or in deed, and above all keep marital love and fidelity holy;

b. the lust which undermines our health, [p. 30] engraves the traces of our passions on the face, and avenges itself not only on the body but even on the soul, shall be an unknown exile among us. Our soul must remain housed in a pure body, and in temptation to profanation we must say with the chaste Joseph: "*How could I do such a great evil, and sin against God!*" Compare with this the saying: "Keep yourselves holy, then shall ye be holy, I am the Eternal your God." (Lev. 20:7; 11:44).

The Eighth Commandment.

Thou shalt not steal.

What does this mean?

a. We shall cause our neighbour no damage whatever to his property, neither openly by violence nor secretly by deceit or cunning;

b. even that by which someone could, through misleading or deceit, obtain a false idea of our actions, גונב דעת [*genevat da'at*, "stealing the mind," deception], is included under this. Fitting here is the admonition: "Ye shall not wrong one another[17]; but thou shalt fear thy God; for I am the Eternal your God." (Lev. 25:17).

[17] On the word "neighbour" see the note to No. 18. [Translator: The Dutch reads "Niemand uwer zal zijne naasten benadeelen," literally "none of you shall wrong his neighbour."]

[p. 31] **The Ninth Commandment.**

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

What does this mean?

a. We shall continually take pains to live truth and sincerity, and always to testify to the purer truth, however it may turn out. "Truth endureth for ever." (Prov. 12:19a);

b. On the other hand we shall contradict false slander, shun hypocrisy, and use speech, as God's most precious gift, for the sanctification and spreading of truth: "*Life and death are in the power of the tongue.*" (Prov. 18:21a).

The Tenth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant or his maidservant, nor his ox or his ass, nor anything else that belongeth to thy neighbour.

What does this mean?

We shall not only strive to follow the good and upright in our actions, but always try to suppress in ourselves the evil desire which can encroach upon our neighbour's property or honour, in order thereby to root out of ourselves the root of all wickedness. Holy [p. 32] Scripture says: "Thou shalt hold wholly to the Eternal thy God!"[18]

All this we shall fulfil for the sake of God's revealed will; which has been proclaimed to us as His holy will, for *our* welfare. — Choose life. Amen!

Chapter XI, or Conclusion.

The Israelite religion therefore teaches you:

a. to acknowledge and confess the Almighty, One and Simple, self-subsistent God, who is at the same time a direct God for man, infinite love, the righteous Judge and merciful Reconciler;

b. to walk the way of sanctification, because this God is holy; through love of God and of one's neighbour, through righteousness and the fear of God and the removal of every unrighteous deed; through atonement with God in remorse, penance and amendment, and with one's neighbour through restitution of damage; — through all the sanctifying means in Sabbath and Festivals, prayer and divine service, together with all moral duties, *and* finally through the fulfilment of all His commandments, according to the law revealed to Moses at Sinai;

c. to *know*, acknowledge, and in this consciousness to trust and rest assured, that after such a God-pleasing and sanctified life a continuation awaits your soul, for purification and bliss!

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[18] Translator: Deut. 18:13 ("Thou shalt be wholehearted with the Lord thy God"); no reference is printed.