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They are offered so readers can explore and compare these catechisms. They are not a scholarly edition. Anyone quoting or citing these texts for research should work from the original printed books.

English translation by Claude of Hirsch B. Fassel, Chief Rabbi of Groß-Kanizsa (Nagykanizsa), Dat Moseh we-Israel: Mosaic-Rabbinic Religious Doctrine, Worked Out Catechetically for Instruction, third revised and improved edition (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1863). The catechism is in ten Sections and a Conclusion. Question numbers start again in each Section. References such as [n. 42] point to Fassel's numbered Notes at the end of the book, which are translated in full. The French approbation is translated from the French. Hebrew proof-texts follow the standard Masoretic text. Where Fassel's printed references are evidently wrong, they are kept and corrected in a note. Unnumbered pages are marked [p. —]. Notes beginning "Translator:" are the translator's; the others are Fassel's.

[p. —] דת משה וישראל (Dat Moshe ve-Yisra'el)

The
Mosaic-Rabbinic

Religious Doctrine,

worked out catechetically for instruction
by
Hirsch B. Fassel,
Chief Rabbi (Oberrabbiner) at Groß-Kanizsa, author of the works: "Mosaic-Rabbinic Civil Law"; "Mosaic-Rabbinic Judicial Procedure"; "Mosaic-Rabbinic Doctrine of Virtue and Law"; "The Ten Words of the Covenant", etc., etc. Holder of the Golden Cross of Merit and of the Imperial-Royal Austrian, the Russian and the Saxon Great Gold Medal for Art and Science.[1]

Third revised and improved edition.
Vienna, 1863.
Wilhelm Braumüller
Imperial-Royal Court Bookseller.
[p. —] Printed by F. B. Geitler in Vienna.

[p. —] Preface to the First Edition.

With no work is one so much driven to plagiarism as with a book of religion. By its very nature it must in and of itself be plagiarism, for whatever is not taken from Holy Scripture is not religion. But in the outward presentation, too, plagiarism is unavoidable, given the many books of religion already in existence.

I therefore openly confess that a number of religious textbooks served me as a basis in composing this book, such as *Emunath we-De'oth* by Dr. W. Wessely; *Or Tora we-Ner Mizwah* by Leopold Breuer; *Unterricht in der mosaischen Religion* by J. Johlson; *Lehrbuch der israelitischen Religion*

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[1] Translator: The Hebrew title means "The Religion of Moses and Israel." Groß-Kanischa (Groß-Kanizsa) is Nagykanizsa in south-western Hungary. Fassel's works referred to are *Das mosaisch-rabbinische Civilrecht*, *Das mosaisch-rabbinische Gerichtsverfahren*, *Die mosaisch-rabbinische Tugend- und Rechtslehre* and *Die zehn Worte des Bundes*.

by the Royal Israelite Supreme Church Authority at Stuttgart, etc., etc.;[2] but I have endeavoured to make the plagiarism of the kind told of in the Talmud, where a theft is related that consisted in taking a silver cup and putting a golden one in its place (BT Sanhedrin 39a). I [p. II] do not believe that in saying this I express any immodesty, for it is quite natural that the dwarf who sits on the shoulder of a giant, for all his dwarfishness, nevertheless sees further than the giant.

Many years of practice have taught me that a book of religion should be worked out strictly catechetically, every answer given as briefly as possible, and a longer one divided, as far as practicable, into *several parts*.

I have further come to the view that citing many scriptural passages in support of a principle given in an answer is something superfluous, and even an overburdening of the memory. In a Jewish religious school, Bible instruction must not be lacking; the religious textbook is there to grasp the principles of religion, not to enrich biblical knowledge, and I have therefore added to each doctrinal statement only *one* scriptural passage.

On the other hand, I find it expedient that the pupil, at least the male pupil, should commit the scriptural passages to memory in the original language; and since almost all Hebrew works are composed without vowel points, the Jewish pupil should be accustomed early on to read scriptural passages without vowel points. With longer passages, however, memorization in the original language can be demanded only of pupils in the higher classes; but such pupils must already have advanced far enough in biblical knowledge to be able to look up an indicated passage in Holy Scripture for themselves; for this reason I have had only the short passages printed in the original language.

The Torah, as the first and holiest book of religion, [p. III] contains the deepest and highest truths: truths that are ever new even to the greatest thinker; grand heavenly truths that unfold ever and again afresh the deeper one penetrates into the sacred content; truths that no human mind has yet exhausted and none ever will; and the Torah is clothed in a content and given in a language that can be made intelligible and comprehensible even to the mind of a child. The student of theology is not instructed in a different Torah, but only by a different teacher in the Torah, than the little pupil in the religious school; that is, for the student of theology the instruction in the Torah is more extensive and deeper. In such a manner a religious textbook for instruction should be composed: the highest philosophy of religion must be capable of being attached to the doctrinal statements as expressed, and yet these must be given in such a way that they can be made intelligible even to a child's understanding.

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[2] Translator: The works meant are probably Wolf Wessely's *Emunot ve-De'ot*; Leopold Breuer's *Or Torah ve-Ner Mitzvah*; Joseph Johlson's *Unterricht in der mosaischen Religion*; and the official *Lehrbuch der israelitischen Religion* issued by the Royal Israelite Supreme Church Authority (Oberkirchenbehörde) of Württemberg in Stuttgart.

In the order of the Sections I have kept in view the laws of correct thinking; but since every scholarly presentation can only be imparted successively and in separate parts, it is not exactly necessary that this order be strictly retained in instruction as well. As long as the pupil has mastered the whole of religious doctrine, it makes no difference which Section he was taught first. Indeed, even within one and the same Section the teacher must be left free to omit one or another doctrinal statement given here in question and answer if it exceeds the capacity of his class.

To the mind of the child and the youth, everything and [p. IV] anything should be given as religion: murder, theft, etc., as vice, because God has forbidden it; and morality, charity, etc., as virtue, because God has commanded it. For this reason I have given the systematic division into duties toward God, toward oneself and toward other people only in the concluding chapter, as mnemonic points of reference, so to speak. But in the ten Sections of the religious textbook everything is presented as a duty toward God, because God has so commanded it; and for that reason I have also sought to develop the whole law of virtue and the whole moral law from the Ten Commandments and from the attributes of God. In the 4th Section, however, I have attempted to make clear the distinction between commandments of virtue, of law, and of statute.

Done in Tishri 5615, that is, according to the common reckoning, in October 1854.

[p. —] Preface to the Second Edition.

Although the present book is the result of many years of practice in religious instruction, I nevertheless had it printed in the first edition only as a manuscript, in order to test it thoroughly through practical teaching; I wished, at least in this one respect, to resemble a חבר [*chaver*, a fellow of the learned], "who lets nothing incomplete go out of his hands."

I submitted a copy of the first edition to the High Authority, *praemissis titulis*,[3] with the request that it be examined. For this purpose I did not name myself as the author, so as neither to bribe nor to prejudice the reviewer by my name, as I stated in my petition: "— — It is the religious textbook, not the author, that is to be examined; therefore it is not necessary for the reviewer to know that the author of the 'Mosaic-Rabbinic Civil Law,' etc., etc., is also the author of this book." The High Imperial-Royal Department of the Lieutenancy, by high decree dated Ödenburg, 3 December 1856, No. 26984, forwarded to me the review that had been received, with the notice "that the petitioner may take it into account in the 2nd edition; a polemic about it would be permitted."

Although this review is for the most part extravagant and also mistaken in many respects, I have nevertheless taken it into account in this 2nd edition, which in any case has been revised throughout and also [p. VI] improved in manifold ways. Only what was all too extravagant, such as, for example, "that the forty principal kinds of work less one" on the Sabbath should be treated in the

[3]Translator: "P. T." (*praemissis titulis*, "the due titles being presupposed") is the customary Austrian abbreviation standing in place of an official's full titles. Ödenburg is Sopron, seat of a department of the Imperial-Royal Lieutenancy for Hungary.

religious textbook;[4] and again, what conflicts with my principles, as when, for example, the review asserts: "A Jew may call upon angels or the dead to intercede for him with God, and the like," I could not take into account.

I further sent the 1st edition to renowned authorities and men of ability in Israel, and have made use of the hints they gave me in this 2nd edition. I feel obliged to particular thanks toward the venerable Chief Rabbi Mr. Sal. Rappoport,[5] who with much learning and great acumen expressed some criticisms to me, and concluded his deeply learned letter of 23 April of last year with the words: "I now most urgently beg you to undertake a new edition of your otherwise excellent religious textbook, and to alter all the passages criticized." And this has been done: the passages that he found too ambiguous I have either omitted or altered, and the principles he contested I have given differently and in improved form.

With confidence I now hand over to the public this religious doctrine, which, although worked out catechetically for religious instruction, can also serve adults, sons and daughters, as a book of edification, and I hope that it will live to see several more editions.

Groß-Kanizsa, in Shevat 5618, that is, in February 1858.

[p. —] Preface to the Third Edition.

The 2nd edition was approved for religious instruction by high decree of the Imperial-Royal Ministry of Worship and Education, communicated through the High Imperial-Royal Department of the Lieutenancy, dated Ödenburg, 31 August 1858, No. 16538, with the rider: "Since a careful examination of the work, along with its merits, has brought to light a number of shortcomings, the corrections enclosed in copy, which are taken from an expert opinion, are forwarded to you for possible use in the new edition"; and these shortcomings that were found have now also been corrected in this third edition, which has besides been improved.

May the opinion of the venerable Israelite Central Consistory of France still find its place here.[6]

I have read and examined the Catechism that Mr. Fassel, Chief Rabbi of Groß-Kanizsa, has published under the title "Mosaisch-rabbinische Religionslehre." This collection, which is distinguished by a well-conceived and skilfully executed plan, by the clarity and precision of the questions and the [p. VIII] answers, and by a happy choice of quotations drawn from the Bible and the Talmud, offers within a suitable framework a methodical and conscientious exposition of the Israelite doctrine and traditions, and commends itself at once as a book of edification and as a school book. I therefore hasten to give this work my entire approval, and I congratulate the author,

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[4] Translator: The thirty-nine principal categories of labour forbidden on the Sabbath (Mishnah Shabbat 7:2), traditionally described as "forty less one."

[5] Translator: Solomon Judah Leib Rapoport (1790–1867), Chief Rabbi of Prague.

[6] Both are originals.

already known by his remarkable scholarly works, on having wished to endow the youth and the families of our coreligionists with an elementary treatise whose reading and study can only be very profitable to them.[7]

Paris, 17 August 1858.

The Grand Rabbi of the Central Consistory of the Israelites of France

(L.S.) **S. Ulmann.** m.p.

Chief Rabbi Mr. Fassel honoured me by sending me the new edition of his "Mosaic-Rabbinic Religious Doctrine," which I have read through with attention and pleasure.

Although the author, who is as modest as he is honourably known for his scholarly achievements, has no need of my judgment, I nevertheless cannot refrain from conveying to him, together with the expression of my thanks, that of my complete approval.

This work, composed in short and clear questions and answers, confirmed and illustrated by well-chosen, apposite Bible texts and passages of the Talmud, seems to me, in form and content, entirely suited to fulfil the author's purpose of furthering instruction in the Israelite doctrines of faith and life, and of awakening a genuinely religious sense for the performance of duties in the youthful mind. Combined with the study of the Holy Books, which works of this kind make more intelligible but by no means dispensable, this Mosaic-Rabbinic Religious Doctrine provides an excellent method of preparing the young for knowledge of the Jewish traditions.

I am therefore glad to join my honoured colleagues in recognizing the merit of the author and in recommending this achievement of his as a very useful school book and book of edification.

The Chief Rabbi of France

S. Ulmann.

Groß-Kanizsa, in Cheshvan 5622, that is, November 1862.[8]

[p. —] First Section. Of Religion in General, and for Whom It Is.

1. ***What does religious doctrine teach us?***

Religious doctrine instructs us about what we are to believe, and what we are to do or not do, in order to make ourselves pleasing to God for our own salvation and good.

2. ***Of what, accordingly, does religion consist?***

Religion consists of faith, disposition and action, that is, of doing or refraining.

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[7] Translator: This paragraph and the signature beneath it are in French in the original; they are printed in the left-hand column of pp. VII–VIII, with the German text that follows set beside them in the right-hand column. Salomon Ulmann (1806–1865) was Grand Rabbi of the Central Consistory of France from 1853.

[8] Translator: Cheshvan 5622 fell in October–November 1861; November 1862 corresponds to Cheshvan 5623. One of the two figures is evidently a misprint.

3. ***And what is the purpose of religion?***

The purpose of religion is to serve God, and in serving God we further our own salvation.

4. ***Is it only man who can serve God?***

Not man alone, but all creatures serve God, for they fulfil His will.

ברכו ה׳ כל צבאיו — ברכו ה׳ כל מעשיו

> "Bless God, all ye His hosts." — "Bless God, all ye His works" (Ps. 108:21, 22) [n. 1].[9]

5. ***But can this also be called religion?***

No; for the worship of the other creatures is without consciousness and without free will.

6. ***What, then, does it mean to have religion?***

To have religion means: to serve God with knowledge, consciousness and of one's own free will; and only man can do this.

[p. 2] **7.** ***What, then, is man in comparison with the other earthly beings?***

Man is the most excellent earthly being, and is therefore called "the image of God."

בצלם אלהים ברא אתו

> "In the image of God He created him" (Gen. 1:27).

8. ***Does this pre-eminence consist in man's body?***

This pre-eminence does not consist in the body; for although man already differs to his advantage from the other creatures in his body, such as in his nobler form, his upright gait, his capacity for speech, and so on, yet the real pre-eminence of man, which makes him worthy to be called an image of God, consists only in his spirit, that is, in his soul endowed with reason.

ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים

> "And He breathed into his countenance a living — that is, an everliving — soul" (ibid. 2:7).

9. ***What are the faculties of the human spirit?***

The faculties of the human spirit consist in the capacity *to think, to judge and to infer*; in the capacity *to feel* or to have consciousness; in the capacity *to will*, or free will; and in *conscience*.

10. ***How might the capacity to think, to judge and to infer be explained more closely?***

When I have an idea of any thing, I think about something, e.g., the world. When I fix this concept by something, that is, when I state something about it, I judge: e.g., the world is great, the world

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[9] Translator: The verses are Ps. 103:21–22; "108" is a misprint.

did not create itself, and the like; and when I deduce one thing from another, I have inferred, e.g.: Since the world did not make itself, God must surely have created it.

11. ***What is the capacity to think, to judge and to infer called in one word?***

This capacity is called: reason, in which consciousness also lies.

[p. 3] **12.** ***What is free will?***

Free will is the name for the capacity to choose with deliberation between the one and the other, between good and evil, between what is right and what is wrong; and of whoever can do this we say: his actions are done of free will.

החיים והמות נתתי לפניך הברכה והקללה ובחרת בחיים

> "Life and death I have set before thee, the blessing and the curse: *choose* life" (Deut. 30:19).

13. ***And who, then, has a free will?***

Only man has a free will, for all other creatures, in all their doing and leaving undone, follow their blind natural drive, which is called *instinct*.

14. ***If man has a free will, what follows from this?***

From this it follows that man has to expect reward for the good he has done and punishment for the evil he has done; for by virtue of his free will he is *accountable*, that is, responsible for his actions.

15. ***What is conscience?***

Conscience is a wonderful power in man, *admonishing and judging*: it *admonishes* to do good and avoid evil, and it *judges*, that is, it rewards being good with a joyful consciousness, and being evil with an inner unrest and distress; and this power is called conscience, and is a *voice of God* in man.

פחדו בציון חטאים אחזה רעדה חנפים

> "The sinners in Zion are afraid, trembling seizes the hypocrites" (Isa. 33:14).

16. ***What further flows from conscience?***

From conscience there further flows *moral feeling*: the uncorrupted person feels joy and emotion at the sight of beautiful and noble actions, and aversion and abhorrence at the sight of wicked and cruel actions.

עשה סטים שנאתי — עיני בנאמני ארץ

> "Those who have run wild I hate." — "Mine eye looks only upon the upright in the land" (Ps. 101:3, 6) [n. 2] [n. 3].

[p. 4] **17.** ***What, then, can man attain by virtue of these advantages that have been granted him?***

By virtue of these advantages that have been granted him, man can attain to perfection, and thereby to happiness, which no other creature is able to do.

18. ***How does it come about that so many people, despite their spiritual advantages, attain neither perfection nor happiness?***

This comes about because such people do not make the right use of their advantages, and often even make a perverse use of them [n. 4].

שחת לו לא בניו מומם דור עקש ופתלתל

> "Does the fault (of the sinners) lie in Him (in God)? No! The corruption is the children's, because they are a perverse and crooked generation" (Deut. 32:5).

19. ***What right use should man make of his reason?***

By virtue of his reason man should come to know God and His holy will, which is the true good.

בני דע את אלהי אביך

> "My son! Know the God of thy father" (1 Chr. 28:9).

20. ***What right use should man make of his free will?***

By virtue of his free will man should master his sensual nature, and subject his own will, that is, his drives and desires, to the higher will of God, which commands only the good.

בטל רצונך מפני רצונו

> "Subject thy will to His" (Avot 2:4).

21. ***What right use should man make of his conscience?***

Man should always listen to the warning voice of his conscience, and let himself be guided by this voice in all that he does.

22. ***What does man need for this, in order to make the right use of his spiritual advantages?***

In order to make the right use of his spiritual advantages, man needs religion; for it alone can make him perfect and happy.

[p. 5]

עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה ותמכיה מאשר

> "A tree of life is she (religion) to those who hold fast to her; and those who lean upon her are blessed" (Prov. 3:18).

23. ***Why can only religion bring this about?***

I. Because only religion gives peace to the soul, which without religion is torn by doubts.

תורת ה׳ תמימה משיבת נפש

"The teaching of God is perfect, it gives peace to the soul" (Ps. 19:8).

II. Because man can very easily err; and only religion preserves him from errors.

עדות ה׳ נאמנה מחכימת פתי

"The testimony of God is sure, it makes fools wise" (ibid.).

III. Because only religion makes a person content with himself and grants inner cheerfulness.

פקודי ה׳ ישרים משמחי לב

"The statutes of God are right, they rejoice the heart" (ibid. 9).

IV. Because man is often so blinded as to take an object of desire for a good which at bottom is an evil, and only religion gives the mind the necessary enlightenment.

מצות ה׳ ברה מאירת עינים

"The commandment of God is pure, it enlightens the eyes" (ibid.) [n. 5].

24. ***What are the sources of religious knowledge?***

The sources of religious knowledge are: the presentiment indwelling in man; the contemplation of nature; the study of history; and divine revelation.

25. ***Do all people have this indwelling presentiment?***

All people have this indwelling presentiment. There is no people on earth, however crude and ignorant it may be, that does not have a presentiment of a supreme being, and that has no religious faith and no worship of God.

כי ממזרח שמש ועד מבואו גדול שמי בגוים ובכל מקום מקטר מגש לשמי

"For from the rising of the sun to its going down My name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered and sacrifice brought to My name" (Mal. 1:11).

[p. 6] **26.** ***And what does this indwelling presentiment prove?***

This indwelling presentiment proves that religion is a need of man.

27. ***Would this presentiment alone suffice?***

This presentiment serves only to prepare man for the knowledge of God and make him receptive to it; but it requires development and cultivation through teaching and instruction, otherwise the idea of God remains obscure and the worship of God superstitious.

28. ***What do we learn from the contemplation of nature?***

From the contemplation of nature we learn to know God; for in His works God reveals Himself to the thinking person; that is, from the world with its arrangements and provisions, where everything is in activity and works according to a *single* law, the thinking person recognizes the infinite Creator.

ה׳ בחכמה יסד ארץ

> "With wisdom God founded the world" (Prov. 3:19).

29. ***What is the most excellent work from which we come to know God?***

The most excellent work from which we come to know God is the heaven with its countless and wonderful heavenly bodies, which all float in space, and circle and move according to wonderful laws [n. 6].

שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה

> "Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who has created all these?" (Isa. 40:26).

30. ***From what other works do we come to know God?***

We further come to know God from our earth with its countless creatures, where there are so infinitely many provisions for feeding and sustaining all the millions upon millions of creatures; from this we recognize that the love and care of God rule everywhere.

שאל נא בהמות ותרך ועוף השמים ויגד לך או שיח לארץ ותרך ויספרו לך דגי הים

> "Ask but the beasts, they will teach thee, and the birds of the heaven will tell it thee. Or the plants of the earth, they will instruct thee, and the fishes of the sea will declare it to thee" (Job 12:7, 8).

[p. 7] **31.** ***From what work do we further come to know God?***

We further come to know God from ourselves: the artful structure of the human body, the wonderful instruments within it which we call senses, and the thinking spirit which lives in them in a still more wonderful way, draw our attention to God, the great Creator [n. 7].

ומבשרי אחזה אלוה

> "And from my flesh I behold God" (ibid. 19:26).

32. ***And what, then, do we recognize from all these works together?***

From all these works together we recognize that *one Being*, the almighty and infinite Supreme Being, has created all this.

כי יד ה' עשתה זאת

"That the hand of God has made this" (ibid. 12:9).

33. ***How do we attain to the knowledge of God through the study of history?***

From history, too, we learn to know God; for the wonderful course of the history of mankind in general and of the Jewish people in particular, the consequences and events that are so often brought about unexpectedly and without preparation, unquestionably reveal an invisible guiding hand.

שאל נא לימים ראשנים אשר היו לפניך

"Ask but of the former days, which were before thee" (Deut. 4:32).

34. ***Can the contemplation of nature and the study of history alone lead to a correct knowledge and worship of God?***

Neither the contemplation of nature nor the study of history can lead to a correct knowledge and worship of God; for these only convince us that God is Creator and Ruler of the world; but about the attributes of God, and how we are to worship Him and serve Him, they cannot instruct us.

35. ***How and by what do we prove this?***

We prove this from the fact that among all peoples to whom the ray of divine revelation had not penetrated, and has not yet penetrated, even when they were or are otherwise cultivated, the belief in many gods was or is predominant and the idea of the Supreme Being was or is deficient. Such [p. 8] peoples were or are idolaters, and rendered or render divine worship to the works or forces of nature, and even to dead human beings [n. 8].

36. ***What is the idea of God usually like among such peoples?***

Among such people the idea of God is usually obscure and unclear; human faults and weaknesses are ascribed to God, such as hatred, envy, vengeance and the like. This we see among all the ancient peoples that did not know divine revelation, and among all present-day peoples that do not know divine revelation.

37. ***By what, then, do we attain to a true religion?***

Only divine revelation leads us to the true religion; that is to say, both the doctrines of religion and its laws have been revealed by God Himself.

וידבר אלהים את כל הדברים האלה

"And God Himself spoke all these words" (Exod. 20:1).

38. ***What worship of God does the true revealed religion prescribe?***

The true revealed religion prescribes a twofold worship of God: an *inner* one, consisting in a religious feeling and a disposition devoted to God, and an *outer* one, consisting of words (prayer) and certain actions. The outer worship of God is accordingly the visible expression of the invisible inner worship of God.

ועבדתם את ה׳ בכל לבבכם

> "Ye shall serve God with your whole heart" (1 Sam. 12:20) [n. 9].

39. ***Can the purpose of religion, then, not be fulfilled by inner worship alone?***

No, for inner worship is only the beginning, and can attain reality only through the deeds and actions that God has commanded us to perform.

לא המדרש עקר אלא המעשה

> "Not inquiry is the chief thing, but doing" (Avot 1:17).

40. ***But can the purpose of religion not be fulfilled by outer worship alone either?***

No, because that would be called a divine service without consciousness and knowledge; and religious deeds without inner disposition, as [p. 9] for example prayer without devotion, or fulfilment of the commandments without the intention of thereby serving God, have no true value before God.

> "Thus saith God: Because this people draws near with its mouth, and honours Me with its lips, but its heart remains far from Me, and their reverence for Me is a precept of men learned by rote; therefore — — the wisdom of its wise men shall vanish, and the understanding of its men of understanding shall be hidden" (Isa. 29:13, 14).

41. ***Whence does revealed religion come?***

Revealed religion comes from God Himself. Just as He assigns the heavenly bodies their courses, prescribes laws to the earth, and marks out for all creatures their destiny, so through revealed religion He has also indicated to men the way they should walk for their own good.

42. ***And whither does revealed religion lead?***

Revealed religion leads to God and to His kingdom of bliss. Through religion *reason* is enlightened and attains the true knowledge of God; and *conscience* is awakened, *moral feeling* strengthened, and the *free will* so acted upon that it decides for what is good and divine.

43. ***Can revealed religion teach something whose truth reason does not comprehend?***

Yes indeed, it can teach such things; for God is infinitely more exalted than the human mind; and therefore if God has declared it, it is certainly a truth, even if human reason does not comprehend it [n. 10].

בטח אל ה׳ בכל לבך ואל בינתך אל תשען

> "Trust in God with all thy heart, but lean not upon thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

44. ***Can religion command something whose usefulness, or forbid something whose harmfulness, reason does not comprehend?***

Certainly! For God knows infinitely more than man; therefore if God commands the thing, it is certainly salutary, and if He forbids it, it is certainly harmful, even if human reason does not comprehend the cause [n. 11].

כי גבהו שמים מארץ כן גבהו — מחשבתי ממחשבתיכם

> "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9).

[p. 10] **45.** ***How can this be made comprehensible?***

There are so many phenomena in the visible world of which human reason cannot comprehend the ground and cause: how then should man presume to wish to know the cause of the divine commandments or prohibitions, or the whole purpose of the divine will? [n. 12]

הן אל ישגיב בכחו מי כמהו מורה

> "Behold! God is exalted in His power; who is a teacher like Him?" (Job 36:22) [n. 13].

46. ***Is there more than one religion?***

There are several religions, which God's inscrutable will allows to exist.

47. ***What do our sages say concerning the various religions?***

Our sages say:

חסידי אומות העולם יש להם חלק לעולם הבא

> "All the good and righteous, whatever religion they may profess, have a share in the world to come" (BT Sanhedrin 105a).[10]

[10]Translator: The formulation "the pious of the nations of the world have a share in the world to come" is that of Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:2 and Maimonides (Hilkhot Teshuvah 3:5, Hilkhot Melakhim 8:11); BT Sanhedrin 105a records the underlying dispute between R. Eliezer and R. Joshua.

48. ***What can be learned about this from Holy Scripture?***

From Holy Scripture it is proved that the non-Jew, too, is called our brother; for concerning the Edomites Holy Scripture says: "Thou shalt not abhor the Edomite, for he is thy brother" (Deut. 23:8, and the like).

49. ***What do our sages say about this?***

Our sages say: "Whoever in trade cheats by false measure or weight, whether it be a Jew or a non-Jew, transgresses a divine prohibition and owes the person cheated restitution. So too whoever cheats a non-Jew by false reckoning; and an abomination unto God, thy Lord, is he who does such a thing" (Maimonides, Hilkhot Geneivah 7:8).

50. ***What do we owe to the adherents of other religions?***

I. We owe the adherents of other religions: *love*; the laws of justice and of love of mankind extend to all people.

ואהבת לרעך כמוך

> "Thou shalt love thy fellow man as thyself" (Lev. 18:18).[11]

[p. 11] **II.** We further owe them: *tolerance*; we may not persuade any adherent of another religion to fall away from his religion, much less compel him. God will one day let His holy light shine upon all men, and "then the whole earth will be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9); but to move adherents of other religions to conversion is not the business of men, for no man may wish to take the place of God; rather he must always speak like Joseph:

התחת אלהים אני

> "Am I then in the place of God?" (Gen. 50:14) [n. 14].[12]

III. Finally, we owe them: *forbearance*; we may not mock other people because of their religion, nor seek to make their religious customs ridiculous, and so on; for it would not be right with us either if other people should do this to us.

מה דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד

> "What thou wouldst not have done to thee, that thou mayest not do to others either" (BT Shabbat 31a).

51. ***What is the concluding statement of this first Section?***

The concluding statement of this first Section is the teaching of our sages: "Which is the best way that a man should choose for himself? That which is good for him and brings him honour among

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[11] Translator: The verse is Lev. 19:18; "18" is a misprint.

[12] Translator: The verse is Gen. 50:19; "14" is a misprint.

his fellow men" (Avot 2:1). Man must live usefully to himself and to others; thereby he will glorify his own religion in the eyes of the whole world.

[p. 12] Second Section. Of the Religion of Israel, and Its Foundation: the Ten Commandments.

1. ***To what religion do we profess allegiance?***

We profess the *Mosaic* religion.

2. ***Why is our religion called the Mosaic?***

Our religion is called the *Mosaic* because the holy teaching from God has been transmitted to us through Moses; and God Himself calls the holy teaching: *the teaching of Moses*.

זכרו תורת משה עבדי

> "Remember the teaching of Moses, My servant" (Mal. 3:22).

3. ***Has the entire content of the holy teaching been transmitted to us through Moses?***

Not the *entire* content of the holy teaching has been transmitted to us through Moses, for the Ten Commandments were revealed by God *directly* to the whole people of Israel; and for this reason they are also called: *the ten words of the covenant*.

4. ***Where were the Ten Commandments revealed to us directly by God?***

The Ten Commandments were revealed to us by God on Mount *Sinai*, which is also called *Horeb*.

ה׳ אלהינו כרת עמנו ברית בחרב

> "God, our Lord, made a covenant with us at Horeb" (Deut. 5:2).

5. ***What does Holy Scripture relate about this?***

Holy Scripture relates: "And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were voices and lightnings, and a heavy cloud upon the mountain, and the sound of a very loud trumpet — —. Mount Sinai smoked entirely, because God descended [p. 13] upon it in fire, and its smoke rose like the smoke of a furnace. And the whole mountain quaked greatly. And the sound of the trumpets grew and became very loud. Moses spoke, and God answered him with a voice. And God came down upon Mount Sinai, upon the top of the mountain — — *And then God spoke all these words*" (Exod. 19:16–25).[13]

[13] Translator: The quotation is abridged from Exod. 19:16–20, its closing words being Exod. 20:1.

6. ***By what else were the Ten Commandments distinguished?***

The Ten Commandments were distinguished, first, in that they were written at once on Sinai on two tablets of stone, and handed to Moses as the *testimony of God*.

> "He gave to Moses, when He had finished speaking with him on Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God" (Exod. 31:18).

They were distinguished, secondly, in that these tablets, on which the Ten Commandments were engraved, were kept as the holiest thing in an ark in the Holy of Holies of the Temple; and for this reason this holy ark is also called the *Ark of the Covenant*.

ויקח ויתן את העדת אל הארן

> "And he took and put the testimony into the ark" (ibid. 40:20).

7. ***Why did God not reveal the rest of the content of the Torah, too, directly to the whole people of Israel?***

God revealed the rest of the content of the Torah indirectly through Moses because the people itself so wished; it felt too fearful to hear more directly from God.

> "And they said to Moses: Speak thou with us, and we will obey, and let God no longer speak with us, lest we should have to die" (Exod. 20:11) [n. 15].[14]

8. ***Why is such importance attached to the Ten Commandments?***

Because the Ten Commandments not only contain the foundation of the whole religion, but also comprehend in few words everything that is necessary for the true knowledge of God, for true divine service and for establishing the welfare of human society; for this reason such importance is attached to them.

[p. 14] **9.** ***How, accordingly, are the Ten Commandments to be regarded?***

The Ten Commandments are to be regarded as the unshakeable foundations on which the holy covenant between God and Israel rests and the kingdom of God on earth is established; and as radiant suns from which the holy light streams forth to the whole world of men.

10. ***Of what do the ten commandments of the covenant consist?***

The ten commandments of the covenant consist of few, but of the most meaningful words; and everything that truth, justice, virtue and piety require is grounded in these holy words.

11. ***What do the ten words of the covenant treat of?***

The first four commandments concern our conduct toward God as Founder of the covenant; the middle five commandments deal with our conduct toward our fellow men as members of the

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[14] Translator: The verse is Exod. 20:16 (Hebrew numbering; 20:19 in English Bibles); "11" is evidently a misprint.

covenant; and the last commandment aims at the perfecting of one's own person, so as to make oneself worthy of being called a child of God [n. 16].

12. ***How does the first commandment read?***

The first commandment reads: **"I am Adonai, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Mizraim (Egypt), out of the house of bondage."**

13. ***Why does God not rather announce Himself as Creator of the world?***

Because the exodus from Egypt was still quite fresh in the memory of the people of Israel, and also because the covenant with Israel was to be concluded on Sinai, God announces Himself not as Creator of the world, but as Israel's special benefactor.

14. ***What does the first commandment command?***

The first commandment commands, first, to believe that it was God Himself who revealed Himself to Israel: "I am Adonai," that is, it is I, Adonai, who speak to thee.

It commands, secondly, to believe that Israel stands under the special providence of God: "I am Adonai, thy God," that is, I, Adonai, [p. 15] the Eternal, the Creator of heaven and earth, am especially your God; I have placed you under My divine protection.

It commands, 3., that we believe that only the one and only God rules and governs in heaven and on earth, and none other: "I am Adonai," and besides Me there is no God.

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

The second commandment reads: **"You shall have no other gods besides Me. You shall not make for yourself any image or any likeness of what is in heaven above, of what is on the earth below, or of what is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them, nor serve them; for I, God, your Lord, am a zealous power, visiting the guilt of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of those who hate Me; but showing grace to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments."**

16. ***How can God be a zealous power if He is all-good?***

The all-goodness of God consists precisely in this, that He cannot behold and tolerate injustice; and everyone who violates justice, or assails the commandments given for the welfare of humankind, must expect God's punishment [n. 17].

17. ***But how can God be zealous or avenging, when He Himself has forbidden revenge***

God has forbidden man revenge on behalf of his own person; on the other hand, it is a duty to punish crimes, and the vengeance of the law is a holy one, because there it is not one's own person that is avenged, but violated right that is punished. And since man, with all his sins and vices,

cannot harm God, God too can never avenge His own person: hence His vengeance is supremely holy.

18. ***Are children punished for the transgression of their parents?***

No, children are never punished for the transgression of their parents; for it is written: "Parents shall not [p. 16] die for the sin of the children, and children shall not die for the sin of the parents, but each shall die for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16).

19. ***And why then does it say here: "God visits the guilt of the fathers upon the children"?***

Because children are usually corrupted as well by the sins of their parents. The children are thus punished only for their own sins, but the guilt for these sins lies with the parents; for had these not given their children the example of sin, they too would have become better people.

20. ***What does the second commandment forbid?***

The second commandment forbids all idolatry and every representation of the divine Being.

21. ***What is meant by idolatry?***

Idolatry means: when someone believes in other gods besides God and worships them; or when one shows idolatrous veneration, for its own sake, to some force of nature, or to some work of nature, or to some image made by human hands [n. 18].

22. ***And to whom is idolatry forbidden?***

Idolatry is forbidden to all human beings, for this prohibition belongs to the seven Noachide commandments.

23. ***What is meant by a representation of the divine Being?***

A representation of the divine Being means: when one believes in the one God, but makes for oneself some representation of the divine Being, or images of other beings, and holds the opinion that by worshipping and venerating the image one serves God [n. 19].

24. ***And to whom is the representation of the divine Being forbidden?***

The representation of the divine Being was forbidden only to Israel, through this second commandment at Sinai.

25. ***What else does the second commandment forbid?***

I. *Self-worship*, that is, on the one hand pride and arrogance; on the other, believing one's own reason more than the word of God.

[p. 17] **II.** *The worship of other human beings*; that is, fearing human beings more than God, placing more trust in human beings than in God, and obeying human beings more than God.

ארור הגבר אשר יבטח באדם ושם בשר זרעו ומן ה׳ יסור לבו

> "Cursed is the man who trusts in human beings, and holds flesh to be the strength of his arm, and turns his heart away from God" (Jer. 17:5).

III. *The worship of things*; that is, when one places earthly things, such as gold, power, honour, etc., higher than the divine utterances, and for the sake of such things sets the word of God aside.

וכסף הרביתי להם וזהב עשו לבעל

> "Silver I gave them in abundance, and gold; but they make an idol of it" (Hos. 2:10).

26. ***What else does the second commandment forbid?***

The second commandment further forbids the *inner* representation of God; that is, when one conceives of God falsely, imagines Him as corporeal, attributes to Him bodily qualities and sensual passions, and the like; for thereby one makes for oneself in one's imagination an image, and a false image, of God.

ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם כי לא ראיתם כל תמונה ביום דבר ה׳ אליכם בחרב

> "Take great heed *for your souls*, for you saw no form of any kind on the day that God spoke to you at Horeb" (Deut. 4:15).

27. ***And what, finally, does the second commandment forbid?***

The second commandment finally forbids *superstition*, both religious superstition and that of everyday life.

28. ***What is religious superstition?***

I. When one believes that an angel or some other spiritual being can intercede with God on behalf of a human being.

> "Whoever prays to any being that it should intercede for him with God is an unbelieving Jew" (Maim. H. Teshuvah 3:7).

II. When one believes that some holy place or some holy person is able to make a person clean of sins; or that any kind of customs can make good a wrong that has been done [n. 20].

> [p. 18] "First you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely and sacrifice to Baal — and then you come and stand before Me in this house, upon which My name is called, and say: Now we are saved! (that is, free of sins). Has this house, upon which My name is called, become a den of robbers in your eyes?" (Jer. 7:9, 10).

III. When one holds things to be customs pleasing to God that find a foundation neither in Holy Scripture, nor in the oral tradition, nor in human reason.

לא תוסיפו הביא מנחת שוא

"Do not go on bringing false offerings to God" (Isa. 1:13).

IV. When one nonetheless retains things that are contrary to the utterances of Holy Scripture, because the forefathers did them so and they have therefore become custom.

"And all the men who knew that their wives offered to the Queen of Heaven answered Jeremiah — —: As for what you have spoken to us in the name of God, in this we will not obey you; rather we will continue — to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and to bring her drink offerings, as we have done, *and our fathers and our kings and princes* in the cities of Judah" (Jer. 44:16, 17).

29. ***What is superstition in everyday life?***

I. When one believes that dreams have some meaning, and lets oneself be frightened by bad dreams, or otherwise be led by dreams into doing anything [n. 21].

וחלמות השוא ידברו

"Dreams speak what is vain and empty" (Zech. 10:2).

II. When one believes in magic means, apparitions of spirits, ghostly hauntings, necromancy, and the like.

"There shall not be found among you anyone who practises divination, the arts of cursing, or sorcery; no conjurer of spirits, no necromancer, no interpreter of signs and no one who inquires of the dead. For everyone who does such things is an abomination before God" (Deut. 18:10–12).

III. When one believes that certain days or times are favourable, and others again unfavourable, for undertaking business; or that certain natural phenomena promise a person good fortune, others again misfortune, and the like.

כה אמר ה׳ אל דרך הגוים אל תלמדו ומאתות השמים אל תחתו

"Thus says God: Do not learn the way of the nations, and do not be afraid of the signs of the heavens, before which the nations are terrified" (Jer. 10:2).

IV. When, without any rational ground, one lets oneself be guided by certain things — for example, because a thrown stick has fallen this way or that, or because this or that animal has run across the street, and the like — to undertake something or to refrain from an undertaking [n. 22].

עמי בעצו ישאל ומקלו יגיד לו

"My people asks counsel of its block of wood, its stick is to reveal things to it" (Hos. 4:12).

30. ***Why is superstition an abomination to God?***

Superstition fills a person with anxiety and embitters his life; it darkens his reason and prevents him from rightly knowing and worshipping the Deity; and in the end it can even lead to the cruellest acts: therefore it is an abomination to God [n. 23].

להם הם אמרים זבחי אדם עגלים ישקון

"Of them it is said: They slaughter human beings, and kiss calves" (ibid. 13:2).

31. ***Of what further sin does one become guilty through superstition?***

Whoever resorts to superstitious means shows a culpable lack of trust in God.

שנאתי השמרים הבלי שוא ואני אל ה׳ בטחתי

"I hate those who wait upon empty things; for I, I trust in God" (Ps. 31:7).

32. ***What do we learn, lastly, from the second commandment?***

We learn, lastly, from the second commandment that the grace of God reigns to the thousandth generation, blessing and sheltering those who are faithful to Him and keep His commandments.

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

The third commandment reads: **"You shall not invoke the name of God, your Lord, upon an untruth, for the Lord will not leave unpunished him who invokes His name upon an untruth."**

34. ***What does the third commandment forbid?***

The third commandment forbids *every* misuse of the divine name; but especially in those cases where the name [p. 20] of God is meant to serve as a particularly effective means of sanctification. And therefore it says: לשוא [*la-shav*], an expression that means both "to an untruth" and "in vain."

35. ***How, accordingly, could the third commandment also read?***

The third commandment could also read: "You shall not invoke the name of God, your Lord, in vain or for nothing, for the Lord will not leave unpunished him who invokes His name in vain."

36. ***What significance, then, does the divine name have?***

The divine name is the highest and holiest thing in religion, for by the name of God we think of His Being.

קדשים יהיו לאלהיהם ולא יחללו שם אלהיהם

"They shall be holy to their God, and not profane the name of their God" (Lev. 21:6).

37. ***Which are the cases in which the name of God serves as a special means of sanctification?***

The cases in which the name of God serves as a special means of sanctification are: prayer and the oath.

38. ***How is the name of God invoked upon an untruth in prayer?***

I. When one calls upon God for help and assistance in sinful undertakings.

ובצע ברך נאץ ה׳

> "The robber who praises God angers God" (Ps. 10:3).

II. Through hypocrisy; when one seeks to deceive the world by praying, namely seeks to give oneself an appearance of piety.

ולרשע אמר אלהים מה לך לספר חקי ותשא בריתי עלי פיך

> "And to the wicked God says: What business have you recounting My statutes, and bearing My covenant in your mouth?" (Ps. 50:16).

III. When one promises and vows while praying, and then does not keep what was vowed.

לא יחל דברו ככל היצא מפיו יעשה

> "He shall not profane his word; just as it went forth from his mouth, so shall he do" (Num. 30:3).

[p. 21] **39.** ***And when is the name of God uttered in vain in prayer?***

The name of God is uttered in vain in prayer when one prays without devotion.

ובשפתיו כבדוני ולבו רחק ממני

> "With its lips this people honours Me, but its heart is far from Me" (Isa. 29:13).

40. ***What is an oath?***

A statement or an obligation for whose confirmation the name of God is invoked, and He is thereby called upon as witness of the truth and as avenger of untruth, is called an oath.

41. ***What purpose does the oath serve?***

I. When the truth of a matter cannot be brought to light by the court, the innocence of the one swearing is established by the oath [n. 24].

שבעת ה׳ תהיה בין שניהם

> "The divine oath shall decide between the two" (Exod. 22:10).

II. In order to give greater force to the statement of a witness, a witness's testimony is to be sworn to at the order of the court [n. 25].

42. ***How is the name of God invoked upon an untruth in the oath?***

In the oath, the name of God is invoked upon an untruth when one swears to something that is untrue, which is called perjury; and perjury is the highest profanation of the divine name, and thus the gravest religious crime, which God never leaves unpunished.

43. ***Why is perjury so grave a sin?***

The perjurer mocks God's power and justice, denies God's omniscience, and endangers the security and the existence of human society.

44. ***How is the name of God uttered in vain in swearing?***

The name of God is uttered in vain in swearing when one swears by God unnecessarily, vainly or uselessly.

ואל תשבעו חי ה׳

> "Do not swear: As God lives" (Hos. 4:15).

45. ***How does misuse of the divine name occur in ordinary life?***

Naming or invoking God on unsuitable occasions is a misuse of the divine name; so too is cursing.

המקלל עצמו וחברו עובר בלא תעשה

> "Whoever curses, be it himself or his fellow man, transgresses a divine prohibition" (BT Shevuot 35a).

46. ***How long does the binding force of an oath last?***

The binding force of an oath lasts until its complete fulfilment; by nothing but fulfilment can the oath be released. We even find examples in Holy Scripture of the validity of an oath passing on to descendants, as with the oath that Abraham swore to Abimelech and the oath that Joshua swore to the Gibeonites.

47. ***How far does the binding force of the oath extend?***

The binding force of the oath extends to its whole content, as the oath was sworn; and one is obliged to fulfil the oath exactly, however much harm it may cause.

> "God! Who may dwell in Your tent? Who may abide on Your holy mountain? — — He who swears to his own hurt, and yet does not break the oath. — — He who does these things shall never be moved" (Ps. 15:1–5).

48. ***Does a vow have the same force and binding power?***

A vow must indeed also be kept, but it can be dissolved under certain conditions and by certain persons; the oath, however, can be dissolved under no condition and by no power in the world.

49. ***When is swearing a vow, and when an oath?***

When the swearing first creates the obligation, it is a vow; but when the swearing confirms a duty already incumbent upon one, it is an oath [n. 26].

[p. 23] **50.** ***And which oath among oaths is the most important?***

The most important oath among oaths is the oath that is taken before a court.

51. ***What else does the third commandment forbid?***

The third commandment further forbids every lie and falsehood.

דבר שקרים לא יכון לנגד עיני

> "Whoever speaks lies shall not stand before My eyes" (Ps. 101:7). The remnant of Israel does no wrong and speaks no lie, and no deceitful tongue shall be found in their mouth (Zeph. 3:13).

52. ***How is the duty of truthfulness to be explained more clearly?***

A person is obliged never to say anything that is an untruth; but he is not obliged to say everything that he knows [n. 27].

כל רוחו יוציא כסיל וחכם באחור ישבחנה

> "The fool utters all his thoughts, but the wise man holds them back on account of the consequences" (Prov. 29:11).

53. ***What does the third commandment command?***

The third commandment commands us to keep not only a promise given on oath, but every promise given at all; as it is written:

מוצא שפתיך תשמר ועשית

> "What has once gone forth from your lips you must carefully observe and do accordingly" (Deut. 23:24).

54. ***What else does the third commandment command?***

The third commandment further commands us to sanctify the name of God on earth; just as the profanation of the divine name is one of the basest sins, so in turn the sanctification of the divine name is one of the highest virtues.

ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל אני ה׳ מקדשכם

> "I will be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel, I, God, who sanctify you" (Lev. 22:32).

55. ***How do we sanctify the name of God?***

I. When we so live, work and act toward other people that they must acknowledge that the God-given [p. 24] religion of Israel commands only what is good and noble, and brings a person to perfection.

ואמרו רק עם חכם ונבון הגוי הגדול הזה

> "They — the nations — shall say: Truly, a wise and understanding people is this great nation" (Deut. 4:6).

II. When we let the name of God, which we bear, so work upon us that we are able for the sake of religion and virtue to forgo everything, to bear and endure everything, and even to sacrifice property, blood and life for it [n. 28].

בקרבי אקדש ועל פני כל העם אכבד

> "Through those who are near to Me I will be sanctified, and (thereby) be honoured before the face of the whole people" (Lev. 10:3).

56. ***Why is it especially incumbent upon the Israelite to sanctify the name of God?***

Because Israel, as the people of the covenant, has received from God the task of glorifying His divine name, and thereby of winning recognition for Him among the nations of the earth.

וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה׳ נקרא עליך

> "All the peoples of the earth shall see — that is, recognize — that the name of God is called upon you" (Deut. 28:10).

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

The fourth commandment reads: **"Remember the day of rest, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work; but the seventh day is a day of rest, dedicated to God, your Lord. On it you shall do no work of any kind, you, your son and your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your cattle and your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days God made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore God blessed the day of rest and hallowed it."**

58. ***What is the day of rest?***

The day of rest is a sign of the covenant between God and Israel; a testimony that God created the world in six [p. 25] days [n. 29]; and also the most important means of sanctification in the covenant that God concluded with Israel.

אך את שבתתי תשמרו כי אות הוא ביני וביניכם לדרתיכם לדעת כי אני ה׳ מקדשכם

> "My days of rest you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you for your descendants, by which it is known that I, God, sanctify you" (Exod. 31:13).

59. ***What is the purpose of the day of rest?***

The day of rest is meant to bind a person more closely to God, for through the rest of the body the spirit is to rise up to God; it is meant to sanctify us, in that on the day of rest we must devote ourselves more to heavenly things; and, in that on the day of rest we engage in higher reflections on our destiny and our true purpose, we attain to true devotion, which gladdens heart and soul.

> "All who keep the day of rest and do not profane it, and — thereby — hold fast to My covenant, them I will bring to My holy mountain, and gladden them in My house of devotion" (Isa. 56:6, 7).

60. ***Of what does the day of rest remind us?***

The day of rest reminds us, 1., that the one and only God is the Creator of the whole universe; and this is clearly stated in this fourth commandment of Exodus.

The day of rest reminds us, 2., that God freed Israel from the yoke of slavery in Egypt and thereby chose it as His people; thus it says in the fourth commandment in Deuteronomy: "And remember that you were a slave in the land of Mizraim, and that God, your Lord, brought you out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm: therefore God commands you to keep the day of rest holy" (Deut. 5:15).

61. ***What does the fourth commandment command?***

The fourth commandment commands, 1., that we be active on the working days and labour according to purpose and calling; it accordingly forbids laziness and idleness.

בעצלתים ימך המקרה ובשפלות ידים ידלף הבית

> "Through sloth the rafters sink, and through slack hands the house leaks" (Eccl. 10:18).

[p. 26] The fourth commandment commands chiefly, 2., that we keep the day of rest holy, because God too hallowed it.

62. ***By what is the day of rest to be sanctified?***

We must distinguish the day of rest from the other days in every respect [n. 30], but especially we must greet the day of rest at its entrance and, as it were, escort it at its departure, for which particular prayers are prescribed.

63. ***Is resting from work alone sufficient?***

Resting from work alone is not sufficient; for the day of rest is not a day of idleness; rather, while the body rests, the spirit is to be all the more occupied [n. 31].

64. ***In what is the activity of the spirit to consist?***

I. In reflections that bring our spirit nearer to God and let us know God better; that is the true delight of the soul.

וקראת לשבת ענג

> "You shall call the day of rest a delight" (Isa. 58:13).

II. In a greater devotion, through which the heart is cleansed and purified and made receptive to pious works.

לקדוש ה' מכבד

> "You shall honour it as a sanctuary of God" (ibid.).

65. ***By what is the day of rest profaned?***

I. By ordinary work or business, which in the fourth commandment is called "labour."

וכבדתו מעשות דרכיך

> "You shall honour it by not conducting your business" (ibid.).

II. By complete idleness, which can never lead to good, much less be a means of sanctification.

III. By sin and dissipation, to which unoccupied leisure is precisely wont to lead.

אשרי — בן אדם — שמר שבת מחללו ושמר ידו מעשות כל רע

> "Happy — the son of man — who keeps the day of rest so as not to profane it, *and keeps his hand from doing any evil*" (ibid. 56:2).

[p. 27] **IV.** By sinning with words, such as slanders, tale-bearing and the like, to which the very rest of the day could lead [n. 32].

ודבר דבר

> "You shall speak nothing on the Sabbath — that could be harmful" (ibid. 58:13).

66. ***How is the day of rest to be regarded?***

The day of rest is to be regarded as a day that turns one's gaze back upon the past week and directs it toward the coming one; on this day one should take account of oneself concerning one's doings and omissions in the past week, and form good resolutions for one's doings and omissions in the coming week.

אז תתענג על ה׳

"Through the day of rest you will have delight in God" (ibid. 44).[15]

67. ***What else does the fourth commandment command?***

The fourth commandment further commands that we also celebrate the other festival days of the Lord in a consecrated manner.

"And God spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them: The appointed seasons of God, which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, אלה הם מועדי '*these are My appointed seasons*'" (Lev. 23:1, 2).

68. ***How is this to be explained?***

When we proclaim the days of the Lord as holy convocations, that is, use them for our sanctification and improvement, then they are festival seasons of God, that is, in such He takes pleasure.

69. ***What, then, is the opposite?***

The opposite is when we use such days only for idleness and enjoyment; then they cease to be called festival seasons of God.

70. ***And does the Lord take pleasure in such days too?***

In such days God takes no pleasure whatsoever, for of such days He says:

[p. 28]

חדשיכם ומועדיכם שנאה נפשי היו עלי לטרח

"*Your* new moons and *your* appointed seasons My being hates; they are a burden to Me" (Isa. 1:14) [n. 33].

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

The fifth commandment reads: **"Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged upon the land which God, your Lord, gives you."**

72. ***What begins with this commandment?***

From the 5th to the 9th commandment, the utterances of the divine covenant relate to our conduct toward our neighbours; and it begins with the most intimate relationship, which, after the relationship to God, is the holiest.

[15]Translator: "ibid. 44" is evidently Isa. 58:14.

73. ***For what reason is the relationship to parents the next holiest?***

I. Because parents are our greatest benefactors on earth; to them we owe everything: life, sustenance, care, upbringing, guidance, etc. [n. 34].

התשכח אשה עולה מרחם בן בטנה

> "Does a mother ever forget her infant? Does she withdraw her love from the child of her body?" (Isa. 49:15).

II. Because parents are, in a certain sense, the visible representatives of God, and God Himself calls Himself our Father. We should therefore recognize the invisible Father in our parents, honour the invisible Father in them; and every offence against parents is an offence against God.

שמע בני מוסר אביך ואל תטש תורת אמך

> "Hear, my son, the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother" (Prov. 1:8).

74. ***What follows from this?***

From this it follows that parents cannot release their children from the duty of reverence [n. 35], because with this reverence is bound up reverence for God, and every disrespect toward parents is a disrespect toward the invisible Father in heaven.

75. ***How is this to be proved from Holy Scripture?***

In Holy Scripture it is ordained: "Whoever strikes or curses father or mother shall be put to death." And even [p. 29] if the parents wished to forgive the child the offence, the court must nonetheless have the punishment carried out; from which it is proved that it does not lie in the power of parents to release from the duty of reverence.

76. ***What, accordingly, does the fifth commandment command?***

The fifth commandment commands that we honour God in His representatives, namely our parents; that we respect their will like the divine will, and follow their guidance like divine guidance.

> "When a person grieves his father or mother, God says: Were I to dwell among human beings, such a one would grieve Me too" (BT Kiddushin 31a).

77. ***What does the duty of reverence require?***

I. It requires gratitude; we must always strive to give our parents pleasure, and whatever we do for them we must do with devoted kindliness.

> "Even if the child gives the parents everything possible, if in doing so it shows them only an unfriendly face, it will be punished by God instead of rewarded" (ibid., in Tosafot).

II. It requires love; every child must love its parents from the heart, and out of love it must strive to procure honour for its parents, to raise their standing, etc. (See Yoreh De'ah 240:6.)

III. It requires obedience; whatever parents command, so long as it is not against a commandment of God, the child is bound to carry out obediently.

שמע לאביך זה ילדך ואל תבוז כי זקנה אמך

> "Obey your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother, even when she is advanced in years" (Prov. 23:22).

IV. It requires trust; a child must subordinate its own judgment to the judgment of its parents, and remain convinced that the parents surely want what is best for the child in all things.

[p. 30]

וכאב את בן ירצה

> "Like a father who always wishes his son well" (ibid. 3:12).

78. ***By what, now, is the duty of reverence violated?***

I. It is violated when one saddens or grieves one's parents.

מקלל אביו ואמו ידעך נרו באישון חשך

> "Whoever slights father or mother, his lamp shall go out in the blackest darkness" (Prov. 20:20).

II. It is violated when one mocks or laughs at one's parents.

עין תלעג לאב ותבוז ליקהת אם יקרוה ערבי נחל ויאכלוה בני נשר

> "An eye that mocks its father and laughs at the wrinkles of its mother, such an (eye) the ravens of the valley shall peck out, and the young eagles devour" (ibid. 30:17).

III. It is violated when by one's own actions one brings shame upon one's parents.

כעס לאביו בן כסיל וממר ליולדתו

> "The foolish son brings grief to his father, and sorrow to her who bore him" (ibid. 17:25).

IV. It is violated when one disregards the commands of one's parents and is disobedient to them.

> "All the people of his city shall stone him — the disobedient, rebellious son — with stones, that he die, and you shall remove the evildoer from your midst" (Deut. 21:21).

V. It is violated when one finds fault with one's parents and wants to know and do things better than they.

> "Even well-founded objections a child may make to its parents only modestly, but never in a tone of reproach or censure" (Yoreh De'ah 240:11).

79. ***What is particularly noteworthy about the fifth commandment?***

It is particularly noteworthy about the fifth commandment that a reward is pronounced for obeying the commandment: "That you may live long and that it may go well with you" [n. 36].

[p. 31] **80.** ***What do we learn from this?***

We learn from this that, just as a curse falls in later life upon one who slights his parents, so the blessing of God will beneficently accompany through the whole of life one who honours father and mother.

81. ***What else is noteworthy about the fifth commandment?***

It is further noteworthy about the fifth commandment that in Deuteronomy it reads: "Honour your father and your mother, as God, your Lord, has commanded you" (Deut. 5:16).

82. ***And what does this addition teach us?***

This addition teaches us that we must honour our parents as God has commanded; if, therefore, it should occur to parents to command something that conflicts with the will of God, the child may not obey its parents in this.

> "Every one of you shall fear his mother and his father, but let him keep My days of rest therewith. I am God, your Lord" (Lev. 19:3). Thus, more than your father and your mother (BT Bava Metzia 3b).[16]

83. ***What else does the fifth commandment include?***

The fifth commandment further commands consideration toward relatives, especially toward brothers and sisters.

84. ***What is required toward relatives and siblings?***

Relatives, and especially brothers and sisters, must respect and love one another and live together in harmony.

הנה מה טוב ומה נעים שבת אחים גם יחד

> "Behold! how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together" — that is, in peace and harmony (Ps. 133:1).

85. ***How does this duty flow from the fifth commandment?***

Whoever truly reveres his parents must also have love and respect for all who are in contact with his parents and connected with them.

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[16]Translator: The exegesis of Lev. 19:3 ("all of you are obliged to honour Me") is found at BT Bava Metzia 32a (also BT Yevamot 5b–6a); "3b" is probably a misprint for 32a.

[p. 32] **86.** ***What else does the fifth commandment command?***

The fifth commandment further commands that we show our teachers love and respect in the fullest measure.

> "Whoever learns from his fellow a section, a verse, a saying, or even just a single letter, must show him honour" (Avot 6:3).

87. ***How does the duty toward the teacher flow from the fifth commandment?***

If we owe reverence to our parents, to whom we owe merely our earthly existence, then we surely owe it no less to the teacher, since to him we owe the cultivation of our soul.

> "One owes more consideration to the teacher than to the parents, for these merely bring a person into this world, but the teacher procures for him eternity" (BT Bava Metzia 33a).

88. ***What else does the fifth commandment comprise?***

The fifth commandment further comprises our relationship to the fatherland; the fatherland is an enlarged parental home, and the inhabitants of the fatherland form the family of this more extended parental home, and the children of the fatherland are, in a certain sense, our brothers and sisters.

89. ***Which is our fatherland?***

Not the land in which we were born, but the land where we enjoy the protection of the law for our life and property, for our actions and endeavours.

90. ***What do we owe our fatherland?***

I. We must obey the laws of the fatherland punctually.

דינא דמלכותא דינא

> "The laws of the land have legal force" (BT Gittin 10b). "Whoever therefore evades a lawful tax or circumvents it, and the like, transgresses the divine commandment: You shall not rob" (Maim. H. Gezelah 5:11).

II. We must strive with all our powers, abilities and means to promote the welfare of the fatherland, and where need requires, also to defend it with our blood.

> [p. 33] "Seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you, and pray to God for it, for in its well-being you too shall fare well" (Jer. 29:7).

91. ***How does our religion regard the ruler of the fatherland?***

Our religion regards the ruler of the fatherland as appointed by God [n. 37].

92. ***And what, therefore, do we owe the ruler of the fatherland?***

I. Reverence; we must pay the ruler of the fatherland a special esteem, and must keep away from those who violate this duty.

ירא את ה׳ בני ומלך עם שונים אל תתערב

"Fear God, my son, and the king, and do not mingle with rebels" (Prov. 24:21).

II. Love; we must love the ruler of the fatherland and pray to God for his welfare.

הוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות

"It is your duty to pray for the welfare of the government of the land" (Avot 3:2).

III. Loyalty; we must be devoted to the ruler of the fatherland, and may never permit ourselves any disloyalty, not only in deeds, but not even disloyalty in words or thoughts.

גם במדעך מלך אל תקלל

"Even in your innermost self you shall not curse the king" (Eccl. 10:20).

93. ***What, finally, follows from the fifth commandment?***

From the fifth commandment there follows, finally, consideration toward all human beings; for the whole world is one great parental home, and all human beings are children of the one Father.

94. ***What do we owe our fellow human beings in general?***

I. Love, which toward all human beings must at least consist in this, that we may hate no one.

לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart" (Lev. 19:17).

II. Respect, which must at least show itself in this, that we may treat no one with contempt.

[p. 34]

אל תהי בז לכל אדם

"Despise no human being at all" (Avot 4:3).

III. Forbearance, which must at least consist in this, that one does not lightly accuse any person or lay anything to his charge.

והוי דן את כל אדם לכף זכות

"Judge every person from the best side" (ibid. 1:6).

IV. Honour; we may at least put no one to shame nor injure his honour.

יהי כבוד חברך חביב עליך כשלך

"Your neighbour's honour must be as dear to you as your own" (ibid. 2:11).

V. Forgiveness; we may at least take revenge on no one for a wrong.

לא תקם ולא תטר את בני עמך

"You shall not take revenge nor bear a grudge against the sons of your people" (Lev. 19:18).

VI. Friendliness; we may violate courtesy toward no human being at all.

והוי מקבל את כל אדם בסבר פנים יפות

"Receive every person with a friendly countenance" (Avot 2:15).[17]

95. ***What further flows from the fifth commandment?***

From the fifth commandment there further flows the duty for parents not themselves to contribute to their children's one day violating the duty of reverence.

"Parents who by their way of life and conduct bring it about that their children violate the commandment of reverence toward them transgress the prohibition: Do not put a stumbling block before the blind" (Yoreh De'ah 240:19, 20).

96. ***How do parents violate this duty?***

I. Parents violate this duty when through excessive indulgence in upbringing they pamper and spoil their children: children brought up in this way then usually grieve their parents greatly.

"He who spares the rod hates his child! He who loves it visits it with discipline" (Prov. 13:24).

[p. 35] **II.** Parents violate this duty when in the presence of their children they let themselves be carried away by the turmoil of the passions, whereby the children must lose their reverence.

III. Parents violate this duty when they sin in the presence of their children and thereby also lead the children into sin; such parents cannot be regarded and honoured by the children as representatives of God.

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

The sixth commandment reads: **"You shall not murder."**

98. ***What kind of sin is murder?***

Murder is the greatest crime in human society, and was punished with death even before the revelation at Sinai.

שפך דם האדם באדם דמו ישפך

"Whoever sheds the blood of a human being, his blood shall in turn be shed by human beings" (Gen. 9:9).[18]

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[17]Translator: The saying of Shammai, "receive every person with a cheerful countenance," is Avot 1:15, not 2:15.

[18]Translator: The verse is Gen. 9:6; "9, 9" is a misprint.

99. ***What does the sixth commandment forbid?***

The sixth commandment forbids not only direct but also indirect murder; not only murder by deed but also murder by omission; not only murder of the body but also murder of the soul; and not only murder of others but also of oneself.

100. ***Why is suicide a crime?***

Suicide is a crime because life is not the property of man, but is granted to him by God so that he may become a partaker of spiritual good.

כי לי בני ישראל

> "To Me belong the sons of Israel" (Lev. 25:55).

101. ***How does one commit indirect murder against the body of another by a deed? [n. 38]***

When one does anything by which another may suffer bodily harm, or by which the life of the [p. 36] other may be shortened, one commits indirect murder against the body of the other.

> "When you build a new house, make a parapet around your roof [n. 39], so that you bring no blood-guilt upon your house if anyone should fall from it" (Deut. 22:8) [n. 40].

102. ***How does one commit indirect murder against one's own body by a deed?***

When one gives oneself over to dissipation or to intemperance in enjoyment, whereby life and health are undermined; or when one eats foods that are harmful to health, such as unripe fruit and the like, one commits murder against one's own body.

> "Never may your heart incline to the way of dissipation, never may you stray onto its path; for many are the slain whom it has brought down, numerous are those whom it strangles" (Prov. 7:25, 26).

103. ***How does one commit murder against the body of another by omission?***

When one sees someone in danger and does not strive to rescue him, one commits murder by omission against him.

הצל לקחים למות ומטים להרג אם תחשוך

> "Rescue those consigned to death, those doomed to destruction, if you can prevent it" (ibid. 24:11).

104. ***What do our ancients say about this?***

Our ancients say: "Whoever could save a human being and fails to do so; or whoever knows of the danger that threatens his fellow man and does not disclose it to him, transgresses the divine prohibition: Do not stand by the blood of your neighbour. And although these are only sins of omission, they are nonetheless highly punishable; for whoever lets one human being perish does

as much as if he let a whole world perish, and whoever in turn saves one human life does as much as if he had saved a whole world" (Maim. H. Rotze'ach 1:14).

[p. 37] **105.** ***How does one commit murder against one's own body by omission?***

When one fails to do what is conducive to life and health; or when, in illness, one does not follow the doctor's prescription, refuses to take medicine and the like, one commits murder by omission against one's own body.

רק השמר לך ושמר נפשך מאד

> "Only take heed for yourself and guard your life carefully" (Deut. 4:9) [n. 41].

106. ***How does one commit direct soul-murder against other people?***

When one slanders one's fellow man, shames him, or otherwise inflicts an injury upon his soul, one commits soul-murder against him.

כל המלבין פני חברו ברבים כאלו שופך דמים

> "Whoever publicly shames his fellow man, it is reckoned to him as though he had shed his blood" (BT Bava Metzia 58b).

107. ***How does one commit indirect soul-murder against other people?***

When one seduces and leads people to sin and to do evil, one has indirectly murdered their souls; for through this they will one day lose their peace of soul and the salvation of their soul.

כל המחטיא את הרבים אין מספיקין בידו לעשות תשובה

> "Whoever leads others into sin will find it hard to succeed in atoning again" (Avot 5:18) [n. 42].

108. ***How does one commit soul-murder against oneself?***

I. When one lets oneself be carried away by sensual desires and passions to commit sins and vices, one murders one's own soul by deed; for thereby one stains one's soul and robs oneself of the salvation of one's soul.

> "For her (sin's) house sinks down into death, and her path into the realm of shades. Of all who go in to her, none returns, none reaches the way of life. Therefore walk in the way of the good and keep to the path of the righteous" (Prov. 2:18–20).

[p. 38] **II.** When one has been so unfortunate as to sin, and then fails to improve and to repent, one murders one's own soul by omission.

הנצל כצבי מיד וכצפור מיד יקוש

> "Save yourself (from the power of sin) like the deer from the snare, and like the bird from the trap" (ibid. 6:5).

109. ***What does the sixth commandment command?***

The sixth commandment commands: **I.** The holding sacred of life, both one's own and the life of one's fellow man; to which end charity in particular is made a duty.

> "Whoever shuts his eyes to the misery of the poor is called base, and can even bring blood-guilt upon himself, for the poor man may indeed die of hunger" (Yoreh De'ah 247:1); and it is also written: וצדקה תציל ממות "Charity saves from death" (Prov. 10:2).

The sixth commandment commands: **II.** That we strive by pious deeds to further the salvation of our soul, and by useful knowledge to work at the enlightenment of our soul; to which end diligence in youth in particular is made a duty.

> "What one learns in youth is like ink written on fresh paper; what one learns in old age is like ink written on blotting paper" (Avot 4:2).[19]

110. ***In what case is it a duty to sacrifice one's own life?***

When a higher duty requires it — as for God and faith, or for virtue, or for the fatherland — it is a duty to sacrifice one's life.

111. ***And in what case may one put one's life in danger?***

To save another human life it is not only permitted, but even meritorious, to put one's own life in danger.

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

The seventh commandment reads: **"You shall not commit adultery."**

[p. 39] **113.** ***What does the seventh commandment command?***

The seventh commandment commands that morality and innocence be held sacred; for morality and innocence are the highest treasures of a human being; they constitute his glory and his honor before God and men.

נזם זהב באף חזיר אשה יפה וסרת טעם

> "A golden ring in a swine's snout is a beautiful woman without modesty" (Prov. 11:22).

114. ***What, then, is our duty?***

We must preserve morality and innocence, purity and chastity, as our highest adornment in life, from earliest youth into the latest old age, and must not violate them, neither by deeds nor by feelings and thoughts, neither by words nor by gestures; and we must avoid every occasion of seduction and always resist it; and each of us must think as Joseph spoke:

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[19] Translator: The saying of Elisha ben Abuyah is Avot 4:20 in the standard numbering.

ואיך אעשה הרעה הגדלה הזאת וחטאתי לאלהים

"How should I do this great evil, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9).

115. ***Why does the seventh commandment refer to the marriage bond?***

Because the bond of marriage is instituted, concluded and sanctified by God, and the bond of marriage therefore constitutes a sanctuary which may be profaned neither by the spouses themselves nor by a third party.

"God is witness between you and the wife of your youth." — "It is the One who instituted the covenant of marriage." — "So guard your spirit, and be not faithless toward the wife of your youth" (Mal. 2:14, 15).

116. ***What, accordingly, is commanded to married people?***

Married people should make each other's life fairer and sweeter through love and faithfulness, through harmony and forbearance, through indulgence and trust, and should encourage one another in virtue and piety.

לא טוב היות האדם לבדו אעשה לו עזר כנגדו

"It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper to be at his side" (Gen. 2:18).

[p. 40] **117.** ***And in what should married people not hold together?***

Married people should not hold together in evil; rather, if one partner wishes to do something evil, the other partner must seek to prevent it.[20]

118. ***What else is compared to the marriage bond?***

The holy covenant that God concluded with Israel is called a marriage bond in many passages of Holy Scripture.

וארשתיך לי לעולם

"I have betrothed you to me forever" (Hos. 2:21).

119. ***What, accordingly, does the seventh commandment further command?***

The seventh commandment accordingly further commands eternal faithfulness to God, the Lord, as the founder of the covenant, and that under no condition—even if one should have to sacrifice one's life—may one violate the holy bond of religion.

[20]Perhaps our sages allude to this in the words: זכה עזר לא זכה כנגדו ["If he is worthy, she is a help; if he is not worthy, she is against him"] (Yebamoth 61b).[Translator: The saying is found at BT Yevamot 63a.]

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

The eighth commandment reads: **"You shall not steal."**

121. ***From whom should one steal nothing?***

One may steal nothing from other people and nothing from oneself.

122. ***What does the eighth commandment forbid?***

Besides theft and robbery proper, the eighth commandment also forbids false measure and weight; the sale of what is false in place of what is genuine; usury; deception by lies or cunning—in a word, every injustice by which another is deprived of his property or of what he has earned.

> "Woe to him who builds his house by injustice and vaults his upper rooms by unrighteousness; who makes his brother work for nothing and does not pay him the wage of his labor" (Jer. 22:13). "Cursed be he who moves his neighbor's boundary" (Deut. 27:17).

123. ***What else does the eighth commandment forbid?***

The eighth commandment forbids depriving another not only of money and money's worth, but also of his good name and [p. 41] reputation, or of his thoughts and words; for all this, too, is property, which we may neither take from another nor violate.

ריבך ריב את רעך וסוד אחר אל תגל

> "Conduct your quarrel with your opponent, but you shall not reveal another's secret" (Prov. 25:9).

124. ***What follows from this?***

From this follows: **I.** that we may not revile or slander anyone, for thereby we rob him of his good name.

לא תקלל חרש

> "You shall not curse the deaf" (Lev. 19:14); and every absent person is called deaf, for he does not hear the slander [n. 43].[21]

From this follows: **II.** that we may not flatter, play the hypocrite toward, or deceive any person, for thereby we steal his thoughts [n. 44].

ולפני עור לא תתן מכשל

> "Before a blind man you shall not lay a stumbling block" (ibid.); that is, you shall not lead anyone astray by deception.

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[21] Translator: The reference number is indistinctly printed (it looks like "34" or "84"); the sequence of the notes (followed by 44, 45, 46 …) shows that endnote 43 is meant.

From this follows: **III.** that we may not thoughtlessly uncover and reveal what another wishes to keep hidden.

גולה סוד הולך רכיל ולפתה שפתיו לא תתערב

> "Do not mix with betrayers, slanderers and babblers" (Prov. 20:19).

From this follows: **IV.** that we may not deceive another even in jest.

> "Like a madman who hurls firebrands, arrows and death, so is he who deceives his neighbor and says: I am only joking" (ibid. 26:19).

125. *Does repentance help against sins of this kind?*

Repentance helps against every sin; but the unhappy person who has made himself guilty of such sins cannot, with all the repentance in the world, obtain reconciliation with God so long as he has not made good the sins as far as he is able; that is, he must first compensate the injured party, insofar as compensation is possible.

> [p. 42] "If a person sins and commits a trespass against God, in that [n. 45] he denies to his fellow something entrusted or deposited with him, or he oppresses his neighbor, or he finds something lost and denies it—: then let him restore the robbery that he robbed, or what he extorted, or what was entrusted to him, or the lost thing that he found—let him repay it in full—; then let him bring his guilt offering to God — —" (Lev. 5:21–25).

126. *Can a person deprive himself of something?*

Certainly! Through laziness and idleness[22] one robs oneself of days and years, and through extravagance one robs oneself of one's property.

גם מתרפה במלאכתו אח הוא לבעל משחית

> "He too who is slack in his work is a brother to the squanderer" (Prov. 18:9).

127. *What does the eighth commandment command?*

The eighth commandment commands that property be held sacred; not only may we deprive another of nothing, but we must also seek to preserve what is his and to protect him from harm, and we are obliged to make many a sacrifice for the welfare of our fellow men.

> "The wicked man says: Mine is mine and yours is mine; the ordinary man says: Mine is mine and yours is yours; but the pious man says: Yours is yours and mine is yours" (Aboth 5:10).

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[22] Translator: The text prints *Mäßigung* ("moderation"), evidently a misprint for *Müßiggang* ("idleness").

128. ***What else does the eighth commandment command?***

The eighth commandment extends over the whole domain of charity, for charity is a duty, and so refusing it is a violation of right [n. 46].

אטם אזנו מזעקת דל גם הוא יקרא ולא יענה

> "He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will himself one day call and find no answer" (Prov. 21:13).

129. ***Does charity extend only to the poor?***

Charity extends to the rich as well, and toward them it is called obligingness, which is likewise a duty of virtue.

גמילות חסד יותר מן הצדקה

> "Being obliging is a higher duty than charity" (Saying of the Ancients).[23]

130. ***To whom else does charity extend?***

Charity extends not only to the living but also to the dead, and consists in paying [p. 43] the last honors to a corpse, and in carrying out the instructions of a deceased person as far as possible.

חסד שעושין עם המתים הוא חסד של אמת

> "Acts of love shown to the dead are the *true* ones" (Saying of the Ancients).[24]

131. ***What else do our sages call a theft?***

Our sages say:

> "Whoever enjoys anything in this world without thanking God for it by a ברכה [*berakhah*, blessing] commits a theft against God" (Berachoth 35b).

132. ***What, then, has God commanded us?***

God has commanded us: to hold sacred life and honor and what is connected with them, in the sixth commandment; to hold sacred moral purity, in the seventh commandment; to hold sacred property, in the eighth commandment; and finally to hold sacred the word, in the ninth commandment.

133. ***How, then, does the ninth commandment read?***

The ninth commandment reads: **"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."**

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[23]Translator: Cf. BT Sukkah 49b: "Acts of loving-kindness (*gemilut ḥasadim*) are greater than charity."

[24]Translator: Cf. Rashi on Gen. 47:29 and Genesis Rabbah 96:5: kindness shown to the dead is "true kindness" (*ḥesed shel emet*).

134. ***What is meant by bearing witness?***

What a witness states before a court is called bearing witness; and since under present legislation every witness must swear to his statement before the court, the false witness transgresses not only the ninth but also the third commandment.

135. ***How is the false witness regarded by God and men?***

The false witness is declared by God to be a base evildoer, and is despised by men as a base person.

> "If the witness has testified falsely against his brother, then you shall do to him as he planned to do to his brother: and you shall remove the *evildoer* from your midst" (Deut. 19:18, 19).

136. ***By which people is the false witness despised?***

The false witness is despised by all people, even by those to whom the false testimony has brought advantage.

[p. 44] **137.** ***How do our ancients demonstrate this from Holy Scripture?***

Queen Jezebel demanded of the elders of Jezreel that they set up false witnesses against Naboth, and in doing so she used the expression: והושיבו שנים אנשים בני בליעל "And seat two *worthless* men opposite him" (1 Kings 21:1);[25] thus she herself, who wished to make use of the false witnesses, called them: *base men*.

138. ***What else does the ninth commandment forbid?***

The ninth commandment further forbids: **I.** Every untruth for or against another person by word:

לא תשא שמע שוא אל תשת ידך עם רשע להית עד חמס

> "You shall not spread a false report; you shall not lend your hand to the wicked to be an unrighteous witness" (Exod. 23:1).

The ninth commandment further forbids: **II.** Every untruth spread by look, gesture or behavior.

> "A godless person, a crafty man, goes about with a false mouth, winks with his eyes, shuffles with his feet, points with his fingers. With falsehood in his heart he devises evil at all times and stirs up strife. Therefore his downfall comes suddenly; unexpectedly he perishes, beyond rescue" (Prov. 6:12, 15).

139. ***What does the ninth commandment command?***

The ninth commandment commands: **I.** Honesty, integrity, sincerity and truth in all things; a person may not present himself to the world otherwise than he is in reality.

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[25] Translator: The verse is 1 Kings 21:10.

"Truth is the seal of God" (Saying of the Ancients),[26] that is, the mainstay of all virtues.

The ninth commandment commands: **II.** Just and truthful testimony; just as false testimony is forbidden, so just testimony is commanded; and it is also our duty always to use our word for the good of our fellow men.

פתח פיך לאלם אל דין כל בני חלוף

"Open your mouth for the mute, and for the right of all the helpless" (Prov. 31:8).

[p. 45] The ninth commandment commands: **III.** To be careful with one's words and to consider carefully before one speaks, for: "An incautious word often becomes a dangerous snare" (ibid. 12:13).

מות וחיים ביד לשון ואהביה יאכל פריה

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and according as one loves it, so does one enjoy its fruit" (ibid. 18:21).

140. ***How is the duty of truthfulness formulated?***

The duty of truthfulness is formulated thus: a person may say nothing that is a lie, but he is not obliged to say everything that is true; and in certain cases it is even commanded to keep the truth silent.

"Betrayers of secrets, slanderers, talebearers and garrulous babblers—do not mix with such" (Prov. 20:19).

141. ***But may a witness before a court also keep the truth silent?***

Every witness called by the court commits, by keeping the truth silent, just as great a sin as by denying the truth.

"If a person is put under oath to be a witness of what he has seen or known, and does not declare it, he incurs sin" (Lev. 5:1).

142. ***Since we have now dealt with purity of deed and purity of word, what remains?***

There remains for us to deal with purity of heart and the perfecting of the inner self; and of this the tenth commandment speaks.

143. ***How, then, does the tenth commandment read?***

The tenth commandment reads: **"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's."**

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[26] Translator: BT Shabbat 55a; Yoma 69b.

144. ***Can coveting really be forbidden?***

Coveting can certainly be forbidden; for if a person constantly [p. 46] observes the teaching of God in its exalted sense, he will bring himself to the point where not even a sinful thought will arise in him; and for this reason this tenth and last commandment is, in a certain sense, the keystone of divine revelation.

145. ***What does the tenth commandment forbid?***

The tenth commandment forbids every evil lust and desire that leads to harm.

146. ***Whom, then, does evil lust harm?***

Properly speaking, evil lust and passion harm the person himself; but they can also lead to harm for others, for if the evil thought is not suppressed but nourished, it easily passes over into the evil deed.

> "Woe to those who devise iniquity and plot evil upon their beds, which they carry out in the light of morning when they have the power in their hands. They covet fields and seize them, houses, and take them away" (Micah 2:1, 2).

147. ***Which thoughts belong particularly among the sinful ones?***

Among the sinful thoughts belong: **I.** Envy, grudging, or jealousy.

חיי בשרים לב מרפא ורקב עצמות קנאה

> "A tranquil mind preserves the body, but envy is a consuming rot of the bones" (Prov. 14:30).

Among the sinful thoughts belong: **II.** Anger and wrath nourished within.

כי לאויל יהרג כעש

> "Surely, his vexation strangles the fool" (Job 2:2).[27]

Among the sinful thoughts belong: **III.** Avarice, selfishness and greed.

נבהל להון איש רע עין ולא ידע כי חסר יבאנו

> "The man with an evil eye is greedy for money, and does not know that it brings him want" (Prov. 28:22) [n. 47].

Among the sinful thoughts belong: **IV.** Vanity and love of finery.

> [p. 47] "And God says: Because the daughters of Zion are so haughty, and walk with outstretched necks — and mincing gait; therefore the Lord will take away — — the pearl ornaments and the bracelets — and the diadems — and the rings, etc." (Isa. 3:16–24).

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[27] Translator: The verse is Job 5:2.

Among the sinful thoughts belong: **V.** Pride and arrogance.

לפני שבר גאון ולפני כשלון גבה רוח

> "Pride before the crash. Arrogance before the fall" (Prov. 16:18).

Among the sinful thoughts belong: **VI.** All sensual lusts.

ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם

> "And you shall not stray after your heart and after your eyes, after which you go whoring" (Num. 15:39).

148. ***What does the tenth commandment command?***

The tenth commandment commands delight in the good; just as one must kill evil lust within oneself, so one must constantly awaken within oneself the desire for the good, and through awakening the desire for the good a person attains perfection.

> "Happy the man who — — always has delight in the teaching of God. — He shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in due season, and whose leaves do not wither, and all that he undertakes prospers" (Ps. 1:1–3).

149. ***Which desires and thoughts belong particularly among the good ones?***

Among the good thoughts belongs: **I.** Delight in God, that is, an ardent longing to serve God.

שמחתי באמרים לי בית ה׳ נלך

> "I rejoice in those who say to me: Let us go into the house of God" (ibid. 122:1).

Among the good thoughts belongs: **II.** The desire to surpass another in good (noble envy).

יתר מרעהו צדיק

> "The pious man always wants to accomplish more than his neighbor" (Prov. 12:26).

Among the good thoughts belongs: **III.** Indignation at the sight of evil (noble anger).

[p. 48]

הלוא משנאיך ה׳ אשנא ובתקוממיך אתקוטט

> "Should I not hate those, O God, who hate you? (that is, become indignant at their deeds) should I not be angry at your adversaries? that is, at wicked people" (Ps. 139:21).

Among the good thoughts belongs: **IV.** The desire to advance further and further in good (noble avarice).

> "You can never be finished with the work—that is, with the task set you as a human being—and therefore you can never become free to withdraw from it" (Aboth 2:16).

Among the good thoughts belongs: **V.** The wish and the striving to distinguish oneself *through the good*.

> "A person should do good from whatever motive, for through doing it from a not entirely pure motive he will come to doing it from a pure motive" (Pessachim 50b) [n. 48].

Among the good thoughts belongs **VI.** *Self-respect*, that is, a warm feeling for one's own dignity as a human being and as an Israelite, which consists in not debasing oneself for any price in the world (noble pride).

> "Make your Sabbath a weekday"—that is, limit your consumption as much as possible—"so that you may only remain independent of human help" (ibid. 112a). "Flay a carcass in the public square—and take your wage for it, only do not need people" (B. Batra 110a) [n. 49].

150. ***What does delight in the good bestow?***

Delight in the good bestows joy to the heart, peace to the soul, happiness in this life and bliss in the world to come.

והיה מעשה הצדקה שלום ועבדת הצדקה השקט ובטח עד עולם

> "And the work of righteousness brings peace, and the working of virtue [n. 50] rest and security forever" (Isa. 32:17).

151. ***How does the brief concluding statement of the Ten Commandments read?***

The concluding statement of the Ten Commandments reads: In a person there must dwell love of God, love of his fellow men, and a rightly understood love of himself; and he must be: pure of hands, pure of lips and pure of heart.

[p. 49] Third Section. Of the Truth of the Religion of Israel

1. ***To what kind of truths does the divine revelation on Sinai belong? [n. 51]***

The divine revelation on Sinai belongs to the historical truths.

2. ***What proofs are there for historical truths?***

For historical truths there is, properly speaking, only one proof, namely the testimony of contemporary historians; but many a historical truth develops out of preceding events and is thus also proved by these; some can be proved from their consequences; and for still others historical monuments speak.

3. ***How, then, shall we prove the truth of the divine revelation on Sinai?***

I. By *the preparation*, namely from those facts which preceded the divine revelation.

II. By *the consequences*, namely from those undeniable events which followed the divine revelation and, in a certain sense, developed out of it.

III. By *the monuments* which, preserved to this hour, attest the divine revelation.

IV. By the infallible *testimony* of the very greatest historian.

4. ***What do we understand by preparation?***

By preparation we understand those arrangements which God made in order to pave the way for the holy teaching and to secure it entrance.

במדבר פנו דרך ה׳ ישרו בערבה מסלה לאלהינו

> "In the wilderness prepare the way of God, make level in the desert a highway for our Lord" (Isa. 40:3) [n. 52].

[p. 50] **5.** ***Where do these arrangements begin?***

Properly speaking, these arrangements begin with the creation of the world, as our sages meaningfully say: "The world was created only for the sake of the Torah"; that is, religion is the end and the whole world only the means.

בהכינו שמים שם אני בחוקו חוג על פני תהום

> "When he prepared the heavens, I was there" (thus speaks the Torah) "when he drew the circle over the deep" (Prov. 8:27).

6. ***But where do the actual preparations begin?***

The actual preparations begin in the time of the patriarchs, that is, our forefathers Abraham, Yizchak and Jacob.

> "Thus says God, the Lord of Israel: Beyond the River your fathers dwelt of old and served alien gods. Then I took your father Abraham, and multiplied his seed and gave him Yizchak; to Yizchak I gave Jacob, and Jacob and his sons went down to Mizraim" (Josh. 24:2–4).

7. ***What, then, did God do by way of preparation?***

God appeared at times to the patriarchs, made his will known to them, and moved them to know him.

8. ***Under what name did God reveal himself to the patriarchs?***

God revealed himself to the patriarchs under the name **"El Shaddai."**

וארא אל אברהם אל יצחק ואל יעקב באל שדי ושמי ה׳ לא נודעתי להם

> "And I appeared to Abraham, to Yizchak and to Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name Adonai I did not make myself known to them" (Exod. 6:3).

9. ***How is this to be explained?***

"El Shaddai" means: "Omnipotence that is sufficient unto itself." The patriarchs therefore recognized, revered, feared and served God as the highest power of heaven and earth. But Adonai [n. 53], the hallowed name which expresses all the attributes of God, was first revealed and taught on Sinai [n. 54].

10. ***What further took place by way of preparation?***

Further, by way of preparation, God concluded a covenant with Abraham, the covenant of religion, to walk [p. 51] before God and to remain faithful to him, for him and his descendants.

והקמתי את בריתי ביני ובינך ובין זרעך אחריך לדרתם לברית עולם

> "And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant" (Gen. 17:7) [n. 55].

11. ***How, therefore, is Abraham to be regarded?***

The patriarch Abraham is to be regarded as the starting point of religion, as the father of faith and of the faithful.

הביטו אל צור חצבתם — הביטו אל אברהם אביכם

> "Look to the rock from which you were hewn — look to Abraham your father" (Isa. 51:1, 2).

12. ***Where did the further preparations take place?***

The further preparations took place in Mizraim, which is nowadays called Egypt, whither Jacob went with his children to sojourn, but where his descendants were harshly oppressed by bondage and hard labor.

וירעו אתנו המצרים ויענונו ויתנו עלינו עבדה קשה

> "And the Mizraites dealt ill with us and afflicted us and laid hard labor upon us" (Deut. 26:6).

13. ***What was this preparation meant to achieve?***

Through the fire of tribulation in the fiery furnace of suffering the children of Israel were to be refined, and through the miraculous deeds that followed they were to be led to the knowledge of God, and thus awakened for the religion which they were now to receive [n. 56].

14. ***Where do the preparations end?***

The preparations end with the redemption from Mizraim, in the course of which never-before-seen wonders and signs took place for the children of Israel, through which they were bound to recognize not only the infinite power of God but also the fact that God had chosen them to receive the hallowed religion.

[p. 52] "That I may perform these signs in their midst, that you may tell in the ears of your son and your grandson what I have wrought in Mizraim, and my signs which I have done among them, *that you may know that I am God*" (Exod. 10:1, 2).

15. ***How, then, are the miracles at the redemption from Egypt to be regarded?***

The miracles at the redemption from Egypt are to be regarded as the last and most important preparation for the divine revelation on Sinai.

16. ***What were the Israelites bound to recognize from them?***

I. The infinite power of God, as Lord of the whole world.

למען תדע כי אין כה׳ אלהינו

"That you may know that there is none like God, our Lord" (ibid. 8:6).

II. That it is God who directs the affairs of the world.

למען תדע כי אני ה׳ בקרב הארץ

"That you may know that I am God in the midst of the land" (ibid. 8:18).

III. That besides God there is no other divine being.

למען תדע כי אין כמני בכל הארץ

"That you may know that there is none like me *in all the world*" (ibid. 9:14).

IV. That God takes Israel under his special care.

למען תדעון אשר יפלה ה׳ בין מצרים ובין ישראל

"That you may know that God makes a distinction between Mizraim and Israel" (ibid. 11:7).

17. ***What are the most important visible consequences that have developed from the divine revelation?***

There is no historical event that has had such great and far-reaching consequences as the divine revelation on Sinai; it destroyed paganism, it forms the foundation of all religions, and whatever humanity possesses that is morally sublime is grounded in the revealed divine teaching.

18. ***By what means did the holy teaching gain entrance into the rest of the world?***

[p. 53] The holy teaching gained entrance into the rest of the world through its pure, morally sublime content. An interpreter of Scripture says meaningfully: "So that no one should think that Moses,

the man of God, secured entrance for the holy teaching through his eloquence, God withheld from him the power of speech; for he was 'heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue'" (Rabbi Nissan).[28]

19. ***Who first of all received the holy teaching from God?***

Israel, which was the smallest people on earth, received the holy teaching from God.

> "Not because you are more numerous than other peoples did God delight in you and choose you, for you are the least of all peoples" (Deut. 7:7).

20. ***And how is Israel to be regarded as the recipient of the divine truth?***

Israel is to be regarded, **I.**, as a firstborn in the great family of nations.

בני בכרי ישראל

> "Israel is my firstborn son" (Exod. 4:22).

Israel is to be regarded, **II.**, as a priestly kingdom.

ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים

> "And you shall become for me a kingdom of priests" (ibid. 19:6).

Israel is to be regarded, **III.**, as an imperishable treasure of God.

והייתם לי סגלה מכל העמים כי לי כל הארץ

> "You shall be to me a treasure out of all peoples, for the whole world is mine" (ibid. 19:5).

Israel is to be regarded, **IV.**, as a holy people.

וגוי קדוש

> "You shall be to me a holy people" (ibid.).

21. ***Why is Israel called firstborn?***

The firstborn is taught first by the father and is called to help teach and raise the other children; so too Israel was the very first to receive the teaching of God, and was called to make it a common possession for all mankind.

[p. 54] **22.** ***Why is Israel called a priestly people?***

The priest is the teacher of the people; but he must also be a model for the people in practice; so too Israel must shine before the other peoples by deeds, so that the kingdom of God may become universal.

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[28] Translator: Probably Rabbenu Nissim of Gerona (the "Ran," 14th century), who makes this point about Moses' speech impediment (Exod. 4:10) in his *Derashot*.

ושמרתם ועשיתם כי הוא חכמתכם ובינתכם לעיני העמים

> "You shall keep it (the divine teaching) and practice it, for it is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the peoples" (Deut. 4:6).

23. ***What do our ancients say about the calling of the priest?***

Our ancients say: It is written:

> "The lips of the priest shall guard knowledge, and teaching shall be sought from his mouth, for he is an angel of the God of Hosts" (Mal. 2:7). If the priest also resembles an angel of God in his conduct and actions, then teaching shall be sought from his mouth; but if not, not" (Chagiga 15b).

24. ***Why is Israel called a treasure among the peoples?***

As treasures are preserved for all times in a treasure chamber, so God has entrusted to Israel the precious treasures of his holy teaching, to preserve them until the time of which it is said:

> "And the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 13:9).[29]

25. ***May we be proud of having been chosen?***

We may not be proud of having been chosen; rather it must lead us to humility and spur us on to constant fulfillment of duty. Our great teacher must serve us as an example in this: God chose him as His highest instrument, and he remained the humblest person on earth.

והאיש משה ענו מאד מכל האדם אשר על פני האדמה

> "The man Moses was very humble, more than any man who lives upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:2).[30]

26. ***In what respect are we to be a holy people?***

We are to be a holy people, that is to say: we should always seek only the good, and find our highest good in the practice of the good.

> [p. 55] "The Israelite should be virtuous not only in order to obtain God's blessings, but out of pure love of God, who commanded virtue" (Maim. H. Teshuba 10:1).[31]

27. ***What are the monuments to the divine revelation?***

The monuments to the divine revelation are: Israel and Holy Scripture.

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[29] Translator: The verse is Isa. 11:9.

[30] Translator: The verse is Num. 12:3.

[31] Translator: Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Repentance (Hilkhot Teshuvah) 10:1–2; Fassel paraphrases.

28. ***In what respect is Israel a monument to the divine revelation?***

The existence of Israel is an eloquent proof of the divinity of the revealed teaching, for no other people of antiquity has survived except Israel. And according to the natural course of events Israel would have been the least able to survive, for as the smallest of little peoples, scattered over the whole face of the earth, it had to struggle with the harshest fates; it is therefore not the revealed teaching that has been preserved by Israel, but Israel that has been preserved by the revealed teaching.

אכן חציר העם יבש חציר נבל ציץ ודבר אלהינו יקום לעולם

> "Truly, the people is grass! The grass withers, the flower fades (so too a people ages and fades away); but the word of God stands forever" (Isa. 40:7, 8).

29. ***How, then, is the existence of Israel to be regarded?***

The existence of Israel is to be regarded as an eloquent monument to the divine revelation, by virtue of which the omnipotence of God protects Israel.

אתם עדי היש אלוה מבלעדי

> "You are my witnesses that there is no God besides me" (Isa. 44:6).[32]

30. ***What convincing monument does Holy Scripture form?***

No book from high antiquity survives as *complete* as Holy Scripture; and if one considers that Israel had to wander from land to land and seldom remained long at home in any one place, the miracle of the preservation of the written word of God becomes all the greater.

> "The heavens may vanish like smoke, the earth wear out like a garment, and its inhabitants die away like a moth; but my salvation shall endure forever" (Isa. 51:6).

[p. 56] **31.** ***What is the most eloquent monument in Holy Scripture?***

The content of Holy Scripture is the most eloquent monument; it is even more convincing than all external facts, for it contains the true, pure and genuine teaching of God, and is therefore an infallible testimony of God and the sole means by which Israel has been preserved.

> "Were not your Torah my refreshment, I would long since have perished in my misery" (Ps. 119:92).

32. ***How could this be expressed in a double proposition?***

This double proposition reads: The teaching is divine because it was taught by God: it was taught by God because its content is divine.

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[32] Translator: The words quoted are from Isa. 44:8.

33. ***And what follows from this?***

From this it follows that the holy laws and teachings can be abrogated by no one but God himself.

> "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder of which he spoke comes to pass, saying to you: Let us go after other gods — then do not hearken to the words of that prophet" (Deut. 13:2–4).

34. ***What, then, are miracles meant to accomplish?***

Miracles and extraordinary signs are no proofs, either for or against an eternal truth; they were performed only because the needs of the nation made them necessary.

> "It is written: 'They trusted in God and in his servant Moses' (Exod. 14:31); not because he performed so many miracles did they trust Moses—these took place only because the time required them—but they trusted him because they all saw how God revealed himself through him, etc." (Maim. H. Yesode Hatora 8, 9, 10).[33]

35. ***What is to be noted about the testimony of the historian?***

I. The divine revelation to Moses took place before the whole people, and what a whole people attests as having perceived cannot be a deception.

[p. 57]

הנה אנכי בא אליך בעב הענן בעבור ישמע העם

> "And God said to Moses: Behold, I come to you in a thick cloud, so that the *people* may hear when I speak with you" (Exod. 19:9).

II. The divine revelation was written down by the greatest man who has ever lived or ever will live, who therefore certainly attested only what is truth.

III. The written sacred history was read aloud to contemporaries immediately after the events had taken place; nothing can therefore have been included that had not actually happened.

ויקח ספר הברית ויקרא באזני העם

> "And he (Moses) took the book of the covenant and read it in the ears of the people" (ibid. 24:7).

IV. Moses gave the completed book of the Torah to the priests and the sons of Levi and commanded them: "Take this book of the Torah and put it beside the ark of the covenant of God, your Lord, that it may be there as a witness" (Deut. 31:26); and this he did on the day of which he knew that it was the day of his death: and on the day of his death no person deals in deception, much less a Moses.

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[33]Translator: Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Foundations of the Torah (Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah); the passage paraphrased is 8:1.

36. ***How does the concluding statement of this third section read?***

The concluding statement of this third section reads:

אמת תורתנו הקדושה והטהורה

"True is our Torah, the holy and the pure."

[p. 58] Fourth Section. Of the Other Revelations, that is, of the Whole Bible, the Prophets and Tradition

1. ***What is the purpose of the divine teaching?***

The purpose of the divine teaching is our spiritual salvation; through it God wished to establish not only our earthly well-being but also our eternal happiness.

למען הודעך כי לא על הלחם לבדו יחיה האדם כי על כל מוצא פי ה' יחיה האדם

"To make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Deut. 8:3).

2. ***What do we call the teaching of God in one word, and how is it divided?***

The whole teaching of God we call in one word: *Bible* or: *Holy Scripture*, and it is divided into תורה Torah, נביאים Nebiim and כתובים *Ketubim*.

3. ***What does the Torah consist of, and what does it contain?***

The Torah consists of the five books of Moses, and contains, besides the Ten Commandments, which God revealed directly to the whole people of Israel, also the other commandments, prohibitions and holy teachings which God revealed to Moses in order that he might communicate them to Israel.

4. ***And what else does it contain?***

Finally, it also contains the history of the creation, of the patriarchs, of the miracles that took place, and of the events of Israel up to the death of Moses.

[p. 59] **5.** ***Where did the other revelations to Moses take place?***

The other revelations to Moses took place partly still on Sinai, during the 40 days when Moses remained on the mountain.

ויהי משה בהר ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה

"And Moses remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights" (Exod. 24:18).

Partly later, in the Tent of Meeting:

"And when Moses came into the Tent of Meeting to speak with him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the cover that is upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim. Thus he spoke to him" (Num. 7:89).

6. ***Did God also reveal himself to other people?***

God revealed himself to other people both before and after Moses, and these chosen people are called Nebiim (prophets) [n. 57].

7. ***In what does the revelation to Moses differ from that to the other prophets?***

I. To the other prophets God revealed himself at certain times, but to Moses at any time, whenever he desired it.

עמדו ואשמעה מה יצוה ה׳ לכם

"And Moses said to them: Wait, that I may hear what God will command concerning you" (Num. 9:8) [n. 58].

II. The revelation to Moses was of a far more perfect kind, which stood to the other revelations as waking to dreaming, as clarity to riddle [n. 59], as plain speech to obscure signaling.

"And God said: Hear now my words: to prophets of your kind I, God, make myself known in a vision, in a dream I speak with him. Not so my servant Moses; in all my house he is trusted; mouth to mouth I speak with him, in plain sight and not in riddles" (Num. 12:6–8).

III. Laws, commandments and prohibitions God revealed solely and exclusively through Moses.

"No prophet may establish a law or commandment, binding for the future, as given by God" (Maim. H. Yesode Hatora 9:7) [n. 60].[34]

8. ***How, accordingly, is Moses to be regarded?***

Moses is to be regarded, **I.**, as the father and the greatest of all prophets.

[p. 60]

ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה אשר ידעו ה׳ פנים אל פנים

"And there has not arisen a prophet again in Israel like Moses, who knew God face to face" (Deut. 34:10).

Moses is to be regarded, **II.**, as the most perfect instrument of which God made use on earth, for through him alone God revealed the *whole* teaching.

וזאת התורה אשר שם משה לפני בני ישראל

"This is the teaching which Moses set before the children of Israel" (ibid. 4:44).

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[34]Translator: Chapter 9 of Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah has only five paragraphs; the principle cited is stated in 9:1. The opening quotation mark is missing in the original.

Moses is to be regarded, **III.**, as our greatest benefactor; the heavenly teaching given through Moses is our holiest inheritance; unchanged and unfalsified it has come down to us from our fathers, unchanged and unfalsified it leads us at all times on the way to life and salvation, unchanged and unfalsified we shall bequeath it in turn to future generations.

> "Not with you alone do I make this covenant — but with him who is here, abiding with us today before God, our Lord, as well as with him who is not here with us today" (ibid. 29:13, 14).

Moses is to be regarded, **IV.**, as the benefactor of the whole human race; the covenant at Sinai is a primordial covenant of God with all mankind, and through Moses the spring was dug and opened from which all people are to draw teachings of salvation.

> "When God came from Sinai, it shone forth for them also from Seir; he beamed forth from Mount Paran; he came surrounded by holy myriads, at his right hand the flames of the law. He loves other peoples too; their holy ones (that is, the pious of every people) are in your hand, and they (the other peoples too) shall (one day) encamp at your feet and receive your words" (ibid. 33:2, 3).

9. ***What, now, was the purpose of the other prophets?***

The purpose of the other prophets was: to be messengers and heralds of the divine charge, to foretell the near and more distant future of Israel and of many other peoples, and the ultimate future of all mankind.

[p. 61]

כי לא יעשה ה׳ אלהים דבר כי אם גלה סודו אל עבדיו הנביאים

> "God, the Lord, does nothing unless he has revealed his counsel to his servants, the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

10. ***What else was the purpose of the other prophets?***

The chief purpose of their mission was to preserve in its purity the teaching of God given through Moses, to exhort their contemporaries to the worship of God, and to make the kingdom of God abiding for all the future.

11. ***And what, accordingly, took place?***

Accordingly it came about that in times when Israel went astray and fell either into unbelief or into superstition, the prophets came forward and proclaimed what is good and what God requires of human beings: and this they did because they had been awakened by the spirit of the Lord.

ה׳ אלהים דבר מי לא ינבא

> "God the Lord has spoken; who would not prophesy?" (ibid. 3:8).

12. ***How do we know that it was only the spirit of God that made the prophet what he was?***

The prophet Jeremiah, who had to endure and suffer so much for his calling as a prophet, says this expressly:

> "God! you have persuaded me — you were stronger than I and have prevailed over me — the word that I speak is a cry — the word of God has become to me a reproach and a derision all day long. And if I say: I will no more remember him, nor speak again in his name; then it is in my heart as though a burning fire were shut up in my bones; I cannot bear it, I can hold out no longer" (Jer. 20:7–9).

13. ***How, accordingly, is prophecy to be regarded?***

Prophecy is to be regarded as a divine institution in Israel for preparing the revelation on Sinai, and then for carrying it further, strengthening it and developing it.

> "A prophet will I raise up for them from among their brothers, like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him" (Deut. 18:18).

[p. 62] **14.** ***What, accordingly, are the prophets?***

I. The prophets are the worthy successors of the man of God, Moses; the spirit of God, with which Moses was imbued in all its fullness, passed over also to the prophets who followed after him.

> "And God came down in the cloud and spoke with him (Moses), and took of the spirit that was upon him and laid it upon the seventy men, the elders. And it came to pass, *as the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied*" (Num. 11:25).

II. The prophets are the keepers and preservers of the divine words and of the divine promises; the faithful shepherds appointed by God to lead his flock on earth; the attentive watchmen of the holy teaching and of the people of Israel, to whom this holy teaching was given.

> "You, son of man! I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel, and when you hear the word from my mouth, you shall warn them on my behalf" (Ezek. 33:7).

III. It is the prophets who, over a long series of years, made the right understanding of the divine will clear and plain and secured it for all the future.

15. ***When did prophecy cease?***

At the beginning of the Second Temple, in the time of the prophets *Zechariah* and *Malachi*, God closed prophecy.

> "And if anyone prophesies any more, his father and his mother who begot him shall say to him: You shall not live, for you have spoken lies in the name of God" (Zech. 13:3).

16. ***What do our ancients say about this?***

Our ancients say:

מיום שחרב בית המקדש נטלה נבואה מן הנביאים ונתנה לחכמים

> "From the day the Temple was destroyed, prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to the sages" (B. Batra 12a); that is, the right understanding of the holy teachings and laws, which was certainly also a purpose of prophecy, now comes about through the sages, in whom a divine spirit dwells at all times."

[p. 63] **17.** ***And how, then, would someone be regarded who gave himself out as a prophet?***

A person who claimed that God reveals Himself to him in a supernatural manner would be regarded as a deceiver or as a deluded fool, as again our Sages say:

מיום שחרב בית המקדש נתנה נבואה לשטים

> "Since the day the Temple was destroyed, it is only fools who prophesy" (ibid. b).[35]

18. ***How are the writings of the prophets divided?***

The writings of the prophets are divided into the Former Prophets נביאים ראשונים [*Nevi'im Rishonim*] and the Latter Prophets נביאים אחרונים [*Nevi'im Aharonim*].

19. ***What do the Former Prophets contain?***

The Former Prophets do indeed also contain exhortations and prophecies, but for by far the greater part the history of the Israelite people from the death of Moses to the destruction of the First Temple.

20. ***And what do the Latter Prophets contain?***

The Latter Prophets do indeed also contain some narratives of particular events, but for by far the greater part speeches, prophecies and exhortations, which abide for all time as sacred monuments of their holy work.

21. ***What does Ketubim mean, and what do they contain?***

Ketubim כתובים means "Writings"; they are those books of Holy Scripture which were likewise written by chosen men whose words and teachings also count for us as the words of God; and they further contain the later history of Israel up to the rebuilding of the Second Temple.

22. ***How many books does Holy Scripture contain?***

Holy Scripture, or the Bible, contains twenty-four books: 5 of the Torah, 8 of the Nebiim, namely 4 of the Former and 4 of the Latter Prophets, and 11 of the Ketubim.

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[35] Translator: BT Bava Batra 12b; "ibid." refers back to the citation "B. Batra 12, a" at the end of the preceding page. The Hebrew literally reads "prophecy has been given to fools."

[p. 64] **23.** ***How are these holy books enumerated in their order?***

These holy books are enumerated in the following order: 1 בראשית the First Book of Moses, 2 שמות the Second Book of Moses, 3 ויקרא the Third B. of M., 4 במדבר the Fourth B. of M., 5 דברים the Fifth B. of M.; of these 5 books the *Torah* consists. 6 יהושע the Book of Joshua, 7 שופטים the Book of Judges, 8 שמואל the two Books of Samuel, 9 מלכים the 2 Books of Kings; of these 4 books the *Former Prophets* consist. 10 ירמיה Jeremiah, 11 יחזקאל Ezekiel, 12 ישעיה Isaiah, 13 תרי עשר the Twelve Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi; of these 4 books the *Latter Prophets* consist. 14 רות Ruth, 15 תהלים Psalms, 16 איוב Job, 17 משלי Proverbs of Solomon, 18 קהלת Ecclesiastes, 19 שיר השירים Song of Songs, 20 איכה Lamentations, 21 דניאל Daniel, 22 אסתר Esther, 23 עזרא נחמיה Ezra and Nehemiah, 24 דברי הימים the 2 Books of Chronicles [n. 61]; of these 11 books the Ketubim consist.

24. ***What are we to take to heart concerning the whole of Holy Scripture?***

I. We are to take to heart that in the 24 books of the Bible the simple, unadulterated, pure word of God is contained, from the very beginning of divine revelation to its close; Holy Scripture is therefore a living fount of salvation for all times and generations; in it everything is expressed that is required for our happiness.

חלקי ה׳ אמרתי לשמר דבריך

> "My portion it is, O God! so I say, to follow Thy word" (Ps. 119:57).

II. We are to take to heart that the rich content of Holy Scripture quickens the soul and gladdens the heart; and it, the perfect one, makes us perfect as well; and it, the wellspring of blessing and salvation, will also bring about salvation and blessing for all eternity.

יקרה היא מפנינים וכל חפציך לא ישוו בה

> "More precious is she than *peninim*, and all that thou holdest dear does not equal her" (Prov. 3:15).

[p. 65] **III.** We are to take to heart that the content of Holy Scripture is eternal and unchangeable; times change, and with them all that is earthly passes away, but the holy word of God endures forever, as God is eternal.

לעולם ה׳ דברך נצב

> "Forever, O God, Thy word endures" (Ps. 119:89).

25. ***Which writings further belong to religious doctrine?***

To religious doctrine further belong the books of the Talmud, in which the *oral* teaching תורה שבעל פה [*Torah she-be-'al peh*] is contained.

"Moses likewise received this teaching on Sinai and handed it down to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets handed it down to the Men of the Great Assembly" (Avot 1:1).

26. ***What is the chief content of the oral teaching?***

The chief content of the oral teaching is the transmission (tradition) of the correct interpretation of the written commandments, and the expressly stated principle that, with regard to the ceremonial laws, that is, the customs of divine worship which are commanded for the outward veneration of God, the pronouncements of the Sages must be followed.

"According to the pronouncement of the teaching *which they* (the Sages) teach thee, and according to the judgment *which they* tell thee, thou shalt do: *thou shalt not turn aside* from the word that they tell thee, neither to the right nor to the left" (Deut. 17:11) [n. 62].

27. ***Is the entire content of the holy teaching eternal and binding always and everywhere?***

One part of the holy teaching is eternal and binding always and everywhere; but the other part is indeed eternal, yet not binding equally at all times and in all places and in all circumstances.

28. ***Which part of Holy Scripture is eternal and binding always and everywhere?***

I. The *principles of faith*; these are *eternal* truths. There can be no *reason* that could deny or refute these revealed truths, and there are no [p. 66] times and circumstances that could justify disowning these holy truths even in the slightest [n. 63].

ראש דברך אמת

"The head of Thy word — that is, the principles of Thy words — is truth" (Ps. 119:160).

II. The *duties of justice*; there can be no conscience that would not approve the *laws of justice*, and there are likewise no times and circumstances that could justify committing a violation of right [n. 64].

ולעולם כל משפט צדקך

"And eternal and unchangeable is the decree of Thy righteousness" (ibid.).

III. The *laws of virtue*; there can be no *moral* feeling that would not assent to the laws of virtue of our revealed teaching, and there are likewise no times and circumstances that could justify violating a law of virtue [n. 65].

עולם חסד יבנה — צדק ומשפט מכון כסאך

"The world is built upon virtue" — "Virtue and right are the support of Thy throne" (ibid. 89:2, 15)[36], that is, the condition of the kingdom of God on earth.

[36]Translator: In the Hebrew numbering the first clause is Ps. 89:3 (89:2 in the English versions); the second is 89:15.

29. ***And which part of Holy Scripture is eternal, but not binding always and everywhere?***

The statutes and customs of divine worship which are commanded in Holy Scripture for the outward veneration of God are eternal, but not binding equally at all times, in all places or in all circumstances; some may not be valid for every time, some not for every place, and there may be times and circumstances which justify violating one or another of such laws.

אין לך דבר שעומד בפני פקוח נפש

> "There is no statute whatsoever that may not be transgressed when it is a matter of saving human life, or of the defence of the fatherland" (Orach Chayim 329:6)[37] [n. 66].

30. ***Which statutes are not valid for every time?***

The *temporal laws*, that is, laws for a particular time, such as the laws of the heave-offering, of the tithe, of the year of release, and the like, [p. 67] which were commanded only for the time when Israel would form a separate state, are not valid for every time.

31. ***Which statutes are not valid everywhere?***

Local laws, which were commanded for a particular place or a particular land, are not valid everywhere; thus there are some laws for Jerusalem or Palestine which do not bind us outside Palestine; and thus the sacrifices, the laws of purification and the like have ceased for the present time, because they are bound up with the existence of the Temple in Jerusalem.

32. ***How are the Sages of the Talmud to be regarded?***

The Sages of the Talmud are to be regarded as men "to whom God has imparted of His spirit" [n. 67], in order to work in the spirit of Moses and the prophets for God and for our hallowed religion.

אטו חכם לאו נביא הוא

> "Is not a sage likewise a prophet?" (BT Bava Batra 12a).

33. ***What, according to this view, are we to wish?***

The wish of the man of God:

ומי יתן כל עם ה׳ נביאים כי יתן ה׳ את רוחו עליהם

> "Would that the whole people of God were prophets, that God would put His spirit upon them" (Num. 11:29).

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[37] Translator: The Hebrew wording ("there is nothing that stands in the way of saving a life") is the Talmudic dictum of BT Yoma 82a and BT Ketubot 19a; Orach Chayim 329:6 is the Shulchan Aruch ruling permitting armed defence on the Sabbath against enemies besieging a town.

34. ***Are the prophets, or the Sages of the past, to be regarded as saints?***

Only God is holy, and the prophets and Sages are His instruments; an honour that is called worship is therefore due to God alone, and to no other being, not even to a Moses; we may give thanks *in worship* to God alone as the author of the teaching.

ברוך אתה ה׳ למדני חקיך

> "Praised be Thou, O God, that Thou hast taught me Thy law" (Ps. 119:12).

35. ***And how are the expressions in the Bible that call this or that person holy to be understood?***

These expressions are to be understood to mean that such persons were holier, that is, better and more perfect than other [p. 68] persons, but that holy in and of itself, so perfect that no higher degree of perfection is possible any more — so holy is God alone.

36. ***What appears justified by this?***

By this it appears justified that Moses, the man of God, lies buried near an idol, the Beth Peor, and that the actual site of his grave remained hidden.

ולא ידע איש את קברתו עד היום הזה

> "And no one knew his grave unto this day" (Deut. 34:6).

37. ***How is this to be explained?***

Had the grave of Moses been known, people might perhaps have dug him up in the course of time in order to show him some idolatrous honour. And had he not been buried on such desecrated, unholy ground, people would have built temples in the area of the presumed grave and again worshipped him idolatrously [n. 68].

38. ***What is the concluding sentence of this Fourth Section?***

The concluding sentence of this Fourth Section is:

האמינו בה׳ אלהיכם ותאמנו האמינו בנביאיו והצליחו

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

[p. 69] Fifth Section. Of God and His Attributes

1. ***Does Holy Scripture teach that there is a God?***

Holy Scripture nowhere teaches as a doctrine of faith that there is a God; rather it begins with the words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1); it thus presupposes the knowledge that there is a God.

2. ***Why does Holy Scripture not find it necessary to state this doctrine?***

Holy Scripture does not find it necessary to state this doctrine because everything — nature and life, reason and the heart, the senses and the feelings — states it again and again: "There is a God."

אתה הראת לדעת כי ה׳ הוא האלהים

> "To thee it has been shown, that thou mightest know — that is, through thine own knowledge — that God is the Lord" (Deut. 4:35).

3. ***Which, then, is the first and highest truth of faith that Holy Scripture teaches about God?***

The first and highest truth is: *God is one and unique*.[38]

שמע ישראל ה׳ אלהינו ה׳ אחד

> "Hear, O Israel! God, our Lord, is a one and unique God" (ibid. 6:5).[39]

4. ***Why do we call this truth the first and highest?***

Because this truth forms the distinguishing mark of our confession of faith; on this truth rests the teaching of Israel, the life of Israel and the mission of Israel; with this truth the realm of darkness, the deceit of polytheism, flees away, and the gates of the luminous [p. 70] kingdom of God are opened; and this truth, finally, is also the starting point for all the families of the earth.

> "There will be a *single* day! It is known only to God, not day, not night; at eventide there shall be light. And God shall be King over all the earth; on that day God shall be *One* and His name *One*" (Zech. 14:7, 9).

5. ***What does "God is unique" mean?***

God is unique means: There is only One God and no second; apart from God there is no divine being.

ה׳ הוא האלהים בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת אין עוד

> "God is the Lord, in heaven above and on the earth below, *there is none else*" (Deut. 4:39).

6. ***What does "God is one" mean?***

God is one means: His being in itself is One, simple and indivisible; in God there is no plurality, no multiplicity, and nothing further can be compared with the unity of God [n. 69].

ואל מי תדמיוני ואשוה יאמר קדוש

> "To whom will ye liken Me, that I should be like him? saith the Holy One" (Isa. 40:25).

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[38] Translator: Fassel's compound *einzig-einig* joins two concepts that he defines separately in Q. 5 and 6: *einzig*, "unique, the only one" (there is no other God), and *einig*, "one, a unity in Himself" (indivisible). It is rendered here "one and unique."

[39] Translator: The Shema is Deut. 6:4.

7. ***What do we learn for ourselves from the unity of God?***

I. That to the One God alone our adoration and our veneration are due, and to the One God alone our service must be consecrated, because salvation and help can come from no one but the One God.

אנכי אנכי ה׳ ואין מבלעדי מושיע

> "I, I am God, and beside Me there is no helper" (ibid. 43:11).

II. God is one and unique; so man too should belong to Him wholly and undividedly, with *all* his heart, *all* his soul and *all* his might.

תמים תהיה עם ה׳ אלהיך

> "Whole and undivided shalt thou be with God, thy Lord" (Deut. 18:13).

III. If God is one and unique, then the whole world too is *His* world, and all human beings should therefore form one whole in love and concord, like brothers and sisters.

דעו כי ה׳ הוא אלהים הוא עשנו ולו אנחנו עמו וצאן מרעיתו

> "Know that God is the Lord; He made us, and *His* are we, His people and the flock of His pasture" (Ps. 100:3).

8. ***What does Holy Scripture further teach about God?***

Holy Scripture further teaches about God: He is *incorporeal*, *eternal*, *self-subsistent*, *unchangeable*, and *the most perfect spirit*.

9. ***What does "God is* incorporeal*" mean?***

God is incorporeal means: God has no bodily form and no bodily property; He is free from all bodily weaknesses and limitations, and can neither be seen with the eyes nor perceived with the other senses.

> "Take ye therefore good heed unto your souls, for ye saw no form on the day that God spoke unto you at Horeb out of the fire" (Deut. 4:15).

10. ***But how are the bodily expressions about God in Holy Scripture to be explained?***

The bodily expressions about God in Holy Scripture are figurative expressions, in order to be intelligible to the human ear; given the imperfection of the human manner of conceiving, man needs figurative expressions in order to understand; thus, for example, "the eye of God" means providence; "the hand of God," power; "the ear of God," omnipresence; and so on.

11. ***What do we learn for ourselves from the incorporeality of God?***

I. That God is *incomprehensible*, and that we therefore must not brood in order to search out *what* and *how* God is.

כי לא יראני האדם וחי

> "For man cannot see Me — that is, as long as man is on this earth — and live" (Exod. 33:20).

II. Even though an *outward* divine service is necessary, since man can attain to the supersensible only by way of the sensible, true divine service nevertheless consists in the spirit and in the heart; for God is indeed incorporeal; a divine service [p. 72] without thought and feeling has no great value, for it is like a body without a soul.

> "And if ye shall hearken unto My commandments — outward divine service — to love God, your Lord, and to serve Him *with all your heart and with all your soul*" (Deut. 11:13).

12. ***What does "God is* eternal*" mean?***

God is eternal means: The existence of God has no beginning and will have no end; God came into being at no time and will cease at no time; and this is signified by the four letters of the most holy Name, Adonai: היה, הוה, יהיה — *He was, He is, He will be*.

> "Before the mountains were born, before the earth and the world were brought forth, from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God" (Ps. 90:2).

13. ***What do we learn for ourselves from the eternity of God?***

Only the Eternal can create what is eternal; were God not eternal, then His word, the holy teaching, could not be eternal either; were God not eternal, then the spirit He breathed in, the soul of man, could not be eternal either.

כי ביה ה׳ צור עולמים

> "God, the Lord, is a Rock — of eternities" (Isa. 26:4).

14. ***What does "God is* self-subsistent*" mean?***

God is self-subsistent means: God is dependent on no being and on no power; the whole world needs Him, but He does not need the world.

> "Thine, O God! is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, yea, *all* that is in heaven and on earth; Thine, O God! is the kingdom, and Thou art exalted above all as head. And riches and honour come from Thee, and Thou rulest over all, and in Thy hand is power and might, and in Thy hand it lies to make all great and strong" (1 Chron. 29:11, 12).

15. ***What do we learn for ourselves from the self-subsistence of God?***

We learn from the self-subsistence of God that He has given the laws and commandments *only for our own* welfare and good; for He is indeed self-subsistent and needs no being.

> [p. 73] "If thou art righteous, what givest thou Him? or what receiveth He of thy hand?" (Job 35:7).

16. ***What does "God is unchangeable" mean?***

God is unchangeable means: With God no change takes place; He is unchangeable in His power: "He fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isa. 40:28); unchangeable in His will: "God is not a son of earth, that He should repent" (Num. 23:19).

אני ה׳ לא שניתי

> "I, God, never change" (Mal. 3:6).

17. ***What do we learn for ourselves from the unchangeableness of God?***

I. That God's counsel stands forever; therefore we, as God's own possession, need fear nothing.

> "The counsel of God standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations. Happy therefore the people that has God for its Lord, the people that He has chosen for His inheritance" (Ps. 33:11, 12).

II. That God's will stands forever; therefore it is not conceivable that God should ever give a new teaching, any other than the revealed one.

קדם ידעתי מעדתיך כי לעולם יסדתם

> "Long have I known of Thy testimonies, that Thou hast founded them for eternity" (Ps. 119:152).

III. That God's promises stand forever: "Can God say and not do, promise and not fulfil?" (Num. 23:19); therefore His pledge remains in eternal force, even if the fulfilment is long in coming.

אם יתמהמה חכה לו כי בא יבא לא יאחר

> "Though it (what was foretold) tarry, wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not fail" (Hab. 2:3).

IV. That we should always trust in God with full confidence, whose *faithfulness* and *truthfulness* are unchangeable and immutable.

> "Know therefore that God, thy Lord, is the *faithful* God, who keepeth the covenant and the love with them that love Him and keep His commandments, to the thousandth generation" (Deut. 7:9).

[p. 74] **18.** ***What does "God is the most perfect spirit" mean?***

God is the most perfect spirit means: God is a living, invisible being who possesses all perfections in the highest degree, without limitation, boundary or measure; and these perfections are called *the attributes of God*.

גדול אדונינו ורב כח לתבונתו אין מספר

> "Great is our Lord and all-powerful, His understanding has no number" — that is, no limitation (Ps. 147:5).

19. ***What else are the attributes of God called?***

The attributes of God are also called *ways of God*; thus the man of God entreated:

הודעני נא את דרכך ואדעך

> "Let me, I pray, know Thy *ways*, that I may know Thee" (Exod. 33:13).

20. ***Why are the attributes of God called*** **ways of God*?***

Because we recognize the attributes of God only from His deeds and works, that is, *His ways*, namely the visible traces and effects of the invisible God in nature and in human life.

21. ***How, then, do we attain to the knowledge of God?***

We attain to the knowledge of God only from His works and deeds that have already taken place, and from His words that have already been spoken; for we cannot, after all, see or grasp God.

וראית את אחרי ופני לא יראו

> "Thou shalt see what is behind Me, but My face cannot be seen" (ibid. 33:23) [n. 69/2], that is, thou canst know Me only from My ways.

22. ***What does Holy Scripture teach about the attributes of God?***

Holy Scripture teaches: God is *almighty*, *all-wise*, *omnipresent*, *omniscient*, *all-good*, *all-just* and *most holy*.

23. ***What does "God is almighty" mean?***

God is almighty means: He can do what He will; nothing is impossible for Him. כל אשר חפץ ה׳ עשה בשמים ובארץ "All that [p. 75] God wills, He does, in heaven as on earth" (Ps. 135:6); and not only do all forces obey His will, but His will itself is almighty, for He can also bring forth out of nothing all that He wills.

24. ***How, therefore, do we praise God?***

We praise God with the profound words: אדון עולם אשר מלך בטרם כל יציר נברא "The Lord of the world, who reigned — that is, He had the power — before any creature was yet created"; another

being needs, in order to reign, other beings subject to him; but God is able to do all things even without any other power or force [n. 69/3].[40]

25. ***From what do we recognize the omnipotence of God?***

We recognize the omnipotence of God, **I.** *from the work of God*, nature, as we see there the heavens with their countless worlds, the earth with the countless beings upon it, and know that God created all this out of nothing.

השמים מספרים כבוד אל ומעשה ידיו מגיד הרקיע

> "The heavens declare the glory of the Almighty, and of His handiwork the expanse proclaims" (Ps. 19:1).[41]

We recognize the omnipotence of God, **II.** *from human life*, from history, in which inexplicable and wondrous events bear witness to the guidance and direction of the Almighty.

לכו וראו מפעלות אלהים נורא עלילה על בני אדם

> "Come and behold the deeds of the Lord, the fearfully wondrous working over the sons of men" (ibid. 66:5).

26. ***What lesson do we draw for ourselves from the*** **omnipotence** ***of God?***

I. Never to defy arrogantly in reliance on our own power and strength; for God alone bestows power, and He can take it away again as He pleases.

> "That thou never say in thy heart: *My* power and the might of *my* hand hath gotten me this wealth; but remember God, thy Lord, for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deut. 8:17, 18).

[p. 76] **II.** Never to trust in human beings, or to fear human beings, however mighty they may be; for God alone "can make poor and make rich, God alone can bring low and lift up."

> Thus saith God: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh the strength of his arm, and whose heart turneth away from God. — Blessed is the man that trusteth in God, so that God is his confidence" (Jer. 17:5, 7).

III. Not to despair even in the saddest situation, for nothing is impossible for God, and He can send help in an instant and quite unexpectedly.

ישועת ה׳ בהרף עין

> "The help of God can come in the twinkling of an eye" (saying of the Sages) [n. 70].

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[40] Translator: The opening line of the hymn *Adon Olam*, sung in the daily morning service.

[41] Translator: Ps. 19:2 in the Hebrew numbering (19:1 in the English versions).

27. ***What does "God is all-wise" mean?***

God is all-wise means: In God is the highest reason, an insight that never deceives, a wisdom that never errs; He knows the final purposes of all things, sees the final consequences of all actions, and therefore chooses the best means for every accomplishment.

> "With God is wisdom and might, His is counsel and understanding. — God alone knoweth the way of wisdom, He alone knoweth its place" (Job 12:13; 28:23).

28. ***Where is the all-wisdom of God revealed to us?***

The all-wisdom of God is likewise revealed to us in nature and in history; supremely wise are His dispensations, supremely wise His creations, where everything is so wisely and wondrously ordered.

ה׳ בחכמה יסד ארץ כונן שמים בתבונה

> "God hath founded the earth with wisdom, established the heavens with understanding" (Prov. 3:19).

29. ***What lesson do we draw from the all-wisdom of God?***

I. Man must never presume to find fault with the ways of God or to wish to correct God's dispensations; for the All-Wise surely understands better than the limited understanding of man.

> [p. 77] "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith God. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8, 9).

II. That we must not regard any commandment of God as slight; for if the all-wise God commanded it, it surely has a useful purpose.

הוי רץ למצוה קלה כבחמורה ובורח מן העברה הוי זהיר במצוה קלה כבחמורה

> "Run to fulfil even the slightest commandment as well as the weighty one, and flee from every sin. Be heedful of the slightest commandment as of the weightiest" (Avot 2:1; 4:2).

30. ***What does "God is omnipresent" mean?***

God is omnipresent means: God is everywhere; His spirit pervades all spaces, and there is no place, either in heaven or on earth, where God's presence does not live and work.

הלוא את השמים ואת הארץ אני מלא

> "Truly, I fill the heavens and the earth, saith God" (Jer. 23:24).

31. ***What lesson do we draw from the*** **omnipresence** ***of God?***

I. "That," as our Sages say, "man should always take to heart that, wherever he may be, the eye of the greatest King, the Holy One, blessed be He, sees him and marks his doings; for it is written:

Though a man hide himself ever so much, shall I then not see him? saith God" (Orach Chayim, ch. 1, § 1).[42]

> "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? and whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; and if I make my bed in the netherworld, Thou art there. If I took the wings of the dawn and settled at the end of the sea, even there Thy hand leads me, Thy right hand takes hold of me" (Ps. 139:7–10).

II. That we should never feel forsaken anywhere, for everywhere we are indeed near our heavenly Father.

גם כי אלך בגיא צלמות לא אירא רע כי אתה עמדי

> "And though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for Thou art with me" (ibid. 23:4).

[p. 78] **32.** ***What does "God is omniscient" mean?***

God is omniscient means: "God is the God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num. 27:16); by virtue of His omnipresence He not only sees deeds, but also knows the thoughts and the most secret designs of human beings; He knows not only what happens in the present, but the future too lies open before His omniscience.

אני ה׳ חקר לב בחן כליות

> "I, God, search the heart, I try the inward parts" (Jer. 17:10).

33. ***What lesson do we draw for ourselves from the*** **omniscience** ***of God?***

I. Not only to guard ourselves against every evil deed, but also to keep ourselves from every ignoble thought.

> "God! Thou searchest me and knowest — Thou understandest my thoughts from afar. — The word is not yet on my tongue, and lo, Thou knowest it altogether, O God!" (Ps. 139:1–4).

II. Not merely to wish to appear good, but also to be good; for human beings can indeed be deceived, but not God.

> "It is not as man seeth; for man looketh on the eyes" — that is, on the outward appearance — "but God looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

III. Not to be aggrieved when we are misjudged by human beings and must suffer injustice; for the highest Judge knows our inner self and will bring justice to light.

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[42] Translator: The Shulchan Aruch passage is a gloss of Moses Isserles (Rema) at the opening of Orach Chayim (1:1), drawing on Maimonides, *Guide* III:52; the verse quoted is Jer. 23:24.

והוציא כאור צדקך ומשפטך כצהרים

"And He will bring forth thine innocence as the light, and thy right as the noonday" (Ps. 37:6).

34. ***What does "God is all-good" mean?***

God is all-good means: God is love; He is *good* towards *all* creatures; He is *all-gracious* to the whole world of men and *all-merciful*; God's beneficence extends even to the sinner.

טוב ה׳ לכל ורחמיו על כל מעשיו

"Good is God to all, and His mercy is the portion of all His creatures" (Ps. 145:9).

35. ***Where is the all-goodness of God revealed to us?***

The all-goodness of God is revealed to us in the whole of nature; God has no need of the creatures and of the whole world, and yet [p. 79] "He opens His hand graciously and satisfies every living thing with favour" (ibid. 145:16).

"God! Thy lovingkindness reacheth unto the heavens, Thy faithfulness unto the clouds — man and beast Thou helpest, God. How precious is Thy grace, O Lord! the children of men find shelter in the shadow of Thy wings. They feast on the abundance of Thy house, and from the streams of Thy delight Thou givest them drink. For with Thee is indeed the fountain of life" (Ps. 36:6–10).

36. ***What lesson do we draw for ourselves from the*** **all-goodness** ***of God?***

I. Our gratitude and our thanks towards God must be without bounds; for the all-goodness of God proves itself especially in human life, and from the first hour of human existence to the last breath forms [n. 71] an unbroken chain of divine blessings and benefits.

"I will praise the love of God, the renown of God, for all that God has shown us, and the great goodness towards the house of Israel which He has shown them according to His mercy and according to the greatness of His grace" (Isa. 63:7).

II. We should in no situation lose hope and trust; even if things go sadly for a person, if he must walk on thorny paths and shed tears of sorrow, God's goodness has nevertheless not ceased; and very often even evil turns out to be for a person's good; therefore our Sages teach:

כשם שמברכין על הטובה כך מברכין על הרעה

"A person is obliged to praise God for an evil that befalls him with a composed spirit and a willing heart, just as he praises God for the good" (Orach Chayim 222:3).

III. We should love our fellow human beings and be forbearing and conciliatory even towards our enemies, and always take to heart that it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong.

"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou mayest rebuke thy neighbour, but bear no grudge against him for an offence. Thou shalt not take vengeance nor bear anger against the

children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, I am God" — that is, for I, God, too am love (Lev. 19:16, 17).[43]

[p. 80] **37.** ***What duties do we have towards our enemies?***

I. We must not take revenge, and not repay evil with evil.

"Say not: I will repay evil; but wait on God, and He will help thee" (Prov. 20:22).

II. We must not rejoice over the misfortune of an enemy.

"When thine enemy falleth, rejoice not, and when he stumbleth, let not thine heart be glad" (ibid. 24:17).

III. We must give our enemy assistance in his misfortune and stand by him helpfully in every difficulty (Exod. 23:3, 4).[44]

"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread; if he be thirsty, give him water" (Prov. 25:21). "If friend and enemy need thy help at the same time, thou must help the enemy first, precisely because this costs self-conquest" (BT Bava Metzia 32b).

IV. We must also remove hatred of the enemy from our inner self.

"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart" (Lev. 19:17).

V. We must never be implacable; rather, if an offender asks to be reconciled with us, we must not refuse it to him.

"Every person should be hard to anger and easy to appease. And when the offender asks forgiveness, he must forgive even the greatest offence with a willing soul and with a whole heart" (Maimonides, Hilkhot Teshuvah 2:10).

VI. We should beg God's forgiveness for our enemies.

"The pious do not lie down in bed at night before they have forgiven their enemies and begged God's forgiveness for them" (BT Megillah 28b).[45]

38. ***What does "God is all-just" mean?***

God is all-just means: God repays each according to his deeds and merit; He has no regard for the person, but [p. 81] looks only at disposition and deed; He never leaves good unrewarded and never leaves evil unpunished.

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[43] Translator: The verses quoted are Lev. 19:17–18.

[44] Translator: The laws of helping an enemy's straying or overburdened animal are Exod. 23:4–5.

[45] Translator: The practice of forgiving all who have given offence before retiring at night is told of Mar Zutra in BT Megillah 28a.

חלילה לאל מרשע ושדי מעול כי פעל אדם ישלם לו

"Far be wickedness from God, and wrong from the Almighty. For as a man works, so is he repaid, and according to a man's ways it befalls him" (Job 34:10, 11).

39. ***Where is the all-justice of God revealed to us?***

The all-justice of God is revealed to us, **I.** in the life of the individual; for there are a great many sins upon which punishment follows *naturally*: intemperance shortens life; avarice brings a person restlessness; ambition prepares humiliations; envy embitters existence; and so on.

מארת ה׳ בבית רשע ונוה צדיקים יברך

"The curse of God is in the house of the wicked, and the dwelling of the righteous is blessed" (Prov. 3:33).

The all-justice of God is revealed to us, **II.** in the history of nations; even if the crimes of individuals are not always punished in this world, because the justice of God can reach the individual in the other world, the crime of a nation, since a nation as such belongs only to this world, never remains unpunished even here below. Every nation in which the pillars of justice have been shaken and undermined has always fallen into decay and been brought to ruin.

צדקה תרומם גוי — כי בצדקה יכון כסא

"Righteousness alone exalteth a nation." — "On righteousness alone is a throne established" (Prov. 14:34; 16:12).

The all-justice of God is revealed to us, **III.** in our inner self, in the judging voice of conscience; good deeds afford us blissful feelings, peace, serenity and contentment with ourselves; but evil deeds bring us anxiety, restlessness and self-contempt.

והיה מעשה הצדקה שלום — אין שלום אמר אלהי לרשעים

"The work of righteousness shall be peace." — "There is no peace, saith the Lord, for the wicked" (Isa. 32:17; 57:21).

[p. 82] **40.** ***What lesson do we draw for ourselves from the all-justice of God?***

I. That we should always recognize and fear God as the eternal Judge, and under no condition forsake the path of justice.

כי צדיק ה׳ צדקות אהב

"For righteous is God and loveth righteousness" (Ps. 11:7).

II. That we should never let ourselves be dazzled by the splendour of a wicked man; for though God is long-suffering, vice nevertheless never remains unpunished.

אל תתחר במרעים אל תקנא בעשי עולה

> "Never be envious of the wicked, envy not the evildoers; for like grass they shall be cut down, and wither like the green herb" (ibid. 37:1, 2).

III. That we too, where justice is concerned, must have no regard for the person.

> "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; favour not the poor, nor shalt thou respect the person of the great; in righteousness shalt thou judge thy fellow men" (Lev. 19:15).

41. ***What does "God is most holy" mean?***

God is most holy means: God is the epitome of all perfections; He is good out of justice and just out of goodness [n. 72]; He wills only the good, the right and the true; in a word: "Holy, holy, holy is the God of Hosts!" (Isa. 6:3); and no human thought can think the perfections of God, and no human tongue can name them.

מי ימלל גבורות ה׳ ישמיע כל תהלתו

> "Who can utter the mighty greatness of God, who proclaim all His praise?" (Ps. 106:2).

42. ***Where is the holiness of God revealed to us?***

The holiness of God is revealed in His divine revealed word; for everything He commands leads to the good, to morality, to justice and to salvation.

> "The teaching of God is perfect, refreshing the soul — the commandments of God are right, rejoicing the heart — the reverence of God is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of God are true, righteous altogether" (ibid. 19:7, 9).[46]

[p. 83] **43.** ***What lesson do we draw for ourselves from the*** **holiness** ***of God?***

I. That our unceasing striving must be towards self-ennoblement and self-perfection.

קדשים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה׳ אלהיכם

> "Ye shall be holy" — that is, strive after perfection — "for I, God your Lord, am holy" (Lev. 19:2).

II. That we should unceasingly worship God with the deepest reverence and devotion; for He alone is the epitome of all that is lofty and sublime.

> "Give unto God honour and praise. Give unto God the honour due unto His name, worship Him in holy array" (Ps. 29:1, 2).

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[46] Translator: Ps. 19:8–10 in the Hebrew numbering (19:7–9 in the English versions).

44. ***What is the concluding sentence of this Fifth Section?***

The concluding sentence of this 5th Section is the principle that our Sages lay down:

להלך אחר מידותיו של הקב״ה

> "To walk after the attributes of God" (BT Sotah 14a), that is, "it is the eternal task of man to become like God in His attributes."

[p. 84] Sixth Section. Of God as Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the World

1. ***What is God according to the revealed teaching?***

God is Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the world.

2. ***Out of what did God create the world?***

God brought forth the world out of nothing, solely through the omnipotence of His will [n. 73].

בדבר ה׳ שמים נעשו וברוח פיו כל צבאם

> "By the word of God were the heavens made, by the breath of His mouth all their host" (Ps. 33:6).

3. ***In how many days did God create the world?***

God created the world in six days.

כי ששת ימים עשה ה׳ את השמים ואת הארץ

> "For in six days God made the heaven and the earth" (Exod. 31:17).

4. ***What did God create on the 1st day?***

On the 1st day God created the entire primal matter of the world, which in Holy Scripture is called heaven and earth [n. 74], and light.

5. ***What did God create on the 2nd day?***

On the 2nd day God caused the vault of heaven to come into being as a division between the lower and the upper waters, as well as the air [n. 75].

6. ***What did God create on the 3rd day?***

On the 3rd day God caused the waters to separate from the earth, and thereby formed the "dry land" and the "sea," and thereby gave the soil the germ of growth.

[p. 85] **7.** ***What did God create on the 4th day?***

On the 4th day God caused sun, moon and stars to become visible, and assigned to these heavenly bodies their unalterable place.

8. ***What did God create on the 5th day?***

On the 5th day God brought forth the creatures of the waters and of the air, fish and birds.

9. ***What did God create on the 6th day?***

On the 6th day God created the creatures of the dry land, wild animals and cattle; and when the world was now complete and habitable, God formed man.

10. ***And what happened on the seventh day?***

The seventh day God hallowed for rest, and ordained that this day be kept as a day of rest.

זכר למעשה בראשית

> "As an everlasting remembrance of creation."[47]

11. ***If God, the All-Good, is the Creator of the world, how is it that so many evil forces are present in the world?***

All works and forces that God has created are necessary to the whole of creation and beneficial for the world as a whole; and there is no force at all and no work of creation at all that is good in and of itself, that is, so good that it could have no evil effect whatever, or evil in and of itself, that is, so evil that it could have no good effect whatever.

12. ***How does Holy Scripture indicate this in the story of creation?***

On each day of creation, where only individual works were created, the story of creation says: וירא אלהים כי טוב "God saw that it was good" — good, but not *very* good, because each individual work of creation can also produce some evil. But at the sixth day of creation it says:

וירא אלהים את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאד

> "And God saw *everything* that He had made, and behold, it was *very* good" (Gen. 1:31); because for the world as a whole there is no evil force at all.

[p. 86] **13.** ***How do our Sages explain this?***

Our Sages say: "We say in the morning prayer: יוצר אור ובורא חשך עושה שלום ובורא את הכל 'He forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates *all things*'; and this is a verse in Isaiah, but there it says: ובורא רע 'He creates evil.'" To this our Sages say: כתיב רע וקרינן הכל "It is indeed written 'evil,' but we are to read 'all things'" (BT Berakhot 12b)[48], that is, God would not have created evil were it not necessary to the *whole*; and so God has in truth created not evil but "the whole."

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[47]Translator: The phrase "a remembrance of the work of creation" comes from the Sabbath Kiddush.

[48]Translator: Isa. 45:7. The Talmudic discussion is at BT Berakhot 11b (on the blessing *Yotzer Or*); the dictum "it is written 'evil' and we read 'all things'" is not in the standard Talmud text as such but summarizes that passage.

14. ***What does "God is the Preserver of the world" mean?***

God is the Preserver of the world means: God watches over it that the order which He established at creation, and the continuing operation for which He created everything, be preserved unchanged.

אשר ברא אלהים לעשות

> "His work which God created, in order *to continue working*" (Gen. 2:3).

15. ***What, accordingly, is the law of nature?***

The law of nature is the will of God, who wills that the world be preserved in this order, and so established it at creation.

ויעמידם לעד לעולם חק נתן ולא יעבור

> "He upholds them — nature and its works — for ever and ever; He gave a law, and it cannot be transgressed" (Ps. 148:6).

16. ***From what are we convinced of such a truth?***

Many phenomena still show us today the traces of the Flood [n. 76], when the law of nature was indeed altered; and if now Holy Scripture gives the assurance: "I will not again smite every living thing, as I have done, and while the world endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:21, [p. 87] 22); this shows clearly that it is God who, since the Flood, maintains the law of nature in its undisturbed order.

17. ***What lesson do we draw for ourselves from the truth: God is the Creator and Preserver of the world?***

I. Not only to love all human beings and to treat them as our brothers, children of the One God, but also to spare all creatures and to cause no creature harm, that is, to torment it by inflicting pain.

צער בעלי חיים דאורייתא

> "Inflicting pain on creatures is forbidden by God" (BT Bava Metzia 32b ff.).

II. Also not to destroy things without purpose.

> "Whoever burns a light for nothing transgresses the prohibition: You shall not destroy" (BT Shabbat 67b).

18. ***By what right may we kill creatures and use up things?***

We may do so by virtue of the authorization from God, when He spoke to the first man:

> "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the heaven, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). And to Noah God spoke: "As the green herbs I have given you all (living things)" (ibid. 9:3).

19. ***What follows from this?***

From this it follows that God has given all things of the earth and the whole animal world to man as his property. Yet only for use, but not the animal in order to torment it, nor the thing in order to ruin it wantonly.

20. ***What does it mean: God is the Ruler of the world?***

God is the *Ruler* of the world means: not only that God created the universe and continually preserves it, but God also guides and orders everything, the times as well as the events, the occurrences as well as the destinies.

ה' מלך אף תכון תבל בל תמוט ידין עמים במישרים

> "God reigns, so the world stands firm and does not totter; He judges the peoples with uprightness" (Ps. 96:10).

[p. 88] **21.** ***What else is God's guidance called?***

God's guidance is also called: the government of the world, and also: divine providence, that is, God's care for the world and its inhabitants.

22. ***How is divine providence represented in the Holy Scripture?***

I. As the eye of God, looking down upon the world and its inhabitants.

עיני ה' המה משוטטים בכל הארץ

> "The eyes of God, they are what range through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:10).

II. As a fatherly care for His earthly children, giving them food:

> "The eyes of all wait upon You, and You give them their food in its season" (Ps. 145:15);

protecting and sheltering them:

> "As the eagle watches over its nest, hovers over its young, spreads its wings, takes them and bears them on its pinions" (Deut. 32:11);

helping and standing by them:

> "God gives bread to the hungry; God raises up those who are bowed down" (Ps. 146:8, 9)[49] etc., etc.

III. As a ruling justice, from which no deed remains hidden.

> "From His fixed seat He looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth; He who fashioned their hearts all together, He examines all their works" (ibid. 33:14, 15).

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[49] Translator: The quoted words are Ps. 146:7–8.

23. ***How is the providence of God divided?***

The providence of God is divided into *general* providence, which has the whole human race as its object and determines the destiny of entire peoples and nations; and *particular* providence, which watches over every individual human being and determines the lot of each individual.

24. ***Where does divine providence reveal itself to us?***

Divine providence reveals itself to us in the whole of nature, and especially in human life and in the course of the nations.

[p. 89] **25.** ***How so in the whole of nature?***

The wonderful arrangements for the preservation of every species of creature do not let us fail to recognize a wise government of the world.

> "Ask now the beasts, and they will teach you, and the fowl of the heaven, and they will tell you. Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, and the fish of the sea will declare it to you: Who would not know by all these that the hand of God does this?" (Job 12:7–9).

26. ***How does the providence of God show itself in human life?***

For the preservation and welfare of human beings there are yet more special and wonderful arrangements; such as: the excellent structure of the body, the endowments and powers of the mind, the holy bond between begetter and begotten, etc., so that one must recognize still more clearly that God's hand has done this.

> "You, O God, have formed my inward parts, You protected me already in my mother's womb. I praise You, that I am so wonderfully distinguished; wonderful are Your works, this my soul knows well. — In the shapeless germ Your eyes saw me; in Your book are written all the days that shall be mine, when as yet there was not one of them" (Ps. 139:13–16).

27. ***Does a bond between parents and children exist only among human beings?***

Among all creatures we see a tender bond between begetter and begotten, but precisely in this do we recognize God's particular governance over man.

28. ***How so?***

Other creatures need only a mother's love for their preservation, and even that only until the creature can sustain itself; and so among the other creatures there is almost no father's love, and the mother's love, too, ceases when the young one is grown. Man, however, needs both parents for his upbringing, and needs their love in later years as well; and so God lets love blaze in the hearts of both parents and never be extinguished.

[p. 90] **29.** ***How does the providence of God show itself in the course of the nations?***

I. Already here below the justice of God rules in the life of the nations; divine punishment has never failed to come upon a degenerate people or state even on earth.

II. The prophets foretold the fate which God decreed for this or that people, and the prediction came true; which surely gives the clearest proof that God guides the destiny of the nations.

> "At one moment I declare concerning a nation and a kingdom, to destroy, to shatter and to annihilate it. At another moment I declare concerning a nation and a kingdom, to build and to plant it" (Jer. 18:7, 9).

30. ***In the life of which people does general providence reveal itself most clearly?***

Divine providence reveals itself most clearly in the life of the Israelite people; from the time Israel became a people until this hour, its path through the events of the world has been so remarkable and wonderful that the working of divine providence cannot possibly be mistaken.

31. ***What, then, has been confirmed in Israel?***

To this day the promise made beforehand has been confirmed:

> "As the heavens and the earth which I made stand ever new before Me, says God, so shall your seed and your name endure" (Isa. 66:22);

confirmed is the promise made in advance:

> "And yet even then, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, nor reject them, to destroy them and to break My covenant with them; for I, God, am their Lord" (Lev. 26:44).

32. ***And of what does this convince us?***

Since, despite the tyranny and persecution, despite the terrible fates of our nation, such and similar prophecies, which declare the eternal preservation of Israel, have nevertheless been fulfilled, we are irrefutably convinced that the providence of God watches over our nation.

הנה לא ינום ולא יישן שומר ישראל

> "Behold! He neither sleeps nor slumbers, the Guardian of Israel" (Ps. 121:4).

[p. 91] **33.** ***What excellent image does the Holy Scripture give of the providence of God?***

Jacob's ladder is an excellent image of the providence of God; it stands upon the earth and its top reaches to heaven, and the angels of God ascend and descend (Gen. 28:12). The events which take place on earth are determined and directed in heaven, whither the top of the ladder reaches.

34. ***And what are the angels who ascend and descend on the ladder?***

Everything that God makes use of to carry out His will, be it a force of nature or a creature, is called an angel or messenger of God. The pillar of cloud and of fire which went before Israel is called an "angel of God" (Exod. 14:19); a human being, when God makes use of him for an important purpose, is called an "angel of God" (Hag. 1:13); and "God makes winds His angels and flaming lightnings His servants" (Ps. 104:4) [n. 77].

35. ***Are there no other angels?***

There are certainly beings endowed with a higher reason than man; beings which are either entirely incorporeal, or at least have no such body as to be visible and tangible to man; and the Holy Scripture often tells of such beings, and these too are messengers of God, that is, executors of His will, as all and everything is.

> "Behold! He charges His angels with shortcomings; how much more the dwellers in houses of clay" (Job 4:18, 19).

36. ***But do these beings stand in connection with man?***

Without the will of God neither an angel nor any other being can help or harm; they can exert no influence on the destiny of man unless God determines and wills it. That belief of other peoples, that God leaves some of the guidance in the world or in the destiny of human beings to certain higher beings; or that such beings are able to accomplish something for man through intercession with God, and the like, is rejected by Judaism and declared to be superstition.

> [p. 92] "Only God goes with us; by this we shall be distinguished" — that is, our faith shall differ — "from all the peoples" (of that time, in the days of Moses) "that are upon the face of the earth" (Exod. 33:16) [n. 78].

37. ***Where does particular providence reveal itself?***

Particular providence actually reveals itself in the life of every human being. Every person, if he reflects carefully on the course of his life, must recognize "that his times and fortunes are in God's hand" (Ps. 31:16); but especially in the life of distinguished persons, whom God makes use of to bring about mighty events and great things.

38. ***How does the belief in the particular providence of God run?***

The belief in the providence of God runs: **I.** There is no chance; rather, my life and my lot, the success or failure of my undertakings, each and every thing that touches and concerns me, depends on the will of God, who directs events and guides their outcome.

לב אדם יחשב דרכו וה' יכין צעדו

> "The heart of man devises his way, but God determines his step" (Prov. 16:9), that is, the outcome of the plan.

The belief in the providence of God runs, **II.**: My dispositions are within my own free choice; with regard to the choice of good or evil I have unlimited freedom; as our sages say: "Everything is in God's hand, except the fear of God."[50] Everything is determined by God concerning man, except whether he shall be good or evil.

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

> "Behold! I have set before you this day life and good, as well as death and evil" (Deut. 30:15).

39. ***Does it not seem petty that God, the Most High, should concern Himself with the destiny of every individual human being?***

This is not petty at all, but quite the reverse; in this very thing consists the infinite greatness of God, that [p. 93] He sees the whole as well as the individual, guides the whole as well as the individual.

> "God is a God of mights, a Lord of lords, the Mighty, the Great, the Strong and the All-revered — and yet He executes justice for the orphan and the widow and loves the stranger and gives him bread and raiment" (Deut. 10:17, 18). "He is the High and Exalted One, who is enthroned for ever and is called the Exalted —; but yet He is also with the crushed and humbled in spirit, to revive the heart of the crushed" (Isa. 57:15).

40. ***How might this be explained more fully?***

Before God nothing can be called great and nothing small; "nations are accounted as a drop on a bucket and as the dust on the scale" (ibid. 40:15); indeed! "All the inhabitants of the world together are accounted before God as nothing, and He does according to His will with the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth" (Dan. 4:32). Before Him, therefore, all is equal, the whole as well as the individual, the high as well as the lowly; and just as He guides the whole, so He also guides and determines the lot of every individual human being.

כי רם ה' ושפל יראה וגבה ממרחק יידע

> "Because God is so highly exalted, He looks upon the lowly, for even the high He knows from afar" (Ps. 136:6),[51] that is, nothing at all can, so to speak, stand "near" to the Lord of the worlds.

41. ***If God, the All-Good, guides and determines each and every thing, whence comes what is bad and evil in the human world?***

What is bad and evil in the human world comes for the most part through human beings themselves; for with regard to the choice of good or evil man is completely free; it is therefore the sins of human beings and the foolish institutions of their own making that call forth so much that is bad and evil in the human world and, so to speak, turn the rich blessings of God into a curse.

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[50] Translator: BT Berakhot 33b: "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except the fear of Heaven."

[51] Translator: Read Ps. 138:6.

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה[52]

> "Behold, I set before you this day blessing and curse. The blessing, if you hearken to the commandments of God, your Lord. — And the curse, if you do not hearken to the commandments of God, your Lord" (Deut. 11:26) [n. 79].

[p. 94] **42.** ***And how does it come about that the good man often fares ill on earth, and the evildoer often fares well?***

This question was already put by the prophets: "Why does the way of the sinner prosper? Why do all who practise wickedness live in good fortune?" (Jer. 12:1.) "Why do the wicked live, grow strong and increase in power?" (Job 21:7); and this puzzling phenomenon has already brought many a one to doubt and then to wavering; "therefore instruction remains powerless, and right does not always prevail, because the wicked surrounds the righteous" — that is, is mightier and more fortunate than he — "therefore perverted judgment goes forth" (Hab. 1:4). "My feet had almost stumbled, my steps had well-nigh slipped; for I envied the wicked when I saw the prosperity of the evildoers" (Ps. 73:2, 3).

43. ***And how is this question to be answered and this riddle solved?***

I. Many sufferings are merely trials, to bring to light whether we are faithful to God in our heart or not.

> "To try you, that it might become known what is in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not, He humbled you and let you suffer want" (Deut. 8:2, 3).

II. Appearance is often deceptive with regard to the person; not everyone who is held to be good is good in reality, and not everyone who is regarded as bad is bad.

האדם יראה לעינים וה' יראה ללבב

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

III. Appearance is deceptive with regard to circumstances; not everyone who seems happy is happy, and not everyone who is thought unhappy is unhappy; for real happiness or unhappiness consists in inner contentment or discontent with one's own situation.

> "Better a little with the fear of God than great treasure with inner unrest. Better a dish of herbs where love is, than a fatted ox with hatred. Better dry bread and quiet with it, than a house full of feasts with strife" (Prov. 15:16, 17; 17:1).

[p. 95] **IV.** Appearance is deceptive with regard to the thing itself; not everything is in reality what it is held to be: many a good fortune leads to misfortune, and many a misfortune to good fortune.

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[52] Translator: The print reads הנה ("behold") in place of אנכי ("I"). The German quotation covers Deut. 11:26–28.

אודך כי עניתני ותהי לי לישועה

"I thank You, God, that You have let me suffer, for it has become my salvation" (Ps. 118:21).

V. Affliction purifies as fire purifies gold, and in misfortune moral strength grows strong; just as, on the other hand, good fortune often makes a person soft and weak.

"It is good for me that I had to suffer; thereby I have learned Your law." "It is often good for a man that he bear a yoke in his youth" (Ps. 119:71; Lam. 3:27). "And there are riches kept by their owner to his ruin" (Eccl. 5:12).

VI. The good fortune of the wicked lasts only a short time, just as, on the other hand, a joyful future is reserved for the righteous.

"Only a little while, and the wicked is no more; you look at his place, he is gone. But the meek inherit the land and delight in abundant well-being" (Ps. 37:10, 11).

VII. "There is no man so righteous on earth that he does only good and never sins" (Eccl. 7:20); but neither is anyone on earth so bad that he should not have done some good. Accordingly God repays the wicked for his little good through earthly prosperity, and punishes the righteous for his little evil through temporal sufferings, so that then in the *other* world both may receive their full recompense.

44. *But why does God permit the evil which one person so often prepares for another?*

God does not prevent these evils for this reason, that otherwise He would have to abolish the moral freedom of man. But in His all-wisdom He often lets much good come forth from the evils inflicted.

"You indeed devised evil against me, but God has turned it to good" (Gen. 50:20).

[p. 96] ### 45. *How, then, must we conduct ourselves in sufferings?*

We must receive sufferings without murmuring, bear them with patience and humility, and even thank our heavenly Father for them; just as Aaron conducted himself when the will of God let two of his sons die at once; וידם אהרן "And Aaron was silent,"[53] that is, he did not murmur against God's dispensation.

46. *Why must we conduct ourselves in such a way in sufferings?*

I. If they are deserved sufferings, imposed on us by the *justice* of God as chastisement, then we must examine and amend our conduct of life, but not sin still more by murmuring.

"Why does man complain in life? Let each one rather complain of his sins! Let us search and examine our ways and return to God" (Lam. 3:39, 40).

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[53] Translator: Lev. 10:3.

II. If they are undeserved sufferings, imposed on us by the *love* of God, either to strengthen our moral power or as trials, then likewise we may not murmur, lest we turn undeserved sufferings into deserved ones.

> "The chastening of God, my son, do not despise, and be not resentful at His reproof; for whom God loves He chastens, and wishes him well, as a father the son" (Prov. 3:11, 12).

47. ***What thought should encourage us in this?***

The thought should encourage us, that God's justice never tries us beyond our strength; that God's love always helps and stands by us; and that the more perfectly we prove ourselves, the earlier and more quickly the trial ends, and the sooner our guilt is made good.

> "Shall we then accept only good from God, and not be willing to accept evil? — God has given, God has taken, blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 2:10; 1:21).

[p. 97] **48.** ***How must we behave in good fortune?***

In good fortune we must always recognize the providence that blesses us, may not become arrogant because of our good fortune, but the happier we are, the better and more humble we must become.

> "Take heed that you do not forget God, your Lord. — Lest, when you eat and are satisfied and build fine houses and dwell in them, and your cattle and your sheep multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies: your heart be lifted up, and you forget God, your Lord" (Deut. 8:11–14).

49. ***Why must we conduct ourselves thus in good fortune?***

Earthly good fortune is not the reward of virtue, but an encouragement to virtue; God gives us His blessing in advance, before we can earn it. Whoever now shows himself unworthy of the blessing surely deserves that it be soon withdrawn from him, and will in any case be called to account for its misuse.

> "Because you did not serve God, your Lord, with joy and gladness of heart, when you had abundance of all things: therefore you shall serve your enemy — in hunger and in thirst and in nakedness and in want of all things" (Deut. 28:47, 48).

50. ***Is earthly good fortune always only an encouragement to virtue?***

Earthly good fortune is also often a trial, a touchstone of our inner disposition and our outward conduct.

> "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but let me only enjoy the bread that suffices me: lest I be overfull and deny, and say: Who is God? And lest, if I become poor, I might steal and lay hands on the name of my God" (Prov. 30:8, 9).

51. ***What lesson does the particular providence of God chiefly give us?***

The particular providence of God chiefly gives us the lesson that we must always trust in God and leave our lot to Him; for God alone has the power to help and to save, and it is His providence alone that directs and guides everything; in a word: God is good and *wills* to help, God is mighty and *can* help.

> "Cast upon God your need, and He will sustain you" (Ps. 55:23). "Roll your way upon God and trust in Him; He will bring it about" (ibid. 37:5).

[p. 98] **52.** ***But may we remain inactive and trust unconditionally in the providence of God?***

It is written: "That God, your Lord, may bless you in every work of your hand that you do" (Deut. 14:29); from this it follows that man must do his part, as far as lies within his strength and understanding; otherwise it is not *trusting* God but *tempting* God.

> "You shall not tempt God, your Lord, as you tempted Him at *Massah*" (Lev. 6:16).[54]

53. ***What, then, is meant by tempting God?***

A person tempts God when, in a danger or a difficulty, he does not take hold of the natural means, but waits for a miracle from God; or when he remains idle and inactive with regard to what he needs for his living, and waits until the providence of God will provide for him.

54. ***To what, then, should trust in God's providence encourage us?***

Trust in God should, **I.**, encourage us: always to do only what is good, and never to seek to attain anything through forbidden means; for God's love watches only over the righteous, and God lets only the good succeed.

> "The *kore* (name of a bird) gathers its eggs together and hatches none; so is he who gets riches unjustly. In the midst of his days he shall leave them, and at his end he remains base" (Jer. 17:11).

Trust in God should, **II.**, encourage us: that we may rescue ourselves even from dangers only by permitted ways; a person should rather perish than depart from virtue. We must therefore take to heart that when need is greatest, God's help is nearest; and if, therefore, in times of danger or need, we depart from God by seizing upon wrongful means, we thrust away from us precisely the help of God.

> "By God are the steps of a man made firm, when He delights in his way. And though he fall, he does not perish, for God [p. 99] upholds his hand. — Depart therefore from evil and do good, and you shall abide for ever" (Ps. 37:23, 24, 27).

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[54] Translator: Read Deut. 6:16.

55. ***But what if God should not wish to save?***

Well, then it is better that the body perish for this world than that the soul be defiled for eternity, as those three pious men spoke to King Nebuchadnezzar. He said to them: "Who is the God that could save you out of my hand?" Then Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah answered and said: — "Our God whom we serve surely lives, and He is mighty enough to save us, and He will deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and out of your hand, O King! But even if not, be it known to you, O King, that even then we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden image which you have set up" (Daniel 3:15–18).

56. ***What is the concluding sentence of this sixth section?***

The concluding sentence of this sixth section is the word of the Holy Scripture.

בכל דרכיך דעהו והוא יישר ארחתיך

> "In *all* your ways acknowledge Him — God — and He, He will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:6). "We live under the protection of the all-good God, and," "let Him do what is good in His eyes" (1 Sam. 3:18). We live under the governance of the all-just God, and "in His doing there is no blame and no fault" (Ps. 92:16).

[p. 100] Seventh Section. Of Man and His Future

1. ***Of what use to us is knowledge of ourselves?***

Knowledge of ourselves is of the greatest importance for us. Whoever has no knowledge of himself lives and works only for his body, and sinks down to the level of the beast. But whoever is conscious of his noble nature, his dignity and his destiny will also live and work accordingly.

2. ***How is the nature of man expressed in the Holy Scripture?***

Right at the creation it says: "And God, the Lord, formed man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into him a living soul" (Gen. 2:7); by this *the nature* of man is designated as a twofold one.

3. ***Of what kind is the twofold nature of man?***

I. The bodily or earthly nature, which is represented by the body, and which is the perishable part of man.

כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב

> "For dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (ibid. 3:19).

II. The spiritual nature, which lies in the soul. The soul is called "the breath of God" and forms the imperishable part of man.

והרוח תשוב אל האלהים אשר נתנה

> "The spirit shall return to the Lord who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7).

4. ***How is the dignity of man expressed in the Holy Scripture?***

The dignity of man is expressed in the following words:

> [p. 101] "When the Lord created man, He made him in the likeness of God" (Gen. 5:1).

5. ***And what does this mean?***

This means: God placed in the mind of man endowments and powers, through whose development and cultivation man becomes like God; and this striving after likeness to God is the destiny of man, as will be taught in the following section.

6. ***What does the Holy Scripture teach about the immortality of the soul?***

The Holy Scripture gives only intimations about the immortality of the soul, such as:

> "In the path of virtue is life; on its beaten way there is no death" (Prov. 12:28); or: "Who knows that the spirit of the children of men ascends upward to the height, and the spirit of the beast goes downward into the earth?" (Eccl. 3:21), etc.

7. ***Why does the Holy Scripture teach nothing explicit about this?***

I. Because man is just as convinced of the immortality of the soul as of the existence of God, which is likewise presupposed by the Holy Scripture as something already known.

II. Because belief in the immortality of the soul already prevailed before the revelation and among other peoples as well. As the prayer of Balaam, the heathen prophet, shows:

> "Let my soul die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like theirs" (Num. 23:10).

III. Because man, enclosed in an earthly body, is not at all able to grasp the true state of the soul.[55]

8. ***What do we understand by the immortality of the soul?***

By the immortality of the soul we understand: that the soul of man can neither perish, nor cease, nor dissolve, nor change; but that it, as a spiritual being, lives on with all its endowments, powers and memories in another world, which we call *the hereafter* or *the future life*.

[p. 102] **9.** ***From what do we draw our conviction of the immortality of the soul?***

We are convinced of the immortality of the soul by: nature; our consciousness; our conscience; the attributes of God, and the utterances of God.

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[55] Translator: No reference number is printed here, but Fassel's endnote 80 (the child cannot grasp the joys or sorrows of the grown man, still less can man grasp those of the soul in eternity) belongs to this point.

10. ***How do we recognize the immortality of the soul from nature?***

In the whole of nature there is nowhere an annihilation, but only a transformation; out of death comes life, out of decay new forms develop; and if nothing at all in nature ceases to be, then man too can say with composure:

לא אמות כי אחיה

"I shall not die, but I shall live" (Ps. 118:17).

11. ***But since in nature everything transforms itself, how do we know that the soul also remains unchanged?***

Since the soul is a spirit and uncompounded, a change in it would be an annihilation; and that surely cannot take place, otherwise the spirit of a Moses, of the divine prophets and of the pious patriarchs would be still less than the meanest worm.

12. ***What, then, is death?***

Death is a birth, in which everything that man needs for earthly life does indeed die away; but his spiritual powers are awakened through the death of the body to new life and to new activity.

13. ***How do we recognize the immortality of the soul from our consciousness?***

I. There is no people, nor has any people ever existed, that did not believe in a continued existence of the soul; even the aberrations of the ancient peoples, such as necromancy, belief in ghosts and the like, show that they believed in the continued existence of man; and what lives as consciousness in *all* human beings, that is also truth, is an unerring presentiment which God has planted in man.

[p. 103] **II.** Even in this world there are joys and sorrows of which the body feels nothing at all, and which nevertheless delight far more, or pain far more [n. 81], than bodily joys or sorrows. Such therefore afford us an image of the joys or sorrows of the soul in the world to come.

14. ***How do we recognize the immortality of the soul from our conscience?***

The warning and reproving voice of conscience is the soul's recoiling from actions that bring it ruin, and the soul's inclining toward deeds that benefit and profit it. And since the ruin that comes from vice, and the benefit that comes from virtue, do not come to the soul in this world, the soul must surely have to await the recompense of its deeds in another world.

15. ***How do we recognize the immortality of our soul from the attributes of God?***

I. God is the *highest perfection* and therefore can have created man only for consummation; but here below only progress toward perfection, not consummation, is possible; this must therefore be attainable in another world.

II. God is *all-wise* and can create nothing without purpose; but now in man so much is superfluous for this world; such as: his longing for perfection; the urge to fathom and explore the unknown;

the ardent yearning for bliss, which he cannot attain here below; the indwelling law of virtue and justice, which in the few years of his earthly existence he often cannot bring into proper practice at all, and the like; if, then, such spiritual powers in man are to have a purpose, man must be destined for yet another world.

III. God is *all-good* and cannot have created any creature in order to suffer; but now "with greater wisdom comes greater vexation, and with the increase of understanding pain increases" (Eccl. 1:18), that is, man through his spiritual advantages is often more unhappy than any other creature [p. 104] on earth; therefore yet another existence must await man, where these spiritual advantages will be of use to him.

IV. God is *all-just*; but on earth reward and punishment are not always to be found; rather, we see very often the virtuous suffer and sinners revel in good fortune; indeed there are virtuous acts which cannot be rewarded here below at all, such as sacrificing oneself for religion and virtue; where, then, would the all-justice of God be? It is therefore proven that man does not cease to be, and has to await the recompense of his deeds there.

16. *How do we infer the immortality of the soul from the utterances of God?*

I. God says: He created man in His *image*; but since God is incorporeal, only the soul, as the spirit of God, can be meant by this: now if the soul of man ceased to be with his death, it would be a passing shadow, but not the image of the eternal God.

II. God calls Himself "the Father of human beings"; and a father who has the power to save his child from annihilation cannot abandon it to annihilation.

III. God said: "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" at a time when the patriarchs were no longer in the world; now if the soul did not continue to exist, these men too would exist nowhere; and how could God call Himself after them? [n. 82]

IV. God declares certain rewards for some deeds, which however do not always follow; if, then, the word of God is not to be a deception, there must be another place where the declared reward will take place.

17. *What is related in the Talmud concerning the last point?*

In the Talmud it is related: "A son wished to give his father pleasure by fetching from the dovecote pigeons, which were his father's favourite dish; he found the mother [p. 105] sitting on the young, sent the mother away according to the commandment of God, and took the young pigeons for his father. He had thus fulfilled two commandments for which the Torah declares long life as a reward. But in climbing down he fell from the ladder and lay dead on the spot. Where, then, would be the long life of this man? A proof, therefore, that there is another place where the declared reward follows" (BT Kiddushin 39b).

18. ***What, then, is death?***

Death is by no means an evil, but rather a wise arrangement of God; it is an angel of peace who opens the gate through which we step out of the imperfect world into the better one.

והנה טוב זה מלאך חיים מאד זה מלאך המות

> "The angel of life is good, but the angel of death is very good" (Yalkut בראשית [Bereshit], ch. 1) [n. 83].[56]

19. ***But should we not be permitted to open for ourselves the gate into the better world?***

Suicide is forbidden by God just as much as the murder of another human being, and to open for oneself the gate of eternity through a crime is not only sinful but also exceedingly foolish.

20. ***What do we know of the state in the life beyond?***

As was said above, in our earthly limitation we can form no correct idea of a purely spiritual life; but this we know, that infinite bliss awaits the righteous there, and that the lot of the wicked is indescribable misery.

> "And the multitudes that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: these to everlasting life, and those to shame and disgrace. And the thinkers shall shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who have led the many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:2, 3).

21. ***What does belief in the immortality of our soul afford us?***

Belief in immortality affords, **I.**, comfort in suffering; for out of earthly sufferings heavenly joys often come.

[p. 106]

כי לא תעזב נפשי לשאול לא תתן חסידך לראות שחת

> "For You do not abandon my soul to the grave; You do not let Your pious ones see destruction. — Fullness of joy is before Your face, everlasting delight at Your right hand" (Ps. 16:10, 11).

Belief in immortality affords, **II.**, reassurance when one is innocently suspected or accused; for in the world beyond our life will be weighed according to its true worth.

כי את כל מעשה האלהים יבא במשפט על כל נעלם אם טוב ואם רע

> "For every work the Lord will bring into judgment, concerning every hidden thing, whether it be good or evil" (Eccl. 12:14).

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[56] Translator: The printed reference number is indistinct and looks like "88"; the sequence of notes and the content of Fassel's endnote 83 (on the figurative "angel of life" and "angel of death") show that 83 is meant. The Hebrew is the midrash on "and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31), Genesis Rabbah 9:10.

Belief in immortality affords, **III.**, certainty amid all the puzzling phenomena of human life; for the balancing out of all deeds takes place only there, and there the riddles that are so incomprehensible here will be solved.

סוף דבר הכל נשמע

> "At the end of the matter everything will become understandable" (ibid. 12:13).

Belief in immortality affords, **IV.**, confidence in dangers; for only vice, but not earthly accident, can bring danger to the better, immortal part in man.

מה תשתוחחי נפשי ומה תהמי עלי

> "Why so deeply bowed down, O my soul? And why do you rage within me? Hope in the Lord, for ever shall I praise Him, the salvation of my countenance and my God" (Ps. 42:12).

Belief in immortality affords, **V.**, protection against the enticements of temptation; for the sinful pleasures, which are after all vain and transitory, one will have to atone for in the hereafter through real, lasting pains.

אל יקנא לבך בחטאים כי אם ביראת ה' כל היום

> "Let not your heart envy sinners, but only the fear of God at all times. For truly there is a future, and what you hope for shall not be cut off" (Prov. 23:17, 18).

[p. 107] Belief in immortality affords, **VI.**, courage to be able to sacrifice even life for God and faith, for virtue and justice; for it is indeed a gain to purchase eternal bliss for a few years of earthly existence.

אני בצדק אחזה פניך אשבעה בהקיץ תמונתך

> "Only through virtue shall I one day behold Your face; I shall feast, when I one day awake, on Your divine image" (Ps. 17:15).

22. ***What motto should man always have on his lips in this regard?***

Man should always have on his lips the motto:

אך טוב וחסד ירדפוני כל ימי חיי ושבתי בבית ה' לארך ימים

> "Only goodness and love accompany me all the days of my life, so shall I then return home into the house of God for long, long days" — that is, for all eternity — (ibid. 23:6).

23. ***What further does the Talmud teach about the continued existence of man?***

The Talmud teaches that not only is the soul immortal, but that it will also one day be reunited with the body: the dead will rise again.

יחיו מתיך נבלתי יקומון

"Your dead shall live again, my corpses shall rise again" (Isa. 26:19).

24. ***How and through what will this happen?***

This will happen only through the will of God; for one day, so tradition assures us, it will be God's will to awaken the departed, and to let them live again in a better and wholly perfected state, just as God once, in the days of the prophet Ezekiel, brought many long dead back to life (Ezek. ch. 37).

25. ***But is this also possible?***

Not only is nothing impossible to the omnipotence of God, but the possibility also lies in the thing itself, as our ancients say:

[p. 108]

מאי דלא הוי הוי מה דהוי לא כל שכן

"If what has not yet been has come into being, then surely what has already been can come into being again."[57]

26. ***What is the concluding sentence of this seventh section?***

The concluding sentence of this seventh section is:

"This world is the vestibule to the world to come; prepare yourself, therefore, in the vestibule, so that you may enter the palace" (Avot 4:16). This world is the place of sowing for the harvests in the other world; and if one must often "sow in tears, one will yet reap there in rejoicing" (Ps. 126:5).

[p. 109] Eighth Section. Of the Destiny of Man, His Relations to God, and His Duties toward God

1. ***What is the destiny of man?***

The destiny of man is to develop his powers and endowments, in order thereby to become like God; for God created man in His image, that is, we have within us a spirit from the spirit of God.

2. ***What is the relation of man to God?***

God is our Father and we are His children [n. 84].

בנים אתם לה' אלהיכם

"Children are you of God, your Lord" (Deut. 14:1).

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[57] Translator: BT Sanhedrin 91a.

3. ***What follows from this relation?***

I. That the commandments of God are given only for our good; for God indeed loves us as a father, and wants nothing but our good.

> "God will make you His holy people, as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of God, your Lord, and walk in His ways" (Deut. 28:9).

II. That we have certain duties toward God, who deigns to call Himself our Father.

> "A son honours his father — and if I am a father, where is My honour? says the God of Hosts" (Mal. 1:6).

III. That we should strive to become like God, as children usually come to resemble their father; for perfection consists in likeness to God.

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך

> "Perfect shall you become with God, your Lord" (Deut. 18:13).

4. ***What are the duties that we have toward God?***

The duties that we have toward God are of two kinds: an *outward* worship of God, consisting in certain deeds and actions commanded us by God; and the *inward* worship of God, consisting in dispositions and feelings toward God which we must preserve in our heart.

5. ***What are these dispositions and feelings?***

I. *Reverence.*

ויראת מאלהיך

> "You shall fear your God" (Lev. 19:32).

II. *Love.*

ואהבת את ה' אלהיך

> "You shall love God, your Lord" (Deut. 6:5).

III. *Obedience.*

לשמע בקלו ולדבקה בו

> "To hearken to His voice and to cleave to Him" (ibid. 30:20).

IV. *Gratitude.*

טוב להדות לה'

> "It is good to give thanks to God" (Ps. 92:2).

V. *Trust.*

והאמן בה' ויחשבה לו צדקה

"And he trusted in God, and it was counted to him as virtue" (Gen. 15:6).

6. ***How does reverence differ from honour and fear?***

One can *honour* anyone whom one esteems, even if one is his equal. One can *fear* even someone whom one does not esteem at all; but *reverence* is a holy awe which one can feel only before one to whom one is inferior in perfection.

7. ***Why, then, are we obliged to reverence toward God?***

We are obliged to *reverence* toward God because He is the most exalted and most perfect Being, to whom in power and [p. 111] holiness nothing can be compared; Him we can only admire in humility and feel a holy awe before Him, and that is what it means to have reverence for Him.

"Who should not revere Thee, O King of the nations! For to Thee reverence is indeed due; for among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like unto Thee" (Jer. 10:7).

8. ***And by what means do we attain to reverence?***

When in earnest contemplation we compare our own imperfection and limitation with the infinite greatness of God, we attain to reverence; and so our Sages also say: "Modesty and humility lead to reverence for God."

עקב ענוה יראת ה'

"The consequence of humility is the fear of God" (Prov. 22:4).

9. ***Who, then, can feel reverence for God?***

Only the *thinking* human being can feel reverence for God, who recognizes from the works of God how infinitely great God is, and how before His power, goodness, wisdom and holiness all human perfection vanishes into nothing. But the ignorant person, who reflects on nothing, may well fear and tremble before God's power, but can feel no reverence for God.

אין בור ירא חטא ולא עם הארץ חסיד

"In the uncultivated person there is no awe of sin, and in the ignorant no true piety" (Avot 2:5).

10. ***What, then, must we do in order always to feel reverence for God?***

We must seek to know God from His works, for only the true knowledge of God establishes reverence, just as, conversely, ignorance of God does not allow true reverence to arise.

"When I behold Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained: what is man, that Thou art mindful of him, the son of earth, that Thou regardest him?" (Ps. 8:4, 5).

[p. 112] **11.** ***What was the work of God, or nature, to the prophets?***

To the prophets nature was a great book which speaks of the wonders of the omnipotence and of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator. In storm and thunder they heard the mighty voice of the Ruler of the world; in the countless provisions for the nourishment of all creatures they saw the infinite love of the heavenly Father, and so forth; and thus the works of God were their teachers.

מכל מלמדי השכלתי כי עדותיך שיחה לי

"I am wiser than all my teachers, for Thy testimony is my meditation" (Ps. 119:99) [n. 85].

12. ***What duties flow from reverence for God?***

I. That we may never presume to judge the works of God immodestly, or to find fault with the dispensation of God.

כי האלהים בשמים ואתה על הארץ על כן יהיו דבריך מעטים

"For the Lord is in heaven and thou art upon the earth; therefore let thy words be few" (Eccl. 5:1).

II. That we must have veneration for everything that stands in relation to God; namely for the house of God and the objects of the rites of worship.

ומקדשי תיראו אני ה'

"And ye shall have reverence for My sanctuary, I am God" (Lev. 19:30).

III. That we may not pronounce at all the proper, hallowed Name of God, שם המפורש [*shem ha-meforash*, the Explicit Name]; this was pronounced only by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, and then all who heard it had to kneel, fall down in worship and say: "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever."[58] But the other designations of God, too, we may not pronounce lightly, but always with a certain devotion.

ולא תחלל שם אלהיך אני ה'

"Thou shalt not profane the Name of thy Lord, I am God" (ibid. 18:22).[59]

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[58]Translator: Fassel's German reads literally "Blessed be the Name of His glory for ever and ever"; the response is *barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed* (Mishnah Yoma 6:2).

[59]Translator: The verse is Lev. 18:21 (which reads ולא תחלל את שם אלהיך אני ה').

[p. 113] **13.** ***By what, then, is the duty of reverence violated?***

The duty of reverence is violated when limited man presumes to find fault with God's works or dispensations; or when he conducts himself improperly or frivolously in the house of God; or finally, when he pronounces the Name of God needlessly or in vain, or even invokes it in support of a falsehood.

> "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker. — — Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it: What makest thou?" (Isa. 45:9).

14. ***What is meant by love?***

Love is the inward attachment to the object which one loves.

15. ***And by what means do we attain to love of God?***

We are inspired with the most heartfelt love of God when we recognize Him from His attributes as the archetype of all perfections, and when we bring vividly before our minds and take to heart His infinite love, His fatherly goodness and His inexhaustible favour and grace toward all His creatures in general, and toward us human beings in particular.

אמרת לה' ה' אתה טובתי בל עליך

> "I say unto God: Thou remainest my Lord, my Benefactor! above Thee there is nothing" (Ps. 16:2).

16. ***What duties flow from*** **love** ***of God?***

I. We must joyfully sacrifice our own feelings and inclinations to the wishes and inclinations of God.

בטל רצונך מפני רצונו

> "Submit thy will to the will of God" (Avot 2:4).

II. We must serve God not for the sake of reward and not out of fear of punishment, but joyfully, out of love; just as one is always glad to oblige in everything the one whom one loves.

> "Be not like servants who serve their master with the intention of receiving a reward; but be like those who serve their master without the intention of receiving a reward" (ibid. 1:3).

III. Since we must love God more than everything, we must also, when need requires, for God and faith sacrifice our [p. 114] all; not only our goods, but also our life: just as Daniel and his three friends and other pious martyrs have done.

> "Thou shalt love God, thy Lord, with all thy heart" — that is, undividedly and above all things — "with all thy soul" — that is, even if it should cost thee thy life — "and with all thy might"

— that is, even if it should cost thee all thy possessions (Deut. 6:5, according to the interpretation of the Talmud).[60]

17. ***By what, then, is the duty of love violated?***

I. When a person, out of some consideration or out of false shame, lets himself be kept from the worship of God, or transgresses a commandment of God; for thereby he shows that he does not love God above all things.

"God, the Lord, hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not back. I gave my back to the smiters, my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." — "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye dismayed at their revilings" (Isa. 50:5, 6; 51:7).

II. When a person, for the sake of earthly goods, earthly honour or other advantages, or in order to avert disadvantages from himself, lets himself be led astray into committing sins or wrong, or even into abandoning the faith, and thus into making wanton sport of what is most holy and degrading what is most holy into an object of common trade.

טוב לי תורת פיך מאלפי זהב וכסף

"Dearer to me is the teaching of Thy mouth than thousands of gold and silver." — "And though they" — the dangers or other disadvantages — "compass me about like bees, blaze up like a fire of thorns, in the Name of God I will destroy them" (Ps. 119:72; 118:12).

18. ***What is obedience?***

Obedience is submission to the will of another.

19. ***How many kinds of obedience are there?***

There are two kinds of obedience: the compelled, servile kind, which proceeds from fear of the power of the other, [p. 115] and the willing, childlike kind, which is founded on love and reverence.

20. ***In what do these two kinds of obedience differ?***

The two kinds of obedience differ in this, that in *childlike* obedience one submits willingly and joyfully to the one whom one obeys, whereas from *servile* obedience one would gladly free oneself.

21. ***How can these two kinds of obedience be characterized more precisely?***

In *servile* obedience only the *outer* man obeys; in *childlike* obedience, the *inner* man.

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[60] Translator: The Talmudic interpretation is that of Mishnah Berakhot 9:5 and BT Berakhot 61b.

22. ***Of what kind should our obedience toward God be?***

It should be not an outward, servile obedience, but an inward, childlike one; that is, out of love and reverence we should make the will of God our own; for God wills what is best for us, and in fulfilling His will we further our own well-being.

ואהבת את ה' אלהיך ושמרת משמרתו וחקתיו ומשפטיו ומצותיו כל הימים

> "Thou shalt love God, thy Lord, and (therefore) keep His charge and His statutes and His ordinances and His commandments always" (Deut. 11:1).

23. ***But how do we know what the will of God is?***

I. We know the will of God because God has revealed Himself in a supernatural manner, both on Sinai and later through Moses and the other prophets, and has given His laws, which, however, are for our own well-being and good.

> "And God commanded us to do all these statutes, to revere God, our Lord, that it might go well with us always, and that our life might be preserved, as it is this day. And it shall be for our well-being, if we take heed to do all this commandment before God, our Lord, as He hath commanded us" (Deut. 6:24, 25).

II. Because God reveals Himself in a natural manner through our reason, and in many respects teaches us what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil, and through our conscience admonishes us to choose only the good and the just.

> [p. 116] "Not with you alone do I make this covenant and oath, but with him that is here, standing with us this day before God, our Lord, as well as *with him that is not here with us this day*" (ibid. 29:13, 14).

24. ***What is gratitude?***

Gratitude is the endeavour to show acknowledgement, by word or deed, to the one from whom we receive benefits.

25. ***Is gratitude a duty?***

Gratitude is a holy duty, just as ingratitude, conversely, is a great vice.

משיב רעה תחת טובה לא תמיש רעה מביתו

> "Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house" (Prov. 17:13).

26. ***Why is ingratitude a vice?***

Not only does the ungrateful person show that he has a wicked heart, in which the feeling for the good has died; he also hinders the beneficence of other people, for nothing is so apt to harden even a feeling heart as ingratitude.

27. ***What follows from what has been said?***

Since God is our greatest benefactor — what we are, we are through Him; what we possess, we possess through Him; what we enjoy, we enjoy through Him — we must feel the most heartfelt gratitude toward God.

> "Do ye thus requite God, O vile and unwise people? Is He not thy Father who hath acquired thee? He hath made thee and established thee!" (Deut. 32:6).

28. ***How should we show our gratitude to God?***

We should show our gratitude to God in *dispositions*, *words* and *deeds*.

הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו

> "Give thanks unto God, for He is good, for His love endureth for ever" (Ps. 118:1).

29. ***How should we thank God by our dispositions?***

I. That we always bring before our minds, and recognize and take to heart in our inmost being, how exceedingly good God is toward us.

[p. 117]

טעמו וראו כי טוב ה'

> "Taste and see how good God is" (Ps. 34:9).

II. That we continually keep before our eyes our dependence on God, and, putting away pride and arrogance, always remain humble.

תועבת ה' כל גבה לב

> "A proud heart is an abomination to God" (Prov. 16:5).

III. That we always regard everything we are and possess only as a gracious gift from God's fatherly hand.

> "That thou say not in thy heart: My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; but remember God, thy Lord, for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deut. 8:17, 18).

30. ***How should we thank God by words?***

We should diligently show God our thanks through prayers; for even though God has no need of our word of thanks, it nevertheless serves ourselves to quicken and preserve the holy feeling of gratitude.

> "It is a good thing to give thanks unto God, and to sing praises unto Thy Name, O Most High! To declare Thy love in the morning, and Thy faithfulness in the nights" (Ps. 92:2, 3).

31. ***How should we thank God by deeds?***

We should use the gifts of God, to which the powers of man also belong, for our own welfare and for the welfare of our fellow men; and also treat all God's creatures with gentleness and forbearance.

יודע צדיק נפש בהמתו ורחמי רשעים אכזרי

> "The righteous man spareth even the life of his beast, but the heart of the wicked is cruel" (Prov. 12:10).

32. ***By what means do we use the gifts of God for our own welfare?***

I. When we are active with our powers for the cultivation and perfection of our mind.

כי אם בתורת ה' חפצו ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה

> "But his delight is in the teaching of God, and in His teaching he occupies himself day and night" (Ps. 1:2).

[p. 118] **II.** When we enjoy our possessions joyfully and do not fall into avarice and greed.

לך אכל בשמחה לחמך ושתה בלב טוב יינך

> "Go, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart" (Eccl. 9:7).

III. When the enjoyment of life does not degenerate into a craving for pleasure and distraction, for such a craving in turn deadens every religious and better feeling in a person.

> "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning to follow intoxicating drink, and sit up late into the night, inflamed by wine, and have the lyre and the harp, the timbrel and the pipe and wine at their feasts, and so behold not the work of God, and see not what His hands have done" (Isa. 5:11, 12).

33. ***By what means do we use the gifts of God for the welfare of other people?***

I. When a person supports the poor and needy from his abundance:

טוב עין הוא יברך כי נתן מלחמו לדל

> "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed, for he giveth of his bread to the poor" (Prov. 22:9).

II. When the man of standing uses his influence to protect the oppressed and to check injustice.

> "Deliver them that are doomed to death, that are given over to destruction, if thou canst prevent it. But say not: We need know nothing of it. Truly! He that weigheth the hearts, He trieth it, and He that keepeth thy soul, He knoweth it, and rendereth to man according to his deeds" (ibid. 24:11, 12).

III. When the man endowed with intellect uses his learning to spread light, knowledge and truth.

"Raise up many disciples." — "He who learns in order to teach, to him God grants that he may learn and teach" (Avot 1:1; 4:5).

34. ***What is meant by trust?***

Trust is calm confidence in the protection and help of another and surrender to his will.

35. ***And in whom does one place trust?***

One places trust in him of whose power, insight and good will one is convinced.

[p. 119] **36.** ***Why, then, must we place our trust in God?***

I. Because we stand under God's providence, and nothing can befall us without His decree and permission.

"Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, who trusteth in God, his Lord. — God executeth justice for the oppressed; giveth bread to the hungry, looseth the prisoners; God openeth the eyes of the blind, raiseth up them that are bowed down. — God preserveth the strangers, and upholdeth the fatherless and the widow" (Ps. 145:5–9).[61]

II. Because there is no situation, however bad and however hopeless it may be, from which God's omnipotence could not rescue us.

"God is our refuge and strength, a help in troubles, easily found. Therefore we fear not, though the earth tremble, and the mountains totter in the heart of the seas" (ibid. 46:2, 3).

III. Because man, with all his striving and all his exertion of strength, can do nothing against the will of God.

אין חכמה ואין תבונה ואין עצה לנגד ה'

"Neither wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel availeth against God" (Prov. 21:30).

IV. Because God wills only what is best for us, and even when He denies us our wishes, and even takes from us what is dearest to us, it surely happens for our good.

"Remember mine affliction and my sorrow, the wormwood and the gall. Yea, Thou wilt remember it, how bowed down my soul is. But this I take to heart, therefore I hope in trust: *The love of God cometh not to an end, His mercy never ceaseth*" (Lam. 3:19–22).

V. Because, finally, the insight of God, too, is immeasurable.

גדול אדונינו ורב כח לתבונתו אין מספר

"Great is our Lord and almighty, His understanding is immeasurable" (Ps. 147:5).

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[61] Translator: The verses quoted are Ps. 146:5–9.

37. ***How must our trust in God show itself?***

I. At every time and in every situation of life we must set our hope and confidence on God and in God.

בטחו בה' עדי עד כי ביה ה' צור עולמים

> "Trust in God for ever and ever, for in God, the Lord, ye have a rock for eternities" (Isa. 26:4).

[p. 120] **II.** We must fulfil the will of God and follow His commandments unconditionally, even when we do not comprehend them with our reason.

בטח בה' ועשה טוב שכן ארץ ורעה אמונה

> "Trust in God, and (thereby) do good, dwell in the land and practise faithfulness, practise uprightness" (Ps. 37:3).

38. ***What gain do we derive from trust in God?***

I. Trust makes us content with the present, since we know that we have received everything from God's hand.

> "For what am I, and what is my people? *From Thee alone cometh indeed everything*" (1 Chron. 29:14).

II. Trust makes us free of care for the future; for we commit our destiny to God, and let Him care for us.

ויבטחו בך יודעי שמך כי לא עזבת דרשיך ה'

> "And they that know Thy Name trust in Thee, for never yet hast Thou forsaken them that seek Thee, O God!" (Ps. 9:11).

III. Trust makes us courageous in suffering and grants us comfort in misfortune; for God can easily raise us up again, and in general, whatever He does is done for good.

ה' הוא הטוב בעיניו יעשה

> "It is indeed God! Let Him do what is good in His eyes" (1 Sam. 3:18).

IV. Trust, finally, grants us calm confidence even in the hour of death; for there too God is with us, and leads us to everlasting continuance in a better world:

כי זה אלהים אלהינו עולם ועד הוא ינהגנו על מות

> "This God, our Lord for eternity, He leadeth us beyond death" (Ps. 48:15).

39. ***If we now fulfil all these duties, to what do we attain thereby?***

If we fulfil all these duties, we are not only happy in life, at peace in dying and blessed in eternity; but we also attain thereby to *likeness to God*.

40. ***Can man, then, become like God?***

Man cannot become *equal* to God, but he can indeed become like Him; namely, by making his spiritual faculties, by virtue of which [p. 121] he is called the image of God, like those same attributes of God.

41. ***What are the spiritual faculties that make man the image of God?***

I. *Power*: God is almighty and can govern without limit in all and everything, and man is powerful to determine himself; that is, he has free will to mark out his course of life for himself in the moral respect.

> "Do not believe what some nations say, that God exerts influence so that a man becomes pious or wicked; every man has an unlimited free will; he can become as pious as Moses and as wicked as Jeroboam: and this is a lofty principle and a pillar of moral teaching" (Maimonides, Hilkhot Teshuvah 5:2, 3).

II. *Wisdom*: God is all-wise, and man can become wise, for he has knowledge and insight of good and evil, of the true and the false, of right and wrong.

> "God giveth — to man — wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He keepeth this treasure for the upright as a shield for them that walk in piety; that they may keep the right path — — understand what righteousness, justice and uprightness mean, and every course that leadeth to the good" (Prov. 2:6–9).

III. *Goodness*: God is all-good, and the heart of man is receptive to the good, is formed for benevolence and love.

כי חסדך לנגד עיני והתהלכתי באמתך

> "For Thy goodness is ever before mine eyes, and I walk in Thy faithfulness" (Ps. 26:3).

42. ***How should man make his power like God's omnipotence?***

God can indeed do everything that He wills; but by virtue of His supreme perfection He can will only the good; so man should seek to bring it about that virtue and the good become second nature to him, so that not even a sinful thought any longer arises in him [n. 86].

43. ***And by what means can this come about?***

This can come about only through diligent exercises in virtue

> [p. 122] "— I will walk in the innocence of my heart within my house. I can tolerate nothing wrong before mine eyes; I hate a perverse nature, it shall not come near me. A deceitful heart shall be far from me; I will know nothing of evil. — Haughty eyes and a proud heart I cannot endure" (Ps. 101:2–5).

44. ***How should man make his wisdom like the all-wisdom of God?***

Man must constantly sharpen his insight and broaden his knowledge through unceasing exercise of his reason. "Even though learning is not the main thing, but practice" (Avot 1:17), yet "learning is of the highest worth" (Pe'ah 1:1); "for only learning leads to right practice" (BT Kiddushin 40b); that is, if a person has no knowledge, he can easily err and do evil instead of good.

> "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that make darkness light and light darkness; that make bitter sweet and sweet bitter. Woe unto them, they are wise in their own eyes and hold themselves to be prudent" (Isa. 5:20, 21).

45. ***How should man make his goodness like the all-goodness of God?***

God's love, grace, mercy, long-suffering and readiness to forgive should be the sublime models which man should always imitate.

> "God, the Lord, is merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in love — and forgiveth iniquity, sins and transgressions" (Exod. 34:6, 7).

46. ***What image can we take for the striving after likeness to God?***

The realm of perfection is a holy mountain, which it is man's task to climb.

47. ***What is the foot of this holy mountain?***

Justice and truthfulness: these are the first steps toward perfection. Man must be just and impartial, just in deed and action, and truthful [p. 123] in mind and judgement; "what thou wouldst not have done to thee, do not to others either" (BT Shabbat 31a).

> "Who shall ascend the mountain of God, and who shall stand in His holy place? He that is of clean hands and a pure heart; who striveth not after vanity and sweareth not deceitfully" (Ps. 24:3, 4).

48. ***What is the middle of this holy mountain called?***

The middle of the holy mountain is *equity and love*; it is not enough to be just, which has fixed limits, but man must climb higher, must let equity and love prevail in all his actions. We must love all our fellow men and do good to them; must be conciliatory toward our enemies; must repay evil with good, and so forth.

> "God! who may *dwell* on Thy holy mountain? He that walketh perfectly and worketh what is *virtuous*" (ibid. 15:1, 2).

49. ***And what is the summit of this holy mountain called?***

The summit of the holy mountain is *holiness*; holy, indeed, is God alone, and man can only strive to become holy; but precisely the sum total of the perfections that man is capable of attaining forms

the summit of the holy mountain; and in order that he may be able to reach it, God has given man the capacities.

ותחסרהו מעט מאלהים וכבוד והדר תעטרהו

> "Thou hast made him — man — but little lower than heavenly beings, and crowned him with glory and splendour" (ibid. 8:6).

50. ***What, then, must man do?***

Man must strive to become holy; that is, to climb ever higher and higher on the steep path that leads upward to the realm of the good and the divine.

ארח חיים למעלה למשכיל

> "The way of life goeth upward for the wise" (Prov. 15:24).

51. ***How should this come about?***

To become holy it is not enough to do the one thing and refrain from the other; or to will the good at one time [p. 124] but not at another; rather, one must seek to strive after the divine *everywhere* and *always*.

52. ***What symbol do we have for such a way of life?***

The symbol of the High Priest of old, who at no time was permitted to go out of the sanctuary.

ומן המקדש לא יצא

> "And out of the sanctuary he shall not go" (Lev. 21:12).

53. ***What is the concluding statement of this eighth Section?***

The concluding statement of this eighth Section is the words of God: "Then the nations shall know that I, God, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst for ever" (Ezek. 37:28). It is not enough merely to do good outwardly; the sanctuary must also be within. *Clean hands and a pure heart; an unfalsified mouth and a pious mind*: whoever strives after these walks wholly and undividedly in the teaching of God.

[p. 125] Ninth Section. Of the Future of the Human Race in General, and the Future of Israel in Particular

1. ***What belief is joined to trust in God?***

Joined to trust in God is the belief in the infallibility of the divine promises, which have been transmitted to us from God through Moses and the prophets. For "God is not a man, that He should

reconsider, nor a son of earth, that He should change His resolve";[62] therefore the divine promises must be realized, however long their fulfilment may tarry.

> "Though the promise aim at a distant time and speak only of the end, yet it does not deceive: if it tarry, only wait, for it will surely come, it will not fail" (Hab. 2:3).

2. ***How are the divine promises to be divided?***

The divine promises are partly such as declare the future of the whole human race, and partly such as determine the future of Israel.

3. ***What is the promise for the whole human race?***

The promise for the whole human race is this: A time will come when the kingdom of God will be founded on earth among all human beings; when all human beings will form one great family of brothers, and happiness will be in abundance over the whole earth; and this happy future we call ימות המשיח [*yemot ha-mashiach*], "*the days of the Messiah*," or also מלכות שדי [*malkhut Shaddai*], "*the kingdom of the Almighty on earth*."

[p. 126] **4.** ***What is the chief condition, or the source, of all the happiness of this future time?***

The source of all happiness on earth is insight, knowledge and enlightenment, and in the Messianic age these will be spread among *all* human beings over the whole earth.

כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים

> "Full shall the earth be of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14).

5. ***And what will be the consequence of this universal enlightenment?***

I. "God shall be King over the whole world; on that day shall God be One and His Name One" (Zech. 14:9); that is, the truth will be recognized by *all* human beings, and the one God will be worshipped and adored *with one accord*.

> "Then will I turn the speech of all nations into a purified one, that they may all call upon the Name of God and serve Him with one mind" (Zeph. 3:9).

II. Every vice will have vanished, hatred and malice fallen silent, wickedness and arrogance and darkness sunk away for ever, and only virtue and righteousness will prevail everywhere.

לא ירעו ולא ישחיתו בכל הר קדשי

> "They shall not do evil nor destroy in all My holy mountain" (Isa. 11:9).

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[62] Translator: Num. 23:19.

III. There will be neither misery nor want nor suffering among human beings; for all human beings together will indeed form one great, united family of brothers.

> "Behold! days are coming, saith God, the Lord, when I will send a famine upon the earth; not a famine for bread nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the word of God" (Amos 8:11).

IV. There will be no cares, torments or excessive toil, nor will anyone lead an unnatural way of life; therefore no one will meet with an early death either.

> "There shall no more be there a youth or an old man that hath not fully completed his days; for one who dies a hundred years old shall be called a youth" (Isa. 65:20).

[p. 127] **V.** All passions will have vanished, and no cause for discord will exist at all; therefore peace and concord will reign over the whole earth.

> "And it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house consecrated to God shall stand firm as the head of the mountains, and it shall rise above all the heights, and all nations shall flow unto it. — And He (God) shall judge among the many nations and rebuke mighty peoples, even far away, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall no more lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall dwell every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; for thus hath the mouth of the God of Hosts spoken" (Mic. 4:1–4).

6. *From what will this happy time develop?*

This happy time will develop from the divine revelation on Sinai, of which Israel is the bearer; for this happy time is the consummation of humanity for religion, and the consummation of religion for humanity; that is, humanity will have attained its destiny and religion its purpose.

> "I, God, call thee (Israel, as the bearer of revelation) for salvation, and hold thy hand, and keep thee, and set thee for a covenant of all peoples, for a light of the nations" (Isa. 42:6).

7. *And who is the instrument for the development of this happy time?*

The instrument for the development of this happy time is Israel, which was sent forth to combat the errors of the ages.

8. *What was often the lot of one sent by God?*

The lot of one sent by God was almost always to endure and suffer much; and so Israel, too, has endured and suffered as no other nation on earth, and has thus in a certain measure atoned for the errors, for the moral diseases of the nations.

> "Despised and shunned by men (was Israel), a being of sorrows, acquainted with sickness — despised was it, esteemed as nothing by us. But *our* sickness it bore, *our* sorrows it endured, [p. 128] and we, we thought it punished, chastised by *God*, and afflicted. But it was wounded through *our* transgressions, bruised through *our* sins" (Isa. 53:3–5 [n. 87]).

9. ***What promises are made to Israel in return?***

I. That Israel will be preserved by God for ever and ever.

כי אני ה' לא שניתי ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם

> "For I, God, change not, and ye sons of Jacob, ye shall not come to an end" (Mal. 3:6).

II. That God will always be with Israel, and His grace will never fail it.

> "And yet even then, when they shall be in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them nor reject them, to destroy them and to break My covenant with them, for I, God, am their Lord" (Lev. 26:44).

10. ***Have these promises been fulfilled? And what do we conclude from this?***

These two promises have already proved true; for of all the nations of high antiquity Israel alone remains; and despite all persecutions and sufferings the grace of God has nevertheless always protected and fed it: and we conclude from this that the remaining promises, too, will be fulfilled.

11. ***What are the promises whose fulfilment we still await?***

I. That Israel will surely accomplish the purpose to which it is called, namely to further the welfare and happiness of all humanity.

> "Now that it hath offered up its being as a guilt-offering, it shall see seed, live long, and the will of God shall prosper through it" (Isa. 53:11).[63]

II. That Israel will be *exalted*.

הנה ישכיל עבדי ירום ונשא וגבה מאד

> "Behold! my servant shall prosper, be exalted and lifted up, very high" (ibid. 52:13).

III. That Israel will be redeemed.

> "Sing, O heavens! for God hath done it. Shout, ye depths of the earth! break forth, ye mountains, into singing, O forest and every tree therein. For God redeemeth Jacob, and glorifieth Himself in Israel" (ibid. 44:23).

[p. 129] **12.** ***What do we understand by the exaltation of Israel?***

By the exaltation of Israel we understand that the faith of Israel will be glorified among all peoples.

> "The nations shall stream thither and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of God, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths" (Isa. 2:3).

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[63] Translator: The words quoted are Isa. 53:10.

13. ***And how will Israel be exalted thereby?***

Through the glorification of the faith of Israel, Israel itself, as the guardian of the hallowed faith and as the benefactor of all humanity, will be held in high honour.

והיה שארית יעקב בקרב עמים רבים כטל מאת ה'

> "And Israel shall be in the midst of the peoples as the dew from God" (Mic. 5:6).

14. ***What do we understand by the redemption of Israel?***

That rich recompense for the sorrow, the sufferings and the sacrifices which Israel had to endure in consequence of its election and mission will constitute the redemption of Israel.

> "Whereas thou wast forsaken and hated, and no one passed by thee, I will make thee an eternal splendour and a joy for all generations" (Isa. 60:15). "For your shame ye shall have double recompense, and for the scorn, rejoicing shall be your portion" (ibid. 61:7).

15. ***And by what means will this come about?***

The exaltation and redemption of Israel already lie in the promised enlightenment of all human beings; for then all human beings will indeed esteem and love Israel as the benefactor of all humanity, and praise God that His grace has always preserved Israel, and that through it the truth has been perpetuated.

> "Praise God, all ye peoples! laud Him, all ye nations! that His grace hath mightily prevailed *over us*, and the truth of God endureth for ever. Hallelujah!" (Ps. 117:1, 2).

16. ***But by what means especially will this come about?***

The Talmudic tradition teaches: God will send an anointed one, משיח [*Mashiach*, Messiah], of the line of David; he will bring Israel back into the Promised Land, make it a mighty [p. 130] kingdom, and he and his descendants [n. 88] will rule as mighty kings; and this is also intimated in the prophecies.

> "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse (the father of David) — upon whom the spirit of God shall rest" (Isa. 11:1, 2). "In those days and at that time will I cause a sprout of salvation to spring forth from the line of David, who shall execute justice and virtue in the earth" (Jer. 33:15).

17. ***Is this to be the real purpose of Israel's mission?***

No; an earthly kingdom, however mighty it might be, is not the ultimate purpose of Israel; rather, the Talmud presents it merely as a means, out of which the sublime goal, the enlightenment and happiness of the whole human race, is to develop.

> "The Sages and the prophets did not long for the days of the Messiah in order to rule over the world, to dominate the peoples and to receive their homage; nor in order to eat, drink and make

> merry, but only in order to be free to occupy themselves with Torah and wisdom, and so be able to fit themselves for the life of the world to come. In that time there will be no famine, no war, no envy and no hatred, for good things will flow in abundance — — and the whole world will have no occupation but to know God; for it is written: The whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea" (Maimonides, Hilkhot Melakhim 12:4, 5).

18. ***What is incumbent upon us to do for the redemption?***

It is incumbent upon us to attain the goal of redemption through a pious, God-pleasing way of life.

> "Thus saith God: Keep justice and practise virtue, for My salvation is near to come and My righteousness to be revealed" (Isa. 56:1).

19. ***Why should we not use ordinary means to attain redemption?***

Because we may not attempt to regain the Promised Land either by cunning, or by force, or by any natural means.

20. ***What, then, does the Talmud say about this?***

The Talmud says: "God made Israel swear to two things: that it should never strive to come into the Promised Land [p. 131] by force, and that it should never rebel against the peoples among whom it dwells" (BT Ketubot 111a).

> "On the house of Judah will I have mercy, and save them through God their Lord; but I will not save them by bow and sword and war, by horses and horsemen" (Hos. 1:7).

21. ***But if we always hope and wait for another fatherland, do we not thereby grow cold toward our present fatherland?***

By no means; the belief in the Messiah, that is, the hope of return to the Promised Land, can no more detract from the duties toward the fatherland than the belief in immortality, by which every human being on earth finds himself in a foreign land and his true fatherland is the kingdom of heaven. And hoping and waiting for the coming of the Messiah cools the heart toward the present fatherland as little as hoping and waiting for the final goal of the human race, when all human beings will form one great family of brothers, and therefore no separate fatherland will exist any longer at all.

22. ***How is this to be explained more closely and better taken to heart?***

I. We must always say to ourselves: Our soul is indeed immortal and our true fatherland is the kingdom of heaven; but as long as the will of God leaves us on earth, we are bound to fulfil the human duties which God has commanded us for this world: and among these are also the duties toward the fatherland.

II. God will indeed bring about the Messianic age, when all human beings over the whole earth will form a single family of brothers, and the state of society will be entirely different; but as long

as it is the will of God to let the present state continue, we are bound to fulfil the duties of society; and among these are also the duties toward the fatherland.

III. The Talmud does indeed declare that Israel will one day come again into the Promised Land; but toward this we may [p. 132] do nothing at all, but must leave it to God alone; and as long as the will of God leaves us in the dispersion, we have no other fatherland than the one in which we find ourselves, and are bound to fulfil the duties toward this our fatherland scrupulously (see Section 2, Fifth Commandment).

23. ***How can this be proved from Holy Scripture?***

This can be proved from the following: the sojourn of the Israelites in Babylon had been fixed in advance by prophecy at scarcely a century. Babylon was therefore surely only a temporary fatherland for the Jews of that time, and yet the prophet Jeremiah exhorted them:

> "Build houses and dwell in them, plant gardens and eat their fruit." — "Seek the welfare of the city (to further it) whither I have exiled you, pray for it to God, for in its welfare ye too shall fare well" (Jer. 29:5, 7).

24. ***How shall we conclude this ninth Section?***

We shall conclude this Section with the close of our daily prayer:

> "We hope in Thee, God, our Lord! that we may soon behold Thee in the glory of Thy dominion, when Thou wilt banish all abomination from the earth, and the idols shall be cut off. When Thou wilt perfect the world in the kingdom of Thine omnipotence, that all the children of flesh may call upon Thy Name; that all the sinners of the earth may turn unto Thee; that all the inhabitants of the world may know and perceive that unto Thee every knee must bow and every tongue swear. — — For Thine is the kingdom, and for eternities Thou wilt reign in glory, as it is written in Thy divine teaching: 'God shall reign for ever and ever.' And as it is further said: 'God shall be King over the whole earth; on that day shall God be One, and His Name One'" (*Alenu* prayer).

[p. 133] Tenth Section. Of the Duties of Israel toward God [n. 89], or Of the Outward Worship of God

1. ***What is an outward worship of God for?***

An outward worship of God is necessary for us in order to suppress the evil impulses and awaken the better ones, because the practice of virtue is made difficult for us in many ways by sensual desires, and because many obstacles are set in man's way by what is earthly in him.

לא ידון רוחי באדם לעלם בשגם הוא בשר

> "My spirit cannot always strive within man, since he is also flesh" (Gen. 6:3).

2. ***What, accordingly, is the outward worship of God?***

The outward worship of God is a means of sanctification; that is, the real means which leads to holiness, that is, to perfection.

3. ***What is the essential worship of God?***

The essential worship of God is the *inward* one; for God must be "served with the heart."[64]

4. ***And what follows from this?***

From this it follows that the outward worship of God should not be a mere bodily performance, but that with every outward deed there must also be joined a devotion (כונה [*kavvanah*]), the inward intention of honouring God by this deed.

כל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים

> "Whatever thou doest, do it for the sake of God" (Avot 2:12).

[p. 134] **5.** ***What image does Holy Scripture have for inward and outward divine worship?***

This image is expressed in the following words: "The commandment is the lamp and the teaching the light" (Prov. 6:23). The lamp — outward divine worship — gives no light unless the light — inward divine worship — burns in it. But the light would have to go out if it did not have the lamp on which it burns.

6. ***Of what does the outward worship of God consist?***

The outward worship of God consists in prayer, the observance of the Sabbaths and festivals, and the keeping of the other commandments and prohibitions of the holy teaching.

7. ***What purpose does prayer serve?***

Prayer, as the immediate expression of religious dispositions, that is, of what we feel toward God in our inmost being, serves at the same time also as an outward bond of the religious community.

8. ***What follows from this?***

As an expression of religious disposition, the wording of the prayers could be left to each individual, and so it was, too, in the time of the Temple [n. 90]; but as an outward bond of the religious community a uniform wording of the prayers is necessary, and therefore the obligatory prayers are prescribed.

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[64]Translator: Cf. Deut. 11:13 ("to serve Him with all your heart") and the rabbinic interpretation that this "service of the heart" is prayer (BT Ta'anit 2a).

9. ***Which are the obligatory prayers?***

On weekdays מעריב [*Ma'ariv*, the evening prayer] and שחרית [*Shacharit*, the morning prayer] and מנחה [*Minchah*, the afternoon prayer]; on Sabbaths and festivals, besides these, also the מוסף [*Musaf*, the additional prayer]; and on the Day of Atonement, besides these four, a fifth prayer as well, the נעילה [*Ne'ilah*, the concluding prayer].

10. ***Which are the most essential parts of the obligatory prayers?***

The most essential parts of the obligatory prayers are: the תפלה [*Tefillah*, "the Prayer"], which, because it originally consisted of eighteen benedictions, is also called שמונה עשרה [*Shemoneh Esreh*, "Eighteen"], without which no obligatory prayer exists at all; and at שחרית [*Shacharit*] and מעריב [*Ma'ariv*] also the שמע [*Shema*].

[p. 135] **11.** ***Why is prayer one of the most important means of sanctification?***

Because prayer lifts the spirit up to God, and expresses in words the dispositions and feelings which make up the inner worship of God.

12. ***How many kinds of prayer are there, accordingly?***

There are **I.** *prayers of praise* תהלה [*tehillah*]; in these we extol the infinite greatness and majesty of God, and also His infinite goodness and fatherly care: and through them we express our *reverence*, *love* and our *obedience* towards God.

There are **II.** *prayers of thanksgiving* תודה [*todah*]; in these we thank God for the countless benefits which we receive daily and hourly from His all-goodness: and through them we express our *gratitude* towards God.

There are finally **III.** *prayers of petition* בקשה [*bakkashah*]; in these we commit our temporal and eternal welfare to God; call upon Him for protection against dangers and for help in need, implore His aid against suffering and His forgiveness of our sins: and through them we express our *trust* in God.

13. ***What power has prayer?***

I. Prayer makes us worthy of the grace of God, and secures for us His protection and aid.

קרוב ה׳ לכל קראיו לכל אשר יקראהו באמת

"Near is God to all who call upon Him; to all who call upon Him in truth" (Ps. 145:18).

II. Prayer exercises a most beneficial influence on our moral and religious conduct of life, and strengthens the resolve to remain faithful to God and to His holy covenant; therefore it is also so greatly loved by God.

ותפלת ישרים רצונו

"In the prayer of the upright He takes delight" (Prov. 15:8).

III. Prayer lifts our soul above the temporal and transitory to the eternal and imperishable, and guards [p. 136] us from clinging too much to the earthly; and therefore the pious man also rejoices to be able to pray.

שמחתי באמרים לי בית ה׳ נלך

"I rejoice in those who say to me: Into the house of God let us go" (Ps. 122:1).

IV. Prayer directs our thoughts to God, encourages us to fulfil His will, strengthens us in the good and keeps us from falling into evil; and therefore prayer has a special worth only when it comes from the heart.

"And from thence you shall seek God, thy Lord, and thou shalt find Him, if thou seekest Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. 4:29).

V. Prayer makes us humble, patient, resigned and trustful, and gives us courage and comfort and strength in all the circumstances of life, and quickens our hope in the never-failing help of God. Thus it is said of Hannah, when she had prayed fervently: "Her countenance was no longer as before" (1 Sam. 1:18), that is, sorrowful.

מהלל אקרא ה׳ ומן איבי אושע

"Praised be God, I cry, and at once I am delivered from my enemies" (Ps. 18:4), that is, I feel relieved and comforted.

14. ***What is the chief requirement in prayer?***

Not the greater number of prayers and not the multitude of words are the main thing; rather, prayer must be: *devout, modest and humble*.

טוב מעט בכוונה מהרבה שלא בכוונה

"Better a little with devotion than much without devotion" (Orach Chayim 1:4).

15. ***How should prayer be, in order to be called devout?***

I. In praying we should withdraw our thoughts from every other object, and picture to ourselves and feel vividly that we are speaking to God, the Supreme Ruler, the All-knowing and Omnipresent:

איזו עבודה שבלב זו תפלה

"Which is an outward service and yet takes place in the heart? That is prayer" (Orach Chayim, sect. 101).[65]

[p. 137] **II.** We must remove every evil, unchaste or sinful thought from our heart before praying; otherwise the prayer is not heard by God.

און אם ראיתי בלבי לא ישמע ה׳

"Had I cherished sinfulness in my heart, the Lord would not hear me" (Ps. 66:18).

16. ***How should prayer be, in order to be called modest?***

I. We must not be immoderate in our wishes, but call upon God only for what seems very necessary to us. Thus Jacob prayed for bread to eat and a garment to put on (Gen. 28:20); thus Solomon prayed neither for riches nor for long life, but only for insight and understanding (1 Kings 3:9); and thus that pious sage prayed:

הטריפני לחם חקי

"Give me only the bread of my need" (Prov. 30:8).

II. In prayer we must bear in mind that it is not we who know what is good for us, but only God; and that if we should pray for something which would not be for our good, then not our will but God's will should be done.

טוב יפיק רצון מה׳

"The good man desires only what is pleasing to God" (Prov. 12:2).

17. ***How should prayer be, in order to be called humble?***

I. In prayer we should bear in mind that it is not our merit that entitles us to demand the granting of our petition, but that we can only call upon the grace and mercy of God; so Jacob prayed: "I am too small for all the grace that Thou hast shown Thy servant" (Gen. 32:11).

II. In prayer we should take most deeply to heart what a nothing man is before the greatness of God; so David spoke in prayer:

ואנכי תולעת ולא איש

"I am but a worm and no man" (Ps. 22:7). "A sacrifice pleasing to God is a contrite spirit; a contrite and crushed heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (ibid. 51:19).

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[65] Translator: The Hebrew means literally "What is the service of the heart? That is prayer"; the saying is from BT Ta'anit 2a (Sifre on Deut. 11:13).

[p. 138] **18.** ***What time is prescribed for prayer?***

Even though certain hours of the day are prescribed for the obligatory prayers, there is nevertheless no time at all which would not be suitable for calling upon God; and our Sages also say: "O that it were possible that a person could pray the whole day long."[66]

אברכה את ה׳ בכל עת תמיד תהלתו בפי

"I praise God at all times, His praise is ever in my mouth" (Ps. 34:2).

19. ***What place is prescribed for prayer?***

Even though the house of God is the most suitable place for prayer, because there no disturbance and no hindrance is found as in ordinary places, and because devotion in the company of a praying congregation is more heartfelt, more solemn and more blissful; there is nevertheless no place at all where one could not call upon God.

20. ***What follows from this?***

From this it follows, since it is written: "In every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to thee and bless thee" (Exod. 20:21); and since God causes His name to be remembered everywhere, for every object in nature reminds us of God, and therefore every place is suitable for calling upon God: that devotion outside the house of God forms an essential part of divine worship, and is called "*domestic devotion*."

21. ***What is the purpose of domestic devotion?***

The purpose of domestic devotion is that the house of the Israelites be a dwelling of the Lord, a place of the worship of God, and that the Israelite be reminded of God always and everywhere.

22. ***What does domestic devotion consist of?***

Domestic devotion consists not only of the morning and night prayers on rising and lying down, but also of the benedictions ברכות [*berakhot*] for all circumstances and all enjoyments in life, and the benedictions at the coming in and going out of Sabbaths and festivals, קידוש [*Kiddush*] and הבדלה [*Havdalah*].

[p. 139] **23.** ***What is the meaning of the benedictions, and how are they divided?***

I. Since the commandments of God are given for our salvation and our best: the Israelite must, before performing a commandment, praise God through a ברכה [*berakhah*] for having given us this commandment; and such benedictions are called ברכות המצות [*birkhot ha-mitzvot*].

II. Since everything that we enjoy comes from God, the Israelite must *before* every enjoyment praise God through a ברכה for having created this object for enjoyment, and after the enjoyment

[66] Translator: Cf. BT Berakhot 21a: "Would that a person might pray the whole day long."

again thank God through a ברכה for having given him the object to enjoy: and such benedictions are called ברכות הנהנין [*birkhot ha-nehenin*].

III. Since the whole world and all that fills it is in God's hand, the Israelite must, on seeing or hearing certain natural phenomena, such as thunder, lightning, the rainbow, the great ocean, the mighty primeval mountains, a person of outstanding beauty or of outstanding deformity, praise God through a ברכה.

IV. On seeing the returning blessing of God, such as the blossoming trees; or on seeing such persons as we regard as very special instruments of divine providence, such as crowned heads or distinguished sages; or on seeing a place where something very important, decisive for his life, befell him, the Israelite must likewise praise God through a ברכה.

V. For every important occurrence, be it good or bad; for rescue from a danger; or for protection in a situation that might have become dangerous, such as on returning from a long journey or a sea voyage, or on leaving a sickbed or a prison, the Israelite must praise God through a ברכה: and all these benedictions are called ברכות פרטיות [*berakhot peratiyyot*, "particular benedictions"].

[p. 140] **VI.** Since life is in God's hand, the Israelite must, at every enjoyment that comes only from time to time, such as a new fruit of the year; on putting on a new garment; on seeing again, after a long time, a person dear to him; or at the arrival of a festival, praise God through a ברכה for having let him live to this time; and this benediction is called ברכת שהחיינו [*birkat she-heheyanu*].

24. *What else belongs to domestic devotion?*

To domestic devotion further belongs diligent reading of Holy Scripture; protection against vice and weapons for faith and virtue are found most surely in God's rich word of life.

> "Let the book of the Law never depart from thy mouth, and thou shalt occupy thyself with it day and night, that thou mayest carefully observe all that is written therein; for then thou shalt be happy on thy ways, and then thou shalt prosper" (Josh. 1:8).

25. *How should we praise God in prayer?*

We should praise, revere and glorify God through no attribute other than those which Holy Scripture ascribes to Him.

לך דמיה תהלה

> "To Thee, O God, silence is praise" (Ps. 63:2).[67]

[67] Translator: The verse is Ps. 65:2.

26. ***What reason is given for this in the Talmud?***

The Talmud says: "Can one ever finish with the praise of God? Can a man exhaust the praise of God? Would not a king feel offended if he were given a lesser title than is his due? We may therefore ascribe to God only those attributes which He ascribes to Himself in His Holy Scripture; every addition is a detraction from His praise" (BT Berakhot 33b).

27. ***What are holy days and festivals?***

They are days which, when they are observed in a truly religious spirit, unite the members of the religious community, make them brothers, and quicken in them love and faithfulness towards God, the common Father.

[p. 141] **28.** ***With what are the festivals to be compared?***

The festivals are to be compared with family celebrations, which are meant to draw the bond of love tighter around the members of the family, and to strengthen further their attachment to the common head of the family.

29. ***How are the festivals divided?***

The festivals, apart from the Sabbath, which has a world-historical significance, are divided into *full festivals*, on which business and the day's work are also to rest, and *half-festivals*, on which work and business need not rest.

30. ***How else are the festivals divided?***

The festivals are further divided into *national-historical festivals*, which are memorials of certain important events concerning the religious life of the nation; and *purely religious festivals*, which are means of sanctification for the purifying of the heart and for the quickening of a pious disposition.

31. ***Which festivals belong to the national-historical ones?***

To the national-historical festivals belong: פסח (Pesach), שבועות (Shavuot) and סכות (Sukkot) as full festivals; and חנוכה (Hanukkah) and פורים (Purim) as half-festivals; and the fast day תשעה באב (Tisha be-Av).

32. ***Which festivals belong to the purely religious festivals?***

To the purely religious festivals belong: the full festivals ראש השנה (Rosh Hashanah) and יום כפור (Day of Atonement), and the half-festivals ראשי חדשים (New Moon days).

33. ***What is the meaning of the Sabbath?***

I. Through the celebration of the Sabbath we acknowledge God and pay Him homage as Creator and Lord of the world.

"For in six days God created heaven and earth, the sea and all that is therein, and on the seventh day He rested; therefore God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it" (in the Ten Commandments of Exodus).

II. Through the celebration of the Sabbath we acknowledge God and pay Him homage as Benefactor and Protector of Israel.

[p. 142] "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Mizraim, and God, thy Lord, brought thee out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore God commands thee to keep the day of rest" (in the Ten Commandments of Deuteronomy).

III. Through the celebration of the Sabbath we acknowledge the holy covenant which God concluded with Israel, and pay Him homage.

"And the sons of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant. Between Me and the sons of Israel it shall be a sign (of the covenant) forever" (Exod. 31:16, 17).

34. *In what does the celebration of the Sabbath consist?*

Chiefly in rest, that is, abstaining from ordinary works and labours[68]; and the celebration of the Sabbath also consists in the special prayers relating to the Sabbath; in an additional prayer מוסף [*Musaf*]; in the reading of a portion from the Torah, and in the reading of a chapter from the Prophets, namely the Haftarah.

35. *What is the meaning of the Passover festival?*

The Passover festival is in remembrance that God freed Israel from the Egyptian yoke of slavery, and is therefore called: Season of our Freedom זמן חרותנו [*zeman herutenu*]; and it is called *Pesach*, Festival of Passing Over, because God, when He smote the firstborn in Mizraim, passed over the dwellings of the Israelites and spared them.

36. *How many days does the Passover festival last?*

The Passover festival begins with the night leading into the 15th of Nisan, and in Palestine lasts seven days, of which the first and last day are full festivals and the middle five days half-festivals. But for those living outside Palestine the Passover festival consists of eight days, of which the first two and the last two days are full festivals and the middle 4 days half-festivals [n. 91].

[p. 143] 37. *In what does the celebration of the Passover festival consist?*

In special prayers relating to the Passover festival; in an additional prayer מוסף; in the reading of a portion from the Torah and in the reading of the Haftarah; and the celebration further consists chiefly in this, that during all eight days of Passover one may neither eat leavened food nor have

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[68] In the Talmud the labours are divided into principal and derivative labours; the former are 39.

it in the house, and may eat only unleavened food; it is therefore also called: "Festival of Unleavened Bread" חג המצות [*Hag ha-Matzot*] [n. 92].

38. ***What special solemnity do we further observe at the Passover festival?***

On Passover we further observe the so-called *Seder* on the first night, and, for us outside Palestine, also on the following second night of the first days of Passover.

39. ***How is the Seder night celebrated?***

I. With unleavened bread, as a remembrance that at the exodus from Mizraim the sons of Israel left the land so quickly that they did not even have time to let their dough rise.

> "And they baked of the dough which they had brought out of Mizraim unleavened cakes, for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Mizraim and could not tarry" (Exod. 12:39).

II. With bitter herbs מרור [*maror*], as a remembrance that the life of the sons of Israel was embittered by the Mizraites.

> "And they embittered their life with hard labour in clay and bricks and in all manner of labour in the field, as well as in all the labours which they imposed on them with rigour" (ibid. 1:14).

III. With four cups of wine ארבע כוסות [*arba kosot*], as a symbol that the redemption from Mizraim appears expressed in Holy Scripture in four ways.

> "Therefore say to the sons of Israel: I, God, I will *bring you forth* (והוצאתי) from under the burdens of the Mizraites, and *rescue* you (והצלתי) from their bondage, and *redeem* you (וגאלתי) with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. And I will *take* you (ולקחתי) to Me for a people" (ibid. 6:6, 7) [n. 93].

IV. With the reading of the Haggadah, in which the exodus from Mizraim is told with all the miracles that took place; and [p. 144] especially with the children one must speak about the meaning of the festival.

> "Even if we were all wise men, all men of understanding, all elders, all versed in the Torah (that is, even if we knew without this what happened in Mizraim), it would still be our duty to tell of the exodus from Mizraim" (Haggadah).

40. ***What else is to be noted about the Passover festival?***

It is further to be noted that on the 2nd day of the Passover festival the *Sefirah* ספירה begins, which consists in this, that from this day until the Feast of Weeks it is counted every evening which day of the 49 Sefirah days is beginning to pass.

וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת שבע שבתות תמימות תהיינה

> "And you shall count from the day after the rest day, — — seven full weeks shall there be" (Lev. 23:15).

41. ***What is the meaning of the Shavuot festival?***

This festival is the festival of the giving of the Law, זמן מתן תורתנו [*zeman mattan toratenu*], because on this day God revealed Himself on Sinai and gave the Torah. It is called שבועות Feast of Weeks, because seven weeks are counted from Passover until it; and it is also called חג הבכורים "Festival of First Fruits," because in the time of the Temple new fruits were offered.

42. ***Of how many days does the Shavuot festival consist?***

The Shavuot festival begins on the night leading into the 6th of Sivan and in Palestine lasts only one day, but we outside Palestine celebrate it for two days with special prayers, Musaf prayers, and the reading of the Torah and the Haftarah.

43. ***Why is the Feast of Weeks connected with the Passover festival through the Sefirah?***

Because both are festivals of liberation; on Passover we were freed from *bodily* bondage, and on the Shavuot festival, through the revelation of God, the fetters of error, idolatry and superstition were broken [n. 93/2].[69]

[p. 145] **44.** ***What is the meaning of the Sukkot festival?***

It is a national-historical festival, in remembrance that God let the sons of Israel dwell in booths in the wilderness, and is therefore called: "Feast of Booths" חג הסכות. It is further called: "Feast of Ingathering" חג האסיף, after the harvest brought in, of the fruits of the trees and of the wine; and as such it is also called "Season of Joy" זמן שמחתנו [*zeman simhatenu*].

45. ***Of how many days does the Sukkot festival consist?***

This festival consists of two distinct festivals: the Sukkot festival proper, which begins on the night leading into the 15th of Tishri and lasts *for us* seven days, of which the first two days are full festivals and the remaining five days half-festivals. Then of the Closing Festival שמיני עצרת [*Shemini Atzeret*], which *for us* lasts a further two days and is a full festival. The last of these days, that is, the 9th day of the whole festival, is also called: "Rejoicing of the Torah" שמחת תורה [*Simhat Torah*], because on this day the last portion of the Torah is read, and thus the Torah is completed.

46. ***In what does the celebration of the Sukkot festival consist?***

Besides the celebration as at every other festival, namely festival rest, special prayers, the Musaf prayer, and the reading of the Torah and Haftarah, the Sukkot festival has in addition the special observance that during the seven days of this festival one is to dwell in leafy booths, and that during prayer the four "kinds" are used: אתרוג (etrog), לולב (palm branch), הדס (myrtle) and ערבות (brook willows).

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[69] Translator: The reference is printed thus, as a superscript "93/2"; it evidently denotes an endnote inserted after no. 93 (perhaps "93½" or "93b").

47. ***What symbolism do our Sages give to these four "kinds"?***

I. The etrog is a fruit which has fragrance and taste, and is thus the symbol of those people who have merit in deeds and knowledge in learning [n. 94].

II. The palm bears fruits which have taste but no fragrance, and is the symbol of those people who have merit in deeds but no knowledge in learning.

[p. 146] **III.** The myrtle has fragrance but bears no tasty fruits, and is the symbol of those people who have knowledge in learning indeed, but no merit in deeds.

IV. The brook willow has neither fragrance nor taste, and is the symbol of those ordinary people who have neither merit in deeds nor knowledge in learning [n. 95].

V. All four "kinds" form *one* bundle in divine worship; a lesson that *all* fellows should unite together to serve God, and that God does not despise even the prayer of the lowliest (Midrash).

48. ***What took place at these three festivals in ancient times?***

As long as the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the Jews from all over Palestine went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the festival there in common and to bring the two festival offerings.

שלש פעמים בשנה יראה כל זכורך אל פני האדן ה׳

> "Three times in the year let every male appear with thee before the face of the Lord, before God" (Exod. 23:17).

49. ***What was the purpose of these gatherings in Jerusalem?***

I. Through this glorification of the festal joys, people from the most diverse regions drew closer to one another, exchanged their ideas and formed ties.

II. At these assemblies public conditions and affairs were discussed and deliberated, and improvements were resolved upon and carried out.

III. At such assemblies the holy Law was read, and the prophets spoke and instructed the people about God and His holy teaching; and, according to the precept of tradition, even now at every festival there should be an instruction about the festival, its meaning and its customs.

50. ***Of how many days does the Hanukkah half-festival consist?***

The Hanukkah half-festival begins on the night leading into the 25th of Kislev and lasts eight full days.

[p. 147] **51.** ***What is the meaning of this half-festival?***

It is in remembrance of the victory of the Maccabees over the superior might of Antiochus. The Maccabees, inspired by zeal for the faith, conquered the mighty armies of Antiochus Epiphanes

with a feeble little band of believers; and they instituted the Hanukkah half-festival as an eternal memorial.

52. ***What does post-biblical history relate about this?***

In the time of the Second Temple Palestine came under the dominion of the Syrian kings. Antiochus Epiphanes, one of these kings, wished to suppress the Mosaic religion and introduce Greek idolatry in its place.

53. ***What did Antiochus do to accomplish this?***

He had the image of Jupiter set up in the Temple at Jerusalem, desecrated Temple and altar, set the death penalty on the observance of Mosaic commandments, and compelled the Jewish people by cruel tortures to serve his idols.

54. ***And how was this wicked plan thwarted?***

The high priest Mattathias and his sons, who were called Hasmoneans and also Maccabees, succeeded in gathering round them a small band of fugitives. With these few who were faithful to God they attacked the mighty power of their oppressors, and God gave victory to the weak against the strong, to the few against the many.

55. ***And what did the Maccabees then do?***

The Maccabees purified the Temple desecrated by Antiochus and consecrated it anew, and therefore named the half-festival "Hanukkah," which means "*Dedication*."

56. ***Of what does the celebration of this half-festival consist?***

That על הנסים [*Al ha-Nissim*] is inserted in the שמונה עשרה [*Shemoneh Esreh*] prayer; that during all eight days the "Hallel" is said; that each day a part of the portion on the dedication of the altar חנכת המזבח [*hanukkat ha-mizbeah*] is read; and that on the eight nights, both [p. 148] in the house of God and in the homes, lights are kindled in ascending number.

57. ***Why are lights kindled?***

Tradition relates: "When the Maccabees rededicated the Temple, only a single little jug of oil was found which had not been defiled. This, however, was sufficient for only a single day; but a miracle happened, that this little oil burned during all the eight days and nights of the rededication: and in order to keep this event in eternal remembrance, the Hanukkah lights are kindled."

58. ***What is the meaning of the Purim half-festival?***

The Purim half-festival is in remembrance of the wondrous deliverance of Israel in the times of *Mordecai* and *Esther*.

59. ***What does sacred history tell us about this?***

Sacred history relates: *Haman*, the most vindictive enemy of the Jews, slandered the Jews before *Ahasuerus*, the king of Persia and Media, and obtained a royal decree that all the Jews throughout the whole kingdom should be murdered.

60. ***How did God thwart this wicked plan?***

God brought the wickedness of *Haman* down upon his own head. *Esther*, a niece of Mordecai, who had already earlier been raised to be queen, obtained from the king that the bloody decree against the Jews was revoked, *Haman* hanged, and *Mordecai* installed in the highest power, after the king, in the whole kingdom.[70]

61. ***How long does the Purim half-festival last?***

The Purim half-festival lasts only one day, namely, for us the 14th, and for the inhabitants of the cities of Palestine and of the then royal residence Shushan, the 15th of Adar [n. 96].

62. ***In what does the celebration of this half-festival consist?***

It is celebrated by the inserted prayer על הנסים; the reading of a portion from the Torah and the reading [p. 149] of the Megillah, consisting of the Book of "Esther"; but chiefly the day of Purim is celebrated as a day of joy and by charitable gifts to the poor.

לעשות אותם ימי משתה ושמחה ומשלוח מנות איש לרעהו ומתנות לאבינים

> "That they should keep them — the days of Purim — as days of feasting and of joy, and of sending gifts one to another, and presents to the needy" (Esth. 9:22).

63. ***What is connected with the Purim half-festival?***

Connected with the Purim half-festival is the *Fast of Esther*, which falls on the 13th of Adar, in remembrance that Queen *Esther* had commanded three days of fasting and prayer, that God might let her find favour in the eyes of King *Ahasuerus*.

64. ***What is the meaning of*** תשעה באב ***[*****Tisha be-Av*****]?***

The ninth of Av is a day of mourning and fasting, because on this day Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jewish kingdom brought to ruin.

65. ***What is attached to this day of mourning?***

I. The tenth of Tevet עשרה בטבת, a fast day, because on this day the siege of Jerusalem began.

II. The seventeenth of Tammuz שבעה עשר בתמוז, a fast day, because on this day the storming of Jerusalem began.

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[70] Translator: In the biblical account (Esth. 2:7) Esther is Mordecai's cousin, the daughter of his uncle.

III. The Fast of Gedaliah צום גדליהו, on the third of Tishri; because on this day *Gedaliah*, son of Ahikam, whom King Nebuchadnezzar left as governor in Palestine, was murdered, whereupon the remnant of the Israelite people still left had to flee the land.

66. ***Why are these fast days enumerated among the festivals?***

Because these fast days will one day be changed into festivals, namely in the future time of Israel's re-exaltation and re-redemption.

> [p. 150] "Thus says the God of hosts: The fast of the fourth (תמוז) and the fast of the fifth (אב) and the fast of the seventh (תשרי) and the fast of the tenth month (טבת) shall become to the house of Judah joy and gladness and cheerful feasts: 'Only love truth and peace'" (Zech. 8:19).

67. ***What is the meaning of the Rosh Hashanah festival?***

According to the words of Holy Scripture it is a day of blowing the alarm יום תרועה [*yom teru'ah*], and it is called ראש השנה because it is the Jewish New Year's festival. Finally this festival is called: "Day of Remembrance" יום הזכרון [*yom ha-zikkaron*], because the providence of God remembers us; and therefore the Israelite in turn should on this day remember his duties, reflect on his past and form pious resolutions for his future.

68. ***How long does the Rosh Hashanah festival last, and in what does its celebration consist?***

The Rosh Hashanah festival begins with the night leading into the 1st of Tishri, and is celebrated everywhere, in Palestine too, for two days, by abstention from work, special festival prayers, reading of the Torah and Haftarah, and further by the blowing of the shofar.

69. ***What is connected with the Rosh Hashanah festival?***

Connected with the Rosh Hashanah festival are the New Moon days ראשי חדשים. Just as the New Year's day is celebrated as a full festival, so every New Moon day is celebrated as a half-festival, with the Hallel and Musaf prayers and the reading of a portion from the Torah.

70. ***What is the meaning of the Yom Kippur festival?***

The Yom Kippur festival lasts only *one* day with its preceding night, the 10th of Tishri, but it is the holiest day in the year, the supreme day of rest שבת שבתון [*shabbat shabbaton*] and a Day of Atonement יום הכפורים [*Yom ha-Kippurim*].

71. ***Why is the Day of Atonement called the holiest day in the year?***

Because there is no other day in the year on which both all work and all enjoyment are forbidden; whereby [p. 151] on this day a person can and must devote himself to the holy in every respect.

72. ***What is the purpose of the Day of Atonement?***

I. The Day of Atonement is to release us from the burden of sins, cleanse and purify our soul, improve our heart, and thereby gain for us the grace of God.

כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני ה׳ תטהרו

> "For on this day He will atone for you, cleanse you from all your sins; before God you shall be clean" (Lev. 16:30).

II. The Day of Atonement is to uplift our spirit, and also to calm the sinner and protect him from despair and self-abandonment, and teach him that forgiveness is with God, and that he must therefore revere God [n. 97].

כי עמך הסליחה למען תורא

> "If Thou, O God, shouldst keep sins, who could stand? But with Thee is forgiveness, therefore Thou shalt be feared" (Ps. 130:3, 4).

73. ***Who needs atonement?***

Every person needs atonement; there is no one, however learned and however pious he may be, who could do without God's forgiveness of sins. Even Moses, the man of God, had sinned at the waters of strife (Num. 20:12).

> "Who can say: I have purified my heart, I am wholly clean of sins?" (Prov. 20:9).

74. ***To whom is atonement granted?***

Atonement is granted to every person; God in His infinite grace and mercy is ready to forgive even the greatest sinner, if he returns to Him in repentance.

החפץ אחפץ מות רשע נאם ה׳ אלהים הלוא בשובו מדרכיו וחיה

> "Do I then desire the death of the sinner? says God, the Lord; only that he turn from his ways, and live" (Ezek. 18:23).

[p. 152] **75.** ***In what does the celebration of the Day of Atonement consist?***

In special festival prayers, with yet a 5th prayer נעילה [*Ne'ilah*]; the reading of the Torah and Haftarah; abstention from all labour and from every bodily enjoyment; and the extension of devotion over the whole day.

76. ***Does the Day of Atonement atone for all sins?***

I. The Day of Atonement atones only for the sins that a person has committed against God alone; but sins that a person commits against other people can be atoned for by the Day of Atonement only if they have previously been made good as far as possible (Orach Chayim 606).

II. The Day of Atonement does not atone for such sins as have been committed, so to speak, on its account; that is, when a person sins because he thinks the Day of Atonement will after all atone for the sins (BT Yoma 87a).[71]

77. *Are sins atoned for by the Day of Atonement alone?*

The Day of Atonement alone cannot bring about the reconciliation of the sinner with God; rather, the person himself must raise himself up to God through amendment.

רחצו הזכו הסירו רע מעלליכם מנגד עיני חדלו הרע

> "Wash yourselves, purify yourselves, put away your evil deeds from before My eyes, cease to do evil" (Isa. 1:16).

78. *What, then, belongs to reconciliation with God?*

To reconciliation with God belong chiefly three things: תשובה [*teshuvah*], that is, contrition, recognition and conversion; תפלה [*tefillah*], prayer, that is, confession of sins and promise of amendment before God; and צדקה [*tzedakah*], charity.

79. *What does conversion mean?*

Through sins a person distances himself from God, and through contrition and amendment he returns to God again.

> "Let the wicked forsake his way and the man of iniquity his thoughts, *and let him return to God*, that He may have mercy on him, to our Lord, who forgives abundantly" (Isa. 55:7).

[p. 153] ### 80. *And what is necessary for conversion?*

I. Contrition, that is, recognition of one's own guilt, shame and blushing at oneself; and a person can arrive at this only through self-examination.

נחפשה דרכינו ונחקרה ונשובה עד ה׳

> "Let us test our ways and search them, and return to God" (Lam. 3:40).

II. An open confession to oneself; a person must not gloss over his sin to himself, but must feel a true contrition of spirit that he has debased himself through sin, made himself guilty of ingratitude towards God, and incurred His displeasure.

> "He who conceals his misdeeds — from his own conscience — [n. 98] cannot be happy; but he who confesses — to himself — and forsakes them obtains mercy" (Prov. 28:13).

III. A complete change of heart. "If a person does not form the firm resolve from now on to sin no more, he has not cast off his sins, and his contrition and repentance are then like one who washes

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[71] Translator: The rule that the Day of Atonement does not atone for one who sins relying on it is Mishnah Yoma 8:9 (BT Yoma 85b); BT Yoma 87a deals with sins between man and man.

and cleanses himself but does not let the object of uncleanness out of his hand" (Maim. Hilkhot Teshuvah 2:3). A person cannot put on festive garments as long as he does not lay aside the unclean garments.

> "And the angel began and called to those who stood before him, saying: Take the filthy garments off him; and to him — to the priest Joshua — he said: Behold, I have taken thy sins from thee, now put on festive garments" (Zech. 3:4).

IV. A complete making good of what has been done, as far as it can be made good; for contrition cannot possibly be complete if one does not strive to make good again, as far as possible, the wrong committed (see Maim. Hilkhot Teshuvah 2:2, 9).

81. *What effect has prayer in repentance?*

I. Prayer is the sincere longing to regain the grace of God and the nearness of God lost through sin.

[p. 154]

קחו עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה׳

> "Take words — prayers — with you and return to God" (Hos. 14:3).

II. Prayer lifts our spirit, which through sin has fallen away from God, up to God again.

שובה ישראל עד ה׳ אלהיך כי כשלת בעונך

> "O return, Israel, unto God, thy Lord — that is, raise thyself up to Him again — for thou hast sunk through thy sin" (ibid. 14:2).

III. Prayer takes the place of the sacrifices; it cleanses and purifies the soul which has been stained by sin.

אמרו אליו כל תשא עון וקח טוב ונשלמה פרים שפתינו

> "Say to Him: Forgive us all our guilt and accept it graciously, that we replace the bullocks with our lips" (ibid. 14:3).

IV. Prayer rouses our strength for good, strengthens us and grants us perseverance; as our Sages say: "He who comes to purify himself is helped from Heaven to do so."[72]

רצון יראיו יעשה ואת שועתם ישמע ויושיעם

> "The will of those who revere Him He performs, and their cry He hears and helps them" (Ps. 145:19).

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[72] Translator: BT Shabbat 104a; Yoma 38b.

82. ***What effect has charity in repentance?***

I. Works of charity are the most suitable means of reconciling God and men with us.

> "Therefore — may my counsel be pleasing to thee, that thou atone for thy sins by beneficence, and for thy transgression by mercy towards the unfortunate; then shall thy welfare be of long duration" (Dan. 4:24).

II. Charity softens again the heart and mind hardened by sin, and makes them receptive to all that is good and noble; and therefore it must not be lacking in repentance.

> "Should this be a fast that I delight in, a day when a man afflicts his soul? When he bows his head like a reed and makes his bed on sackcloth and ashes? Dost thou call this a fast, a day pleasing to God? Behold, this is a fast that I delight in; — — break thy bread to the hungry and bring the sighing poor into thy house; when thou seest one naked, clothe him, and from him who is thine own flesh do not [p. 155] withdraw. Then shall thy light break forth like the dawn" (Isa. 58:5–8).

83. ***What is connected with the Day of Atonement?***

Connected with the Day of Atonement are further the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which days together are called: עשרת ימי התשובה "The Ten Days of Repentance."

84. ***Are only these days, then, suitable for repentance?***

Every day in life is suitable for repentance; but in order that every person be reminded of repentance, the ten days of repentance in particular have been instituted, with the important and meaningful closing day יום כפור.

> "For repentance and the prayer connected with it every day is suitable; but the ten days of repentance are the most suitable for it; and the Day of Atonement is a public day of repentance for the whole community of Israel" (Maim. Hilkhot Teshuvah 2:6, 7).

85. ***What follows from this?***

From this it follows that a person should never put off the work of repentance. He should not let guilt stay overnight with him, and should not lie down without confessing his sins before God and pleading for atonement. Every day he should examine his conduct of life, raise his spirit again to God with sincere contrition, and do everything that is necessary for repentance.

שוב יום אחד לפני מיתתך

> "Repent one day before thy death (Avot 2:10); but since thou canst not know which day this is, repent every day, for perhaps tomorrow is the day of thy death. Say not: When I have time and leisure I shall do it, for perhaps thou wilt have no time and leisure" (ibid. 2:4).[73]

86. ***What noteworthy days have we besides the full and half-festivals?***

There are also several days of remembrance, which, however, are marked by nothing at all except that on such days the supplication prayer תחנון [*Tahanun*] is not said.

87. ***How many commandments and prohibitions does Holy Scripture contain?***

[p. 156] In Holy Scripture 248 commandments and 365 prohibitions are pronounced. But some of them have had to cease for the time being since the destruction of the Temple.

88. ***Of what must we hold ourselves convinced regarding the commandments and prohibitions?***

We must hold ourselves convinced that everything which God commands is salutary for our soul, and everything which He forbids is harmful to our soul, even if we do not comprehend the reason and cause; for God surely knows infinitely more than man. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9).

89. ***How are the statutory commandments divided?***

Into commandments for *certain times*, מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא "a commandment occasioned by time," as for example matzah, lulav and the like; and into commandments for *all times* מצות עשה שאין הזמן גרמא "a commandment not occasioned by time," such as prayer, mezuzah and the like.

90. ***What principles must we take to heart in performing the commandments of God?***

I. In performing a commandment of God which reminds us of God, we should call to mind our relationship to God and thereby always keep the religious disposition awake within us.

II. The performance of a commandment of God should be done joyfully, and not with negligence, reluctance or in such a way that it can be seen that the performance is a burden to the one carrying it out.

> "And when you offer the blind for sacrifice, is that not evil? and when you offer the lame and sick, is that not evil? — says the God of hosts" (Mal. 1:8).

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[73] Translator: The explanation following the first sentence is that of BT Shabbat 153a (cf. Avot de-Rabbi Natan 15); the last sentence is Avot 2:4 ("Say not: When I have leisure I shall study"), here applied to repentance.

III. The performance of a commandment of God must never come about through a wrong, מצוה הבאה בעברה [*mitzvah ha-ba'ah ba-averah*], for example, to overreach another and to perform good deeds with the money acquired through wrong, and the like.

> "You go to Bethel and transgress, to Gilgal to multiply [p. 157] transgression, and then you bring your sacrifices in the morning. — You burn thank-offerings of your extortions, and call such things freewill gifts and boast of them; for so you love it, sons of Israel, says God, the Lord" (Amos 4:4, 5).

91. ***What is sin?***

Every transgression of a divine prohibition, or every neglect of a divine commandment, is sin; and this is imputed to the person, for he is the free author of his deeds.

> "Truly! if thou wilt be good, thou canst lift thyself up, and if thou wilt not be good, sin lies in wait at the door. Its desire is towards thee, but thou canst rule over it" (Gen. 4:7).

92. ***Whence does sin arise?***

When a person does not have the strength to master his sensual desire, but lets it master him, he falls into sins.

איזה גבור הכובש את יצרו

> "Who, then, is to be called strong? He who masters and subdues his own heart's impulse" (Avot 4:1).

93. ***What are the consequences of sin?***

I. Every sin weakens our moral strength, and a person comes through small sins to greater ones.

עברה גוררת עברה

> "One sin draws another after it" (ibid. 1:2).[74]

II. Sins are the snares of a person, through which he forfeits the good pleasure of God and the respect of better people.

בפשע איש רע מוקש

> "In the wicked man's wickedness lies his snare" (Prov. 29:6).

III. The evil consequences of sin never fail to come; the inner peace of conscience is disturbed; sin prepares a tormenting agony for the hour of death; and the actual punishment does not fail to come either, and even if it is not always visible here below, it follows quite certainly in the world to come.

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[74] Translator: The saying is Avot 4:2.

זורע עולה יקצור און

"He who sows wrong shall reap misery; the rod of the wicked destroys himself" (ibid. 22:8).

[p. 158] **94.** ***Are all sins equal?***

All sins are equal in one respect, that each one needs contrition and repentance; but according to the kind of act and the magnitude of the deed they are more or less punishable; for example, the sin of commission is more punishable than the sin of omission; the deliberate more punishable than the unintentional; the one done oneself more punishable than the sin of participation, etc. (see Maim. Hilkhot Teshuvah 1:4).

95. ***What is the concluding statement of this tenth Section?***

Prayer and devotion; Bible reading and edification; festivals and holy seasons; repentance and atonement; statutes and customs are the glorious means to the glorious end which I, as an Israelite, am to attain: "And strength shall be added to strength, to appear one day before God in Zion" (Ps. 84:8).

[p. —] Conclusion

1. ***In what does our religion consist?***

Our religion consists in faith, dispositions and actions.

2. ***What does our religion teach concerning faith?***

Our religion teaches thirteen fundamental principles, which are called articles of faith, and which it is the task of every Israelite to hold true.

3. ***Why are they called articles of faith?***

Because to each of these 13 articles of faith either the whole religion or an essential part of it is attached [n. 100].

4. ***How do the 1st, 2nd, etc. articles of faith read?***

The 1st article of faith reads: God alone is the Creator and Guide of all created beings; from Him alone comes all life and being [n. 101].

The 2nd article of faith reads: God is one and unique, and there is no unity that would be even remotely like His [n. 102].

The 3rd article of faith reads: God is an incorporeal Being; He can neither be seen nor perceived by any sense, and nothing can be compared with Him, either in heaven or on earth.

The 4th article of faith reads: God was, is and will be; He is the First and also the Last, that is, God is eternal.

The 5th article of faith reads: God alone is to be worshipped; no being besides Him is worthy of worship.

The 6th article of faith reads: God has revealed Himself to inspired [p. 160] men, who are called prophets, and all the words of these prophets are true.

The 7th article of faith reads: The prophecy of Moses our teacher is true and truthful; he is the father and the greatest of all the prophets who were before him and who have come after him.

The 8th article of faith reads: The whole Torah, as we possess it, is the one that God gave through Moses our teacher.

The 9th article of faith reads: This Torah is eternally valid; it will not be exchanged by God, nor replaced by another Torah.

The 10th article of faith reads: God is all-knowing; He knows all the actions and all the thoughts of human beings.

The 11th article of faith reads: God is all-just; He rewards every good and punishes every evil.

The 12th article of faith reads: God will bring a Messiah (משיח), through whom Israel will be redeemed and exalted. And then all human beings will be enlightened, will know the true God, and will live as brothers in love and in concord [n. 103].

The 13th article of faith reads: There is no death. Earthly death is the passage to a new life, where the good and righteous go to heavenly glory, the wicked to judgment and punishment. And God will one day also revive the body and reunite it with the soul [n. 104].

5. ***What does our religion teach concerning action?***

Our religion has commandments and prohibitions as obligations toward God; commandments and prohibitions as duties owed to oneself; and commandments and prohibitions as duties toward one's fellow men.

6. ***Which commandments as obligations toward God must we particularly note?***

[p. 161] The commandments that reach into life and are chiefly suited to bind the Israelite to God and to remind him of God are the ones we must particularly note.

7. ***And which commandments are these?***

The commandments concerning circumcision; concerning prayer; concerning Zizith ציצית [fringes], Tephilin תפילין [phylacteries] and Mesusa מזוזה [doorpost scroll]; concerning the observance of the celebration of Sabbath and festivals, with the statutes and customs belonging to it.

8. ***How does the Sabbath differ from the festivals with respect to the time of their occurrence?***

The Sabbath is always the seventh day of the week, without regard to the day of the month; a festival day, however, always falls on a fixed day of the month, without regard to the day of the week.

9. ***How many months does the year have according to the provisions of our law?***

The year has twelve lunar months; and in order to bring the lunar year into line with the solar year, there are in every 19 years 7 leap years, which consist of 13 lunar months.

10. ***What is the name of the 1st, 2nd, etc. month, and what is to be noted about each?***

The 1st month is called Nissan ניסן; it has *one* New Moon day; on the night before the 15th of it the Passover festival begins, which lasts 8 days; and the whole remainder of the month consists entirely of days of remembrance.

The 2nd month is called Iyar אייר; it has *two* New Moon days; the 18th of it is a day of remembrance, ל״ג בעומר [Lag ba-Omer] [n. 105].

The 3rd month is called Sivan סיון; it has *one* New Moon day; the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th are days of remembrance, ימי הגבלה [yeme hagbalah, "days of setting bounds"]; the 6th and 7th are the Feast of Weeks; the 8th of it is a day of remembrance, אסרו חג [isru chag].

The 4th month is called Tammuz תמוז; it has *two* New Moon days; the 17th of it is a fast day, שבעה עשר בתמוז [the Seventeenth of Tammuz].

[p. 162] The 5th month is called Av אב; it has *one* New Moon day; the 9th of it is a fast day, תשעה באב [Tishah be-Av]; the 15th is a day of remembrance.

The 6th month is called Elul אלול; it has *two* New Moon days; in the last week of it the *days of repentance* begin, ימי סליחות [yeme selichot, days of penitential prayers], and the 29th, as the day of preparation ערב י״ט [eve of the festival], is a day of remembrance.

The 7th month is called Tishri תשרי; the 1st and 2nd are festival days, ראש השנה [Rosh Hashanah]; the 3rd is a fast day, צום גדליה [the Fast of Gedaliah]; until the 9th are days of repentance, ימי תשובה [yeme teshuvah]; the 9th, as the day of preparation ע״ט [eve of the festival], is a day of remembrance; on the 10th is the Day of Atonement; from the 11th to the 14th are days of remembrance; on the 15th the Feast of Tabernacles begins, which lasts 9 days; on the 24th is a day of remembrance, אסרו חג [isru chag].

The 8th month is called Marcheshvan, also abbreviated Cheshvan חשון; it has *two* New Moon days.

The 9th month is called Kislev כסליו; it has sometimes *one*, sometimes *two* New Moon days; on the 25th of it the half-festival of Chanukah begins, which lasts 8 days.

The 10th month is called Tevet טבת; it has sometimes *one*, sometimes *two* New Moon days; on the 10th of it is a fast day, עשרה בטבת [the Tenth of Tevet].

The 11th month is called Shevat שבט; it has *one* New Moon day; the 15th of it is a day of remembrance and is called "New Year's Day of the Fruit Trees".

The 12th month is called Adar אדר; it has *two* New Moon days; the 13th of it is a fast day, תענית אסתר [the Fast of Esther]; on the 14th is the half-festival of Purim; the 15th is a day of remembrance.

The 13th month in a leap year is called Second Adar אדר שני; it has *two* New Moon days; and in a leap year the 14th and 15th of the first Adar are mere days of remembrance, and the half-festival of Purim is celebrated only on the 14th of the second Adar, and the fast day too is on the 13th of the second Adar.

[p. 163] **11.** ***Which prohibitions as obligations toward God must we particularly note?***

Likewise those prohibitions that reach into life and are special means of sanctification.

12. ***And which prohibitions are these?***

The prohibitions against partaking of any food on certain days (fast days); the prohibitions against partaking of certain foods at all times, such as of certain kinds of animals, or of certain parts of the permitted animals, such as blood, suet and the like, and of meat and milk together, בשר בחלב [basar be-chalav]; the prohibitions of certain foods on certain days, such as leavened food at Passover; and the prohibitions concerning Sabbaths and festivals, namely: not to profane them by work [n. 106].

13. ***What does religion teach about dispositions as obligations toward God?***

We are obliged toward God to *reverence*, *love*, *obedience*, *gratitude* and *trust*.

14. ***What does our religion command and forbid with respect to the duties owed to oneself?***

Our religion requires *self-respect*, *self-knowledge*, *self-estimation* and *the furthering of one's own happiness*.

15. ***What does self-respect demand?***

Self-respect demands that we not debase ourselves through baseness, servility, gluttony or needless begging, and that through diligence and activity we should always strive to preserve our independence.

16. ***What does self-knowledge demand?***

Self-knowledge demands that we often examine ourselves before God; that we listen to the judgment of experienced persons; that we put away from us frivolity, self-love and conceit; and

that we carefully flee all association with bad people and every [p. 164] occasion for sin, among which idleness especially belongs, for idleness is the beginning of all vice.

17. ***What does self-estimation demand?***

Self-estimation demands that we must not overestimate either our actions or our abilities: boasting, pride or arrogance must always remain far from us; true self-respect consists in humility. But neither may we underestimate ourselves; a person may never entirely give up self-respect and confidence in himself.

18. ***In what does the furthering of one's own happiness consist?***

The furthering of one's own happiness consists in care for the body and care for the soul.

19. ***What does care for the body demand?***

I. We must take care of our life, must never wantonly put ourselves into danger, and must avoid everything that can shorten life.

II. We must take care of our health; we may neither do nor consume anything that has a harmful effect on health, and must do everything that is conducive to health; to this belong especially moderation, activity and cleanliness, and abstaining from agitating states of mind.

III. We must take care of our temporal welfare; we must protect ourselves from poverty by devoting ourselves to a useful calling, seek to earn through industriousness, enjoy what has been earned in moderation, and must never fall into avarice; but neither let ourselves be carried away into extravagance; and we must, finally, strive to win the respect of good people through an upright and honest way of life.

20. ***What does care for the soul demand?***

I. We must seek to develop the powers of our mind purposefully and constantly to ennoble them; we must therefore from an early age strive diligently to gather useful knowledge.

[p. 165] **II.** We must strive for peace of soul; we must therefore not let ourselves be ruled by evil inclinations and desires, and must do everything with deliberation and reflection.

III. We must preserve peace of conscience; we must therefore not sin either by deeds or by words, and must take counsel with right, virtue and religion in every action.

IV. We must take care for the eternal future of our soul; we must therefore not grow weary of gathering treasures for eternity through pious and charitable works.

21. ***What does our religion command and forbid with respect to the duties toward our fellow men?***

Our religion requires *love of humanity*, *respect for humanity* and *the furthering of human happiness*.

22. ***What does love of humanity command?***

I. We must not only banish all hatred from our breast, but also seek to further the welfare of our neighbor; and every human being, without distinction of faith and of country, is our neighbor.

II. Not only must envy, grudging, malicious joy and callousness remain far from us, but we must also show love to the enemy and be ready for reconciliation at all times.

III. We must not only leave our neighbor what belongs to him and give him what is due to him, but also be charitable toward the poor and obliging toward all people.

IV. The good name and honor of our neighbor must be sacred to us; we must therefore refrain from mockery, slander, putting to shame and evil talk, and must judge every person from his best side and defend his honor as far as possible.

V. We must be compassionate toward those who suffer, nurse the sick, assist the infirm, comfort mourners, and seek to relieve all human misery as far as possible.

[p. 166] **23.** ***What does respect for humanity command?***

I. We may not slight, degrade or despise any human being, but must respect every human being as a being created in the image of God [n. 107].

II. We must be truthful toward every human being, and therefore guard against lies, falseness, hypocrisy, dishonesty and faithlessness.

III. We may not be sullen, rough or gloomy toward anyone, but must meet everyone with friendliness and courtesy; and even every act of charity we must perform with consideration and friendliness.

IV. We must cultivate gentleness toward all people, even toward enemies; anger, vindictiveness and implacability must remain far from us.

V. Respect for humanity extends also to the dead; not only may we not treat a corpse disrespectfully, but we must still show it respect by accompanying it and giving it an honorable burial.

24. ***What does the furthering of human happiness command?***

I. We must strive, as far as possible, to be obliging and helpful to every human being.

II. In all claims and in all dealings with our fellow men we must let equity prevail and always show indulgence toward their faults and weaknesses.

III. We must seek to further the welfare and the intellectual cultivation of our fellow men to the best of our powers, and in general contribute as far as possible to the good of our fellow men.

25. *Are the duties toward all fellow men of the same degree?*

The duties toward fellow men are not all of the same degree; besides the general ones, there are still higher duties toward some.

26. *Which are the higher duties?*

I. To proven friends we owe, besides the general duties, also special love, respect, sympathy and loyalty.

[p. 167] **II.** To benefactors we are also obliged to gratitude.

III. Spouses owe each other in addition tender love, respectful care, unchanging faithfulness and the most heartfelt sympathy.

IV. Parents are in addition obliged to take care of the bodily and spiritual welfare of their children; and children owe their parents in addition love, obedience, reverence, gratitude and trust.

V. Toward the aged, and also toward experienced and knowledgeable persons, one is in addition obliged to respect, modesty and helpfulness.

VI. Brothers and sisters and blood relations are in addition bound to one another in mutual love, respect, peaceableness, concord, obliging helpfulness and mutual aid in need.

VII. Servants are in addition obliged to their employers to diligent industriousness, loyalty and honesty; and employers are bound to treat their servants with consideration and humanity.

VIII. Toward the fatherland we are in addition obliged to further its welfare in every way, with all our powers; to render the most punctual obedience to its constitution and laws; and to defend it against internal and external enemies with life and property.

IX. To the ruler of the fatherland we are in addition obliged to love, reverence and punctual obedience; and we must show this especially by rendering punctual obedience to the official persons appointed by the sovereign of the land.

X. Pupils are especially obliged to render obedience and docility to their teachers, to place trust in them, and always to meet them with love and reverence.

[p. 168] **27.** ***What else does our religion make our duty?***

Religion further commands us to show forbearance and compassion toward all living creatures; we may not torment or torture any creature at all; and it also commands us a certain carefulness toward lifeless things: we may not wantonly spoil or destroy anything.

28. ***What is the closing sentence of the whole book of religion?***

It is the benediction: ברוך אתה ה׳ אלהינו מלך העולם שעשני ישראל "Blessed art Thou, O God, our Lord, King of the world, who hast made me an Israelite." Amen.

[p. —] **Notes**

1) Every passage cited should be made into a separate question for the pupil, namely, if it is from Holy Scripture: "What does Holy Scripture say about this?" and if it is from the Talmud: "What do our ancients say about this?"

2) In the earlier edition there were the following 3 paragraphs:

17. What do we call the sense of beauty?

That through which the beautiful delights us and the ugly repels us we call the *sense of beauty*.

18. And how does moral feeling differ from the sense of beauty?

The sense of beauty merely contemplates, but moral feeling *instructs* and *judges*, like conscience.

19. From what can this be recognized?

This can be recognized in that one and the same deed can often be praised and admired, and often censured and abhorred; thus, for example, we will curse a man who out of cruelty mutilates a limb of another man; but we will applaud the skilful physician who does the same in order to save a person's life.

But since these were found by the reviewers to be too lofty for a child's understanding, they were left out in the third edition, and it is left to the teacher to draw the intelligent pupil's attention to this.

It is very easy to make clear to the pupil what the sense of beauty, or "*aesthetic feeling*", is.

3) The difference between *murder* and lawful execution should also be presented to the pupil here. Moreover, the teacher has to measure such questions by the pupil's power of comprehension, and either pass over them entirely or in part.

4) It is not hard to make this vivid to the pupil through an *image*, e.g., *fire* is beneficial and indispensable when rightly used, and raging and destructive when badly used.

[p. 170] **5)** Where an answer consists of several parts, the teacher should pose a question for each part: Why 2ndly? Why 3rdly? etc.

6) The pupil should be made aware that all the stars are worlds, of their tremendous size and infinite distance, and how they all float in space without being fastened to anything.

7) Instruction about the five senses of man is the teacher's affair.

8) The pupil should be made aware of the ancient Greeks, who, despite their high culture, had an abominable worship of gods, even combined with human sacrifices.

9) It says: with your heart, that is, outward service too must be performed with the heart.

10) To these truths belong the miracles that are narrated, and the like.

11) To this belong the religious statutes and customs. Moreover, these questions too belong among those which, as above (note 3), are to be measured by the pupil's power of comprehension.

12) The pupil should already be told here what *cause* and *effect*, *ground* and *consequence*, *means* and *end* signify.

13) In the earlier edition there were the following paragraphs:

47. But can religion teach something that reason must recognize as untruth?

What reason must recognize as an untruth religion cannot teach; for since God has given man reason for thinking, it would be a contradiction if God were in turn to declare something as a truth which, by virtue of correct thinking, would necessarily have to be an untruth.

51. How is this to be explained?

Since God has given man reason in order to know, and conscience and moral feeling in order to love the good and abhor the evil, and finally free will in order to choose the good and the just and to reject the evil and the bad: it would be a contradiction if God were to command something that reason recognizes as evil and unjust, or to forbid something that reason recognizes as good and just.

But since the reviewers found these paragraphs incomprehensible for a child's understanding, they have been omitted; however, it is left to the teacher to draw the pupil's attention to this.

[p. 171] This sharp distinction between what reason merely does not comprehend and what contradicts reason is made by *Mendelssohn* in his *Jerusalem*[75], and he adds quite rightly that the Jewish religion teaches or commands nothing whatever that would be contrary to reason.

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[75]Translator: Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem, oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum* (1783).

14) See Yoreh De'ah section 268, where this is expressly taught, and that one must even dissuade from it someone who wishes to convert to Judaism.

15) See also Deut. 5:20–30.

16) If one covets the wife or the house of another without carrying the desire into action, one does not harm the other, but oneself. — —

17) Here it should be made vivid to the pupil that the better and more feeling a human heart is, the less it can bear a wrong done or hard-hearted unkindness.

18) These are the worshippers of the sun, of fire or of fetishes, and the like.

19) The pupil must be made aware here that the nations among whom we live are accordingly not idolaters. And that the Talmud says: The prohibition of idolatry belongs to the Noachide commandments, and therefore extends to all human beings; but the prohibition of making an image of God, as well as of invoking an intermediary being, issued from Sinai, and therefore extends only to the professors of Judaism (see my *Rechtslehre*[76] § 34).

20) This and similar things are taught by Hasidism.

21) With the cessation of prophecy, the prophetic dreams that are mentioned in Holy Scripture have also ceased.

22) See Yoreh De'ah 179:13.

23) Out of superstition the ancient heathens sacrificed human beings to their gods; out of superstition later nations tormented, tortured and often killed those of other beliefs. — —

24) That is the oath of the parties.

25) According to Mosaic-rabbinic law it is not necessary that the witness swear, but it is according to all the laws of the present day.

26) Vows to do this and to refrain from that create obligations that would not have existed without the vow. An oath to perform this or that for another creates a liability which the one swearing would not have had without the oath. Oaths of affirmation, however, confirm an already existing duty. (Duty means duty toward [p. 172] human beings or toward human society, and must not be confused with religious obligation), e.g., the witness swears to tell the truth, or the official to serve the state faithfully, and the like; he thereby confirms by the oath a duty that is incumbent upon him even without the oath, and the like. For the rest, this important subject is treated more closely and at greater length in my *Tugendlehre* § 32 and in the work composed by me, *Das mosaisch-rabbinische Civilrecht*, § 1336.

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[76]Translator: Fassel's *Rechtslehre* and *Tugendlehre*, cited repeatedly below, are his works on Mosaic-rabbinic law and on Mosaic-rabbinic ethics (*Tugend- und Rechtslehre*).

27) One is not obliged to say to an ugly person that he is ugly, but one may not say that he is beautiful, and the like.

28) This is quite rightly called קידוש השם [kiddush ha-shem, sanctification of the Name] in the Talmud.

29) The pupil should be made aware that there is not and has not been any people that does not or did not keep one day in seven as a day of rest. This agreement of all human beings points to a primeval revelation. —

The whole idea of the Sabbath might also be explained to the pupil: 1. namely, the Sabbath of days, that is, the 7th day of the week. 2. The Sabbath of weeks, that is, the 7th week after the end of the Passover festival; this forms the Sabbath week, and its first day is a festival day. 3. The Sabbath of months, that is, the 7th month, whose first day is a festival day. 4. The Sabbath of years: the 7th year is a sabbatical year, and always begins with the first of Tishri, thus with a festival day. 5. The Sabbath of the seven sabbatical years, that is, the jubilee year, which always begins with the 10th of Tishri, with the holiest day in the year. Finally, 6. the Sabbath of the festivals. There are seven festival days in the year; together these form a week. The cycle begins on the first day of Sukkot, because it is written: "You shall take for yourselves *on the first day* the fruit of the tree Hadar" etc.; this shows, so the Talmud says, that this day is the first day of the festival week; the eighth day of Sukkot is the second, the first and seventh days of Passover are the third and fourth, Shavuot the fifth, Rosh Ha-[77] the sixth; accordingly the Day of Atonement is the Sabbath of the festivals.

30) Through clothing, food, etc. As the Talmud says, one should not wear the same clothes on the Sabbath as on weekdays; "the Sabbath dishes should be better," etc.

31) That is the image the ancients use for the נשמה יתרה [neshamah yeterah, the "additional soul"].

32) Our ancients say: It is written: "You shall kindle no fire on the day of rest"; you shall not use the rest in order to kindle the fire of strife.

33) The closer meaning of the Sabbath and the festivals is treated in the 10th Section.

[p. 173] **34)** The pupil should be made aware that man in his childhood is the most helpless of all creatures, and that the child would therefore have to perish without the care of its parents.

35) Parents may well renounce gratitude or positive reverence, but they cannot permit the children to injure them or hold them in low esteem (see Yoreh De'ah sections 240, 241).

36) Since punishment is due for the violation of a duty, no reward can by right be due for the fulfilment of the duty.

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[77] Translator: so printed at a line break ("Rosch-Ha- / der sechste"); "Rosh Hashanah" is evidently meant.

37) Hence the prescribed benediction when one sees the ruler of the fatherland. (See my *Tugendlehre* § 36.)

38) Immediate, actual murder needs no explanation.

39) In the Orient the roofs are flat.

40) This is an indirect murder by deed, for he made the place dangerous by building the house.

41) According to the interpretation of the Talmud.

42) One can improve oneself; but how will the seducer improve those whom he has led astray?

43) According to the interpretation of the Talmud.

44) Deception is called in the Talmud גניבת דעת [genevat da'at], "stealing of the mind."

45) Whoever sins against human beings sins against God.

46) Every duty must be matched by a right.

47) The more the miser obtains, the more he wants; he therefore always lacks more.

48) See my *Tugendlehre* § 3: that rabbinic Judaism indeed upholds the principle of practicing virtue for the sake of virtue itself, but nevertheless does not entirely reject the שלא לשמה [she-lo lishmah, not for its own sake] (eudaemonism); in particular, what the rabbinic doctrine of virtue declares cannot be demanded of the young: "Serve God without any thought of reward."

49) Earned wages for the lowliest work are more honorable than shaming support from others.

50) צדקה [tzedakah] means both "justice" and "virtue."

51) There is a mathematical truth, which is proven by arithmetical proofs, a metaphysical truth, which is proven by logical proofs, a physical truth, which is proven by empirical proofs, and finally a historical truth.

52) Ignorance and savagery are desert and wilderness.

[p. 174] **53)** This is put in place of the actual name, שם המפורש [shem ha-meforash, the explicit Name], which name the Jew may not pronounce.

54) This is also why God could command Abraham to sacrifice his only son. — — — — —

55) With male pupils, the covenant sign of circumcision is spoken of here.

56) Through this we understand that God said to Moses: "And this shall be the sign to you that I have sent you: when you have brought this people out of Mizraim, you shall serve God upon this mountain" (Exod. 3:12). You shall therefore recognize that the oppression in Mizraim was the

preparation for serving God upon this mountain (Sinai), and you will be convinced that I will be with you to complete the great work. — —

57) Already of Abraham God said: "He is a prophet" (Gen. 20:7).

58) On this verse the Talmud remarks: "Hail to the one born of woman who was certain at all times that God would reveal Himself to him." (See Rashi, ibid.)

59) The Talmudists say: "Moses saw the appearance of God" (the reflection of the divine revelations) "in a luminous mirror" (*ispaklurya*, specularia); "the other prophets in a dark mirror." — —

60) "Note this important principle: all divine commandments and prohibitions were given by God through Moses, but not through any earlier or later prophet. And even circumcision, which God commanded Abraham, would not have for us the dignity of a *divine* commandment had God not had it commanded to us through Moses." (Maim., Mishnah Commentary on Chullin, ch. 7.)

61) I have followed the arrangement of the Talmud (see BT Bava Batra 14b); for it cannot be stated precisely why the 5 books of Moses are counted as 5 and the 2 books of Samuel, of Kings and of Chronicles each only as 1 book. Why the twelve prophets are reckoned as 1 book and the 5 Megillot as 5 books? Why Daniel forms one book by itself, and Ezra and Nehemiah together one book? When we therefore say that Holy Scripture contains 24 books, we say it only after the Talmud; therefore we must also in turn follow the arrangement and division of the Talmud.

62) Very many times the Talmud says: Whoever does not follow the words of the sages transgresses the divine prohibition לא תסור, "*You shall not turn aside*," etc.

[p. 175] **63)** The Jew must rather let himself be killed than do something that shows that he denies the principles of the faith, *even if it were only the change of a shoe-strap* (see Yoreh De'ah 157:1).

64) In the Talmud (BT Bava Kamma 60b) the question "May a person save his own life with the property of another?" is answered in the negative. But even if it remained answered doubtfully or even affirmatively, it would still be true that the religious law of right is unchangeable; for it would first be a question whether it is called a violation of right if I save a life hovering in danger with property, which can after all be restored. — — (See also on this my *Tugendlehre* § 16.)

65) The Jew must rather let himself be killed than violate a law of virtue and of moral purity. (See Yoreh De'ah 157:1.)

66) Our ancients say: "Every teacher is obliged to teach publicly and in the schools that one may violate any ceremonial law if one can thereby save even a single human being, even from a doubtful danger to life." (See Orach Chayim section 328, M. A. [Magen Avraham] note 1.) Here too the pupil should be made aware that religion stands higher than love of parents, and thus also than love of the fatherland; and should its government ever *directly* command the transgression of

a divine prohibition, the Jew could not obey the order. But where the defense of the fatherland demands it, he may and must go to war even on the Sabbath, and the like.

67) Formula of the benediction upon seeing a sage.

68) However many times the people of Israel were led astray into idolatry, we nevertheless do not find that they worshipped great men who had died, and this is owing to the circumstance mentioned here. If the very greatest man could not be idolatrously venerated at his grave, then such could not happen to other men either. —

69) For all the attributes of God we can find likenesses, weak ones to be sure, but likenesses nonetheless; but for the unity of God no likeness is conceivable.

69/2) Here the teacher has the opportunity to explain to intelligent pupils what proofs *a priori* and proofs *a posteriori* are.

69/3) The difference between reigning and being King is pregnantly expressed in this prayer. "He reigned before anything was yet created," because He is almighty. But He was called King only after everything had [p. 176] been created. And when everything perishes again, "He will reign alone." — —

70) In verse 6 of chapter 30 of the Psalms, the *regina* [disjunctive accent] of ברצונו still belongs to the following clause, and the verse would be translated: "For in the moment of His anger there is yet life. If He wills, weeping still lodges in the evening, and in the morning already rejoicing enters." In general there are quite a few verses where one and the same word is taken both with the earlier and with the later clause.

71) How defenseless and helpless is the body of man, and yet how strong he is through the spiritual weapon that God has given him.

72) Goodness without justice is weakness; justice without goodness often leads to harshness. —

73) Human reason can only infer from the known to the unknown, and according to experience things arise in only four ways: by chance, by growth, by generation and by art; and these were also the systems for the creation of the world. *Epicurus* had it arise by chance; the Brahmins had it grow out of the lily of Brahma; the Greeks had it born from Leda's egg; and even the greatest Greek sage, *Aristo*[78], had it formed out of chaos by a god. Only revelation has taught that God created the world out of nothing.

74) In this all the earlier philosophers of the Jews agree: that on the 1st day the whole world was created in its primal matter, and that on the following days each thing was merely brought "from potentiality into actuality, מכח אל הפועל"; and therefore the first day of creation is called יום אחד

[78]Translator: so printed, presumably for Aristotle (Aristoteles); the shaping of the world out of chaos by a divine craftsman is, however, rather Plato's doctrine (*Timaeus*).

[yom echad, "one day"] and not יום ראשון [yom rishon, "first day"], because it was the one distinguished day among all.

75) Each day can form a separate question by itself. — —

76) Such as the petrified sea creatures in the interior of the mountains, the bones of primeval animals, and the like.

77) Maimonides too teaches this in the *Moreh Nevukhim* (Part 1, ch. 49 and Part 2, ch. ff.)[79].

78) Some passages of Holy Scripture, and especially of the Talmud, from which one might infer that there are intercessors, guardian angels and the like, are likewise only images, like the sensuous expressions about God. Thus, e.g., it says: "If there is then an angel as intercessor for him, one among a thousand, then God has mercy on him and says: Deliver him from going down to destruction" (Job 33:23, 24). And yet this interceding angel means nothing other than "a good deed," which is his intercessor. [p. 177] Thus it says in the Talmud in explanation of this passage: "If a man has intercessors, he is saved. The greatest intercessors of man are: repentance and good works. And if 999 — of his deeds and works — speak against him, and one in his favor, he is saved, for it is written: 'If there is an angel as intercessor among a thousand.' Rabbi Eliezer says: Even if in the intercessor itself 999 parts speak against him and only one part in his favor, he is saved as well" (BT Shabbat 32a). That is to say: if in the deed that becomes his interceding angel there were 999 ulterior motives, if there was only one good intention in it, the All-Good accepts it too as an intercessor. Let what I say in my work *Die zehn Worte des Bundes*, page 125, in a scholium, also find its place here: — Those prayer-pieces in which angels, seraphim or *chayyot* are invoked to be intercessors with God conflict most glaringly with the pure principles of Judaism. And since Maimonides already says: "Whoever invokes a *kokhav* [star], a *mazal* [constellation] or any other being to be an intercessor with the Lord of the world is a *min* [heretic]" (Hilchot Teshuvah 3:7), it is quite certain that such prayers do not belong to Judaism and are therefore to be removed (see Orach Chayim 68, Magen Avraham note 1). I do not say such pieces, as the יהי רצון [Yehi ratzon] between the *teki'ot* [shofar blasts], the מכניסי הרחמים [Makhnisei ha-rachamim] with the תחינה [supplication] connected with it, the interpolated pieces in the קדושה [Kedushah] of ראש השנה [Rosh Hashanah], and the like. To the 1st strophe of the *pizmon* מלאכי הרחמים [Malakhei ha-rachamim] I have given the following formula: מלך הרחמים אל עליון אחלה נא את פניו במטיב הגיון אולי יחום עם עני ואביון אולי ירחם [King of mercy, God Most High, I will entreat His face with goodly words; perhaps He will have pity on a poor and needy people, perhaps He will have mercy]. Herr Markus Benedict[80], late Chief Rabbi of the Land of Moravia, זצ״ל [of blessed memory], when he led the נעילה [Ne'ilah] prayer, said the מדת הרחמים [Middat ha-rachamim] in the following

[79]Translator: the chapter number in Part 2 is missing in the print.

[80]Translator: Mordecai (Markus) Benet (1753–1829), Landesrabbiner of Moravia at Nikolsburg. The Hebrew of Benet's formula is given in standard spelling; the print shows evident misprints (מרת הדחמים, תהינתי, ובער).

manner: מדת הרחמים עלינו התגלגל ולפני קוני תחינתי אפיל ובעד עמי רחמים אשאל כי כל לבב דוי [Roll Your attribute of mercy upon us, and before my Maker I will cast down my supplication, and for my people I will ask mercy, for every heart is faint] etc., and in this form I too recite it. The *selichah* שלש עשרה מדות [Shelosh esreh middot] originally had a different wording; there the מדה נכונה [middah nekhonah] was personified, addressed in the second person and invoked to be an intercessor with God. Who altered this *selichah* and gave it its present wording is unknown to me; but certainly someone who knew how to appreciate the spirit of Judaism better than the author. Some strophes have erroneously remained in the original wording, such as נעם תבקשי עלי and בעתר אליו תדרשי or תסכים עמם במחילתך, where it was forgotten to insert the שם [Name] or נפשי [my soul]. — —[81]

But let no one object: our forefathers, too, knew what they were saying; for when the prophet inveighed against the un-Jewish custom of making images of the Queen of Heaven, his contemporaries likewise answered [p. 178] him: "We will continue to do this — to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and to pour out libations to her, as we have done until now, and our fathers, our kings and our princes" (Jer. 44:17).

79) Maimonides already says: "Of a thousand evils in the human world, 999 are ones that people often make for themselves in their own arrangements."

80) The child is unable to grasp the joys or sorrows of the grown man; how much less is man able to grasp the joys or sorrows of the soul in eternity.

81) E.g., honor and disgrace and the like: these are purely pleasures of the soul—a proof, says Maimonides, that the soul can feel joys and sorrows without the body.

82) The Talmud says something similar. It is written: "The land which I swore to your fathers to give to them"; it does not say "to give to *you*," but "to *them*"—a proof that these fathers must still live (BT Sanhedrin 90b).

83) In figurative language life is called "the angel of life," and death "the angel of death."

84) Every other love is limited, that is, it can extend only to one or to very few objects; but a father's love is unlimited: a father can love ever so many children with equal love.

85) If actual teachers were being spoken of here, such boasting would be great immodesty. But the works of nature are meant here, which are indeed the teachers of men, and there the pupil is wiser than the teacher, because he has reason and can converse with the testimony of God.

86) See Section 5, at the 10th Commandment.

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[81] Translator: the Hebrew phrases of this note are typeset inline in left-to-right German text; the order of the last three strophe incipits is given as they stand on the line.

87) The 53rd chapter of the Book of Isaiah, which begins with the end of the 52nd, should not be interpreted as referring to any single person, but speaks of the whole of Israel as the servant of God.

88) "The Messiah will reign long, but then will nevertheless die; then his son will reign, then his grandson, etc." (Maimonides, Mishnah Commentary, Sanhedrin, chapter Chelek); "and the whole purpose of the Messiah is merely to be able to prepare oneself better for the world to come" (ibid.).

89) Inner worship God demands of the Israelite as a human being; but outward worship God demands only of the Jew. — —

[p. 179] **90)** The Temple with its observances, where in particular all Israel came together three times a year, formed the outward religious bond.

91) There is no harm in telling the pupil the reason, namely that at that time they did not know how to calculate the New Moon day exactly, and therefore proclaimed the New Moon day according to the moon's becoming visible. The inhabitants outside Palestine could therefore not know exactly on which day the actual New Moon day had been proclaimed, and accordingly, because of doubt, had to celebrate this festival for two days.

92) It is sufficient that it has been said once that on the full festival days work must rest.

93) See BT Pesachim 99b, in Rashi. The teacher should also speak with the pupils about the other customs of the Seder night, such as that everything there must be eaten reclining (*heseba*), etc.

93/2) Shavuot is also called עצרת [Atzeret] for this reason—as it were, the concluding festival of Passover.

94) Each part is to be asked separately, namely: "What is the meaning of the lulav?" etc., and at the 5th part: "What, then, do all 4 kinds together symbolize?"

95) Between such people and sinners there is still a great gulf.

96) The 15th of Adar was instituted on account of Shushan for all cities that were walled in the days of Joshua.

97) If God did not forgive sins, the sinner would have nothing more to lose and would no longer need to fear God at all.

98) "A man should not confess his committed sins before other people, and it is even impudence if he does so; rather he should confess his sins before God alone, etc." (Maim., Hilchot Teshuvah 2:5).

99) Tefillin and tzitzit are counted by the Talmud among the first class of commandments, because tzitzit are not worn at night, nor tefillin on Sabbath and holy days.

100) "Ikkarim"[82] quite rightly remarks that there are actually only three principles to each of which the whole essence of religion is attached: God, revelation and immortality, together with the principle bound up with it, reward and punishment. But Maimonides also counts as fundamental articles those to which an essential part of religion is attached.

101) The existence of God cannot be counted as an article, because all religions, even the heathen ones, must acknowledge it; for if there is no God, no religion is possible.

[p. 180] **102)** Each article of faith is to be asked of the pupil separately.

103) This 12th article of faith is given here in the 3rd edition exactly as Maimonides formulates it. In Hilchot Melachim chapters 11 and 12 he discusses the coming of the Messiah and the restoration of the Palestinian kingdom, and closes the treatise with the words: "The sages and the prophets did not long for the days of the Messiah in order to rule over the whole world, to dominate the nations and to receive homage from them; nor in order to eat, drink and make merry; but only in order to occupy themselves in freedom with the Torah and with wisdom, and so to be able to prepare themselves for life in the world that is to come. In that time there will be no hunger and no war, no envy and no hatred, for good will flow forth in abundance, — — and then *the whole world* will have no other occupation than to know God, for it is written: '*The whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of God*,' etc." (See, moreover, my *Tugendlehre* § 36.)

104) This 13th article of faith, too, is given here in the 3rd edition as Maimonides and R. Abraham ben David together formulate it, according to the interpretation of the *Kesef Mishneh*. In Hilchot *Teshuvah* ch. 8 § 2 Maimonides says: "In the world that is to come there is no body and no corporeal form, but the souls of the righteous are all bodiless like the angels; therefore there is also no eating and no drinking, and in general nothing at all that the body needs." On this R. Abraham ben David writes: "Truly! The words of this man seem to mean that the bodies of men will never become alive again. But as I live! Our sages did not hold this opinion, etc." The *Kesef Mishneh* corrects this: "Our teacher Maimonides speaks of the world after death; this is called *the world that is to come*, and in that world the soul alone lives. But there is yet another *world that is to come*, and that is the world of the *revival of the dead*, and then God will also make the bodies alive again. Thus both the words of Maimonides and those of R. Abraham ben David are words of the living God." (See, moreover, my *Rechtslehre* § 44.)

105) Each month is to be asked separately. And the pupil should also be made aware that the leap month is a clear proof of an existing tradition. A leap month is not mentioned in Holy Scripture, and yet it must have existed [p. 181] from the most ancient times; for all the festivals are tied to particular seasons of the year: Passover to the time of the barley harvest, Shavuot to 50 days after the beginning of the harvest, Sukkot to the completed gathering-in of all the fruits; but if there

[82] Translator: the *Sefer ha-Ikkarim* of Joseph Albo (15th century).

were no leap month, then the 15th of Nissan or the 15th of Tishri would often fall in high summer and often in the harshest winter. —

106) Our ancients say: Concerning Sabbaths and festivals there are commandments and prohibitions, עשה ולא תעשה [positive and negative precepts]: commandments to celebrate such days, and prohibitions against profaning them by work.

107) Even in the criminal we must still respect humanity. "You shall love your fellow man as yourself": this teaches that for a criminal condemned to death one must choose an easy manner of death, and that apart from the punishment one may not shame the criminal in any way (BT Sanhedrin 45a).

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