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CATECHISM

FOR

ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION

IN THE

Hebrew Faith,

BY

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PREFACE.

ACTUAL experience having convinced me of the great want of a Catechism for elementary instruction in our Holy Faith, adapted to the capacity of little children, I have endeavored in a measure to supply this deficiency. The one which has long been used in our Sunday-schools answers very well, so far as the first two or three chapters are concerned; but after those, the answers are too lenghty, and the phraseology too difficult, for a child of tender years. It has, therefore, been my aim to simplify both questions and answers in this book, as much as possible, and to treat also on other subjects.

In the first few chapters I have given some Bible history, by way of introduction to Israel and Israel's duties, and which will serve as a preparation for those books now in use, which are adapted to children of more advanced age.

This work has not been undertaken for profit, but merely in hope of doing some good in supplying a want.

G. J.

CHAPTER I.

THE CREATION.

Q. Who created all things?

A. God.

Q. What is meant by the word *create?*

A. To make out of nothing.

Q Why, then, is God called the Creator?

A. Because he made all things out of nothing.

Q. Could any one else make anything out of nothing?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Because only God can create things.

Q. What did God create?

A. The heavens, the earth and everything.

Q. How long was God creating all these things?

A. Six days.

Q. What did God create the first day?

A. Light.

Q. What on the second?

A. The heaven above us.

Q. What on the third?

A. Trees, grass, fruit and all things that grow in the earth.

Q. What on the fourth?

A. The sun, moon and stars.

Q. What on the fifth?

A. Birds and fishes.

Q. What on the sixth?

A. Beasts and creeping things.

Q. What else did God create on the sixth day?

A. Man.

Q. Of what was man made?

A. Out of the dust of the earth.

Q. What did God create on the seventh day?

A. Nothing. He rested from his work.

Q. Was God tired that he rested?

A. No, but to show us that we must rest on the seventh day.

Q. What did God call the seventh day?

A. The Sabbath day or day of rest.

CHAPTER II.

OF MAN, ETC.

Q. Who was the first man?

A. Adam.

Q. Who was the first woman?

A. Eve.

Q. Where were they placed?

A. In the Garden of Eden.

Q. Did they always stay there?

A. No, they were driven out.

Q. Why were they driven out?

A. Because they disobeyed the command of God?

Q. What was the command they disobeyed?

A. Not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

Q. Where was this tree?

A. In the midst of the garden.

Q. Who tempted Adam to eat of the fruit?

A. His wife, Eve.

Q. Who tempted Eve?

A. The serpent.

Q. What were the names of Adam's first two sons?

A. Cain and Abel.

Q. What was Cain's occupation?

A. He tilled the ground.

Q. What kind of a man was Cain?

A. A bad man

Q What was Abel's occupation?

A. He was a keeper of sheep.

Q. What kind of a man was Abel?

A. He was a good man and feared God?

Q. What bad act did Cain do?

A. He killed his brother Abel.

Q. Why did Cain kill Abel?

A. Because he thought God cared more for Abel.

Q. How?

A. By accepting an offering Abel made to him.

Q. What is an offering to God?

A. A sacrifice or a gift from our own free will.

Q. What did Cain think of the punishment?

A. That it was greater than he could bear.

Q. What also did Cain think?

A. That all who met him would kill him.

Q. What did God do to prevent this?
A. He set a mark on Cain.
Q. Why did God set a mark on Cain?
A. That all might know him and not kill him.

CHAPTER III.

THE FLOOD.

Q. When the world was full of people were they good or wicked?
A. Very wicked.
Q. What did God do to punish them?
A. He sent a flood on the earth.
Q. What is a flood?
A. A great deal of water.
Q. Were all the people destroyed by the flood?
A. No.

Q. Who were saved?
A. Noah and his wife; and his three sons and their wives.
Q. How many persons did that make?
A. Eight.
Q. Why was Noah and his family saved?
A. Because Noah was a good man.
Q. What does this show?
A. That God will punish the wicked and reward the good.
Q. Were all living things destroyed?
A. No, all were not desrtoyed.
Q. What were saved?
A. A pair each of every living thing.
Q. Why were they saved?
A. To keep alive some of the race.
Q. How long did it rain upon the earth?
A. Forty days and forty nights.
Q. How long did the water increase on the earth?
A. One hundred and fifty days.

Q. When the flood was over, what did God promise Noah?

A. That He would no more send a flood to destroy the earth.

Q. What was the sign of this promise or covenant of God?

A. The rainbow.

Q. Were the people better after the flood?

A. No, some were very wicked.

Q. What did they do?

A. They tried to build a high tower.

Q. How high did they want to build it?

A. Till the top should reach heaven.

Q. Was it ever finished?

A. No, God did not let them finish it.

Q. What became of the people?

A. They were scattered all over the earth.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PATRIARCHS.

Q. What is the meaning of the word patriarch?

A. The chief or a head of a family.

Q. Who was our great patriarch?

A. Abraham.

Q. What is the meaning of *Abraham?*

A. Father of many nations.

Q. What race was he the chief or head of?

A. The Jewish race.

Q. Why did God choose him as the chief?

A. Because he was a good man and feared God.

Q. Did not other men fear God in those days?

A. No, they were idolators.

Q. What are idolators?

A. Persons who worship false gods.

Q. Who was Abraham's wife?

A. Sarah.

Q. The Bible mentions the names of two sons of Abraham; can you tell them to me?

A. Yes, Ishmael and Isaac.

Q. What is the meaning of *Ishmael?*

A. God will hear.

Q. What is the meaning of *Isaac?*

A. Joy or laughter.

Q. Who was the mother of Isaac?

A. Sarah.

Q. Why was his name called Isaac?

A. Because his parents were glad when God said he should be born.

Q. How did God try Abraham's faith?

A. He told him to offer up Isaac as a burnt-offering.

Q. Was he willing to obey God?

A. Yes, and he went early to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Q. Did God allow him to kill Isaac?

A. No, an angel of God stopped him

Q. When did the angel call out to him?

A. Just as he took the knife to slay Isaac.

Q. What did Abraham offer instead?

A. A ram that was caught in the bush.

Q. What was the name of Isaac's wife?

A. Rebecca.

Q. How many children had Isaac?

A. Two.

Q. What were their names?

A. Esau and Jacob.

Q. What kind of mau was Esau?

A. He was a rough man, fond of hunting.

Q. What kind of a man was Jacob?

A. He was a pious man.

Q. How many wives had Jacob?
A. Two.
Q. What were their names?
A. Leah and Rachel.
Q. How many sons had Jacob?
A. Twelve.
Q. Which was the eldest?
A. Reuben.
Q. Which was the youngest?
A. Benjamin.
Q. Which of his sons did Jacob love best?
A. Joseph.

CHAPTER V.

THE SOJOURN IN EGYPT.

Q. How was Joseph treated by his brothers?
A. Very badly; for they hated him.

Q. Why did they hate him?

A. Because he had dreamed dreams about them

Q. What did they wish to do unto Joseph?

A They wanted to kill him.

Q When was that?

A. One day when they were at Dothan.

Q. Who prevented them?

A. His eldest brother, Reuben.

Q. What was done to Joseph?

A They cast him into a pit.

Q. Did they leave him there?

A. No, they sold him soon after.

Q. To whom did they sell him?

A. To some merchants going to Egypt.

Q. What did these merchants do with him?

A. They sold him to one of Pharaoh's officers.

Q. Did Joseph remain long with Potiphar?

A. No, he was cast into prison.

Q. How was he treated in prison?

A. Very kindly, for God was with him.

Q. What caused him to be taken out of prison?

A. Pharaoh dreamed dreams which no one could explain.

Q. Who was Pharaoh?

A. King of Egypt.

Q. Did Joseph explain the dreams?

A. He did, by the help of God.

Q. What were the dreams about?

A. Seven years of plenty and seven years of famine.

Q. What is a famine?

A. A great scarcity of food.

Q. What did Pharaoh do when Joseph explained the dreams?

A. He made him ruler over Egypt.

Q. When did the seven years of famine commence?

A. After the seven years of plenty.

Q. Who were among those that went to buy corn in Egypt?

A. Joseph's brothers.

Q. Why did they go to Egypt to buy?

A. Because there was plenty of food in Egypt.

Q. Did they know Joseph?

A. They did not, but Joseph knew them.

Q. Did Joseph make himself known to his brothers?

A. Not at first, but he did so afterward.

Q. What did Joseph do after he had made himself known to his brothers?

A. He sent for his father and all his family.

Q. Did his father go?

A. He did, and lived near Joseph in the land of Goshen.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

Q. Were the Israelites always treated well in Egypt?

A. No, they were not.

Q. When were they ill-treated?

A. After the death of Jacob and Joseph.

Q. Why were they ill-treated?

A. There was a new king, who did not know Joseph.

Q. What did this new king fear?

A. That they might join his enemies against him.

Q. What did he do to the Israelites?

A. He treated them as slaves.

Q. Were they always kept in this state?

A. No, the Lord delivered them.

Q. What did the Lord do to the Egyptians?

A. He punishhd them with certain plagues.

Q How many plagues were sent?

A. Ten.

Q. What was the last plague?

A. The death of the first-born.

Q. When the first-born were slain, what did the Egyptians do?

A. They drove the people out of Egypt.

Q. What festival was instituted before they left Egypt.

A. The Passover.

Q. By what way did the Israelites leave Egypt?

A. Through the Red Sea.

Q. How did the Israelites pass through the Red Sea.

A. On dry land.

Q. How could they pass through the sea on dry land?

A. God divided the water and let them pass over.

Q. Did the Egyptians follow them?

A. They did, but the waters closed over them and they were all drowned.

Q. Whom did God choose to lead the Israelites?

A. Moses, the son of Amram

Q. Who assisted him?

A. His brother Aaron.

Q. How did Moses celebrate this deliverance from Egypt?

A. By a song of praise to God.

Q. Where did Moses next lead the people?

A. Through the desert.

Q. What is a desert?

A. A large, dreary tract of land.

Q. What mount did they soon come to?

A. Mount Sinai or the Mount of God.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Q. Who gave the Ten Commandments?
A. God.
Q. To whom were they given?
A. To his people Israel.
Q. From what place were they given?
A. From Mount Sinai?
Q. When were they given.
A. In the third month after they had left Egypt.
Q. How did Mount Sinai appear to be at that time?
A. Burning with fire, and there were thunder and lightning.
Q. What else was heard?
A. The sound of the shofar or cornet.
Q. How many commandments were given?
A. Ten.

Q. Can you tell me the first commandment?

A. I am the Lord, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt.

Q. What does this commandment teach us?

A. That God exists, and that He brought our fathers out of bondage.

Q. What is the second?

A. Thou shalt have no other gods before me; thou shalt not bow down to them nor serve them.

Q. What does this commandment teach us?

A. That we must worship and believe in the one true God only.

Q. What is the third.

A. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Q. What does this commandment teach us?

A. That we must never curse, swear nor use God's name in vain.

Q. What is the fourth?

A. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou do all thy work.

Q. What does this commandment teach us?

A. That we must not do any work on the Sabbath, but keep it as a day of rest.

Q. What is the fifth?

A. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land.

Q. What does this commandment teach us?

A. That we must love and honor our parents, and be always ready to obey them in all things.

Q. What is the sixth?

A. Thou shalt not commit murder.

Q. What does this commandment teach us?

A. That we must never do anything that may take away the life of a fellow-creature.

Q. What is the seventh?

A. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. What does this commandment teach us?

A. That we must be pure in our conduct, and modest in our behavior.

Q. What is the eighth?

A. Thou shalt not steal.

Q. What does this commandment teach us?

A. That we must never take anything that belongs to another.

Q. What is the ninth?

A. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Q. What does this commandment teach us?

A. That we must always speak the truth and never tell a falsehood on our neighbor.

Q. What is the tenth?

A. Thou shalt not covet.

Q. What does this commandment teach us?

A. That we must never be jealous nor envious of what any one else has.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SABBATH.

Q. What is the seventh day of the week called?

A. The Sabbath day.

Q. What is the meaning of the word Sabbath?

A. Rest.

Q. What must we understand by the Sabbath day?

A. That it is a day of rest.

Q. How must we observe this day?

A. By not attending to any business whatever.

Q. Why?

A. Because it is the Sabbath of the Lord our God.

Q. How must the day be spent?

A. In rest and the service of God.

Q. Is it sufficient that we do not perform any work?

A. No, we must attend the house of God and join in His worship.

Q. Is it necessary that we should rest on the Sabbath?

A. Yes, so that we may have strength for our labor after the Sabbath.

Q. Between whom did God say it should be a sign?

A. Between him and the children of Israel.

Q. Were those who did not keep the Sabbath day to be punished?

A. Yes, God said they should surely die.

Q. Do not all persons die?

A. Yes, but the good shall be rewarded.

Q. Where?

A. In the world to come.

Q. What will be done to sinners?

A. They shall all be punished.

Q. Where is the commandment about the Sabbath day to be found?

A. In many parts of the Holy Bible.

Q. But where particularly?

A. In the Fourth Commandment.

Q. What does that commandment say?

A. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOLIDAYS.

Q. What is the meaning of the word festival?

A. Feast or holiday.

Q. From what month do we begin to count our festivals?

A. From the month of Nissan.

Q. Is it really the first month of the year?

A. It is not.

Q. Why then do we begin to count from it?

A. God commanded that it should be to us a "beginning of months."

Q. Why did He command it?

A. Because it was the month we went out from Egypt.

Q. What festival takes place this month?

A. The Passover.

Q. On what day of the month does it begin?

A. On the fourteenth day at evening.

Q. Why is it kept?

A. In memory of our going out from Egypt.

Q. What was slain before leaving Egypt?

A. A lamb.

Q. What did the Israelites do with its blood?

A. They sprinkled it on their door-posts.

Q. Why did they sprinkle it?

A. That the angel might pass over their houses.

Q. At what time?

A. When he went forth to slay the first-born at midnight.

Q. Why is this festival called the Passover?

A. Because the angel *passed over* the houses of the children of Israel.

Q. How long does this festival last?

A. Seven days.

Q. What are we commanded to remove from our houses during this festival?

A. All manner of leaven

Q. What must we eat during this festival?

A. Unleavened Bread.

Q. What does God say He will do to those who eat leaven?

A. Their souls shall be cut off from Israel.

Q. What is meant by their souls being cut off from Israel?

A. That they shall not share the promises made to Israel.

Q. What is the next festival that we are ordered to keep?

A. The Feast of Weeks.

Q. When does this festival take place?

A. On the sixth day of the month of Sivan.

Q. Why is it called a Feast of Weeks?

A. Because seven weeks were counted from the second day of Passover.

Q. What was done at the end of the seven weeks?

A. An offering was brought to the Lord.

Q. Of what did this offering consist?

A. Of the first ripe fruit.

Q. What great event took place on the first day of this festival?

A. God gave the Ten Commandments.

Q. From where?

A. From the top of Mount Sinai.

Q. What is the third festival in the year?

A. The feast of Succoth.

Q. When does it take place?

A. On the fifteenth day of the month Tishri.

Q. What is the meaning of *Succoth?*

A. Booths of Tabernacles.

Q. Why is it so called?

A. Because the Children of Israel dwelt in booths.

Q. When did they dwell in booths?

A. When they were in the wilderness

Q. Why did God command us to dwell in booths?

A. To remember His watchful care over us.

Q. How long are we to dwell in booths?

A. Seven days.

Q. What are we to take on the first day?

A. Branches of the palm tree.

Q. What else?

A. A citron, willows and myrtle.

Q. What were we then to do?

A. Rejoice before the Lord our God.

Q. What is this festival also called?

A. The Feast of Harvest.

Q. When does our New Year begin?

A. On the first day of the month of Tishri.

Q. What does this day commemorate?
A. The creation of the world.
Q. By what other name is the New Year called?
A. The Day of Memorial.
Q. Why is it called the Day of Memorial?
A. Because we must remember on it our sins of the whole year.
Q. What else is the day called?
A. The day of blowing of trumpets.
Q. Why is it called the day of blowing of trumpets?
A. Because the shofar or trumpet is blown on that day.
Q. Why is the shofar blown?
A. To warn us that we should repent.
Q. What are the first ten days of this month called?
A. The ten days of penitence.
Q. What is the tenth day called?
A. The Day of Atonement.

Q. Why is it called the Day of Atonement?

A. Because we should make atonement unto the Lord our God.

Q. For what should we make atonement?

A. For our sins of the whole year.

Q. How is this day kept up?

A By a solemn fast.

Q. How long does this fast continue?

A. From the evening of the ninth to the evening of the tenth day.

Q. What does God say shall be done to those who do not keep this day?

A. Their souls shall be cut off from Israel.

Q. Is fasting all we have to do on this day?

A. No, we must pray to God with all our heart.

Q. What else must we do?

A. We must repent from sin.

Q. Can we expect God to forgive us unless we repent?

A. No, we must leave off our evil ways.

Q. What is the meaning of repent?

A. To be sorry for what we have done, and try not to sin again.

CHAPTER X.

THE MINOR FEASTS.

Q. What other feasts do we keep?

A. Two—Pureem and Hanuckah.

Q. When does Pureem take place?

A. On the fourteenth day of the month Adar.

Q. Is its observance commanded by God in the Bible?

A. No.

Q. Why, then, is it kept?

A. In memory of the goodness of God to his people Israel.

Q. When was this particular goodness shown us?

A. In the days of Mordecai and Esther.

Q. Who was Mordecai?

A. A Jew of the tribe of Benjamin.

Q. Who was Esther?

A. An orphan, the niece of Mordecai.

Q. From what was our people delivered?

A. From entire destruction.

Q. Who sought to destroy them?

A. A wicked man named Haman.

Q. Who was Haman?

A. An officer of A-has-u-e-rus, King of Persia.

Q. Why did Haman wish the Jews destroyed?

A. Because Mordecai would not bow down to him.

Q. Why would not Mordecai bow down to Haman?

A. Because it is not right to bow down to any one but God above.

Q. When did Haman wish the Jews destroyed?

A. On the thirteenth day of the month of Adar.

Q. Why did he wish them destroyed on that day?

A. Because he had cast *lots* to find out a day.

Q. From what is this feast called Pureem?

A. From the *lots* cast by Haman.

Q. Why?

A. Because "*Pureem*" means lots.

Q. Did God allow His people to be destroyed?

A. No, they were saved by Esther.

Q. How was Esther able to save the people?

A. She had been chosen by the king for his wife?

Q. What then?

A. She told the king the wrong Haman wanted to do.

Q. What became of Haman and his sons?

A. They were hanged.

Q. What order was next given?

A. For the Jews to defend themselves.

Q. When they had been delivered, what did Esther order the Jews to do?

A. To keep up the feast of Pureem.

Q. Did they do so?

A. They did and rejoiced exceedingly.

Q. What book contains an account of all these things?

A. The book of Esther.

Q. What does the word *Hanuckah* mean?

A. Dedication.

Q. When does the feast of Hanuckah begin?

A. On the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev.

Q. How long does it last?

A. Eight days.

Q. Why is Hanuckah kept up?

A. On account of the wonderful deeds of the God for Israel.

Q. When were those deeds wrought?

A. In the days of the Maccabees.

Q. Who were the Maccabees?

A. The children of a priest named Mat-ta-thi-as.

Q. What did these Maccabees do?

A. They delivered Israel from the hands of their oppressors.

Q. By whom were they oppressed?

A. By a Grecian King named Antiochus.

Q. What did Antiochus want to do?
A. To destroy our religion?
Q. How did he try to do this?
A. By preventing the Jews from reading the five books of Moses.
Q. What did they read instead?
A. Other parts of the Bible that were nearly like it.
Q. What are those portions of the Bible called?
A. The Haph-ta-roth.
Q. When the Maccabees delivered the Israelites, what did they set about?
A. Repairing and cleaning the Temple.
Q. Why was it necessary to do this?
A. Because it had been made unclean.
Q. By whom?
A. By the Greeks.
Q. After the temple was made clean, what was wanting?
A. The oil for the lamps.

Q. Was there any at all found?

A. Yes, enough for only one day's use.

Q. How long would it be before more could be made?

A. About a week.

Q. What miracle did God perform?

A. He caused the one flask of oil to last for a whole week

Q. How do we celebrate the memory of this great miracle?

A. By keeping the feast of Hanuckah.

Q. How do we keep it?

A. By lighting lights every night during the eight days.

Q. How else?

A. By praise and thanks unto our God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CREED

Q. What is the meaning of the word creed?

A. What we are to believe.

Q. Who wrote down the creed?

A. Moses, the son of Maimon.

Q. By what other name is he known?

A. Mai-mon-i-des.

Q. How is our creed divided?

A. Into thirteen articles or parts.

Q. What does the first article teach us?

A. That God is our Creator, and that he has made all things.

Q. The second?

A. That there is only one God.

Q. The third?

A. That God is not mortal, but a perfect spirit.

Q. The fourth?

A That God, our Creator, is the first and the last.

Q. The fifth?

A. That we ought to worship only God, our Creator.

Q. The sixth?

A. That all the words of the prophets are true.

Q. The seventh?

A. That Moses was the greatest prophet that ever lived.

Q. The eighth?

A. That we have now the same law Moses gave us.

Q. The tenth?

A. That God knows all our thoughts and actions.

Q. The eleventh?

A. That God will reward the good and punish the bad.

Q. The twelfth?

A. That the Messiah will come when it shall please God.

Q. The thirteenth?

A. That the dead will again be brought to life.

CHAPTER XII.

FOOD, ETC.

Q. Are the Israelites allowed to eat all kinds of food?

A. No; God has told us what we may eat and what we may not eat.

Q. What does God call the food we may eat?

A. Clean.

Q. What does he call the kind we may not eat?

A. Unclean.

Q. Where are these laws pointed out to us?

A. In the eleventh chapter of Leviticus.

Q. What kinds of animals may we eat?

A. All clean ones, like the ox and sheep.

Q. What kinds of animals must we not eat?

A. All unclean ones, such as the hog and horse.

Q. What kind of birds may we eat?

A. All clean birds, like turkeys, ducks, geese and chickens.

Q. What kind of birds may we not eat?

A. All unclean birds, like the eagle and vulture

Q. What kinds of fish may we eat?

A. All that have fins and scales.

Q. What kinds of fish must we not eat?
A. All that do not have fins or scales.
Q. What other kinds must we not eat.
A. All kinds of shell fish.
Q. Tell me some of those we must not eat?
A. Oysters, crabs and turtles.
Q. Why must we not eat them?
A. Because God commands us not to do so.
Q. Must we obey God?
A. Yes in all things, great or small.
Q. What word is used for all that is proper for us to eat?
A. The word "*Kosher.*"
Q. What does the word "*Kosher*" mean?
A. Right or proper.
Q. What does God tell about blood?
A. That we must not drink it.
Q. Why?
A. Because blood is the life of the animal.

Q. What must be done with the blood of animals?

A. It must be poured on the ground like water.

1. Come, let us seek the Lord in youth,
And worship Him, our father's God;
Serve Him, and Him alone, in truth,
And welcome e'en affliction's rod.

2. For all the blessings we enjoy,
O let us give our thankful praise;
In pious deeds our time employ,
And know the Lord in all our ways.

3. Though grief and pain must be our lot
Though life's bright joys must some day fade,
O never be His name forgot,
'Til in the silent grave we're laid.

1. In youth before our life is dark,
Or ere the evil days we see;
To duty's voice, O let us hark,
And then, O God! remember Thee.

2. In manhood's prime, while strength is ours,
From vice and error let us flee;
Devote to Thee our noblest powers,
And then, O God! remember Thee.

3. When age reminds that we must die,
At Thine all just, all-wise decree;
Then may we lift our hopes on high,
And then, O God! remember Thee.

H. S. J.