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JUDAISM

AS

CREED AND LIFE

BY

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

AMELIA JOSEPH

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PREFACE

THE view of Judaism set forth in the following pages is one likely, I believe, to commend itself to a large number of English-speaking Jews. It lies midway between the orthodoxy which regards the Shulchan Aruch, or at least the Talmud, as the final authority in Judaism, and the extreme liberalism which, setting little store by the historic sentiment as a factor of the Jewish consciousness, would lightly cut the religion loose from the bonds of Tradition.

The present volume, then, may fairly lay claim to novelty. Almost all the expositions of Judaism which have hitherto appeared in England have been written from the rigidly conservative standpoint. Of these the two handbooks of my much-respected teacher Dr. M. Friedländer, are notable examples. Something, though far less, has been done to familiarise the public with the conception of Judaism which stands at the other extreme. It has found an able champion in my friend Mr. C. G. Montefiore, whose essay, entitled *Liberal Judaism*, was published almost on the very day that this book was finished. But

thus far no attempt has been made to elucidate systematically the intermediate position, and to give a comprehensive account of Jewish belief and practice as they are conceived by men of moderate views. That the aim I have set myself is not superfluous will, I think, be generally admitted. Whether I have been fortunate enough to realise it, is a question for the public to decide.

In writing the book, I have kept in view the requirements of two classes of readers. In the first place, there is the large section of my own co-religionists who would desire to see worked out in detail a definition of Judaism which they have already formulated for themselves, though only in broad and perhaps vague outline. To these I would demonstrate the possibility of reconciling respect for the claims of modern thought and life with loyalty to traditional Judaism, of being at one and the same time a faithful son of Israel and a true child of the progressive age in which we live. But I have also not forgotten that there is a considerable general public to whom the Jewish religion is a subject of deep and increasing interest. If I have afforded some measure of enlightenment to either class of readers, I shall be amply repaid for the time and labour which I have devoted to this book. It has been written intermittently, during a period of several years, in the brief and irregular intervals of leisure allowed me by an exacting vocation.

But Judaism consists of something more than theology and religious practice. Its morality is an integral and

by no means the least interesting part of it. A third of the book, then, is devoted to an exposition of Jewish ethics. In my treatment of this section I shall certainly have the sympathy of all my Jewish readers, whatever the school of religious thought to which they belong. Upon the ethical teachings of their religion all Jews are in virtual agreement, and all alike are interested in seeing those teachings adequately formulated. No previous work by an English writer has, I believe, dealt with this important subject, in its practical aspects more particularly, on an equally extensive scale.

From what has been said it will be evident that what I am here presenting is only one view of Judaism. As a consequence, I have left out of account certain doctrines and prescriptions which are irreconcilable with that view. But I cannot therefore, I submit, justly be charged with onesidedness. The book is not a history of Judaism, but a description of a certain phase of it. Judaism is the growth of thousands of years, and countless minds have contributed to its evolution. It is the task of the modern Jew to establish a *modus vivendi* between this necessarily heterogeneous product and the great intellectual and social movements of his age. He can do this only by selection. And what he selects will obviously be the best things. Nor is it he alone who feels the stress of this necessity. The most conservative exponent of Judaism experiences it. It would be impossible to write a book, however orthodox, on the Jewish religion in these days which should include all the utterances of all the authorities who

have, at one time or another, spoken in the name of Judaism. Some of those utterances are contradictory; others are admittedly out of harmony with modern ideas. Every attempt indeed to adapt a religion to a new environment necessarily means selection. The Christian would find it difficult to frame a consistent and practical scheme of religion which should take in all the doctrine of the Church Fathers.

Thus much in reply to the possible charge that I have given a mere anthology,—that I have provided a collection of elegant extracts at the cost of ignoring the less attractive teachings. I have certainly made many quotations, especially in the section on Ethics. But I have done so intentionally. My aim has been to give some idea of the nobility of thought which characterises the Jewish doctrine of post-Biblical times. The passages I have cited are but specimens of the vast moral and spiritual wealth to be found in the Talmudic and medieval literatures.

In my attempt to provide for Jewish wants I have not lost sight of the requirements of the young. Experience has brought home to me the need of a manual of instruction suitable for Jewish boys and girls of Confirmation age. I have attempted to supply this need, and the fact will explain the somewhat homiletical tone which is to be discerned here and there. Desirous of making my book useful to readers at the formative period of life, I have deemed myself justified in employing the language of exhortation and appeal, which never fails to evoke a

ready response from the generous heart of youth. On the other hand, there are certain passages in the work which will have little or no meaning, save for persons of maturer years. These are printed between asterisks.

That I have laid many writers under contribution will be abundantly evidenced from the footnotes. These will be considered, I trust, sufficient acknowledgment of my general indebtedness. But there are two works from which I have derived especial assistance, and which I must therefore single out for especial mention. They are Hamburger's indispensable *Real-Encyclopädie des Judenthums*, and Suwalski's book on Jewish life under the Talmud, in both its Hebrew and German editions. From these works I have borrowed many illustrative extracts from the Talmud and the Midrashim to supplement those which I have collected in the course of my own reading. And here I may add that all my quotations have been carefully verified by reference to the originals. I have also supplied, when quoting from the Midrashic literature, the chapter and verse of the Scriptural text upon which the passage is based.

Another and a larger debt I have to acknowledge. It is my debt to my friend Dr. Schechter, lately Reader in Rabbinic in the University of Cambridge, and now Principal of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America To him I owe much of the inspiration that has made this book possible. It is a matter of deep regret to me that Dr. Schechter's removal to the United States has prevented him from fulfilling his kind promise to read my

manuscript before I sent it to press. His advice would have been of inestimable advantage to me.

It remains only to express the hope that this book may, under the Divine blessing, prove helpful to some of my brethren who are desirous of gaining a clearer insight into the significance of their religion and a firmer grasp upon its truths. And even those who are unable to accept my theological standpoint may, I trust, find something in these pages to interest and instruct them. From all my readers alike I bespeak a generous reception for an effort which, whatever its shortcomings, is at any rate sincere.

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Note.—Passages not intended for youthful readers are printed between asterisks.

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INTRODUCTION

JUDAISM AS CREED AND LIFE

CHAPTER I

RELIGION IN GENERAL

RELIGION we may define as belief in God and the feeling of being responsible to Him. This is the meaning of Religion as an abstract idea, of Religion written with a capital R. We use the word in this sense when we say of a certain man that he has no Religion, meaning thereby that he lacks the religious sentiment, that he does not believe in God. But the term has also a concrete meaning; it is often used to denote a particular kind of Religion, one of the various systems in which men have embodied their thoughts and feelings about God. We speak of religions; we speak of the Jewish, or the Christian, or the Mohammedan religion. "What is your religion?" one person may ask another.

The object of this book is to expound a certain kind of Religion: the Jewish religion or, as it is usually called, Judaism. But Judaism, like every concrete religion, has the religious sentiment for its foundation and starting-point. And so it becomes necessary to say something about Religion in its first, its abstract significance—to

speak of Religion generally before speaking of our religion.

We have defined Religion to be the belief in God and the feeling of being responsible to Him. Thus Religion is at once theoretical and practical. Two things go to the making of it: Faith and Duty. And both are essentials. Faith, of course, is necessary. It is clear that you cannot have Religion—you cannot have the religious sentiment—without the idea of God, that is without belief in God. There are people, it is true, who claim to have Religion, though they do not believe in God. The Positivists do not believe in God, but they have what they call the Religion of Humanity; the thought of human goodness arouses in them feelings of reverence and emulation. Nay, there are thinkers who, denying the Divine existence, yet find a religion in the higher emotions kindled in the human mind by the hand of Science and even of Art. "The astonishment," says one of those thinkers,[1] "with which we gaze upon the starry heavens and the microscopic life in a drop of water, the awe with which we trace the marvellous working of energy in the motion of matter, the reverence with which we grasp the universal dominance of the law of substance[2] throughout the universe—all these are part of our emotional life, falling under the head of 'natural religion.' . . . The modern man who 'has science and art'—and therefore 'religion'—needs no special church, no narrow, enclosed portion of space. For through the length and breadth of free nature, wherever he turns his gaze—to the whole universe or to any single part of it—he finds, indeed, the grim 'struggle

[1] Haeckel, *The Riddle of the Universe*, 1st Eng. ed., p. 352 *seq.*

[2] *I.e.* the law of the conservation of matter and of energy.

for life'; but by its side are ever 'the good, the true, and the beautiful'; his church is commensurate with the whole of glorious nature. Still, there will always be men of special temperament who will desire to have decorated temples or churches as places of devotion to which they may withdraw."

* That a leading exponent of scientific materialism should have written these words is, we may incidentally remark, a highly suggestive fact. It shows that mere thought and research, even the triumph implied in knowledge, do not suffice to satisfy the scientific investigator. There are deeply-seated yearnings instinctive in humanity whose claim is imperious. Reverence and awe springing from a sense of the majesty of the universe are emotions that dominate the man of science no less than the unlettered savage, and the one can no more successfully stifle them than the other can. Recognition of "the good, the true, and the beautiful," whether in nature or in art, is an indispensable wellspring of solace for the chemist or the astronomer no less than for the religious idealist. For science can neither explain the meaning of life nor mitigate its sorrows. That task belongs to the human heart itself, with its elementary emotions which "make the whole world kin." The agnostic calls the exercise of those emotions Religion, and in so doing pays unconscious homage to the higher and more spiritual feelings to which he denies all rational foundation. *

The sense, however, in which the word Religion is used by the Agnostic and the Positivist is not the ordinary one. Religion, as usually understood, has for its essential condition belief in a Divine Power. Without that belief we cannot, properly speaking, have Religion. But we

cannot really have it unless, in addition to belief in God, we have a sense of obligation towards Him—unless, in other words, we feel that we owe Him certain duties. Indeed, there have been scholars who have seen the idea in the very etymology of the word. The Latin word *religio* they have derived from a verb which means to "bind back"; and according to them it would embody that conception of responsibility of which we are speaking. The Biblical expression which comes nearest to our word *Religion* is *yirath Adonai*—"reverence for God." It embodies the two ideas—God and Duteous Feeling towards Him—which the modern term essentially denotes.

Now, it is quite possible to have one only of these ideas. It is possible to believe in a Divine Being without feeling the sense of obligation, without feeling any impulse to obey Him. But this is not Religion as we understand it. Religion, in our sense, is a perception of the Divine existence, issuing in duty. God does not stand aloof from the universe. He is its Creator and, more than this, its Lord, its Life. He did not make the world and leave it. The idea of the old Jewish Sages [1] which is embodied in the Prayer-Book, and according to which He creates the world anew every day, expresses a great truth. He is always moving and working in the universe. He is ever in close touch with His handiwork, and therefore with us, who are part of His handiwork. To Him our existence is due, and to Him, therefore, we owe obedience. He is the potter and we are the clay. Reverence and humility, then, are the feelings with which we must regard Him. But we think of Him with other feelings too. For He is a merciful God, whose mercies claim our gratitude and

[1] *Chagigah*, 12 b.

affection. He is not only our King, but our Father, our Father who orders our lives lovingly, and we, His children, have to give Him loving service in return. All this is included in the meaning of Religion. God is not the mere Force or Intelligence which some thinkers see in the universe, and which suffices to explain to them its existence and wonders. Nor is He a far-off, soulless Being, shut up in a remote Heaven, without thought or feeling for mankind. The God of Religion is a personal God, who is in close contact with the world He has made, and is filled with loving solicitude for its indwellers.

And just because He is thus bound to men by the ties of sympathy and love, they are bound to Him by the bond of affectionate duty. Close relations exist between God and man, and they are mutual relations. This idea is an essential ingredient of Religion. You cannot have real Religion without it. God is in the universe, nay, in the life of man; and man must make obedience to Him his life's aim, even as it is the aim that God has given to him with his life. Religion must be no abstract idea or barren sentiment. The God-idea must be the mainspring of conduct; it must hallow life. This truth is suggested by the famous passage in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, which is known to us Jews from its initial Hebrew word as the Shemang: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The passage thus sets forth the two great factors of the Religious Idea: God and Duty. Not belief alone, but belief ripening into loving obedience—this is the ideal. For faith in the Supreme only attains its true purpose

when it fulfils itself in the dedication of all our powers and faculties to His service.

We pass now from Religion in the abstract to Religion in the concrete, from Religion generally to Judaism in particular. God and Human Responsibility—these, as we have seen, are the two constituents of the Religious Idea, and they suggest the two great constituents of Judaism: Beliefs and Duties. In the Beliefs or the Creed of Judaism we are told about God—what He is and how He acts towards the world and its inhabitants. In like manner our Duties put the idea of Human Responsibility into practical form; they tell us what we have to do in order to acquit ourselves of our obligations to God.

A certain measure of belief is, as we have seen, necessarily common to all religions worthy of the name. All alike affirm the great twofold truth of the Divine Existence and Man's responsibility. This common element is called Theism. Every religion, then, contains the truth, and is therefore deserving of our respect. It is the diverse methods of giving expression to that truth which constitute the points of difference between the various religions, and which give them their various degrees of truthfulness. Thus Paganism starts with the truth, but obscures and degrades it by teaching the existence of many gods instead of one God, and ascribing to them human shortcomings. Judaism, so we Jews affirm, embodies the Religious Idea in the purest form—gives to the truth the most truthful shape. And thus we hold it superior to every other religion. In its essence it is neither more nor less true than any other religion. For

in regard to their fundamental idea all religions are identical. But, taken as a whole, taken as an expression of the great twofold truth, of which we have just spoken, Judaism, in the opinion of the Jew, is the truest religion that has been given to the world. It is the purest, the most sublime embodiment of the God-idea of which men have any knowledge.

As to our Duties, they are of two kinds: (1) Moral or Ethical; (2) Religious or Ceremonial.

Moral Duty or Ethics, broadly speaking, defines our obligations as human beings. It tells us, for example, "Thou shalt not steal." A large part of Ethics, then, is independent of Religion. But there is such a thing as religious morality. There is such a thing as a religious conscience, a conscience fashioned and influenced by Religion. The command "Thou shalt not steal" may be given, as in the Bible it is given, in the name of God. And because it is so given, it carries additional weight with certain minds over and above that which attaches to it as a merely human law. Its Divine origin becomes what is called a "sanction" or authority, which strengthens its claim upon the obedience of such minds. They do this or that good act all the more readily and enthusiastically because they are asked to do it for God.

* But Religion does more than supply an additional and powerful motive for right conduct. It enlarges the sphere of right conduct. There is, as we shall see, a whole order of moral duties which directly spring out of religious belief, and could not exist without it. They are the duties which the religionist feels that he owes as the child of God, but which of necessity no mere worldly code can enjoin. And it is clear that when moral duty is thus

enlarged, a great part of it too is common to all religions. A great part, we say, for the identity is not absolute. The ethics of religion must necessarily be influenced by the character of the religion itself. Our view of God—our theology—will powerfully help to determine our conception of right conduct. Paganism, with its immoral gods and men, is an extreme illustration of this truth. Nay, there are certain ethical duties peculiar to each particular religion. Thus the Israelite has responsibilities which have no meaning for his Christian neighbour, and *vice versa*. If the Jew has to protect the reputation of Israel, the Christian has to uphold the fair fame of the Church; and if the Christian is exhorted to take the Founder of his religion as his pattern, the Jew finds his highest duty in the imitation of the Supreme. But these are instances not of different ethical principles, but of different applications of the same principle. As systems of morality, Judaism and Christianity may be said to be practically identical. *

But Ethics, even when enlarged and enriched by the religious sentiment, does not cover the entire ground of duty as Religion defines it. In common with other religious systems, Judaism has recourse to certain ceremonial institutions or practices, with the object of strengthening the empire of religion over the heart and the life. Religious doctrine is too abstract to stand alone. It needs to be supplemented by concrete observances which bring home to us, by striking and picturesque methods, the lessons it teaches. To practise those observances is a sacred duty, for each of us is bound to strengthen and vivify his religious ideas and feelings by all the means at his command. Those persons who think it a sign of

intellectual or spiritual superiority to decry ceremonial, and who are content with what they style "heart-religion," make a great mistake. None of us can dispense with outward helps to religious feeling. And if Religion is really rooted in the heart it can never be the worse, but will certainly be the better, for finding expression in ceremonial acts. On the other hand, as we shall see presently, ceremonial is useless without heart-religion, and of all the constituents of a religious system it is the least important. We can imagine a religion existing without a scrap of ceremonial; but a religion without a creed, however simple, is impossible.

Nevertheless, ceremonial institutions are a valuable constituent of a religion, and Judaism has made abundant use of them as an aid to the religious life. The Sabbath is an example. One of the great truths of Judaism is that the universe is the handiwork of God; and of this truth we are forcibly reminded by God's holy day, which, by turning our thoughts back to the Beginning, helps us to conceive of Him as the Creator. Again, one of our moral duties is that of self-examination and self-improvement. We are bound to develop our moral and spiritual faculties to the utmost, to "go from strength to strength" in well-doing. The Day of Atonement, another ceremonial institution, impresses upon us the importance of this duty, nay, almost forces us to make some attempt to perform it.

Thus ceremonial comes to the aid of doctrine. But it aids it in yet another way. All such holy days as the Sabbath, the Day of Atonement, the Festivals, are calculated by their very sanctity to bring us into closer touch with God. The worship to which they summon us, the

rites in which they give us an opportunity of taking part, help us to realise the existence of the Almighty, to get some glimpse of "the beauty of holiness." They serve to write the ideas and precepts of Religion on our hearts, to make Religion a part of ourselves, a part of our lives. They are like the pictures in a story-book. They illustrate Religion's message; they enable us to understand its meaning better; they help to make it a real, a living thing.

No religion has more clearly recognised the value of ceremonial than Judaism. It has set apart consecrated days which the Jew may devote to thinking about God and Duty. It has availed itself of emblems like the unleavened bread on Passover, the Shophar on New Year's Day, the palm-branch on Tabernacles, each of which embodies in an impressive form some important religious or moral truth. Nay, it enjoins the recital of a special prayer in connection with the most familiar incidents, on our awaking from sleep in the morning, for example, or partaking of a meal, or sharing in some enjoyment, and thus hallows the daily life by deepening within us a sense of the Divine.

But these ceremonial constituents, though they are important elements of Judaism, are important not in themselves, but by reason of what they signify and what they may effect. They are but means to an end, and that end is the religious life. If they fail to achieve that end, they are useless. It is a mistake to suppose that observances which no longer help us to be better and more religious have any value or sanctity, or that obedience to the ceremonial law is in itself a virtue. There is only one test of the value and authority of a religious

practice; it is its power to arouse or to deepen spiritual emotion. It would also be a mistake, then, to imagine that there is anything meritorious in the mere fulfilment of religious observances. Simply to "keep" the Sabbath by abstaining from work, to spend God's day in idleness, or to devote it solely to amusement, is to miss the purpose of the institution, to make the Day a failure. No religious rite has done its work unless it has sown some high thought in the mind, stirred the heart with some noble resolve.

CHAPTER II

THE BIBLE

WHERE are we to look for the teachings of Judaism? The answer is, first and chiefly to the Bible. The Bible is the great source of our knowledge of Religion, as Israel has conceived it. To its pages we must chiefly turn in order to know what we ought to believe and how we ought to live as Israelites.

The Bible is divided into three great parts: (1) The Pentateuch, or the Five Books of Moses, sometimes called the Torah, the Law; (2) The Prophets; (3) The Hagiographa, or Holy Writings.

The Books of the Pentateuch are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They contain the religion taught by Moses.

The Prophets are divided into two sections: the Earlier Prophets and the Later Prophets. The former are historical books which record, among other things, the history of one or more Prophets. The latter give the actual words of the Prophets whose names they bear.

The Earlier Prophets comprise the Books of Joshua and Judges, the two Books of Samuel, and the two Books

of Kings. The Later Prophets consist of the following Books:—Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, together with twelve short Books, which are accordingly called the Minor Prophets, viz. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The Prophets, using the term in its proper meaning as denoting persons rather than books, were men and women of great religious ardour who had a call from God to declare His will to their fellowmen. The Prophet was sometimes a foreteller, but always and chiefly a forth-teller, a preacher. Some of the Prophets predicted coming events; all of them sought to reclaim the sinner and to encourage the righteous. The Prophet, as the Hebrew word *nabi* perhaps implies, was a highly-strung soul "bubbling over" with enthusiasm for God and goodness.

The Holy Writings comprise Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon or Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the two Books of Chronicles.

The Bible is the great treasury of religious truth. It is on that account revered by many millions of men outside the pale of Judaism. But for the Jew it has a special claim to reverence and affection. It is a book that has been entrusted to his people from ancient times, to be the source of their own ennoblement, and to be handed on by them to the world at large, and so to become the instrument of a yet wider moral and spiritual uplifting. The Jews have been called "the people of the Book," because the Bible—the Book *par excellence*—is their special inheritance. Not only may it powerfully aid

them in their endeavour to lead exalted lives, but it is also, so to speak, their charter, from which they derive their mission—the mission of spreading religious truth and righteousness among the families of men. In fact, besides being a text-book of faith and morals, the Bible is a history—the history of the education of Israel for the sublime task that has been assigned to him by Divine Providence.

The Bible is an unique book. It has come to us with all the sanctity in which the reverence and affection of successive ages has clothed it. But its claim upon our affection and obedience rests on something more stable even than this. More important than what is called its prescriptive authority is the authority that resides in its own intrinsic worth. The mere fact that the Bible has for centuries been venerated by multitudes of men, and has most powerfully helped to uplift their lives, gives it a strong title to our homage. But the truest foundations of its authority are to be found in its own pages, in the manifest sublimity of its teachings, and in the assent which they win from our mind and our conscience. The religious ideas it enunciates are doubtless to be found set forth in far later books. But the great teachers who have left us their message in the Bible were the first to conceive and formulate them. It is this fact which makes the Bible unique. We have only to compare its exalted teachings with those current among the great nations of antiquity—the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians—to perceive the measure of its uniqueness. And even if the comparison be made with later religious conceptions, with those prevailing among the Persians, and even the Greeks and Romans, the pre-eminence of the Bible

still remains. Israel's genius for Religion is recognised by the great thinkers of the world. That genius distinguished in the highest degree Israel's noblest souls. And it is they who are the authors of the Bible. It is not too much to say that when we read the Hebrew Scriptures, we are listening to men who stood very near to God, lived in close touch with Him, had an especially clear insight into His nature and His will. To them was vouchsafed a knowledge, upon them bestowed a gift, which were not possessed by other men. Only thus can we express their originality as religious thinkers. Only thus can we explain that sublimity of the Hebrew Scriptures to which antiquity offers no parallel, and to which the world to-day pays homage. It is of this characteristic quality that we speak when we say that the Bible is inspired.

* That the real authority of the Bible is intrinsic rather than prescriptive becomes clear as soon as we think of the circumstances in which the Scriptural Canon was formed. The decision by which certain Books were included in the Bible and others excluded, was a purely human decision. The great teachers sat in judgment upon the claims of the various works, and decided upon those claims by the light of reason—in other words, by the internal merits of the works themselves. Nor was the decision always easy. The fate of some Books, like Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, and Esther, was, we learn, trembling in the balance even as late as the third century of the present era.[1]

[1] *Megillah*, 7 a. Compare *Shabbath*, 30 b; *Aboth d' R. Nathan*, ed. Schechter, pp. 2, 3. In the first century the Canon was far from complete. Josephus knows only of seventeen Scriptural Books besides the Pentateuch—thirteen Prophetical works, and four others (*Contra Apion*, i. 8). On the

The touchstone applied to the various Books was intrinsic worth, and nothing else. The discussion concerning their canonical character, as reported in the Talmud, is frankly made to hinge upon this point. These Books seemed to teach valuable doctrine, and therefore, despite their doubtful features, they were declared sacred, part of Holy Writ. Of Ecclesiastes, in particular, it is said[1] that some passages seemed heretical, but that since the orthodoxy of the Book was vindicated by its epilogue it was included in the Scriptures. Here we have a clear indication of the temper in which the great Talmudic doctors approached the Bible. It was enough for them that, taken as a whole, it taught excellent doctrine. In that circumstance, and in no other, they deemed its authority to reside. And, considering that they themselves were the determining authority, they could not consistently have adopted any other view. Assuming the right to say "this is canonical, and that is not," they necessarily implied that the final test of the authority and inspiration of the Bible was human reason.

And if that was their test, it may well be ours. Nay, it must be ours. The formation of the Canon was an intellectual act, and therefore the intellect has the right to judge it. That the Bible was declared Divine centuries ago does not prove that it possesses that character. It is a plea for tender and respectful treatment of the Scriptures, but nothing more. In adjudicating upon the claim of the Bible the Fathers of the Synagogue were not satisfied with prescription alone, and we cannot be

other hand, Ecclesiasticus seems at one time to have been included in the Hagiographa (see *B. Kama*, 92 b).

[1] *Shabbath*, 30 b.

satisfied with it. For no Synagogue or Church can possess an authority which neither has in reality conceded to Holy Writ itself. The mere word of any number of men, however learned or pious, cannot suffice to determine the character of the Bible, for they avowedly had but the same qualifications as other learned and pious men have for determining it. Possessing an *a priori* title to our reverence and obedience which no sober mind will contest, the Bible must, in the last resort, plead for itself—plead for itself with the intellect and the conscience in every age.

Any additional claim is useless, but needless too. The Bible can well dispense with external supports for its authority, seeing that reverence for its truth and sublimity is deeply rooted in the consciousness of the civilised world. If the fabled Heavenly voice, of which the Talmud tells,[1] could be heard to-day proclaiming the Hebrew Scriptures Divine, it would not increase their empire over the minds and hearts of men. For no authority is greater than that which is wielded by the truth, and for the apprehension of the truth there is no instrument so trustworthy as reason.[2]

But when this is admitted there is yet room, as we have said, for the claim of prescription. The Bible has its history in its favour. Behind it are centuries of wide-world homage and affection. But in the case of us Jews it makes an additional demand for reverence, inasmuch as it records both the worldly and the spiritual life-story of our race for a thousand years. If the annals of a people

[1] See *e.g.* *B. Mezia*, 59 b.

[2] See the remarkable declaration of R. Joshua, *ibid.* "The Torah," he cries, "is not in heaven." It is not the supernatural, but the human intellect that is the real test of truth.

are precious to it, then must the Bible be ever a cherished object of veneration for Israel. But more precious even than a people's annals is its literature, and especially that part of its literature in which its noblest aspirations have found utterance. When we remember that the Bible embodies the lofty teachings of the Pentateuch—teachings which still furnish the world with ideals—that to the making of it have gone the noble passion of the Prophets for righteousness, and the Psalmists' insatiable longing after God, we must acknowledge that its ancient claim is fully justified, and that its prescriptive divinity is but the reflection of its intrinsic worth. *

The Bible thus contains both a Divine and a human element. But, since everything human is necessarily imperfect, we must not expect to find an absolutely perfect representation of Divine truth even in God's Book. Rays of light, penetrating through a stained-glass window, not only part with some of their brilliance, but borrow the various colours of the panes. It is so with the Bible. The Divine truth in its passage through human minds has necessarily lost some of its perfect purity, and has taken up, and been coloured by, the ideas of the minds—the *media*, as some people would say—through which it has passed. To think otherwise is to imagine that the authors of the Bible were not human beings but Divine. For an absolutely perfect revelation of truth is only possible when it comes direct from God Himself.

We must be prepared, therefore, to meet in the Bible with partial and even diverse representations of religious truth, and with allegories and legends. The Bible itself, in effect, tells us this. Moses, it declares, was the greatest

of the Prophets; he alone saw God "face to face";[1] his knowledge of Divine truth, that is to say, was unique. It follows, then, that compared with his teachings, those of the other Prophets were imperfect. The Rabbins discerned this fact, and emphasised it. "Isaiah and Ezekiel," they say, "both saw the King, but Isaiah like one that dwelleth in a city, Ezekiel like a villager."[2] Both were inspired, but each Prophet's message varied with his intellectual and spiritual powers. The Divine truth is always the same, but the form in which it is presented depends upon the medium that transmits it. Further, some of the Rabbins held that Job never lived, and that his story is an allegory.[3] And the great Maimonides takes this view not only of Job, but of more than one incident in the Pentateuch.[4]

But to say this is not the same as saying that the religious teaching of the Bible is ever untrue. An allegory is essentially true, though outwardly fictitious, and a truth is none the less valuable because it is clothed in an imaginative garb—a garb that attracts because it is imaginative. The allegories and legends of the Bible serve a useful purpose; they teach some precious moral or religious lesson, and teach it all the more forcibly by reason of the picturesque shape in which it is presented. A familiar instance is the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Every child loves that story, and because he loves it he is more likely to remember the

[1] Deut. xxxiv. 10.

[2] *Chagigah*, 13 b. Similarly they distinguish between the promises and threats in Leviticus xxvi. and Deuteronomy xxviii. respectively. In the one case it is God that speaks, in the other Moses. See *B. Bathra*, 88 b.

[3] *B. Bathra*, 15 a.

[4] *Morë Nebuchim*, iii. 22, and elsewhere.

great truths it may teach him: the necessity and sanctity of work, for example, the cunning, the insidiousness of temptation, the power of conscience, which makes many a sinner hide himself for very shame, the omniscience of God which penetrates to the most secret chambers of the human heart.

And if it be asked how we are to distinguish the legendary from the historical in the Bible, the answer is, by the help of reason and study. Some of the Biblical stories are clearly legends, though highly beautiful and instructive. Their legendary character is, so to speak, written on their very face. The thoughtful mind recognises it at a glance. But there are others about which it is far less easy to decide, about which different opinions are held by different scholars. As to these, all that we can do is to study diligently the arguments on both sides, and then by the aid of our reason decide between them. Only in this way can we satisfactorily distinguish between legend and history in the Bible. And the chief thing is that we should try our utmost thus to distinguish between them, that, to put the matter in the broadest form, we should do our best to arrive at the truth in regard to religious as well as all other questions. Whether we do get at the truth after all is of secondary importance. We are answerable to God not for our religious beliefs and opinions, but for the earnestness and sincerity with which we arrive at them. Judaism teaches no doctrine more clearly or more consistently than this.

There is another important truth which we must keep in view in forming our estimate of the character of the Bible. The Bible is, above everything, a book about Religion; it is not a book about science or any other

branch of profane knowledge. In regard to scientific matters it reflects only the knowledge of the age in which each writer lived.[1] It is as an authority on Faith and Duty only that the Bible stands above all other books. If we bear this truth in mind we shall cease to find any difficulty in passages like the first chapter of Genesis. Whether the Universe was formed in six days, or is the product of ages of evolution, as men of science now affirm it to be, is a question that need not enter our minds when we try to determine the value of that great opening paragraph of Holy Writ. The grand truths to be learnt from it are not scientific, but religious. The heavens and the earth spring from chaos in obedience to the command of the Supreme; the earth is furnished with tree and herb and grass before any living thing is placed upon it; man is created in the Divine image. What does the story teach but the precious lesson that an Almighty Power is behind the phenomena of Nature, that God lovingly notes the needs of the meanest creature, that through the soul humanity is linked to the Divine.

If it could be proved to-morrow with the certainty of a mathematical proposition that the Universe attained its present form, not in six short days, but as the result of forces that have been slowly acting through millions of years, the cardinal truths about God and Duty taught us by the first words of the Bible would still remain utterly unshaken. And if, on the other hand, it could be proved

[1] Some of the medieval Jewish philosophers practically admitted this truth. Thus Gersonides, following Maimonides in his *Morë*, ii. 29, declares (*Milchamoth*, iii. 6) that when the language of the Torah, interpreted literally, is in conflict with the teachings of Science, the sacred text must be so interpreted as to reconcile it with those teachings. Nay, Maimonides himself plainly affirms (*Morë*, *loc. cit.*) that the Biblical cosmogony is figurative.

with equal certainty that the account of the creation of the world that is given in Genesis is literally exact, those truths would not thereby acquire greater force. Their force is inherent, not derived, and therefore is entirely independent of the literal accuracy of any statements about the work of Creation with which they happen to be connected. And it is for the purpose of teaching such truths that the Bible has been given to us, and for that purpose only.

* To take this view of the Hebrew Scriptures is to reconcile belief in their authority with an acceptance of the modern critical theory. The new school of expositors, judging the Books of the Bible by purely literary canons, have arrived at certain conclusions concerning their date and authorship which are more or less at variance with the teachings both of the Synagogue and the Church. It is affirmed, for example, that the Pentateuch is the work not of one hand, but of many hands. Various documents, dating from various ages, have gone, it is declared, to the making of it, and in its present form, to say the least, it is many centuries later than Moses. Similar views prevail among scholars with regard to other books of the Bible. Thus the Book of Isaiah is held to be a combination of at least two distinct works, one of which, comprising the first thirty-nine chapters, contains the prophecies of the true Isaiah, whilst the other belongs to a period some two or three hundred years later. We are told further that to the Psalter David contributed no more than Solomon did to the Book of Proverbs or to Ecclesiastes—that is to say, little or nothing—and that Daniel is historically far more closely connected with the Maccabees than with its eponymous hero.

There can be no question that, like every new idea, the Critical Theory has been carried to undue lengths; and we shall do well to be on our guard against many of its developments. But the soundness of the theory itself is unaffected by the improper uses to which it has sometimes been put. And, as we have said, it is quite possible to accept it, and yet to retain our belief that the Bible is the Word of God. The claim of the Scriptures rests, as we have shown, solely upon their inherent truth, and therefore is independent equally of the form in which that truth is embodied, and of the age in which it was first revealed. The springs of their authority, then, are as much beyond the reach of literary criticism as of physical science. That a Supreme Being is behind the universe, that He is a righteous God who loveth righteousness, are verities no less real or solemn because they were declared only two thousand instead of three thousand years ago, or because the Prophet or the Psalmist who proclaimed them happened to live, not before the Babylonian Exile, but after it. Such questions can only vex the mind that exalts opinions as to the mere age or authorship of a Scriptural Book into dogmas, and places them among the foundations of the faith. But for those who are content to find in the sublimity of the Bible its sole title to their homage such difficulties have no terrors whatsoever. For religious truth can no more be damaged by literary criticism than mathematical truth can. It is the husk merely that is touched; the kernel is unharmed, is unassailable.

The liberal teachers of Judaism, even in former days, discerned this truth. Some of the Talmudic Rabbins, though they strenuously upheld the Mosaic authorship

of the Pentateuch as a whole, did not scruple to affirm [1] that the last eight verses of Deuteronomy, which record the death and burial of Moses, were written by Joshua —a significant admission indeed, duly considered. In like manner they declared [2] that Samuel wrote only a part of the Books bearing his name. The editing of the Book of Isaiah and of certain Books of the Hagiographa they ascribed to Hezekiah and "his company," and that of Ezekiel, of the twelve Minor Prophets, and of other portions of the Scriptures to the "Men of the Great Synagogue." [3] As to Job, they plainly declared, as we have said, that the work is a poem, and its hero an imaginary personage. But this did not prevent them from reverently treasuring all these books of the Bible, for they saw that the real source of their sanctity was their inherent truth, which questions as to date and authorship could not possibly affect.

And later teachers bettered their instruction. Nearly eight hundred years ago Ibn Ezra acknowledged the composite character of Isaiah, and, anticipating the modern view, held that the beginning of the fortieth chapter marked the dividing line between the two sections of the Book.[4] He was followed early in the last century by Krochmal and Rappaport, who, in addition, "accepted the post-Exilic origin of many Psalms and the late date of Ecclesiastes," [5] whilst Zunz forty years ago expressed the view that Leviticus dates from the time of the Second Temple.[6]

And it must be confessed that all these teachers, whose learning and authority are unimpeachable, had

[1] *B. Bathra*, 14 b. [2] *Ibid.* 15 a. [3] *Ibid.*
[4] See Friedländer's *Essays on Ibn Ezra*, p. 67.
[5] Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, Introduction. [6] *Ibid.*

reason on their side. No one can read the Pentateuch without perceiving that its sacred fabric is woven out of many and diverse threads. Even those who are unable to discern two independent accounts of the Creation in the first and second chapters of Genesis respectively, cannot possibly fail to see that there are two distinct versions of the Ten Commandments in the Pentateuch—one in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, the other in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy. And these are only the most obvious of many examples.[1] *

[1] The evidence for the composite character of many of the Scriptural books is so powerful that even conservative writers are nowadays constrained to acknowledge its force. Thus one of them (Friedländer, *The Jewish Religion*, 1st ed., p. 56) admits that the dual authorship of Isaiah is "open to discussion"; that some of the Psalms may possibly not have been composed by David; and that the two Books of Samuel, in their entirety, "could not have been written by Samuel."

CHAPTER III

OTHER SOURCES OF JUDAISM

THE Bible, then, is the chief source of our knowledge of Judaism. But it is not the only source. Many additions have been made to the religion of Israel since the times of the Bible. Indeed, the term "Judaism" applies, strictly speaking, only to the religion as it existed after the Biblical age, when it had been expanded under the influence of great teachers. Even before that age had quite closed, books were written by learned and God-fearing Israelites, which, owing to causes that cannot now be precisely ascertained, were not included in the authorised collection usually called the "Canon" of the Scriptures, though on many grounds some of them were deserving of a place in it. These Books are known as the *Apocrypha*, or "hidden books." The most valuable of the Apocrypha are the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Jesus (Joshua), the son of Sirach (Ben Sira), or Ecclesiasticus, and the two Books of the Maccabees. Some of the Apocryphal Books, Ecclesiasticus for example, were originally written in Hebrew, but the majority of them in Greek. These books played no small part in the development of Judaism.

More important still was the influence of the order of

teachers known as the Rabbins (*i.e.* masters or teachers). Tradition—whether rightly or wrongly is a vexed question—speaks of the "Men of the Great Synagogue" (*i.e.* Council), said to date from the time of Ezra (fifth century B.C.), who received from the Prophets the task of safeguarding Israel's religion. The last of them was Simon the Just (third century B.C.), and with him the Rabbinical period may be said to have commenced. The Rabbins began that task of amplifying the doctrine and practices of Judaism which afterwards took shape in the Talmud, a work which was finally completed about the year 500 of the present era.[1]

The Talmud is thus the outcome of a series of religious activities extending over a period of more than seven centuries. The Rabbins, its authors, were guided by two great principles. The first principle was that the Pentateuch, or the "Written Law," whose injunctions are sometimes obscure or not sufficiently precise, must be interpreted and supplemented by the "Oral Law," which, according to the Rabbinical theory, had been handed down by word of mouth from ancient times, and even, as regards part of it, from the time of Moses.[2] The second principle was that the necessity of preserving Judaism imposed on its custodians the duty of giving a still wider scope to this process of elaboration, and of ensuring to the religion the further development that was needed in order to adapt it to the altered conditions of the times.[3] These principles obviously made for elasticity

[1] The reference is to the Babylonian Talmud. The Palestinian or Jerusalem Talmud was completed a century or two earlier.

[2] *Shabbath*, 31 a; *Siphrê* to Deut. xxxiii. 10.

[3] Thus the Rabbins can lay down such famous axioms as "The Sabbath has been given to you; ye have not been given to the Sabbath" (*Mechilta* to

and growth. Judaism, instead of sinking into a rigid, stereotyped system, became a progressive and therefore a living religion, a religion making a continuous and adequate response to living needs. And this important advantage the Rabbins secured for Judaism not only during the Talmudic age, but for all ages. The process of development could not logically be limited to any one century or period. To affirm that Judaism has the right to adjust itself to the requirements of a new generation was to affirm it for all time.

* To assign limits, then, to the development of Judaism, and to assert that the communication of Divine truth to Israel ceased with Moses or with Malachi or with the close of the Talmud, is to ignore the teachings not only of reason, but of history. That the Talmudic hypothesis of an oral tradition illustrating and supplementing the written Word has historic justification, is less questionable than it was once thought to be. One of the most interesting by-products of the Critical Theory, now in so much favour with Biblical scholars, is the support it extends to that hypothesis. Modern critics of the Old Testament are inclined to see in the word *Torah*, usually and inadequately translated *law*, a reference to the oral direction given by priest or prophet in the Divine name on moral and religious questions.[1] And that this teaching should have been treasured up in the minds of its devout hearers in various ages, and so in course of time have formed a body of sacred traditional lore, is easily

Exod. xxxi. 14), and (with reference to Lev. xviii. 5, "Ye shall keep My statutes, and My judgements: which if a man do, he shall live by them") "man is to live by the Law, not die under it" (*Yoma*, 85 b; *Siphra* to the passage).

[1] See, *e.g.* Driver's *Amos* in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*, p. 230 *seq.* For the wide significance of *Torah* in the Rabbinical literature see S. Schechter in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. viii. p. 5 *seq.*

conceivable. Part of the treasured doctrine was doubtless preserved by being incorporated in the Scriptures, but part, at least, of the residue must have continued to live in the memory of the faithful. The collection and sifting of this oral teaching was, according to the Rabbinical theory, the task of the Scribes and the Sages, and gave its origin to the Talmud. Certainly, the Bible contains many references to the spoken direction on religious matters given by the Priests and the Prophets in ancient times.[1]

Of the need for religious direction of this kind there can be no doubt whatever. The Mosaic Law, assuming that it existed in a written form in the early Prophetic age, could not have sufficed as a religious guide for the people. The injunctions of the Pentateuch are sometimes incomplete, and in the absence of an authoritative interpretation, obedience to them would have been difficult and even impracticable. Thus, to give familiar examples, it is only by Tradition that "the fruit of goodly trees," to be used in the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles,[2] is identified with the citron, and that the ambiguous "Sabbath," from the morrow of which the seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost are to be counted,[3] is affirmed to mean the first day of the former Festival. Moreover, cases must have continually arisen, not actually provided for by the Law, upon which it was essential to have an authoritative decision. In other words, the sacred text had to be expounded and amplified in such a way as to meet the ever-multiplying wants of the religious life. This was the great task of the post-Biblical teachers

[1] See *e.g.* Lev. x. 11; Deut. xxxiii. 10; Jer. ii. 8, xviii. 18; Mal. ii. 7; 2 Kings iv. 23; Isa. i. 10, viii. 16-20; Lam. ii. 9; Amos ii. 4.

[2] Lev. xxiii. 40.

[3] Lev. xxiii. 15.

of Israel, and in performing it they laid the foundation of traditional Judaism.[1]

The authority of Tradition is an ancient subject of controversy. It was the great battle-ground of Sadducees and Pharisees, and, in later times, of Rabbinites and Karaites. The sympathies of Israel at large were, in the former case, as we learn from Josephus,[2] on the side of Tradition, and they have been on the same side ever since. Can we doubt that they were wisely given? The mere letter of Scripture, as we have seen, did not always suffice for guidance. But, even when it did, obedience might become irksome, and Religion, which should be a joy, degenerate into a burden. The Karaites have furnished an impressive object-lesson on this point. Insisting upon a literal fulfilment of the Mosaic Law without regard to its broader purport, they have refused to allow a fire to be kindled on the Sabbath even in the depth of a Russian winter, thus making the holy day a season of discomfort instead of "a delight." From such absurd consequences the sober Jewish mind recoiled. An exposition of the Sabbatical law which defeated its clear intent stood self-condemned. The inspired legislator could not possibly have meant his injunctions to be taken in their bare literalness, without some interpretation that would elucidate what was obscure and soften what time had made harsh.

This is the theory of Tradition so strenuously affirmed by the Talmudic school. It is a theory whose logical effect is to make Judaism a practical religion, and to provide for its continual self-adaptation to the needs of

[1] See on this point the note in Lazarus' *Ethics of Judaism* appended to section 261 a.

[2] *Antiquities*, XIII. x. 6.

successive ages.[1] Both points have been strangely overlooked by certain schools of liberal Jewish thought. It has been deemed the characteristic function of progressive Judaism to reject the traditional view, and to keep Judaism strictly within the four corners of the Bible, a position which is clearly self-contradictory, seeing that no religion can be progressive which is identified only with certain phases of it. Moreover, this view has proved to be impossible in practice. Its advocates have inconsistently to fall back upon the Rabbinical citron at Tabernacles and the traditional ram's horn at New Year. They borrow the Feast of Dedication (*Chanucah*) from post-Biblical ordinances, and the whole framework of their liturgy from Talmudic and post-Talmudic sources.

Still more significant is it that Traditionalism, far from being a synonym for religious stagnation, as is commonly supposed, is necessarily the authoritative licence for religious progress. A moment's thought will suffice to make this clear. To stipulate that the spirit of Scripture shall illuminate its mere letter, and so to secure the evolution of a living Judaism, is an enormous step in the path of religious expansion. But this is not all. The interpretation which is to elucidate the Divine Word is itself mutable; it responds to the ever-changing needs of the human mind. The Oral Law, so resolutely upheld in principle, is not fixed, but fluid; its growth does not belong to any one age, but continues indefinitely. Thus the Rabbins could declare that to Moses every ordinance

[1] "If," says the Talmud, "the precepts of the *Torah* had been put in a rigid, sharply-defined form, the teacher, with his expositions, would have had no *locus standi*" (*Jer. Synhed.* iv. 2). Compare *Pesikta Rab.* p. 111 a, and *Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. xii. 6. In other words, the Law has been purposely left vague, so as to give play to individual minds intent on expounding it.

was revealed that was to be instituted in after times, however remote,[1] and that the doctrine of any teacher, however obscure he might be, was to be venerated in the same degree as if it had been taught by the Prophets or even by Moses himself.[2]

The whole body of Tradition, then, whoever the teacher that has added to it, and whatever the age that has produced him, is invested with authority. In other words, new conditions call for new interpretations and new ordinances, and these are sacred. They form part and parcel of the true, because the living Judaism.

This is the real implication of the Talmudic theory. If at certain periods that theory has made for rigidity and apparent narrowness, it provides at other times for elasticity and growth. The authority that binds in one age is free to loose in another;[3] for, as we have seen, that authority is perennial; its mandate is never exhausted. With the Divine Word as its text, it gives such expositions of religious truth and practice as are consonant with the ideas and needs of the times. Thus the traditional theory, far from setting a term to the growth of Judaism, in reality is the guarantee of its continuous evolution. It makes provision for that adaptation to environment which is the essential condition of development and life.[4] *

[1] *Jer. Megillah*, i. 7. Compare *Talm. Bab. Megillah*, 19 b.

[2] *Sifrë* to Deut. xi. 13.

[3] It would be unfair to characterise the lifework of the Talmudic Rabbins as that of "binding" only. They did not shrink on occasion from modifying a Pentateuchal law. Thus they substituted a money fine for the literal enforcement of the *lex talionis* (Exod. xxi. 23-25); they virtually abolished the enactment (Deut. xv. 2), which cancelled all debts in the Year of Release; and they roundly declared in general terms (*Menachoth*, 99 b) that there were circumstances in which to suspend the laws of the *Torah* was to fulfil it.

[4] For some notable observations on this subject see Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, Introduction, and p. 222 *seq*.

And so it is that the growth of Judaism did not cease with the Talmudic age. It continued long afterwards; it is going on to-day. During the fifteen centuries that have elapsed since the completion of the Talmud there have arisen many teachers in Israel who have contributed by their writings to the store of Jewish truth; and these writers we accordingly number among the sources from which our religion is derived. Examples of such productions are—the *Emunoth Vedeoth* (Beliefs and Opinions), by Saadyah (tenth century); the *Choboth Halebaboth* (Duties of the Heart), by Bachya (eleventh century); the *Cuzari*, by Jehudah Halevi (twelfth century); the *Morë Nebuchim* (Guide of the Perplexed), by Maimonides (twelfth century); and the *Sepher Ikkarim* (Book of Principles), by Joseph Albo (fifteenth century).

All such works, enhancing as they do the religious or moral wealth of Judaism, may be regarded as amplifying the Tradition of which the Rabbins loved to tell. Their teachings took root by degrees in the Jewish consciousness, and so became part of the Jewish religion. The religious ideas of one generation became the traditions and the rule of the next. Nay, all such later teachings may be regarded as adding to the stream of the Divine revelation which began with the inspired writings of the Bible. For God has never been without His messengers. They may have been men of diverse spiritual powers, and their utterances may be of unequal value. Now it is an Isaiah that is chosen, one whose mouth a seraph touches with the live coal upon the altar, and whose words are made to burn and glow with sacred fire; now it is only a placid soul, such as was to be found among the medieval teachers, setting down his saintly thoughts in

the quietude of his study. At one time it is an eloquent prophecy that calls to us, at another only an utterance of stammering lips. But all alike are of God; all are manifestations of His truth; all tell some message that the age has especial need to hear. All go to the making of that complex, that changeful product which we call Judaism.

But when all this has been said, the Bible still retains its proud position as the principal source of Israel's religion. It is the rock from which Judaism has been hewn, the foundation upon which the superstructure, slowly fashioned during many successive generations, has been reared. But for the Bible there would have been no Judaism and no Israel. Nay, more, the Bible has a quality all its own. It is more truly Divine than all the other books that have appeared within the Jewish domain. Even as Moses is declared to have been the greatest of all the Prophets in Israel, so the Bible is the most sublime of all the factors that have gone to the making of Israel's religion. The high-souled men who call to us from its pages had a clearer vision of God than had any of the teachers, pious and noble though they were, that rose after them.

BOOK I

BELIEFS

CHAPTER I

FAITH AND REASON

We have seen that, like every other religion, Judaism consists of two great constituents — Beliefs and Moral Teachings. To these, as we have also seen, must be added a third constituent—Ceremonial. These are the three divisions of our subject, and we now proceed to consider them in detail, beginning with Beliefs and reserving Morals for the last.

What, then, are the Beliefs of Judaism? They may be grouped about one or other of three central ideas: viz. (1) God. (2) Man. (3) Israel.

But first it is necessary to say a few words about Belief in general.

The Bible never commands us to believe, though it commends belief. Such a command would be useless. Belief cannot be coerced. I may order another person to do an act he dislikes, and if I have sufficient authority over him he will obey; but I can never, by simply commanding him, make him believe something to be true which he thinks untrue. Belief is a matter of mental persuasion. We believe in a statement only because our minds are satisfied as to its truth. Real belief is an

intellectual condition. Reason is its ultimate foundation. We say real belief, because to accept a statement as true in spite of the protests of reason, to believe in a doctrine, as some one said he did, because it is impossible, is not belief, but credulity. Judaism asks us not for credulity, but for true faith—faith based on reason.

The Bible, as we have said, never commands us to believe. It commands us to *know*, to get that intellectual persuasion in which belief, to be worth anything, must be rooted. "Know therefore this day, and consider in thy heart, that the Lord He is God in the heavens above and upon the earth beneath: there is none else."[1] The great Moses Mendelssohn laid particular stress upon this truth. "I recognise," he said, "only those as eternal truths which the human mind can comprehend, and human powers verify." "Commands and prohibitions," he adds, "rewards and punishments, apply only to acts, for they alone are under the control of the Will; whereas belief and doubt are regulated not by wishes or desires, not by fear or hope, but by the ability or inability to discern the truth." "The Divine religion," he finely declares, "brandishes no avenging sword; its power is the Divine might of truth."[2]

But though the Bible never commands us to believe, it expects belief, and supplies us with the means of attaining it. Nay, it enunciates great essential truths—truths without which there would be no such thing as Judaism. It is a mistake to suppose that Judaism has no definite creed, no dogmas. It is only necessary to mention the

[1] Deut. iv. 39.

[2] Kayserling's *Letters of Mendelssohn*, quoted in Hamburger's *Real Encyclopädie*, art. "Lehr und Denkfreiheit."

great principle of the Unity of God in order to show how great that mistake is. Judaism is sometimes spoken of as a practical religion, as a religion whose paramount aim is the regulation of conduct, the hallowing of life. And so it is; but it seeks to hallow life by controlling its springs, by moulding ideas and convictions. Religious practice, as Bachya insists,[1] must needs be poor and unhealthy that does not issue from sanctity of soul.

* Judaism, then, has dogmas. But, as Renan has said, it is "a minimum of Religion," or rather of theology. Its essential principles are few and simple. From time to time great teachers have attempted to frame a more or less elaborate scheme of necessary Jewish belief. Maimonides, Chasdai Crescas, Simon Duran, Joseph Albo are instances. But all such schemes, differing as they did from each other, were put forth on the individual responsibility of their respective authors, never in the name of the Jewish Church; and there is reason to believe that their varying form was largely determined by the passing religious needs of the various ages in which they appeared.[2] The scheme of Maimonides, it is true, has prospered most. His Thirteen Creeds have found their way into the Jewish Prayer-Book, both in prose and in verse. But they have always encountered opposition, and the objections to them are not likely to diminish as time goes on, and men's thoughts widen. That the greatest authorities on Judaism should thus disagree as to its essential dogmas is a significant fact. It shows that, apart from a few leading ideas, the Jewish Creed has always been in a fluid condition, and that Judaism

[1] Introduction to the *Choboth Halebaboth*.

[2] See Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, p. 215 *seq.*

leaves us free to construct our own theology, so long as we do not trench upon certain easily recognised principles which, because they are wrought into the very fabric of the religion, could not be discarded without destroying the religion itself. To deny the existence of God, for example, or His unity or His spiritual nature, nay, to deny His providential government of the world in general, or the Divine appointment of Israel in particular, is manifestly to tear up the very foundations of Judaism. These are dogmas, for they are of the very essence of the religion. But, dogmas though they are, our acceptance of them must be a rational one, the outcome of thought and intellectual persuasion. *

Thus it is that the Bible, the great text-book of Judaism, though never commanding us to believe in the Supreme, *persuades* us to believe in Him. It supplies us with proofs of the Divine Existence. It bids us turn, now to the great wonders of Nature, now to the story of the Past, and cries "Behold your God!" "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth His handywork," so the Psalmist reminds us.[1] "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things," so says the Prophet.[2] From Nature the Bible leads us to Nature's God. We are asked to believe that there is a Power behind the universe, not on the mere assertion of the Bible, but on the most convincing of all testimony—the testimony of the universe itself. But this is only part of the truth. There is the life-story of Israel—his wondrous preservation, his equally marvellous chastisement, his manifest selection for the performance of a great work in the world; and there is, moreover, the fate of the nations—

[1] Ps. xix. 1. [2] Isa. xl. 26.

of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia—all of which bear witness to the Supreme and His overruling Providence. It is to such evidence that the Bible appeals, and on which it rests its assertion that God lives and reigns.

* And it is to such evidence that the human mind must still go back if it is to have a stable creed. We must not take our Religion wholly on trust; we must satisfy ourselves of its truth by bringing it to the test of reason. "How do I know that there is a God?" is a question that is not only natural but commendable. It is the glory of Judaism that it encourages such questions, that it invites us to free inquiry into the grounds of our religious belief.[1]

Unlike Christianity, Judaism does not set up the Bible or the Church as a despotic authority, whose ordinances it is a sin to reason about. Maimonides is a conspicuous, but by no means a solitary example of the intellectual freedom which Judaism concedes to its followers. In his great work, the *Morë Nebuchim*, he gives his reasoning powers full play in investigating the grounds of the Biblical precepts; in other words, he seeks to justify the Scriptural religion to the intellect.

But the possession of this great privilege implies the duty of exercising it. What is conceded to us is the right to inquire, not the right to indolently doubt. The two things are often confounded. If we ought not to suspend our reasoning powers in order to believe, we ought not to suspend them in order to deny. Wilful

[1] Bachya insists upon such inquiry, by those who have the requisite intelligence, as a sacred duty, one whose neglect amounts to a positive sin (Introduction to the *Choboth Halebaboth*); and the earlier part of his great book is devoted to Natural Theology, to a verification of the fundamental truths of Religion on purely rational grounds.

scepticism is at least as reprehensible as blind credulity. To exercise our "God-like reason" is always a solemn duty; but its solemnity is immeasurably heightened when it summons us to ponder those great verities of Religion by which "men live, and wherein is wholly the life of the spirit." To get a firmer hold upon such a truth as the Divine Existence, to realise by way of the intellect the Deity that lives and moves in the universe, is a sacred task which we must fulfil even though it cost us much time and thought.

And let us not forget that while the subject is huge, our powers are very limited. We are finite minds dealing with the Infinite. Just as we can see even with the most powerful telescope only a fragment of the physical universe, so we can see only a part of the workings of the stupendous Power behind it.

There must always be a region into which we cannot penetrate, a mystery we cannot solve. When the intellect has done its utmost, we must still have recourse to faith. Where we cannot know we must be content to trust. Nor is it only in the domain of Religion that this exercise of faith is demanded. It is an essential element in the conduct of everyday life. Without faith in human nature, in its honesty, its veracity, its trustworthiness, there could be no such thing as commerce. It is the very breath of life for the great world of business. And it is equally indispensable for the social life. Society could not hold together for a single day if men did not trust and believe in one another.

Moreover, faith is the necessary equipment even of the scientific investigator, himself being witness. Religion postulates a Divine Mind as the explanation of the uni-

verse. But the demand which it thus makes upon our faith is no greater than that put forth by physical science, with its assumption of a substance filling all space, to which it has given the name of the Ether. It is a substance not merely imperceptible by the senses, not merely imponderable, but in its nature entirely different from all other forms of matter. It "has probably no chemical quality, and is not composed of atoms. It is neither gaseous nor solid."[1] In other words, it is something which stands utterly alone in the material universe, so far as we know it. And yet the man of science can imagine such a substance, and does not hesitate to affirm its existence. He is compelled to do so in order to account for certain natural phenomena which would otherwise be inexplicable. But what is this affirmation of a substance which no eye has seen and no balance is fine enough to weigh, nay, whose very nature and properties are—the word is not too strong—supernatural, but an act of pure faith? The most determined champion of the materialistic theory fully acknowledges the fact, and is forced to admit that Science cannot, any more than Religion, pin itself down to absolutely demonstrable propositions. "We are compelled to make use of faith," Haeckel himself admits,[2] "even in science itself. . . . The man who renounces theory altogether, and seeks to construct a pure science with certain facts alone, must give up the hope of any knowledge of causes and, consequently, of the satisfaction of reason's demand for causality. . . . The force of gravity in the theory of gravitation and in cosmogony, energy itself in its relation to matter, the ether

[1] Haeckel, *The Riddle of the Universe*, 1st English ed., p. 232.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 307 *seq.*

of optics and electricity, the atoms of the chemist, the living protoplasm of histology, the heredity of the evolutionist—these and similar conceptions may be regarded by a sceptical philosophy as mere hypotheses and the outcome of scientific faith, yet they are indispensable for us until they are replaced by better hypotheses."

Faith, then, is indispensable to physical science no less than to religion. And if it is admissible in the one domain of thought, it cannot be inadmissible in the other. A Haeckel will attempt to disprove this assertion, but without success. He will tell us[1] that "in science only such hypotheses are admitted as lie within the sphere of human cognisance," in utter forgetfulness of the Ether he postulates, and of which he has no cognisance whatever. Or he will try to throw us off the scent by declaring[2] that religious faith, unlike the faith of science, "means always belief in a miracle," which is true only of some kinds of religious faith, not of religious faith generally. Or, again, he will warn us[3] that religious faith "assumes supernatural forces and phenomena which are unknown and inadmissible to science, and which are the outcome of illusion and fancy," as though this were not an apt description of so fanciful a substance as the Ether, and as though science were a sort of divine touchstone infallibly distinguishing between the true and the false.

The truth is, that even in the exercise of faith there is no real abdication of the reason. It is because reason discloses God to us in so large a portion of the world and of life, that it justifies us in inferring that He is everywhere in that great domain. The "great leap in the dark" of Faith has Mind for its impulse. We see God

[1] *The Riddle of the Universe*, 1st English ed., p. 307. [2] *Ibid.* p. 309. [3] *Ibid.*

with the eye of the mind in certain phenomena, and this warrants our trust in that vision of Him which the soul's second-sight discerns "behind the veil." For let it be remembered that for the apprehension of the Divine we are not thrust back upon reason alone. We know God by way of the intellect, but by way of the soul as well. Spiritual experience is no less real and trustworthy than the evidence of the mind. God reveals Himself to us as surely in the ecstasy of prayer as in the awe that is aroused within us by the majesty of the physical universe. Nay, even the perception of that majesty is as much spiritual as intellectual. The glory of nature evokes an answering glow within us distinct from the cold light of reasoned knowledge. The splendour of a sunset, the grandeur of the sea, the silence of the everlasting hills, will arouse a mystic sense of the Divine, that at once transcends and reinforces their appeal to the intellect. Their wondrousness proclaims a Divine Power, but some nameless influence of theirs touches strange chords within us; "deep calls unto deep"; we become conscious of a larger life than this, of a world about us in which earth and sea and sky have no part. In Bachya's words: "We see, yet not with the eye; we hear, yet not with the ear; we speak, yet not with the tongue."[1]

Thus does the human spirit bear witness to God. Judaism is often called the religion of reason. It is this, but it is also the religion of the soul. It recognises the value of that mystic insight, those indefinable intuitions, which, taking up the task at the point where the mind impotently abandons it, carries us straight into the presence of the King. Thus it has found room both for the

[1] *Choboth Halebaboth*, chap. viii.

keen speculator on theological problems and for the mystic who, because he feels God, declines to reason about Him—for a Maimonides and a Mendelssohn, but also for a Nachmanides, a Vital, and a Luria. And who shall blame it? Certainly not we of this generation, which is beginning to see that every human faculty is worthy of cultivation for its own sake, but also as an avenue by which God may come to us. And though total self-abandonment to mysticism has wrought fatal injury to many a mind and many a character, to forbid it altogether is to deny Religion what, with some natures, is her most effective instrument.

On the other hand, there are minds for whom the religious life has no evidential value, and who deny that spiritual experience can legitimately be adduced as a witness to the reality of its Divine Subject. For them the only admissible proofs are external, those furnished, for example, by the physical universe or by the life-story of mankind. But while rightly seeking for such proofs they must keep in view their true character and limits. They must remember that, on the intellectual side, it is possible to attain to no more than a persuasion of the truth of a dogma like that of the Divine Existence. Strict verification, such as is possible in the case of a mathematical proposition, is out of the question. We can prove to demonstration that two and two are four, or that two sides of a triangle are greater than the third side. But it is otherwise with the great truths of Religion. They are matters of inference, and inference from apparently contradictory phenomena. The facts of the universe and of life now proclaim the Divine Existence, and now seem as loudly to deny it. It is only by weighing these

diverse witnesses one against the other, only by balancing probabilities, that we are able to arrive at a judgment upon the claims of Religion. And the majority of mankind, not excluding the greatest minds of this thoughtful and scientific age, agree that those claims are well founded. Of the two hypotheses, God or no God, an infinite Mind or an infinite self-controlled Machine, the former, by general consent, is that which best explains the universe. Whatever the problems Religion has to face, the difficulty which confronts materialism is immeasurably greater.

Nor must we be disappointed because the evidence in favour of the religious hypothesis is not always clear. For the science of Religion is the most arduous of the sciences. No investigator has so huge a field to explore, nay, is possessed of so slender an equipment, as the seeker after Divine truth. With finite powers he attempts to comprehend the Infinite, "by searching to find out God." Can we wonder that he is so often at fault, that he loses the clue and wanders about aimlessly in a bewildering maze? The man of science is constantly being baffled even when he keeps to his legitimate province. He cannot explain such familiar phenomena as life and death, thought, and memory, and consciousness. Is it surprising that we too should be baffled—we who try to explain the nature and the ways of the Infinite God? Surely, we may confess that such knowledge is too wonderful for us. "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know?"[1]

But though our capacity for dealing with these high matters is small, we must not refrain from exercising it.

[1] Job xi. 8.

If to each of us were granted that clear spiritual insight which reveals the Supreme to the elect soul, insight from which sprang the prophetic visions of old, we might spare ourselves the arduous intellectual quest. But, for most of us, patient thought is the only means of reaching religious certitude. And it is not because there are insoluble problems that we are justified in declining to grapple with the problems that give promise of solution. It is not because Heaven is so often hidden from us by an impenetrable cloud, that we should shut our eyes against the light that steals through its rifts. Ignorant though we are and must remain, we can still know enough to justify belief, to vindicate the faith which sees God in that inmost shrine of Nature and of Life which is closed against all lower vision. *

CHAPTER II

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

THE available evidence for the truth of the Divine Existence is abundant enough to satisfy every fair-minded thinker, even in these days of daring inquiry. The scientific spirit which probes and weighs the holiest truths, has by a wondrous compensation furnished religion with new arguments. Like the ocean which restores to the land in one place what it has stolen from it in another, physical science diminishes the empire of Religion with one hand only to extend it with the other. We may have lost some of the childlike trust that distinguished the men of old, but we have gained in reasoned faith. We know more about the laws that govern this mighty universe; and our greater knowledge fills us with a correspondingly deeper awe of the power and the wisdom that ordained them. Instruments like the telescope, the microscope, the spectroscope, have revealed to us wonder-lands, hitherto unknown, in the boundless world outside us. And the same advance has taken place in our know-ledge of ourselves, in physiology and the sciences akin to it. But the more we know of these sciences, the clearer becomes their witness to the Divine. If the

Psalmist, with his slender physiological knowledge, could cry, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made,"[1] how much more powerfully ought we, to whom science has more fully revealed the marvels of the human body, be drawn in reverence and homage to the living God!

And the truth is far-reaching. In ancient times the earth was supposed to be the centre of the universe, and the universe to be limited to the orbs that flash upon the sight from the firmament. We know now not only that this earth is a mere speck in the solar system, but that there is a countless host of such systems scattered through space, and that the stars revealed by the most powerful telescope, though they are "as the sand of the sea for multitude," form but a fragment of a universe that is infinite. And the tale of grandeur thus told us from on high is echoed by the objects around us. Not only is the construction of the meanest creature—the beetle that crawls under our feet, the midge that floats in the air, the anemone that lurks in the pools on the seashore—a thing of wonder, but we know that the air and the waters are swarming with life, filled with tiny beings which only the instruments of the man of science disclose to the sight. And all these marvels can point only in one direction. If they evince power and wisdom, they must surely testify to the existence of a Being who is all-powerful and wise. The awe with which they inspire us is awe not of them, but of the greatness of which they silently tell. The scent and splendour of the rose fill us with joy, but with a more chastened, a more solemn feeling also. The joy is for the beauty of the flower, the awe is for its wonders. We bow before the might that

[1] Ps. cxxxix. 14.

has made such loveliness, the wisdom that has woven it into the motley raiment of Nature. And bowing before that might and that wisdom, we give glory to the Mind that has evinced them. And that Mind we call God.

As soon, then, as we acknowledge the power manifested in the universe we have the beginnings of a religion. Men may refuse to write that word Power with a capital P, affecting not to believe in a personal God, in a Divine *Being*, but only in some force or tendency. They may call themselves agnostics or whatever they choose. But they are on the threshold of Religion all the same. They have penetrated further into the sanctuary even than this, if they could only see it. For a force or tendency that makes for intelligent ends cannot be self-existent. All that we know of the physical universe teaches us that force is essentially unintelligent. If the great energies of Nature were left to riot unrestrained, this world would cease to move, to exist; the stars would fall from their places in the firmament; we should have not order, but confusion, not a cosmos, but chaos. Order, law, life, to which the universe so abundantly testifies, are only made possible by the operation of Mind. A familiar example will illustrate this. A force such as steam or electricity keeps an engine at work; but a mind is needed to generate and apply the force. You may have not only your engine, but your steam. But unless some intelligence brings them into relation with each other, the engine will never work. Admit that the universe is a machine, marvellously contrived and moved, and you must admit that it has been so contrived and is so moved only by the intervention of a supremely wise Mind.

And to this conclusion we are led, whatever theory we adopt as to the manner in which the universe came into existence. In former days it was thought that the heavens and the earth and all that is in them were the result of special creative acts. But in modern times the doctrine of evolution, largely as the result of Darwin's great researches, has found wide acceptance, and has revolutionised men's ideas on this question. According to this doctrine the various forms of life on this earth have not been separately called into being, but have been developed, under the influence of certain natural and mechanical processes, from a few primitive types of the simplest character. Now evolution, it must be remembered, is only a theory, though a highly plausible one. It is not a scientifically established truth. But even if it were so established, the fact would not weaken in the smallest degree the credibility of the fundamental proposition laid down by Religion—that which affirms the existence of God. The idea of evolution does not deliver us from the necessity of postulating Divine intelligence as the cause of the universe. On the contrary, it intensifies that necessity. If transcendent wisdom was required to create each type of animal life separately, how much more was it needed to endow a few simple organisms with the capacity for gradual development into a vast multitude of highly complex forms, and to think out and will the appropriate conditions for bringing that capacity into play. Man's remote ancestor may possibly have been a jellyfish; but only infinite intelligence could have made a jellyfish a potential man, and have planned and ordained the long series of changes that would have to take place before the potential became

the actual, before the jellyfish developed into an Isaiah or a Shakespeare.

In the memorable words of Darwin himself:[1] "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms, most beautiful and most wonderful, have been, and are being evolved."

* How inadequate and inexact, then, is the statement of a professed seeker after truth like Haeckel, who can put forth evolution as an explanation of the variety of organic forms on the earth, and even declare that Darwin so represented it. "Darwin," he says,[2] "has proved by his theory of selection that the orderly processes in the life and structure of animals and plants have arisen without any preconceived design." And further, "The theory of selection teaches us that this organic progress is an inevitable consequence of the struggle for existence."[3] It is difficult to conceive of a "theory" teaching us anything. But assuming that the varied procession of life on this earth is the result of evolution acting in the struggle for existence, it by no means follows that evolution is its final and sufficient cause. It is impossible for the mind seeking after the origin of things to rest in a mere process or law. A mechanical explanation of phenomena cannot possibly content it. The process, so orderly and so vast, must have had a mind to will it; the law implies a lawgiver. So, at least, Darwin could

[1] *The Origin of Species*, 1901 ed., p. 669.
[2] *The Riddle of the Universe*, 1st English ed., p. 76.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 278.

admit.[1] And though, in its old and narrow sense, design is incompatible with evolution, in its larger significance it is quite reconcilable with it. The Supreme may not have formed each species by separate creative acts; but by ordaining the process which ensured the variety of organic forms, He may as properly be said to have designed them as if He had fashioned them singly by special efforts.

Those persons, therefore, who consider the evolutionary theory the most satisfactory explanation of the origin of the universe, are free to hold it without any veto from Religion. They can adopt it without doing violence to the dogma of the existence of a Divine Being, all-wise and all-powerful, which constitutes the foundation of the Jewish Faith. *

We have said that the evidence for the existence of a Higher Power is not drawn exclusively from the world outside us. Part of it is furnished by human nature itself. We have referred already to the structure and the functions of the human body as witnesses to God. To their message the mind with its marvels joins its testimony. The eye, even if it were of no use, would still excite our admiration by its delicate texture and its transcendent beauty. As an instrument for seeing, it is incomprehensibly more wonderful. As an example of perfect adaptation to a given end it inspires us with

[1] Other advanced thinkers admit it. Weismann, for example. "It would be a great delusion," he warns us, "if any one were to believe that he had arrived at a comprehension of the universe by tracing the phenomena of nature to mechanical principles. He would thereby forget that the assumption of eternal matter, with its eternal laws, by no means satisfies our intellectual need for causality."—*Studies in the Theory of Descent*, English ed. 1882, p. 710.

astonishment and awe. But not until we take a step further and think of the eye as one of the gates of the brain, connecting vision with sensation and thought, do we perceive all the grandeur of this little organ. We see a person, and recognise him as a friend; we see a picture, and its beauty fills us with pleasure. How the two operations are linked together in each case we know not; we only know that a link there is. It is an impenetrable mystery. But the wondrousness of the phenomenon, the mystery itself, testifies to God. Nay, there is the whole range of mental processes—consciousness, thought, emotion, memory—all so marvellous when we come to think of them. These too are God's witnesses, Bibles within ourselves, inner revelations of the Divine. Think, too, of Conscience, or the Moral Sense as it is sometimes called. It is the voice within us that alternately exhorts and warns, a flame in the breast which now scorches and sears it, now warms it with the glow of an exquisite joy. This power to know good and evil, this mysterious law engraven on the heart's tablets, this conscious possession of a higher self, of an ideal by which in our best moments we measure our acts and our lives—whence has it come? Is it a mere accident, the one chance thing in a universe whose every part shows deliberate purpose? Or is this too not a manifestation of Divine wisdom and will? Does not the ideal within us correspond with some eternal ideal, some pattern of goodness fashioned by God Himself?

Finally, God's witnesses are to be found not only in human nature, but in human experience. From time to time we see what is figuratively called the "hand of God" working in the fate of men. We see the sinner

overtaken by a just punishment, or we follow the process by which some life is wonderfully guided towards a wise and beneficent end. Nor is it only the individual life that bears this testimony. The fate of nations ofttimes proclaims the action of an over-ruling Providence. "The history of the world," it has been said, "is God's judgment of the world." There is nothing haphazard in national destiny. It is no mere coincidence that great powers like Egypt and Assyria and Persia, that had become morally decadent, should have entered on the downward path that brought them to extinction, or that the might of Rome, the mistress of the world, should have begun to decline simultaneously with the disappearance of her ancient virtues. And the history of the Jewish people is equally a witness to God and His sovereign will. Their periodical faithlessness to their religious ideals has been visited upon them in suffering; and, on the other hand, as though upborne by a Divine purpose, they have signally triumphed over the immeasurably mightier forces arrayed against them. It is in the revelation of God as the disposer of national destinies that the Bible renders one of its chief services to the cause of Religion. Its first words are naturally devoted to emphasising the great truth that the universe is the work of the Almighty's hands; but it quickly proceeds to its chief task, that of telling the early story of the human race, and of so telling it as to bring out lucidly and forcibly its testimony to the living God. In the Bible the Supreme is described as doing everything, even as hardening Pharaoh's heart, so profoundly convinced are the writers that human destiny, both individual and national, is the Divine handiwork. The history of Joseph is another striking instance. Yet

another is the struggle between Moses and Pharaoh. It is depicted as being what it was, a contest between the Egyptian monarch and God, and, as was inevitable, God triumphs at last. And this is the character of the Bible narrative throughout. Its supreme aim is to exemplify the truth implicitly taught by all history, the cardinal truth that God lives and reigns. It is a truth which the Prophets enunciated in their turn. They were never weary of pointing out that Israel's woes were divinely sent as chastisements for his disobedience. Nor, permitting themselves a wider outlook, did they omit to show how the Supreme was at work outside the pale of Israel, how the various nations were but the instruments of the Divine will, now, like Assyria, "the rod of God's anger," raised up to punish "a profane nation,"[1] now chosen, like Cyrus, to comfort God's people in their low estate.[2] When the Egyptian magicians, baffled by an infinitely greater wisdom than theirs, cry "This is the finger of God,"[3] they acknowledge the truth upon which the Scriptural historians are for ever insisting.

[1] Isa. x. 5, 6. [2] Isa. xlv. 1. [3] Exod. viii. 19.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF GOD

JUDAISM affirms that God is perfect. Indeed, this truth follows necessarily from the truth of the Divine existence. The idea of the Divine perfection is implicitly contained in the very idea of God. When we think of God we necessarily think of a Being who has made and rules the universe, one therefore infinitely transcending in might and wisdom the greatest of His creatures. We think of a Being who is free from the defects inherent in humanity, who is immeasurably superior to the changes and chances of this mortal life. If He whom we call God were not such a Being, He would not be God; He would not satisfy our definition of Deity. The true God is, in philosophical language, the Absolute. He is independent of all conditions external to Himself. He is proof against change. For Him time has no meaning. There is no flaw in His wisdom, and no limit to His knowledge. Whatever our ideal of perfection may be, it is realised—more than realised—in Him. This is said to be the great truth embodied in the declaration made by the Almighty to Moses, "I am the I am," the

Absolute, the Unique, and even in the tetragrammation (JHVH), the *four-lettered* name of God in the Hebrew Bible.[1]

But if God is perfect, superior to all changes and chances, He must be a Spirit only, without physical form or qualities. He cannot have a body — be a material being; for matter is the source, the very type, of imperfection — of change and decay and death. Religions like Paganism, which made the gods half human beings, with human passions and failings, or like Christianity, which declares that God once walked the earth in the guise of a man, lived a man's life, and died a death of suffering, really affirm that God is imperfect. To think that the Almighty ever has, or ever will, put on the garb of flesh, or that He is subject to any of the defects, physical or moral, inseparable from the flesh, is to degrade our conception of Him, nay, in effect to deny Him. "No man can see Me and live,"[2] so God taught Moses at that great moment in the Lawgiver's life when he reached the summit of his knowledge of the Divine nature. And we all remember the stress that the Bible lays upon the sin of idolatry, of worshipping as God material objects like the sun or the moon or any of the heavenly host, or of making images and regarding them as fit to represent God. It is a sin sternly condemned in the solemn warnings of the Second Commandment. And when Moses reminds his people of the great manifestation at Sinai, he bids them remember that though God spoke to them, they saw Him not. "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourself, for ye saw no

[1] Maimonides, *Morë Nebuchim*, i. 61, 63.
[2] Exod. xxxiii. 20.

manner of form on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire."[1]

It is quite true that the Bible sometimes uses language which, if taken literally, would imply that God has bodily organs and even human imperfections. Thus we read of the "hand of God," of the Almighty "repenting," of His being "a jealous God." These are what are called *anthropomorphisms*, expressions ascribing to the Supreme attributes that necessarily belong only to human beings. They are of course used only figuratively. God's "hand" stands for God's power; when He forgives He is said to "repent"; when He punishes His people for worshipping strange gods He is described as "jealous." Such language is figuratively used of Him in such cases because it would literally be used in similar cases of human beings. It is not to be supposed that the Almighty knows such feelings as jealousy or repentance; to think so would be to dishonour Him. All such expressions are simple and picturesque modes of communicating ideas which would naturally find favour with men in the childhood of the world. Their figurative character stands out with especial clearness when we think of those Scriptural passages in which Israel is described as God's "first-born," or as being "betrothed" to God.[2] The thought expressed in both cases is the consecration of Israel as God's people, and it is expressed in a highly figurative and poetic manner. Thus regarded, these passages convey a beautiful truth in striking language. But to interpret them literally is to deprive them of all meaning. This is evident in the instance before us. For, strictly speaking, Israel cannot be both God's bride and His first-born. Nor even to-

[1] Deut. iv. 15. [2] Exod. iv. 22; Hosea ii. 19.

day, when exact words have been found for ideas, however abstract, are we able to dispense with such expedients. Our language, both spoken and written, is full of figures of speech, some of them borrowed direct from the Bible. Thus we still speak of God's "hand," of His "all-seeing eye," of His "heavenly throne."

* The truth is that all language, when used in relation to God, is necessarily inadequate, and therefore in effect metaphorical.[1] "Words," we are properly reminded,[2] "which have gained their meanings from finite experience of finite objects of thought, must inevitably falter and fail when we seek to apply them to that which is infinite." And we are further warned[3] that "we do not mend matters by employing terms taken from the inorganic world rather than from human personality. To designate the universal Power by some scientific term, such as Force, does not help us in the least. All our experience of force is an experience of finite forces antagonised by other forces. We can frame no conception whatever of Infinite Force comprising within itself all the myriad antagonistic attractions and repulsions in which the dynamic universe consists. We go beyond our knowledge when we speak of Infinite Force, quite as much as we do when we speak of Infinite Personality. Indeed, no word or phrase which we seek to apply to Deity can be other than an extremely inadequate and unsatisfactory symbol." *

The Absolute Being, then, is necessarily a Spirit. He is also necessarily Alone. He is the One and only God. The doctrine of the Divine Unity is involved in the

[1] R. Chanina (*Berachoth*, 33 b) rebukes a Reader in a synagogue who multiplies epithets in declaring the Divine praises. See *Choboth Halebaboth*, i. 9. [2] Fiske, *Through Nature to God*, p. 158. [3] *Ibid.*

doctrine of the Divine Perfection. Polytheism is its negation, its denial. If there are more gods than one, it is clear that none of them can be perfect, or they would not all exist; none of them is all-sufficient for the task of making and ruling the universe. It demands their united powers. And, in fact, the old Pagans never thought of their gods as perfect. Each god was a monarch reigning over a separate realm, with which the others might not interfere. Like monarchs, too, they often fought with each other for mastery, and one or other of them was beaten.

That form of religion known as Dualism, *i.e.* the belief in two opposing deities, which was the religion professed by the ancient Persians, is a striking illustration of the truth that only the one God can be the perfect—that is, the true God. The gods of the Persians, Ormuzd and Ahriman, were respectively the good and the evil powers, who were always fighting with each other for the empire of the world; and, according as one or the other prevailed, human life was happy or miserable. Clearly, neither of these alternately triumphant and defeated deities could be perfect.[1] And the same objection applies to the doctrine of the Trinity which fills so large a place in the religion of our Christian neighbours. Christianity claims to be a monotheistic religion—a religion, that is, which teaches that there is only one God. In this respect it is in agreement with Judaism. But while Judaism teaches that there is but one God, and that He is one, Christianity teaches that there is but one God, and that He is three. In some mysterious way, according to the Church, God, though one Being, is yet composed of three

[1] Bachya insists upon this truth. See his *Choboth Halebaboth*, i. 7.

distinct persons. To hold such a doctrine is to charge God with imperfection. Each of these three persons cannot be perfect Deity, all-powerful or all-wise; for if so, why should there be three? Each must have a domain from which the others are shut out. Christianity seems indeed to admit this. It distinguishes the three persons of the Trinity as respectively man's Creator, his Redeemer, and his Sanctifier.

In short, there is no escape from the conclusion that as soon as we begin to talk of many gods, or of many persons in one God, we debase our conception of Deity. God ceases to be perfect, ceases to be God, as soon as we deny that He is a strict unity. The perfect, the true God, the ideal of might and wisdom, must needs be One, the sole Author of the universe and of all the diverse threads that make the fabric of human life. And so we find the Lawgiver exclaiming in memorable words: "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is none but Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: and there is none that can deliver out of My hand."[1] And so too the great Prophet of the Captivity declares, with special reference, perhaps, to the Persian Dualism by which he was surrounded: "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form light, and create darkness; I make welfare, and create calamity."[2]

Thus Judaism can have no place in its system for the belief in an evil Power, in a Devil. It is true that a being called the "Hinderer" or the "Adversary" (in Hebrew *Satan*) does mysteriously flash here and there across the pages of the Old Testament. Flash across

[1] Deut. xxxii. 39.

[2] Isa. xlv. 6, 7. According to Cheyne's translation.

them, we say; for whoever this "Adversary" is, he comes upon the scene very fitfully and for brief periods only. He is mentioned scarcely half a dozen times in the Old Testament,[1] as compared with more than fifty times in the New. This fact suffices to show that the idea of an evil Being is really foreign to the genius of the Hebrew Religion. And we may fairly account for the allusions to such a Being in the Old Testament by the contact of the Jews with Persian religious thought which resulted from the Babylonian Captivity. Equally probable is it that in the Hebrew Bible this malevolent Being is not real, but imaginary, a personification of Evil such as would be natural to the Jewish mind under the influence of contemporary ideas. The writers who spoke of an arch adversary or Satan, conceivably did so not because they believed in the existence of such a Power, but because, wishing to speak effectively of the forces that make for sin, they almost inevitably described them in the familiar terms of current phraseology. It is always of *the* Satan that they speak. The use of the word as a proper name, the name of a real person, belongs to later times. Confirmation of this view seems to be afforded by the account of David's numbering of the people which is given in the First Book of Chronicles,[2] where Satan is said to have tempted him into performing this forbidden act, whereas, in the parallel and earlier account in the Second Book of Samuel,[3] the tempter is said to be God Himself. It does not follow because the writers spoke of Satan that they believed in him. Goethe did not

[1] Job i. and ii.; Zech. iii.; 2 Chron. xxi., and doubtfully in Ps. cix. 6.

[2] Chap. ii.

[3] Chap. xxiv.

necessarily believe in Mephistopheles because he wrote *Faust.*

Moreover, the Satan of the Hebrew Bible is devoid of the chief attributes of a devil. He hinders man rather than tempts him. The only human being he actually seduces is David. In the prologue to Job it is God whom he tempts; Job he smites. But him he smites only by virtue of an express mandate from the Supreme. He is, then, never God's rival. He is not the Ahriman of the Persian religion, the maleficent Being in perpetual conflict with his benign fellow deity. Whatever power he possesses is delegated to him by the Most High. He is thus not so much a devil as an emissary of the Almighty, charged with an errand which, though seemingly sinister, yet because it emanates from the Source of all good, is the seed of blessing.

But, as we have said, the Satan of the Hebrew Scriptures is a mere personification of Evil, of the evil that is in the world and in the hearts of men. Some of the Rabbins taught this truth. Satan, the angel of Death and wicked desire, they declared,[1] are one. Certain it is that Satan has never conquered any dominant place in Jewish thought. It is quite impossible to find a Jew who, when confronted with his own wrong-doing, will plead that the Devil tempted him, as though his will had been overborne for the time being by a baleful Power against whom it was hopeless to struggle. Though in very rare instances the Israelite has prayed to be delivered from the "Adversary," it is certain that his belief in the existence of such a Being has been of the vaguest and most shadowy kind. As an effective force

[1] *B. Bathra*, 16 a.

hindering him from right-doing, Satan has had no objective reality for him.[1]

And surely it is well that this should be so. To believe in a devil is to degrade our conception of God. It is to depose Him from the high throne on which He sits in majestic solitude, and to make Him share His rule with a rival. It is to degrade man also. It is to deny him that absolute moral freedom which, as we shall see, is his inalienable birthright. It is to impeach God and man together. For if man is so poor a creature as to be the sport of a malignant Power, who can make him sin and suffer in his own despite, then is the beneficent God weak indeed, seeing that He is powerless to prevent such iniquity.

Against such false, such pessimistic ideas Judaism strenuously protests. The very Book of Job, in which Satan plays so conspicuous a part, declares that all the changes in human destiny, both bright and sombre, are the handiwork of the one omnipotent God. "What!" cries the Patriarch,[2] "shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Joy and sorrow, ease and pain, are but different aspects of the Almighty's work—different manifestations of His will. "Beneficence governs the world,"[3] and beneficence only. And if man sins, it is because he wills to sin, and he alone. But even this evil is ultimately transmuted into good by the Divine alchemy. Man may rise out of his dead self to higher things.

To think of God as a strict unity is, then, the only

[1] The few references to Satan in the Jewish liturgy are omitted from the Prayer-Book of the Reform Jews.

[2] Job ii. 10.

[3] *Aboth*, iii. 15.

rational way of conceiving of Him. And this essentially Jewish conception is in close harmony with the message of the world around us.[1] Every advance of physical science more firmly establishes the fact that the universe is marked by unity of purpose and design, that it has been planned and is controlled by one mind, and not by many minds. Phenomena, like light and darkness, sunshine and storm, growth and decay, which seemed to the men of ancient times the work of different and contending deities, are now seen to be but manifestations of one uniform law, one self-consistent Mind.

Night falls on one hemisphere only that a new day may dawn upon another; the rain and the wind are the handmaids of the sun in his life-giving work; the plant and the animal die in order that others may live. Despite its seeming discords, Nature is marked by a harmony of purpose throughout. All its various parts fit into each other, work with each other, as do the sections of a machine. The bee steals its sweetness from the flower, but at the same time fertilises it with the pollen she has unconsciously carried away on her body from some other flower. Nature moves through a cycle of changes; once complete, the cycle begins again. The seed falls upon the earth; it germinates; it yields the blossom, which casts the seed in its turn; and so on for ever. The sun draws up the water from the ocean in the form of vapour; the vapour becomes a cloud; the cloud empties itself as rain; the rain replenishes the river, which returns it to the sea. Nay, the universe is governed by a firm hand; it is governed by fixed laws, not by caprice. The seasons follow each other in unbroken sequence. The heavenly

[1] See Bachya, *Choboth Halebaboth*, i. 7.

bodies travel their appointed course with such regularity that astronomers can calculate their orbit with mathematical precision. The changes in the little life of the meanest insect are uniform ; order reigns supreme in the most insignificant part of Nature's kingdom. And if there is one truth which Science has established most clearly, it is that the force or energy which works in the universe is one and persistent. Showing itself in diverse forms, it is still essentially ever the same. It is never spent ; it fails not, nor grows weary ; it is unchangeable, deathless.

* Scientific observers are at one on this point. "What," asks an ardent evolutionist, "is the lesson that is taught alike by the correlation of forces, by spectrum analysis, by the revelations of chemistry as to the subtle behaviour of molecules inaccessible to the eye of sense, by the astronomy that is beginning to sketch the physical history of countless suns in the firmament, by the palæontology which is slowly unravelling the wonders of past life upon the earth through millions of ages? What is the grand lesson that is taught by all this? It is the lesson of the unity of nature. To learn it rightly is to learn that all the things that we can see and know in the course of our life in this world are so intimately woven together that nothing could be left out without reducing the whole marvellous scheme to chaos. Whatever else may be true, the conviction is brought home to us that in all this endless multifariousness there is one single principle at work, that all is tending toward an end that was involved from the very beginning, if one can speak of beginnings and ends where the process is eternal. The whole universe is animated by a single principle of life,

and whatever we see in it, whether to our half-trained understanding and narrow experience it may seem to be good or bad, is an indispensable part of the stupendous scheme."[1] "Physics," says Haeckel in his turn, "has proved the unity of the forces of the entire universe. The mechanical theory of heat has shown how intimately they are connected, and how each can, in certain conditions, transform itself directly into another. Spectrum analysis has taught us that the same matter which enters into the composition of all bodies on earth, including its living inhabitants, builds up the rest of the planets, the sun, and the most distant stars. Astrophysics has considerably enlarged our cosmic perspective in revealing to us, in the immeasurable depths of space, millions of circling spheres, larger than our earth, and, like it, in endless transformation, in an eternal rhythm of life and death. Chemistry has introduced us to a multitude of new substances, all of which arise from the combination of a few elements that are incapable of further analysis."[2] And again: "We now know that heat, sound, light, chemical action, electricity, and magnetism are all modes of motion. We can, by a certain apparatus, convert any one of these forces into another, and prove by accurate measurement that not a single particle of energy is lost in the process."[3]

What a flood of light do all these facts throw upon the Divine Nature! If unity marks the universe, the Power that made and controls it must needs be One. "One God, one law, one element"—such is the teaching of science. It is also the teaching of Judaism. Nay, it

[1] Fiske, *Through Nature to God*, p. 23.
[2] *The Riddle of the Universe*, 1st Eng. ed., p. 3.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 235.

was the teaching of Judaism before it was the doctrine of science. The grand conception of the universe implied in the dogma of the Divine Unity paved the way for the modern physicist, with his affirmation of the unity and the orderliness of the cosmos. *

The doctrine of the Divine Unity is the corner-stone of the Jewish religion. It is set forth in the Pentateuch with notable clearness and force. "Hear, O Israel," so runs the impressive adjuration, "the Lord is our God; the Lord is One."[1] The use of the introductory appeal, "Hear, O Israel," is itself a token of the importance with which the great truth was invested by the Scriptural teachers. It is seldom indeed that such words are prefixed to any declaration in the Bible. It was the conception of the Divine Unity that chiefly distinguished the religion of ancient Israel from that of the surrounding nations. And it has ever since been regarded as the one distinctive element of Judaism—the very quintessence of the Jewish creed. For the truth of the Unity of God, the Rabbins declare, the Jew is bound to make the supreme sacrifice of his life. How faithfully the Israelite in every age has fulfilled this duty Jewish history eloquently tells. It is a record of long drawn-out agony, patiently borne in defence of Israel's cardinal truth. Nor has this heroic constancy been exceptional, limited to a few chosen souls. It has been exhibited by an entire race. The Jew has seen that if he failed to bear witness at the stake or on the rack, or in submission to the protracted torture of insult and exile and worldly loss, to the truth of his chief dogma, he would treacherously help to deal its deathblow to Judaism. And, on the other hand,

[1] Deut. vi. 4.

he believed that his anguish would give it new strength and new life. And his belief has been justified. The sad, yet glorious story of Jewish suffering has stirred the respect of the world, not only for the constancy of the sufferers, but for the religion that has inspired it. Nay, it has afforded an example of devotion to Judaism that will live in the Israelite's memory in every age, and strengthen his loyalty to the ancestral faith. "The blood of the martyrs," it has been said, "is the seed of the Church." It is especially true of the Jewish Church, which draws to-day no little of its vitality from the stimulating example of those who suffered and died for it in olden times.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF GOD (*continued*)

GOD, then, is necessarily perfect; and all the various qualities or attributes we ascribe to Him are simply so many different expressions of this truth. They merely denote the Divine perfection seen from diverse points of view. Thus we speak of God as Eternal and Unchangeable, as Omnipotent and Omniscient and Omnipresent. All this He needs must be because He is the absolute self-existent Being, for whom time does not exist, who alone is unchanging in a universe of change, whose power and knowledge know no bounds, whom space cannot confine.[1]

* God, we have said, is omnipotent. But our conception of omnipotence must be rational. It would not be correct to say that God can do everything. The infinite Mind, He is bound by the laws of reason which He has ordained. "Omnipotence," it has been well said,[2] "cannot be power to realise contradictions." God cannot make

[1] Whether attributes can with philosophical accuracy be ascribed to God is the great question which divided the Jewish thinkers of the Middle Ages. Maimonides (*Morè*, i. 51 *seq.*) took the negative side. The ascription of attributes to God by the Bible he regarded merely as a concession to the needs of the human mind; it was intended to make clear the truth of the Divine perfection.

[2] *Philosophy of Theism*, by Prof. Campbell Fraser, 2nd ed., p. 269.

two and two other than four. Nor can He be untrue to His own moral nature, false to Himself. For example, He can do no unrighteousness. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" He is bound too by His own purposes. He will not alter them. For to think otherwise is to assume that some of His purposes are not supremely wise; in other words, to imagine a flaw in His wisdom, to conceive of Him as imperfect. Even omnipotence, then, is qualified and conditional.[1] *

None of the Scriptural writers more profoundly felt the various aspects of the Divine perfection than the Psalmists: "Of old Thou hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end."[2] "O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, Thou knowest it altogether. . . . Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the dark-

[1] Maimonides plainly taught this truth. See *Morë*, iii. 15.

[2] Ps. cii. 25-27.

ness shall cover me; and the light about me shall be night; even the darkness hideth not from Thee: but the night shineth as the day."[1]

But though God pervades the universe, He transcends it. Unlike Pantheism, which identifies Nature with God, Judaism, while making Him the informing spirit of all things, distinguishes Him from them, and sets Him above them. "God is the place of the universe," so the Rabbins teach,[2] "but the universe is not His place;" for not even the universe can contain Him. And so Solomon cries in his beautiful consecration prayer: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"[3]

But, once more, though God is infinitely great—so great that Job despairs of finding Him out—though His majesty is far beyond human conception, He yet takes note of the infinitely little, He "humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth."[4]

This truth is the corollary of the Divine perfection. It is because the Supreme is infinitely great that He takes note of the infinitely little. To the ancients the idea of the Omnipotent interesting Himself in the affairs of this lower world was a stumbling-block. Ben Sira gives utterance to their difficulty when he makes them say: "Who shall remember me from on high? I shall not be known among so many people; for what is my soul in a boundless creation?"[5] But it is just because the Supreme is immeasurably great that He concerns Himself with the

[1] Ps. cxxxix. 1-12. Compare Ecclus. xxiii. 18 *seq.*

[2] *Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. xc. 1.

[3] 1 Kings viii. 27.

[4] Ps. cxiii. 6.

[5] Ecclus. xvi. 17.

earth and the lowliest creature that crawls upon it. Only if He were less mighty would His ken and His care be limited. Boundless solicitude, far from being irreconcilable with omnipotence, is inseparably bound up with it. The Rabbins perceived this truth when they pointed out[1] that the proclamation of the Divine might in the Bible is immediately followed by a declaration of His love. And as one example they quote the Prophetic words: "Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit."[2]

The Divine greatness and gentleness are connected in the Hebrew Bible because they are but different aspects of the Divine Omnipotence. Thus the God of Judaism is not a far-off God, outside the universe, remote from the life that fills it. Having made the world, and established the laws that govern it, He has not retired into a distant heaven where tidings of its welfare cannot reach Him. Having made humanity, He has not left it in the grasp of a pitiless fate, without a thought for its happiness, without an ear for its cry. The meanest creature is sure of His solicitude, and man is at least equally sure of it. At the Creation God's blessing is bestowed on all living things from man, Creation's crown, down to the humblest animal.[3] "For the Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works."[4]

Thus, immeasurably exalted above all human conceptions of His nature, God is yet very near to the souls He has made. Infinitely transcending the universe, He is

[1] *Megillah*, 31 a.

[2] Isa. lvii. 15. Compare Deut. x. 17-19; Job xxxvi. 5; Ps. cxlvi. 6-9; cxlvii. 5-6; Isa. lxvi. 1-2.

[3] Gen. i. 22, 28.

[4] Ps. cxlv. 9.

nevertheless immanent in men's lives, responsive to every sincere prayer, to every earnest aspiration after Him. He "is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, unto all that call upon Him in truth."[1] The wondrous history of Israel, as related in the Bible, is one long proclamation of these verities. God is ever near to His people. He walks in the midst of their camp; the cloud of glory, the visible token of His Presence, rests upon the Sanctuary; He talks with men from Heaven. Such a Deity needs no mediator to bring Him into touch with humanity. His very nature, nay, theirs, supplies the link between them. The Supreme "in His love and in His pity" redeems them; "He bears and carries them."[2] But man too, in whom God has breathed the breath of life, can rise to the Divine source of his being without any aid save that which he may get from the inherent power of his own immortal soul. "See," cry the Rabbins,[3] "how exalted the Most High is above the world! And yet let a man enter God's House and but whisper a prayer, and the Almighty hearkens, even as a friend into whose ear one pours his secret."

Rejecting, as we have seen, the idea of an evil Power at war with God, Judaism also repudiates the notion of a beneficent Being mediating between the Supreme and man. No go-between can possibly be needed to bring the All-Father into communion with His own children. "In the hour of the client's need," say the Rabbins,[4] "he cannot go without ceremony into the presence of his patron; he must linger at the door and get a servant to announce him. Even then it is doubtful whether he will be received. It is not so when men would approach the

[1] Ps. cxlv. 18.
[2] Isa. lxiii. 9.
[3] *Jer. Berachoth*, ix. 1.
[4] *Ibid.*

Almighty. In this wise does He speak to them: 'When ye are in trouble call not on any of the angels, neither on Michael nor on Gabriel; but cry unto Me, and I will answer you straightway.' For doth not Holy Writ say,[1] 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered'?" In like manner the Rabbins declare[2] that the Israelites sinned when they asked Moses at Sinai to speak to them in place of God. Moses, they say elsewhere,[3] had no greater power to move the Supreme by prayer than had the humblest man. At the Red Sea he offered supplication. But God rebuked him. "Why criest thou unto Me? My sons have already prayed to Me, and I have heard their prayer."[4]

Judaism, it may here be said, is essentially the determined foe of superstition. Proclaiming the one omnipotent God, it can have no place in its procedure for attempts to propitiate either good or evil spirits. Teaching the simplest possible creed, it sets its face against the mysteries of the wonder-worker. Nay, affirming that the universe is ruled by law, and is not the sport of caprice or chance, it necessarily discredits the idea that merely fortuitous occurrences can influence human destiny.

[1] Joel iii. 5. [2] *Midrash Rabbah* to Canticles i. 2.

[3] *Shemoth Rabbah*, chap. xxi. to Exod. xiv. 15.

[4] See Exod. xiv. 15, 10. It cannot be denied that this characteristic Jewish doctrine has not always been respected in practice. Invocations to angels and other intercessory beings have found their way here and there into the liturgy, though not, it must be added, into the essential portions of it. But they have done so as the result of foreign influences, and in spite of the disapproval of the highest authorities. Thus Maimonides says (*Commentary to the Mishnah Synhed.* xi. 1), "We have to revere God alone and no lower being. Nor may we invoke the intercession of any such being. To God alone ought we to direct our inmost thoughts, ignoring every other existence but His." In this explicit utterance Maimonides sets forth the true Jewish doctrine on the subject.

One of the earliest prohibitions of the Pentateuch[1] is directed against sorcery. All such practices are antagonistic to the pure religion of which Israel was to be the custodian, and therefore inconsistent with the holiness which was to be his special characteristic. Superstition was peculiarly unbecoming in those who bore the title of "the children of God."[2] The Lord's people were to belong to Him entirely; no supernatural power or occult influence was to divide their allegiance with Him.[3] And so we find the Mosaic Law repeatedly denouncing superstitious rites of all kinds—rites which at once dishonour the Almighty and disquiet and degrade the human mind. With such clear denunciations before them the teachers of Judaism in every age could offer no hospitality to debased religious ideas. The warnings of the Bible have saved the Jew for enlightened religion in many a dark age. The Talmud is a witness to the fierce struggle which even some of the best intellects in Israel had to maintain at times against a superstitious environment. As a rule they were victorious. The Talmud, despite certain doubtful passages that have found a place among its diverse elements,[4] staunchly upholds the Pentateuchal prohibitions of superstition.[5] Its enactments on this subject were embodied by Maimonides in his Talmudic code, and in forbidding the practice of using Scriptural verses as charms, he declares that those who resort to it are guilty not only of superstition, but of denying the sanctity of the Bible. "They use," he says,[6] "to ensure merely physical well-being sacred words which are intended exclusively for man's spiritual

[1] Exod. xxii. 18.
[2] Lev. xix. 1, 26; xx. 26, 27; Deut. xiv. 1-2.
[3] Deut. xviii. 9-13.
[4] See, *e.g.* *Berachoth*, 13 a.
[5] See *Mishnah Synhed.* x. 1; vii. 4; *Synhed.* 65 b.
[6] *Hilc. Accum.* xi. 12.

health." Such enlightened teaching, it is true, was not always heeded, as the history of the Kabbalah proves. But it is Maimonides, and not those who ignored his warnings, who may justly claim to speak in the name of Judaism on this subject. The profession of Judaism is incompatible with superstition in any form. And the Jew who in these days gives himself to spiritualism or to any other modern variety of an ancient and degraded cult, sins against both the letter and the spirit of his religion.

* The nearness of God to His creatures is an implication of His very nature. A remote God is no God. There must be order in the moral world to match the order that exists everywhere in the physical universe. Chaos in any part of the Divine creation is impossible. And chaos there would be if the Supreme stood aloof from life, if destiny were not the expression of a moral purpose, if there were not a universal heart beating responsive to the heart of humanity. Like the earth he treads, man has not been created in vain. Human life has a meaning; the greatest of all natural phenomena, it must needs have a supremely wise purpose. It is no chance thing. It has not been "thrown off" by the great Artist in an hour of idleness—thrown off lightly, and as lightly thrown away.

The Rabbins in their exuberant fancy could imagine God creating and destroying worlds one after another before finally fashioning this world.[1] But this world He spares because it realises its purpose; in His eyes it is "very good." And if this earth satisfies God's ideal, no

[1] *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. ix. to Gen. i. 31.

less faithfully does human destiny conform to it. God has been serious in making man—serious, therefore, in planning all the inevitable consequences of that stupendous act, all its resulting goodness and happiness, and evil and misery. And because He has planned those consequences He cannot possibly be indifferent to them. God who has willed the end has willed the means. He has placed men in this world for some wise purpose—the purpose to which good and evil, joy and sorrow, are alike needed to minister. For God, then, those varied elements of human experience must be matters of profound concern. To say it reverently, the tangled web of destiny that holds humanity fast in its meshes binds Him too. The only alternative to this conclusion is the denial to human life of any purpose whatsoever, in other words, as we have said already, to imagine chaos in a universe of order. It is to charge God with folly, which is the same as saying that there is no God. If the Supreme does not care for His creatures, He is less than God, for He has performed a huge creative act that is devoid of meaning. To feel for His creatures, to knit, so to say, the life He has made into His own life, is an obligation which He owes to His Divine nature. The great souls of Israel seem to have discerned this truth. "I am thine, save me," cries the Psalmist.[1] The very fact that he belongs to God—belongs to Him by right of creation—is his indefeasible claim to the Divine help and redemption. And the appeal of the Prophet is in the same strain: "But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou art our potter, and we are all the work of Thine hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord."[2] The clay is in the potter's hands

[1] Ps. cxix. 94. [2] Isa. lxiv. 8, 9.

to mould as he will, but for that very reason he cannot be indifferent to its fate. He must needs care what becomes of the vessel his hands have fashioned. How much more so when the potter is Divine and His handiwork human life! In the Supreme love is the corollary of power. "As His majesty is, so also is His mercy."[1] *

[1] Ecclus. ii. 18.

CHAPTER V

THE DIVINE IN MAN

In the first chapter of Genesis we read that God made man in His own image, and after His own likeness. Man possesses certain qualities which make him akin to the Supreme. To those qualities we refer when we speak of the Soul. It is a term which stands for all that is best in humanity. Pity, forgiveness, love, the feeling that impels a mother to give up her life to save her child, or a man to sacrifice himself for a friend, these are some of the manifestations of the Soul. Another manifestation is conscience, which enables us to think of goodness and to desire it. The power to conceive of God, to believe in Him, to aspire after Him, to consecrate our lives in a self-denying spirit to His service, is yet another. All these qualities are links connecting us in nature with God. In Rabbinic phrase, the human soul is a tiny lamp kindled from the Divine torch;[1] it is the "vital spark of heavenly flame." We are partakers, therefore, of God's spiritual nature.

This kinship between the Supreme and His human children is set forth in one of the titles given to Him in

[1] *Berachoth*, 10 a.

the Pentateuch. He is described as the "God of the spirits of all flesh," an expression which implies not only that the Almighty is the master of the spiritual as well as of the physical world, but that the human soul is one in nature with His spirit. The title is used only in appeals to that Divine knowledge of the human soul which springs from this kinship. "God of the spirits of all flesh," Moses and Aaron cry during Korah's revolt, "shall one man sin, and wilt Thou be wroth with all the congregation?"[1] "A soul Thyself," so they say in effect, "Thou knowest the souls of all the living; Thou art able to distinguish the innocent from the guilty. Thou canst not, therefore, condemn a whole people for one man's rebellion." And by the same appellation does Moses address the Supreme when he asks Him to appoint a worthy leader of the people in his place, one with the requisite qualities of soul that will fit him for that high position.[2]

Thus man is a dual being, compounded of heavenly and earthly elements, of body and soul. That the Biblical writers recognised this dual character is evidenced by the expression "spirits of all flesh," to which reference has just been made. Nay, that character is affirmed in the account of man's creation. God takes as His materials the dust of the ground; but upon that lowly substance He impresses His Divine image. Thus His latest creation becomes Man, a creature of clay, yet with a godlike element within him which raises him infinitely above clay. Through it, in the words of Scripture, he becomes "but little lower than God, and is crowned with glory and honour."[3]

Very clearly did this conception of the soul present

[1] Numb. xvi. 22. [2] Numb. xxvii. 16. [3] Ps. viii. 5.

itself to some of the Psalmists. They speak of it as man's "glory" or glorious part. "My heart," one of them exclaims,[1] "is glad, and my glory rejoiceth." And in like manner later Jewish writers beautifully call the soul "a pearl"—a pearl in a fleshly shell—which it is man's duty to keep unspotted until the time comes for restoring it to the Divine giver.[2]

The soul, then, is the better part of man, nay, it is the real man. It is the link by which he is united both in nature and in being to the Supreme. In being, let it be remembered, as well as in nature; for, as we have seen, it is by way chiefly of the soul that man is able to know God and to attain to fellowship with Him.

But, since God is eternal, man's spirit must also be imperishable, immortal. This is a truth which the Scriptural writers are content merely to suggest. They never directly affirm it. The Bible repeatedly uses the word *soul;*[3] but nowhere does it say that it is immortal. And yet the idea of its immortality must have been present in the minds of some at least of the Biblical writers. When the author of the first chapter of Genesis, for example, speaks of man being created in the Divine image, did he picture the godlike powers he thus attributes to humanity as perishing like the body—the body that had sprung from the lowly dust? It is difficult to think so. He could scarcely have avoided thinking of the soul as imperishable, seeing that its source is the Eternal. Nor can we say that the thought was too high for him. The mind that could rise to the sublime conception of man as being formed in the very image of the spiritual God, of Him

[1] Ps. xvi. 9. [2] *Reshith Chochmah*, part iii. chap. ii.
[3] The Hebrew equivalents are *ruach*, *neshamah*, more especially *nephesh*.

who is devoid of all bodily form or likeness, would find no difficulty in conceiving of man's spirit as living for ever.

That the Hebrews had, at an early date, some belief, however vague, in a life beyond the grave is certain. They believed in *Sheol*, the under-world, inhabited by the ghosts of the dead. Existence in that under-world was certainly pale and colourless, but it was at any rate survival. It would have been strange indeed if the Israelites had failed to share a belief common to most primitive peoples.

Almost equally certain is it that, even in the Biblical age, *Sheol* by no means represented for the Hebrew mind all the possibilities of life after death. For how otherwise are we to understand such incidents as the translation of Enoch[1] and the ascension of Elijah?[2] In the former case the Patriarch's reward cannot have consisted in mere removal even from a wicked and miserable world; the Divine love must have yielded him something better than extinction. So, too, the wonderful passing of Elijah means something more than death or even an unusual death, one marked by suddenness or grandeur. Those who narrated these incidents must have thought of both Patriarch and Prophet being caught up by the hand of God and removed, as befitted their saintliness, straightway to a Divine region without passing through the nether world.

Such a conception would have harmonised closely with the ideas of the finest spirits among the Biblical poets. For some of the Psalmists *Sheol* was a state from which it was possible to be saved, and from which they devoutly

[1] Gen. v. 24. [2] 2 Kings ii. 11.

prayed to be saved. If one singer could ask in his uncertainty, "Who is the man that shall live on, and not see death, or win escape for his soul from the hand of Sheol?"[1] there were others who cherished and avowed a larger hope. "Thou wilt not give up my soul to Sheol," they could confidently cry to God; "neither wilt Thou suffer Thy beloved to see the pit. Thou wilt make me know the path of life: fulness of joy is in Thy presence; in Thy right hand are pleasant things for evermore."[2] The poet is clearly singing of spiritual joys, but of joys to be experienced in a spiritual state for which this world could not offer the materials. The scene of "the beatific vision" he projects into a region "beyond these voices." The path of life which he yearns to behold can only be the life everlasting.

* Whatever its precise character, eternal life is the promise of the Hebrew Scriptures. To this result some of the latest critics are forced to come. "For the Psalmist," says one of them,[3] "here and afterwards, in life as in death, the presence, the counsel, the power of God are sure. 'Flesh and heart may fail; God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.' The promises of all future doctrines of immortality and resurrection are here—in the faithfulness and power of the Deity to whom His follower has committed himself. That it is the next life to which he looks for the action of these Divine attributes, is clear." It is the same with Job. "He is dying unvindicated; here God will not appear to him, nor examine his plea. Therefore he

[1] Ps. lxxxix. 49. [2] Ps. xvi. 10, 11.

[3] George Adam Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 206.

knows he shall see God after death. The ethical necessities of an unfinished cause demand a life to come."

That the future life was a reality to these ancient poets and seers is certain. All that can justly be said is that their allusions to it are more or less veiled. If the Israelite cherished the great truth of immortality it was in his inmost heart. It was part of his consciousness rather than of his life. The present claimed his thoughts and his energies; the future he left to God. Thus he presents one of the grandest of spectacles—that of an earnest pursuit of righteousness uninfluenced by the thought of a heavenly reward. It is a spectacle that has extorted the admiration even of non-Jewish divines, reared as they have been on a theology which makes the future life the transcendent object of human endeavour. "This," says Professor Delitzsch,[1] "is just the heroic feature in the faith of the Old Testament, that in the midst of the riddles of this life, and face to face with the impenetrable darkness resting on the life beyond, it throws itself without reserve into the arms of God." And, to quote from the writer already cited, "Most of the crises of religious experience may be achieved, as some of the grandest psalms fulfil their music, without the echo of one of the far-off bells of Heaven. . . . The great thing is to be sure of our individual relation to God. In teaching man that life is in Him and in nothing else, and that the term of our days here has been given us to find Him, the Old Testament has done more for the assurance of immortality than if it had explored the life awaiting us, or had endowed us with strong intellectual conceptions of

[1] Quoted by Montefiore, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1892, p. 455.

its reality."[1] In like manner Huxley wrote to Romanes: "The only religion which appeals to me is prophetic Judaism. It may be well to remember that the highest level of moral aspiration recorded in history was reached by a few ancient Jews—Micah, Isaiah, and the rest—who took no count whatever of what might or might not happen to them after death." *

But when we come to the post-Biblical writings, to the Apocrypha and the Talmudic literature, all obscurity of expression ceases. The doctrine of a Future State is set forth in the clearest possible language. Thus the author of the Wisdom of Solomon could write[2] that "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seem to have died, but they are in peace." The martyred brothers of the Maccabean age are described[3] as having "endured a short pain that bringeth everlasting life." In like manner Philo declares[4] that the soul of the just, when it leaves the body, lives eternally. Josephus, too,[5] speaks of the immortal soul, the tenant of the mortal body.

It is in the Talmudic literature, however, that the doctrine of immortality finds amplest expression. The distinction between soul and body, between the deathless and the perishable elements in man, was a very real one for the Rabbins. Two creatures, they say,[6] are blended in man—one intended for this life, the other for the life hereafter. The later mystics even conceive of the body as an encumbering garment, which falls away at death

[1] G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 206.
[2] Wisdom of Solomon iii. 1-3.
[3] 2 Maccabees vii. 36.
[4] *On Fugitives*, Bohn's Edition, p. 205.
[5] *Wars*, ii. 8, 11.
[6] *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. viii. to Gen. i. 26.

and leaves the true man free to rise into the light of the heavenly life.[1]

And this exaltation of the soul above the body, this conception of its imperishableness, are intuitions common to us all. They may slumber, but only to awake from time to time. Some external stimulus sets the secret chords of the soul vibrating, and our being is filled with strange melody. The glory of Nature, the fervour of worship, a strain of sublime music, the spell of a beautiful life, will set our spiritual pulses beating, suffuse the breast with a nameless longing which the joys of this lower world are powerless to still. The Soul awakes; it becomes conscious of itself; it discerns its imperishableness. It has

> Sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither,
> Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the children sport upon the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

The doctrine of the immortality of the Soul is an integral part of the Jewish creed. It is more; it is a necessary ingredient of every consistent religious creed. It follows as the logical sequel to the God-idea itself. One of the most elementary qualities that we associate with God is His trustworthiness—He will not wilfully deceive His creatures. To believe in God is to believe not only in His existence, but also in His faithfulness. He must needs be true to His word, to His promise. "God is not a man that He should lie." This persuasion of the Divine trustworthiness is an instinct of the human mind. We cherish, for example, the profound conviction that the alternation of day and night and the sequence of

[1] *Zohar* to *Terumah*.

the seasons will never be broken. It is a conviction which is shared and acted upon by every scientific thinker. And, taking the shape of faith, it marks the attitude of the believer towards spiritual things. The moral universe, he holds, is as trustworthy as the physical. Just as God will always fulfil our expectations of an unbroken alternation of day and night, of heat and cold, so He will fulfil those higher expectations which are sown, as part of its very nature, in every human soul.[1] The Prophet of old seems to have taught this truth: "Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, so that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also My covenant be broken with David My servant."[2] If God fulfils His word written in natural law, He may clearly be trusted to fulfil the promise He has written deep in the human heart.

The presentiment of immortality is one of those promises. An invincible instinct bids us

> . . . trust that good shall fall
> At last, far off, at last, to all,
> And every winter change to spring.

And this presentiment, as we have already seen, is universal. It is part of man's very nature to think of his real self as soul, and to think of that soul as imperishable. Experience, moreover, joins its forces with this intuition. Few of us can contemplate this earthly life without a painful recognition of its incompleteness. "This cannot be the end," we cry; "the disproportion between means and results is too palpable. God cannot possibly have

[1] See *Philosophy of Theism*, by Prof. Campbell Fraser, 2nd edition, p. 312.

[2] Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21.

placed us here to suffer, to battle with evil, only to fling us away like an outworn garment, to cast us 'as rubbish to the void,' when our short race is run." And the inadequateness of this life constitutes the clearest promise of another. The mind oppressed by the sorrows, the vanity of this earthly existence, finds relief in the vision of a heavenly state. The problems that vex us here will be fully solved hereafter; eternity will explain this brief life. This is the wondrous music which we wring from the jarring notes of the world's pain and sin. In it God speaks to us. It is His promise to us, His promise of immortality. And that promise He will fulfil, nay, must fulfil; for He is God.

* Moreover, the aspiration after goodness foreshadows a larger life in which to realise it. This, too, is a Divine promise which will assuredly be redeemed. Every human being recognises in virtue the one desirable thing. The recognition and the desire may be feeble and intermittent; they may have a thousand different shades of intensity in a thousand different persons. But they exist. That is the all-sufficient fact. Goodness is the one human ideal. Now, God has created that ideal, for He has created *us*, and with it He has given us a promise that it shall be realised, that we shall realise it. But is this promise ever redeemed? No, not even in the lives of the best of us. Never do the noblest minds completely fulfil their own conception of goodness. They are baffled and beaten by influences inherent in the very constitution of things. The nature of goodness dooms them to defeat. They are for ever being lured on by a glorious will-o'-the-wisp; the ideal recedes with every step they take towards it. "At the end of the best and

fullest life must we not 'contrast the petty Done, the Undone vast'? And even if, in the eye of the world, the accomplishment seems great and the life complete, shall not the worker himself inscribe upon it 'Unfinished'? He knows, if others know not, the unrealised potentiality that is in him, the character yet unexpressed and waiting for its more perfect expression, the capacity yet unfulfilled and waiting for its fulfilment."[1]

And if this be true of the elect few, what shall we say of the vast majority of mankind, in whom moral failure is "the story of their lives from year to year"? To think of this life as the only opportunity of fulfilling their higher possibilities that is vouchsafed to that countless multitude of human souls is to charge God with folly. It is to write the word "failure" upon the Divine scheme, to declare that the Supreme has endowed men with a capacity for goodness which they were never meant to realise, or which He is powerless to help them to realise. It is to accuse Him either of caprice or of impotence. It is, then, to deny Him, to declare that He is no God. From this conclusion the mind recoils. These germs of goodness in the human soul, we say, must come to ripening at last. Retarded and stunted in this inhospitable atmosphere, they will expand and thrive in a more congenial clime. Goodness has a nobler destiny than defeat. God has not taught us to dream of success, only to deceive us. Somewhere and somehow our noblest visions will be fulfilled. God will be true to His promise; He will be true to Himself.[2]

[1] James Seth, *A Study of Ethical Principles*, p. 456. Compare Martineau, *Study of Religion*, ii. p. 386.

[2] Mendelssohn used this argument in the second part of his *Phaedon*.

The nature of the Soul itself points to a future life. That it is closely connected with the body is unquestionable. Spirit and flesh are mutually interdependent; they act and react upon each other. A violent blow on the head may derange or destroy the mental powers. Fear will set the heart beating; pity, sorrow, even deep prayerful feeling will produce the purely physical phenomenon of tears. In like manner, thought may be either quickened or paralysed by a draught from the wine-cup, and the end of a banquet is deemed the most propitious opportunity for pleading with the feasters the cause of charity. And seeing that body and soul coexist in one and the same person, and combine to make that person, this interaction is what might be expected. But it by no means proves that the soul is only physical, that spirit cannot exist apart from matter. The materialist calls thought a function of the brain; the highest and holiest emotions, he tells us, are but the result of molecular vibrations. But is this an adequate explanation of these phenomena? These molecular vibrations are not the cause, but only the physical accompaniment of intellectual and spiritual processes. "A tear!" cries one of Balzac's characters, "any one can make a tear: a little water, a little gum, and it is done." But have you got your tear then? Is there not something more, something higher, than the chemical ingredients, that goes to the making of it, something which the chemist, with his most delicate instruments and his most searching analysis, can never capture or define? And it is so with the soul. Its manifestations mock the efforts of the physiologist. The sight of another's misery moves us to compassion. Is that beautiful emotion adequately accounted for when we have referred it to

certain modifications of the brain-stuff? Instinct rebels against the idea.[1]

Nay, upon what physical theory are we to explain the simple fact that the emotion of pity is beautiful in our eyes, that it wins our homage, that we place it higher than other emotions, such as grief and fear and anger? In other words, how do we explain the presence of a moral sense in man, how account for the existence within him of an ideal which discloses a remote elysium of

[1] And not instinct only. There are scientific teachers who support its testimony on this momentous question. The materialist would have us believe that the phenomena of the soul are purely physical. He will tell us that they are merely force in one or other of its various manifestations. Thought, will, emotion he regards as fundamentally identical with light and heat and electricity. For him the spiritual world, as something distinct from the physical universe, has no existence. A distinguished scientific teacher, Mr. John Fiske, denies the validity of the assumption. "There is," he says, "no such correlation or equivalence as is alleged between physical forces and the phenomena of consciousness. The correlations between different modes of motion have been proved by actual quantitative measurement, and never could have been proved in any other way. We know, for example, that heat is a mode of motion; the heat that will raise the temperature of a pound of water by one degree of Fahrenheit is exactly equivalent to the motion of 772 pounds falling through a distance of one foot. In similar wise we know that light, electricity, and magnetism are modes of motion, transferable one into another, and, although precise measurements have not been accomplished, there is no reason for doubting that the changes in brain tissue which accompany each thought and feeling, are also modes of motion, transferable into the other physical modes. But thought and feeling themselves, which can neither be weighed nor measured, do not admit of being resolved into modes of motion. They do not enter into the closed circuit of physical transformations, but stand for ever outside of it, and concentric with that segment of the circuit which passes through the brain. It may be that thought and feeling could not continue to exist if that physical segment of the circuit were taken away. It may be that they could. To assume that they could not is surely the height of rash presumption. The correlation of forces exhibits Mind as in nowise a product of Matter, but as something in its growth and manifestations outside and parallel. It is incompatible with the theory that the relation of the human soul to the body is like that of music to the harp; but it is quite compatible with the time-honoured theory of the human soul as indwelling in the body and escaping from it at death."—*Through Nature to God*, p. 155.

thought and being, and commands him to reach and enter it? Or, finally, how are we to explain the Religious Sentiment? Think of a devotee on his knees. What trust in the Unseen it betokens! What self-abasement before a Divine Perfection! Nay, what power to escape from the prison-house of the flesh, and to soar away from this world into a higher realm! These are spiritual facts. Is the instinct wrong that invents a special name for them? Or are they to be classed with merely physiological processes like digestion and secretion? Shall we, when, like the Israelites of old, we see God, callously eat and drink, inasmuch as there is no real dividing line between those gross pleasures and the rapture of the beatific vision? The question answers itself. The spirit protests against the materialist's theory, and in the protest affirms its own reality.

Nay, that matter and spirit are distinct is proved by actual facts. As old age creeps over us the bodily powers gradually decay, but the higher faculties of the soul are untouched. Physical vigour is impaired; the senses are dulled; the mental flame burns low. But there is a spiritual residuum which seems beyond the reach of the destroyer. Reverence for duty lives on with undiminished strength to the last; the ideal retains its loveliness and its sanctity; and a dying mother's love is as tender and beautiful as it was years ago when she first pressed her child to her bosom.

It is such considerations as these that lend support to the doctrine of Immortality laid down by Religion. The flesh is but the garment of the soul; the garment decays and perishes, but the soul lives on. Death is not the cessation of life, but an incident in it. It is but the

"narrows," to use the Psalmist's striking expression,[1] through which the soul passes on its fateful voyage. But though straiter than the river of this earthly life, they open at length into a boundless sea. Coming from God, the soul must eventually go back to Him. This is the Israelite's hope, and he gives expression to it in the beautiful prayer which he repeats every morning soon after awaking from his sleep; for sleep, the type of death,[2] foreshadows, as it vanishes, the momentous passage that the soul is to make hereafter into the life eternal. "O God," so the prayer runs, "the soul which Thou hast set within me is pure. Thou hast fashioned it; Thou hast breathed it into me, and Thou dost keep it within me. And Thou wilt take it from me, and restore it to me in time to come. As long as it is within me I will give humble homage to Thee, O Divine Master, Lord of all spirits, who givest back the soul to the dead."[3] *

[1] Ps. cxvi. 3.

[2] *Berachoth*, 57 b; *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. xliv. to Gen. xv. 12.

[3] The original is in *Berachoth*, 60 b, and embodied the doctrine of the Resurrection, the concluding sentence being "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who restorest souls to dead bodies." There was, however, another reading, "Who causest the dead to live again" (*Pesikta Rabbathi*, ed. Friedmann, chap. xl., par. 3; see Zunz, *Ritus*, p. 12). The rendering given above is based upon the modified form of the prayer contained in the Prayer-Book of the West London (Reform) Synagogue.

CHAPTER VI

MAN IS FREE

But if the soul is akin to God, why has it been placed in the body? If Heaven is our home, why are we here? In other words, what is the purpose of human life? The answer has already been suggested. We have been placed on this earth in order to ennoble ourselves by seeking after goodness. To "subject our will," in Rabbinic phrase, "to the will of our Father in Heaven"—that will which is so wise and good—this is our life's great business. All other aims, however worthy, are subsidiary to it. If they do not promote it, they are worthless. To be rich or famous or clever—these are ambitions which may or may not be good; but their goodness can only be determined by one test: whether they help or thwart the supreme purpose of life, whether they help or hinder us in our endeavour after perfection. To be true to the best—that is our vocation here on earth. Its fulfilment is the only real success; its neglect the only real failure.

And to be true to the best is necessarily to discard all lower self-seeking. The true life is the self-denying life, which ministers to the higher welfare of him who lives it,

and to the happiness of the race. Its conscious aim is to help in the accomplishment of God's task of perfect beneficence, to attain, in Rabbinic phrase,[1] to that co-partnership with Him in His creative work which is the privilege of noble souls. The individual may possibly achieve happiness in so co-operating with the Supreme; he will certainly achieve it if he attaches the right meaning to happiness, and finds his ideal good in his very co-operation. He may even achieve well-being in the lower and worldly sense. But that is only an accident. The real purpose of existence is the moral welfare of the individual, with which the welfare of the race is in reality identical. It is a purpose which individual suffering is often needed to realise. But to it, whether we suffer or not, we must bow in reverent submission, content with the knowledge that we are taking our humble share of a work at once majestic and benevolent, rejoicing in being fellow-labourers with the infinite God.

* Submission, a merging of Self in the universal scheme—this is our one supreme duty; this is life. The teaching of modern science coincides with the doctrine. "The biological truth," says Nordau, "is that constant self-restraint is a necessity of existence as much for the strongest as for the weakest. It is the activity of the highest human cerebral centres. If these are not exercised, they waste away, *i.e.* man ceases to be man." And he adds: "We possess an unfailing means of determining the exact degree of vital energy in a given species, race or nation, in the proportion between the egotism and altruism of the individuals contained in it. The larger the number of beings who place their own interests higher

[1] *Mechilta to Yithro*, chap. ii.

than all the duties of solidarity and the ideals of the development of the species, the nearer is the species to the end of its vital career. While, on the other hand, the more individuals there are in a nation who have an instinct within them, impelling them to deeds of heroism, self-abnegation, and sacrifice for the community, the more potent are the vital energies of the race." *

Life, then, is a moral ordinance, and man is above everything a moral creature. Duty is the law of his being. But duty necessarily means freedom. A law can be given only to those who have the power to obey it. The fetters of obligation are unmeaning except to bind those who are free. Only he who has power to choose the evil can be commanded to choose the good. Freedom, as a great philosopher has said, is the postulate of morality—that is to say, there can be no such thing as duty without it. "*I ought* implies *I can.*" This is the great argument in support of what is called Freedom of Will. The inner voice that urges us to cling to goodness would have no intelligible message for us, did it not also assure us that we are free agents, that we can obey it if we choose. And when that inner voice speaks to us in the sadder tones of remorse it proclaims our freedom once more. "Thou shouldst have refrained from this evil deed," it says. And we acknowledge the justice of the reproof, and, acknowledging it, admit that we were free to refrain.

Thus Reason and Religion are once more at one. Man, says the Bible, is a free agent. "Sin croucheth at the door," like a beast of prey ready to spring upon its victim; "but thou shalt rule over it."[1] The power to

[1] Gen. iv. 7.

rule over it is our birthright. We are never forced to do wrong. Our moral destinies are in our own hands. And so in his solemn farewell charge to his people Moses can truthfully say, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; choose then life."[1] Ben Sira proclaims the solemn truth in clearest fashion: "Say not thou, It is through the Lord that I fell away; for thou shalt not do the things that He hateth. He Himself made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. If thou wilt, thou shalt keep the commandments; and to perform faithfulness is of thine own good pleasure. He hath set fire and water before thee; thou shalt stretch forth thy hand unto whichsoever thou wilt. Before man is life and death; and whichsoever he liketh, it shall be given him."[2]

And the Rabbins emphasise the lesson. "Everything," they declare,[3] "is in the hands of Heaven save the fear of Heaven." That, to say it reverently, God Himself cannot give, nor take from us when we have it. He cannot, because to do it would be to contradict Himself, to break that law of His upon which human existence is based. "Keep My commandments," the Rabbins elsewhere represent God as saying,[4] "and I will account it unto you as though you had created yourselves." In the moral sense man is his own maker.

And this conviction of human free-will is the one safeguard of religion, nay, of morality. If God has implanted in us a sense of duty, but prevented us from being true to it, if He has filled us with a love of goodness, but denied

[1] Deut. xxx. 15, 19. [2] Ecclus. xv. 11 *seq.* [3] *Berachoth*, 33 b.
[4] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. xxxv., to Lev. xxvi. 3; *Tanchuma* to Deut. xxvi. 16.

us the power of reaching it, then is He cruel indeed. Then is He no God. The very foundations of Religion are broken up as soon as we regard ourselves as mere machines driven by an inexorable fate, as leaves blown about aimlessly here and there by the winds of circumstance. Nay, there can be no morality once we part with the conviction of our freedom. Let men believe that their moral lives are not in their own keeping, and they will throw down their arms and refuse to fight temptation any longer. Why should they struggle when the issue of the conflict is already decided? There are people indeed who call themselves fatalists, who hold with the poet that

> We are no other than a moving row
> Of magic shadow-shapes that come and go
> Round with the sun-illumined lantern held
> In midnight by the Master of the show.
> But helpless pieces of the game he plays
> Upon this chequer-board of nights and days;
> Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
> And one by one back in the closet lays.

But they never act as if they thought so. Their conduct of life is based upon the conviction that their moral course, whatever the force of wind and tide, however great the pressure of outward circumstance, is determinable by themselves. They feel that they, and they alone, are responsible for their moral destinies; and so they make a vigorous effort "to refuse the evil and to choose the good." And if they fail, the voice that is loudest in condemning them is the voice of their own hearts. This confession of our freedom is the best witness to its reality. As Dr. Johnson said: "We *know* that we are free, and there is an end of it."

* If, we may add, we did not know it, there would be

an end of morality. "A great evolutionist deduced from evolution the negation of free-will and the automatism of man. The discovery would have been an end of everything that could properly have been called morality. The deduction, however, supposing it logical, would be fatal surely, not to free-will, but to evolution. That man has power over his own actions, however limited or qualified that power may be, and by whatever name you may choose to call it, with the responsibility attendant, is surely a fact of human nature no less undeniable than the existence of any one of our bodily senses. We may puzzle ourselves over it without end, but no one ever practically denies it either in his reflections on his own actions or in forming his opinion on the actions of his neighbours. The whole course of life, of society, of law, and of government, implies it. . . . If anybody has ever persuaded himself, nobody has ever acted on the persuasion, that the relation of the inducement to the action, in him or his neighbours, is as the impact of one billiard ball on the other. The feeling of free-will, indeed, may be roughly described as our sense, given us by consciousness, of the difference between physical and moral causation."[1]

But when we speak of Freedom of Will, we must be careful to use the expression in its true sense, in the rational sense which harmonises with facts. Human freedom is not absolute. It is limited. We are free agents in so far as our choice between good and evil is unfettered. But the limits of that choice, the sphere in which it is exercised, the particular kinds of good and evil between which we are to choose, are determined for us.

[1] Goldwin Smith, *Guesses at the Riddle of Existence*, p. 210.

The determining influences are to be found both within and without us. There is first the natural moral bias which is inborn in every individual, and which varies with the individual. There is such a thing as Heredity. We have certain moral tendencies which we inherit at birth. The Second Commandment makes allusion to them when it speaks of God visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Him and keep His commandments. A child is born into the world with a definite inclination towards either good or evil, that has been transmitted to him by his parents.

To this inner factor are to be added certain external influences. Education is one of them. It is the task of education to deal with these inborn tendencies, to develop them if they are good, to neutralise them if they are evil. But Education may be defective ; it may even be positively injurious. Then, again, there is the play of circumstances. Some persons live under conditions more favourable to moral development, to right-doing, than others. What is called "environment" differs with the individual.

Clearly, then, we are not absolutely free agents. The accident of being born of certain parents, of having a good or bad training, of having certain surroundings—all quite beyond the child's control—powerfully influences his moral choice and helps to determine his moral life. But to affirm this is not to deny that there is such a thing as Free Will—that is to say, the power of choosing between right and wrong. The influences above mentioned merely determine the conditions in which the

momentous choice is to be made. They form, so to speak, the battle-ground of the struggle with evil; but the battle we ourselves must fight. No one is made good or bad by circumstances; they are but the scene of the moral drama. The real actor is the Self. It is the exercise of the Will that makes us good or bad. To borrow the simile of a thoughtful writer, we are, as it were, sculptors, and these inborn tendencies and outward circumstances are the plastic materials with which we work.[1] It is for us to shape them after a noble pattern, to create from them a moral life that shall realise our idea of goodness. Without the intervention of the sculptor the clay would never become a statue. In the same way inner disposition and outward environment alone will never produce what we call Character. Something else is needed for its creation—something that is personal, spontaneous. That something is Will. It is the one determining factor of the moral life. "What in detail Character shall be, in what way good and in what way evil, depends upon the given elements of nature and circumstances; whether it shall be good or evil depends upon the man himself."[2] *

[1] Professor James Seth, *Study of Ethical Principles*, 3rd edit., p. 371.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 372. Among the few Jewish writers who denied man's absolute freedom was Chasdai Crescas. But even he, determinist though he was, admitted to the full the principle of human responsibility. According to him a man's deeds are the result of an endless chain of antecedent circumstances, stretching back to the First Cause. But he is none the less answerable for them, inasmuch as the power of discerning between good and evil has been given him, and the state of his mind at the time of action, his approval or disapproval, constitutes his merit or his guilt. In the physical sense man may not be a free agent, but morally he is free. No power coerces him to approve either of good or of evil. (See his *Or Adonai*, ii. 5, 5.) This acute distinction raises difficult psychological problems. Few persons do wrong without a clear protest from conscience. Does the mere protest absolve us? On the other hand, Crescas's position is less untenable than it seems at first sight.

Human freedom is a cherished principle of the Jewish religion. Judaism utterly repudiates such a doctrine as that of Original Sin, which declares that there is something inborn in all men which forces them to do wrong whether they wish it or not. It rejects teaching which would reduce human beings to mere puppets in the hands of a cruel deity, who visits upon them transgressions for which they are not responsible. It refuses to dishonour God by picturing Him as having dowered men with a curse from their very birth. There is nothing in the Hebrew Scriptures that can lend support to so strange a dogma. The Bible certainly declares that the "imagination of the heart of man is evil from his youth";[1] and the statement sets forth a very familiar truth—the truth, namely, that human nature is morally weak and easily drawn towards wrongdoing. But this is quite a different thing from teaching that men are doomed from birth to commit sin; and the words "from his *youth*" (not from his *birth*) ought to suffice to save the verse from so gross a misrepresentation. Between a doom and a tendency there is an immeasurable gulf. From destiny there is no escape; but inclination may be fought and conquered. And it is in fighting and conquering it that our whole duty lies. The desire to yield to evil impulse is inborn in human nature, for it is the essential condition of the moral life. Without that impulse goodness would lose its glory. Without an enemy to fight there would be no

A starving man steals a loaf. Not his will but his poverty consents. He knows that he is doing what, in the abstract, is wrong, and perhaps despises himself for it. But necessity knows no law, and he allows his dire physical distress to override his morality. And the opinion of most good people will condone his offence. His state of mind exculpates him.

[1] Gen. viii. 21.

such thing as victory, with all its beauty and its ennobling effects.

* Every picture of a possible world must include struggle, the condition precedent to progress and happiness. And of that struggle the moral conflict forms only a part. Battle with difficulty is the salt of the earthly life, and man's lower yearnings are a spur impelling him to the conflict. "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good"; even the evil impulse, say the Rabbins,[1] was part of that gracious handiwork; that too is very good, since but for it men would not engage in any of the activities that keep the world alive. If man had been created angelic, free from the solicitations of a lower nature, he would have been created in vain. Thus all parts of God's great scheme work together for good. What we call evil is really the germ of blessing, a witness to the very beneficence which it seems to impugn. And if this is true of the worldly life, it is equally true of the moral. Without an evil tendency to fight, the world would have been impossible, but so too would righteousness have been. Man would have been unmoral, and life devoid of meaning. As Martineau has well said, "To set up an absolute barrier against the admission of wrong is to arrest life at the stage of a human menagerie, instead of letting it culminate in a moral society."

That the inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth is a fact which, far from disproving the reality of free-will, on the contrary affirms it. God, who has created us with this powerful bias, must needs have provided a force with which to combat it, if morality, life, nay, God Himself, have any intelligible meaning. Sin

[1] *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. ix. to Gen. i. 31.

and freedom are correlatives. We are doomed to fight, not to fall. If we fall, it is not because of the triumph of the foe, but because of the defeat of the friend, within us. It is no congenital curse which compels us to sin; it is our enfeebled will. God, say the Rabbins,[1] created the evil impulse, but also the Torah as its antidote. We have but to use the antidote, to oppose duty to inclination, the will to obey to ignoble desire, and our moral triumph is assured.

But here an old difficulty presents itself. How are we to reconcile human freedom with Divine omniscience? If God knows all that is about to happen, He must know beforehand the upshot of a man's moral struggles; and to know it is to determine it. How can I be free to choose between right and wrong if my choice is already foreseen by the Supreme and therefore preordained? This is a problem which has exercised religious thinkers in every age, and Jewish thinkers among them. The Talmud is content to take note of the problem and then to leave it. "Everything is foreknown, but man is free," so the Rabbins roundly affirm.[2] They felt the difficulty of reconciling God's foreknowledge with man's free-will, but they upheld the two great principles none the less resolutely. Later teachers, with a greater leaning towards philosophy, gave more thought to the problem and anxiously strove to solve it. And the solution which most of them favoured consisted in a bold denial that any difficulty existed at all. The Supreme, they declared, cannot rightly be said to preordain an event merely because He foreknows it.[3] And there is something to

[1] *Kiddushin*, 30 a. [2] *Aboth*, iii. 15.
[3] See *e.g.* *Moré Nebuchim*, iii. 20; *Cuzari*, v. 20.

be said for this view. I know almost with certainty that the sun will rise to-morrow, but that knowledge does not in the slightest degree make me a cause of the sun's rising. God's foreknowledge is infinitely more accurate; it is free from the smallest possibility of error; it is flawless. But, even so, it cannot be said to stand towards events in the relation of cause to effect. The two ideas —prescience and causation—are entirely distinct. This is how some of the medieval Jewish philosophers argued.[1] But there were others who deprecated such reasoning. Difficulties of this sort they held to be insoluble.[2] They were satisfied to throw themselves back upon faith in the unalterable justice of God. And doubtless they were right. For there are matters too high for the human intellect, despite its wondrous powers. And this is one of them. What do we know of God's nature? We talk of His omniscience, His foreknowledge, and the like. But, after all, these are little more than figures of speech. As Maimonides himself admits,[3] we can no more understand the Divine knowledge than we can comprehend God Himself. If, then, we experience any difficulty, it is because we ourselves have made it owing to our inability to think of the Divine save in human terms. When we understand the nature of the majestic Being who is the Lord and the life of the boundless universe, then we can hope to solve these problems, nay, venture to formulate them. But, as things are, we must be satisfied not to know. The truth

[1] Descartes inclined to the same view. See Martineau, *Study of Religion*, ii. 273 *seq.* On the other hand, Gersonides understood Divine Omniscience in a limited sense. See his *Milchamoth* Tract. iii. Joel (*Crescas's Religions-philosophische Lehren*, p. 39) says of him that, without admitting it, he sacrificed a part of the Divine Omniscience in order to save human freedom.

[2] See *e.g. Choboth Halebaboth*, iii. 8.

[3] *Hilc. Teshubah*, v. 5; *Morë*, iii. 20. Compare Crescas, *Or Adonai*, ii.

that man is free is too well founded to be gainsaid. And if our conception of the Divine nature conflicts with it, we must school ourselves to lay the antagonism at the door of our faulty conception. For all our thoughts about God, however sublime, are necessarily but approximations to the truth, seeing that the human mind is finite. Nor ought we to chafe under our disabilities. In the physical world, to repeat what has been said already, there is much that even the most sanguine investigator must recognise as beyond the power of Science to explain or to reveal. Why, then, should we be surprised when we find the same impassable barrier in the spiritual world? If we cannot comprehend some of the phenomena that constitute our most familiar experiences, if there are realms in the universe which we can never behold save with the eye of the imagination, is it wonderful that we cannot penetrate into the recesses of the universal Mind? And if we acquiesce in our ignorance in the one case, shall we not resign ourselves to it in the other, but none the less holding fast, in spite of it, to the things we know, to the truths of which we are assured? *

CHAPTER VII

GOD AND MAN

CLOSE relations, as we have seen, exist between the Creator and mankind. The old Pagan idea which pictures the gods as reclining at their ease in heaven while, all unheeded by them, mortals drag out their lives in care and misery here below, finds no place in Judaism. God has not made the world and left it to its fate. Exalted above the heavens, He yet takes a deep and loving interest in human joys and sorrows. It is impossible to think otherwise. The Supreme is bound by His own nature to care for His handiwork. An unsympathising God is no God.

Nor are we thrown back upon cold argument alone. The Divine love is before our eyes. Its tokens are sown thick in the world and in human life. It stands revealed in the nobility of man himself, in the tender affection that binds parent to child, and child to parent, in the self-denying fidelity that makes husband and wife one flesh, in the single-hearted devotion of a man to his friend. God has created these beautiful qualities, and therefore they must mirror His nature. He must know the love with which He has filled His creatures; He must be at least as good and tender as the souls He has made.

"Behold," said God to Moses, "I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb;" "wherever"—so, according to the Rabbins, God declares—"thou findest the footprints of men, there I stand before thee."[1] For man is the greatest revelation of the Divine.

Human affection can be no chance thing. Even though it be the product of ages of evolution, it is none the less a witness to the benevolence that has ordained it of old. Human love ministers to human happiness, and therefore testifies to the Divine goodness.

But it is only one source of that happiness. Unbiassed study compels the conviction that the world has been purposely contrived to promote the well-being of its indwellers. The joys of life are real, and though many dark threads are worked into the web, yet, as we shall see, they help to make the brightness of the fabric. Happiness is the final outcome of sorrow. Man's part is to abate his woes by the aid of wisdom, and especially by the aid of that higher wisdom which teaches conformity with God's wholesome laws. But while misery is thus diminished, joy, on the contrary, tends to increase. The world's well-being grows from more to more. The scheme of human life is planned by love.

The details are both within and without us. The commonest acts which go to sustain the physical life are pleasurable. We breathe the air about us, we eat and drink, we bask in the sun that warms and cherishes us, with a satisfaction that never fails. There are the joys too of the intellect and of social intercourse, nay, the rapture of the very struggle for life in spite of the bitterness and the tragedy of the conflict.

[1] *Mechilta* to Exod. xvii. 6.

And the beauty of the external world adds its generous contribution to the stock of our joys. The hue and the scent of the flower, the bird's melodious note, the everlasting hills, the majesty of the ocean, the rainbow's magic splendour—all are sources of unfailing delight. It is true that, in nature, beauty and usefulness often go together. The bright colours of the flower attract the insect that fertilises it. The bird may call to its mate all unconscious of the music it makes. But the fact of human joy remains, and while God's great scheme of life goes forward, His desire for men's happiness is likewise fulfilled.

Nature, moreover, has beauties which seem to have been fashioned for the sake of the sheer gladness they cause, and for no other reason. The flower draws the bee with its scent or its colour; but what of its graceful form, whose charm only the human mind can feel? Why that purple glory of the mountain, with its nameless power over the soul? What use is there in the beauty of the rainbow's prism or of its perfect curve, or of the quivering leaflet at springtide, or of the midnight sky sown with stars? As a mere mechanical contrivance the world would have gone on well enough without the musician or the painter. From the utilitarian standpoint neither is needed. The procession of life would have been maintained unbroken, though not a note of music had ever been written or a single picture been painted. Even human progress would have been possible without them. A parliament would make as good laws in a barn as in a gilded chamber, and the great world would have gone on spinning for ever down the ringing grooves of change, though men had never heard a symphony or an oratorio. No; the appreciation of the beautiful, whether in nature

or in art, is the free gift of God, bestowed upon men out of His overflowing love. They have been endowed with it, not merely in order that they may live, but in order that they may live happily. Well, then, might the Prophets and Psalmists of olden days "sing of the loving-kindness of the Lord,"—a loving-kindness that was "mightily shewn" unto men, seeing that it fills the whole domain of life, and floods it with a gratuitous joy.

But if love binds God to man, duty binds man to God. And duty, as we have seen, implies a knowledge of the distinction between good and evil. No one can justly be held accountable for his acts unless, besides being free to will them, he recognises that they have a moral quality, that they are right or wrong as the case may be. Thus the idea of Responsibility involves the idea of Revelation. God holds us accountable for our lives because He has revealed to us the right way of living them. He has communicated to us His will, and therefore, rightly expects obedience from us.

Revelation, then, is the communication of God's will to man. And such a communication is made to every human being. It is implied in the very possession of a moral sense, in our conception of ourselves as moral beings. To feel bound to be good is to have been taught of the Lord. To love virtue we must first have discerned it, first have been made to see that it *is* virtue. This knowledge has been given us in Conscience, "God's most intimate presence in the soul, and His most perfect image in the world." In the words of Micah, "He has *shewn* us what is good" [1]—shewn us as the necessary consequence of our moral nature.

[1] Micah vi. 8.

For us Jews the Bible contains the most sacred communication of the Divine commands. But it is not the only revelation of God that man possesses. There are millions of human beings who have never seen the Bible, never even heard of it. Shall we say that God has left them without the means of learning His will? Surely not. Some of those huge multitudes have Scriptures of their own, which, though they contain much that we cannot accept, still are like our Bible, inasmuch as they teach the duty of goodness, and teach it in God's name. They are therefore a revelation of the Supreme, means Divinely ordained for the moral education of the human race.

But not all men possess Scriptures, however crude and fallible. There are millions of men who have no sacred books whatever—wild tribes to whom any kind of Bible would be a sealed volume, seeing that they cannot read. But even in their case God is not without His witnesses. For them, as well as for us, Nature is a Bible, revealing a majestic Being to whom they feel instinctively bound to offer the homage of obedience. For them too, as we have said, there is the voice of Conscience, God's universal revelation, in which He has written His law upon the heart, just as in the Bible He has written His law in a book.

* That the dictates of Conscience vary with the moral development of the race, or even of the individual, does not destroy its claim to be regarded as a revelation of God. The conceptions of duty formed by the savage and by the civilised man respectively are widely separated. On certain points they are absolutely irreconcilable. But the underlying moral sense is common to them both. The savage hears no less clearly than the civilised man the inner voice with its "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt

not," and, equally with him, recognises its sacredness and its authority. It is this universal sense of duty, rather than the particular guise in which it presents itself in individual cases, which is a powerful witness to God, a manifestation of His existence and His rule.

Nor is the inner voice less Divine because its monitions seem to be the echo of merely social ordinances. When Conscience warns us "Thou shalt not steal," it may do so because men have learnt by ages of painful experience that honesty is the best policy, and that the rogue fares badly at the hands of his neighbours. But, while the dictates of Conscience often coincide with social obligation, they are not identical with it, and therefore do not spring from it. A whole realm of duty lies, as we shall see, outside the boundaries of morality as social convention conceives it. There are many acts which will not necessarily injure the community, but which are still stigmatised by the monitor within. It is possible to tell a lie without its entailing any harm save the moral degradation of him who utters it. And yet the fear of the degradation is a very real thing. Whence that fear? Why should it influence us? Why should falsehood be in itself repulsive, truth be in itself lovely? Why, unless there be some fixed canon of goodness, and a Supreme Lord who has ordained it?

But even if Conscience were nothing more than the individual's homage to the social code, it would be a manifestation of the Divine. Whatever its history, it exists, and exists as a mighty factor of human progress. Its testimony to Divine wisdom and goodness is clearly unaffected by its life-story. It has none the less come to us from God because it has come to us indirectly. Just

as man may claim to be the Divine handiwork in spite of his having reached his pre-eminence by slow advances from the humblest beginnings, so Conscience is Divine in spite of its being the product of long ages of social evolution.

> A fire-mist and a planet,
> A crystal and a cell;
> A jelly-fish and a saurian,
> And caves where the cavemen dwell;
> Then a sense of law and beauty,
> And a face turned from the clod—
> Some call it Evolution,
> And others call it God. *

Nor are these all the methods by which the Supreme makes known His will to men. He manifests that will in their own experiences. They see from time to time how closely suffering is interwoven with disobedience, how punishment dogs the footsteps of sin, how often iniquity and retribution are, so to speak, sown together. And thus by that most impressive form of teaching—practical experience—they are taught wherein right and wrong respectively consist; they are taught that virtue is their good and sin their bane. Or they have the fate of nations before their eyes, and they behold the Divine power at work on a still larger scale. They see how national calamity springs from national wrong-doing as naturally and inevitably as the flower from the seed. And they see, on the other hand, how races are wonderfully preserved in order that they may accomplish the Divine purpose. Nay, they scarce have need to look abroad. Let them turn their gaze inward and they may discern the finger of God working, warning, directing, in their own national fortunes. Truly, as a modern Seer has said, "Every nation's history is its Bible."

The Almighty, then, has revealed Himself to mortals. The methods and the nature of the revelation have differed; but to all men alike some idea of duty has been imparted. All have a consciousness of responsibility—some to God, all, without exception, to their higher selves, to their consciences. Every man has a standard of goodness by which he measures his conduct, an ideal by which he determines his moral condition. If he has been slack in his efforts to reach that ideal, he feels a sense of degradation. He ought to have made a better fight for duty; he ought to have got nearer to the ideal. Thus the soul itself admits its obligation. It confesses that it is bound by duty to God. It concedes His right to hold it accountable. The knowledge of good and evil has been given to it; the freedom of choosing between them has been given to it. But it has abused its freedom; it has chosen the evil and refused the good.

Thus the principle of human responsibility, which is affirmed by Religion, finds its witness in the human breast. And human responsibility implies a Divine judgment. If God holds us accountable for the use we make of our lives, it is clear that He must examine them and determine their moral quality, their degree of goodness or badness. We are constantly passing judgment, as we have seen, upon ourselves—constantly measuring ourselves against our ideal standard. Conscience is always more or less actively at work. And what is often said of conscience, that it is the voice of God, is in a sense true; for it is, so to speak, the echo of God's verdict. It is the reflection in our souls of the solemn fact of the Divine judgment.

God, then, is our Judge. And this He must needs be

because He is our Father. The Divine scrutiny is the corollary of the Divine love. If the welfare of His human creatures is dear to God, their goodness must be especially dear to Him. For goodness is the only true happiness, and there is no real misery save that which springs from sin. A truly loving father watches over the moral welfare of his children at least as jealously as over their bodily well-being. Thus God is ever scrutinising our acts, for He would have them noble. "He looketh down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any that understand, that seek after God."[1] And, with God, to see and to know is to judge. It is not with Him as it is with mortals; there is no interval between His perception of men's deeds and His verdict on them. "For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed."[2]

Now, since God is perfect He must be absolutely just. Were He not absolutely just He would not be God. This is what Abraham meant when, in his brave and eloquent appeal for the doomed Cities of the Plain, he cries, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"[3] A human judge who, because he is human, is fallible, might be unfair; the Divine judge, because He is Divine, must needs be just.

The Divine rectitude is a theme upon which the Biblical writers are never tired of dwelling. "Righteousness and justice," says the Psalmist, "are the foundation of Thy throne"[4]—the foundation, that is, of the Divine government of the world, nay, the foundation of the Divine nature itself.

[1] Ps. xiv. 2.
[2] 1 Sam. ii. 3.
[3] Gen. xviii. 25.
[4] Ps. lxxxix. 14.

It is sometimes urged that by insisting upon this conception of the Supreme as a God of judgment or justice, the Biblical writers failed to bring out the gentler side of the Divine character. Judaism, it is affirmed—at any rate the religion of the Old Testament—preaches only a stern and inflexible God, one to be feared, not loved. But the truth is just the opposite. The Hebrew Bible does preach a loving and therefore lovable God. He "is good to all," cries the Psalmist, "and His tender mercies are over all His works."[1] He loves the stranger.[2] He has a tender pity even for the dumb animals.[3] Nay, the very verse just quoted, in which righteousness and justice are declared to be the foundation of God's throne, concludes with the words "mercy and truth go before Thy face."

The lesson just suggested must be kept clearly in mind. Expressions like "a God of justice" and "a God of love" are not really antagonistic. Each is correct as long as it is used to represent one aspect only of the Divine nature. Justice and mercy express the diverse ways in which God deals with man in different circumstances. They are by no means irreconcilable ideas. God is just, and He is also merciful. How this is possible we shall see presently.

But a word more remains to be said about the Divine judgment. God's verdict on human conduct is supremely just. He is incorruptible. In the words of Scripture, He "taketh no bribe."[4] That which a man deserves, and that only, will He mete out to him. And thus we reach the idea of Recompense in its twofold character of Reward

[1] Ps. cxlv. 9.
[2] Deut. x. 18.
[3] Ps. civ. 14-28.
[4] Deut. x. 17.

and Punishment. The idea is necessarily involved in the conception of God as man's judge. For the Supreme to form an opinion of human conduct would be useless, nay, unmeaning, were it not followed by recompense. The Divine rewards and punishments, then, are the logical sequel to the Divine judgment. They are its necessary expression, the method by which God's estimate of our conduct is brought home to us.

Now, the thought of God's judgment, far from filling us with terror, ought to tranquillise us. Those who are disquieted because the Old Testament writers love to speak of a strictly just God, are unnecessarily disquieted. For is it not a satisfaction to think that there is an All-seeing eye ever beholding and scrutinising human actions, to be assured that virtue is certain of recognition, iniquity bound at last to pay the righteous penalty? The truly terrifying thought would be that the good man is left to his fight with temptation without one throb of sympathy from the Divine heart, and that the sinner is suffered to persist in his sin, not only without the certainty of punishment, but without the prospect of the moral redemption that punishment brings with it. Nay, every sin is a debt which, in justice to his dishonoured better self and to the outraged conscience of his fellow men, the sinner must discharge. The payment of that debt, the expiation of that sin, can only be good. The sole evil would be the possibility of evading it. No; the idea of God's justice, incorruptible, certain, redemptive, is one full of comfort and encouragement for every good man. And so we find the old Hebrew poets singing of it with positive delight. They saw with their mind's eye the Supreme pronouncing verdict upon nations as well as upon in-

dividuals, and the vision filled them with awe, but also with joy: "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice before the Lord: for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth."[1]

Thus God's judgment, even God's retribution, is essentially and supremely good. If there were no such thing as punishment for wrongdoing, we should rightly despair of the Divine justice; and to despair of the Divine justice would be to have no God. Life would then be not a well-ordered scheme, but chaos. Then might man rebel against the restraints of conscience, and deny the supremacy of duty. That "there is a God judging in the earth" is a thought that rightly can yield only the deepest joy.

But to think of punishment as merely retribution is to take a narrow view of it, nay, to form a low conception of God Himself. A truly just God will punish, but not vindictively. He will visit upon the sinners the consequences of their disobedience, not for the sake of the mere suffering they must thus experience, but for the sake of its purifying effects. If God chastises us, He chastises us in love, as a father his child. "Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men."[2] And the Rabbins emphasise the lesson: "I will make all My goodness pass before thee"—so the Supreme promised Moses.[3] And, say the Rabbins,[4] the goodness thus to be revealed was the mercifulness of the Divine punishments.

[1] Ps. xcvi. 11-13.
[2] Lam. iii. 32, 33.
[3] Exod. xxxiii. 19.
[4] *Tanchuma* to the verse.

And now we are able to see that the terms "just" and "merciful" are perfectly compatible even when applied to God. His judgments of human conduct are just; His punishments are just. But they are designed mercifully—for the purpose of inducing the sinner to turn from his evil way and live. They are not vindictive, but redemptive. All high-souled justice, then, the justice that is framed on the Divine pattern, is nothing but mercy. Only injustice would let the wicked man live undisturbed in his wickedness, without that chance of moral recovery which lies in expiation, nay, without those deterring effects which the spectacle of the sinner's chastisement exerts upon others. "It is good for me," exclaims the Psalmist, "that I have been afflicted that I might learn Thy statutes."[1] "When," cries the Prophet, "Thy judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness."[2]

Far, then, from seeking to escape the Divine punishments, the wise man will welcome them. He will welcome them as a witness to God's moral government of the world, and as the necessary condition of his own moral salvation. This is a truth with which readers of the Greek Classics are familiar. But in reality it is to be discerned in the Hebrew Bible also. A writer who could exclaim, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, even as a father his son in whom he delighteth,"[3] must, like the Psalmist and the Prophet, whose utterances have just been quoted, have clearly seen that the Divine punishment, far from being an evil, is supremely good—the sign of a loving God anxious for the happiness of His human children.

[1] Ps. cxix. 71. [2] Isa. xxvi. 9. [3] Prov. iii. 12.

Far later writers saw it too. "What," it is asked,[1] "mean the words 'Arise, sing in the night'?[2] What is this song? It is a song of thanksgiving for God's chastisements. If a man sins and suffers, let him arise at midnight and joyfully bless his Maker for His saving tribulation." Another teacher holds similar language: "If a man has sinned, let him repent with all his might, pray earnestly for pardon, and go and sin no more. And then if trials come upon him, let him greet them with joy."[3]

In the Divine scheme, then, retribution is necessary. It is God's medicine for the soul—bitter, but wholesome. But if this be true, what are we to say about God's forgiveness? If punishment is so good, how can the Almighty pardon? The difficulty vanishes as soon as we understand that pardon means not the remission of the penalty, but the removal of guilt. Punishment is too essentially just, too sacred, too gracious for the Supreme to forgo any part of it. To think of His doing so is to think of Him as breaking His own good laws. But we may picture Him as taking the sinner back to His love, as restoring the happy relations between Him and His erring child which transgression has interrupted. Forgiveness is the removal of sin, or rather of sinfulness, not the remission of punishment. And we may, perhaps, perceive this important truth set forth in the beautiful passage in Exodus: "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving

[1] *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, p. 359.
[2] Lam. ii. 19.
[3] Introduction to the *Rokeach*.

iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."[1] In these words God reveals the grand principles of His dealings with men. He "will by no means clear the guilty;" they must suffer the righteous consequences of their misdeeds. But He is ready to pardon them when they turn to Him with penitent hearts.[2] The Divine forgiveness, then, is moral, spiritual. The sinner is not let off, in the schoolboy's sense of the expression, but is taken back to the arms of the loving Father. He and His wayward child are at one again. The sin, in Scriptural language, is "covered"[3] —hidden, so to speak, out of sight; "cast," as the Prophet beautifully phrases it, "into the depths of the sea."[4] But the liability to punishment remains, and, as we have seen, it is well that it should remain.

[1] Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.
[2] See also 1 Kings viii. 39.
[3] Ps. xxxii. 1.
[4] Micah vii. 19.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MYSTERY OF PAIN

SINCE suffering is a wholesome discipline, it is not difficult to understand how even the virtuous may be called upon to endure it in God's righteous scheme. He would have the good made better still, and to this end He uses pain with its ennobling effects. "He delivereth the afflicted by his affliction, and openeth their ear in suffering."[1] Similarly the Rabbins represent God as saying to man: "With thy very wounds I will heal thee."[2] For every day we see how the heart is purified, the character strengthened and uplifted, by sorrow; and, so far from being a sign of God's displeasure, affliction may, in truth, ofttimes be a proof of His love. It is the seal which He sets upon His elect, the token by which He proclaims them to be His. "Those whom God afflicts bear His name."[3] And this ordinance the Rabbins have in mind when they speak of "chastisements of love," an expression suggested by the words already quoted, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Thus they

[1] Job xxxvi. 15.
[2] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. xviii. to Lev. xv. 2. The reference is to Jer. xxx. 17.
[3] *Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. xciv. 1.

hold that to rejoice in suffering is the characteristic mark of virtue. To live in unbroken prosperity was for them a disquieting sign. It bred the fear that they were entering into their heritage here, and that the inevitable expiation was being reserved for the hereafter, to dim its unspeakable joy.[1] "Let men," they cried,[2] "rejoice in suffering, for 'whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth'—chasteneth and purifieth in this life." "If thou desirest life," they further exhort us,[3] "hope for affliction."

That suffering is a loving discipline, and not necessarily punishment inflicted by an angry God, is one of the truths exemplified by the Book of Job. The unmerited misfortunes of the Patriarch constitute the problem which his friends try to solve. But they try to solve it on the entirely mistaken supposition that, because Job is afflicted, therefore he must necessarily be wicked. According to their restricted theology, human suffering can only be a sign of God's anger. That it may be educatory, a token not of wrath, but of love, never occurs to them. Certainly, the lesson is not directly set forth in the Book, but the assumption that all adversity is the result of sin and its unmistakable indication is implicitly disproved. The friends who seek to comfort the sufferer with their dreary philosophy are rebuked, and in the end Job's lost prosperity is restored to him.

The truth here set forth is of the highest importance, for it goes far towards solving the problem which has perplexed the human mind in every age. Suffering seems to be the inalienable heritage of the human race, a

[1] See Akiba's saying in *Synhed.* 101 a.
[2] *Siphrë* to Deut. vi. 5.
[3] *Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. xvi. 11.

doom from which it is for ever trying to escape in vain. In sorrow was the first man to eat of the earth's fruits all the days of his life, and the decree has thus far been perpetual, fashioning the destinies of every succeeding generation. Nor is pain the birthright only of humanity; the brute creation shares the inheritance. How are we to reconcile this universal ordinance with Divine goodness?

One answer to the question, in so far as human beings are concerned, has already been given. Pain is a moral discipline. But it is something else. In a lower sense, too, it is the saviour of humanity, the seed of its happiness. "Whatever the All-merciful doeth," say the Rabbins,[1] "He doeth well," and the wider knowledge of natural law which we possess in these days only makes the utterance all the truer. What was a creed becomes a conviction. Pain, in the light of scientific research, is now seen to be a danger-signal, alarming and terrifying like the shriek of a fog-horn at sea, but a warning that shields many a life from destruction. It reveals the disease which otherwise might lurk undiscovered until it was past remedy. It has been, moreover, the impulse to progress all along the line. The necessity of devising some alleviation for human discomfort and misery has been forced upon mankind by the discomfort and misery itself. What men have called a curse has proved to be the very wellspring of blessing. The struggle for existence, with all its attendant suffering, has sharpened the human intellect, and so become the parent of civilisation. It has been the impulse to new inventions; it has increased the sum of human knowledge; it has hastened the growth of art and science. In short, as we have seen

[1] *Berachoth*, 60 b.

already, there could be no such thing as progress—in other words, there could be no such thing as a world, as human life—without struggle, without pain.

The truth holds good not only of individual suffering but of general disasters, like war or plague or desolating fire, which deal widespread ruin and misery. Let us remember that God may choose such visitations as the instruments of His wholesome designs. With them He may be aiming at the ultimate salvation of the race from these very disasters: "For by fire will the Lord plead, and by His sword, with all flesh."[1] In such impressive ways does the Almighty often work. He ordains calamity in order to rescue the world from it for ever. For only by the stern teaching of painful experience can men be brought to perceive the horrors and the wickedness of many an evil they tolerate, and so be forced to put an end to it. The very deadliness of war will force the nations, with one consent, to abolish it for ever. The wasting epidemic will compel communities to respect the laws of health, to banish the foul plague-spots from their midst, and so pave the way for the time when epidemics will be unknown. And so it is throughout. With all such dire visitations does God plead with men. The lesson is sharp, but it is wholesome. It is taught in pain, and sorrow, and death; but from them there spring forth for the world peace, and joy, and life.

And what has been said of humanity is true in a general sense of the lower animals also. God's loving thought is not withheld even from them. That they are capable of suffering is unquestionable, though that capacity does not equal the susceptibility to pain of

[1] Isa. lxvi. 16.

human beings with their more delicate nervous organisation. But even in the case of animals suffering has been a protection. It has been the impulse to that self-adaptation which alone has made life possible. The gazelle, for instance, has acquired the swiftness which is her sole defence against her formidable enemies only as the result of ages of painful experience. The animal world teems with similar examples. The scientific doctrine of evolution, which shows how the arduous struggle for existence has produced the most perfect types of animal life, reveals the merciful nature of conditions which, to the uninstructed gaze, seems to spell only soulless cruelty.

We should do well to keep all these truths in mind when confronted with the spectacle of the world's suffering. We cannot always see how Divine wisdom and love are working beneath it; how blessing is being distilled in God's alembic from pain, and misery, and death. But that blessing will come of it at last we may be certain. From the known we rightly argue to the unknown. A merciful purpose clearly speaks to us from many an ordinance that at first sight seems harsh and stern. Shall we not, then, believe that it actuates these inscrutable decrees also, and that our failure to discern it is only the consequence of our ignorance, our blunted perceptions, the limited sweep of our vision? Are we not justified in thinking that if we could see the entire plan, and not merely tiny fragments of it, it would reveal itself to us as unimpeachably wise and beneficent. "On the earth the broken arcs"; but "in the heavens," could we but see it, "a perfect round."

With that assurance we shall surely be content. To know that love is behind the contradictory phenomena of

experience, knitting them into harmony, is to have all the knowledge we need in order to live the sane and hopeful life. It may be asked why things should have been so constituted as to make evil the indispensable preliminary to good. But that is the one unanswerable question. Nor, seeing that good is the outcome, need we be troubled because we cannot answer it. Nay, when there is so much in the physical world that defies our analysis, shall we be surprised that there are mysteries in the moral universe that are impenetrable to us? Let it suffice us to know that there is a Divine Being guiding events, and that He guides them well. Did we know more, did we know all, there would be no room for God. For man would be "as God, knowing the mystery of good and evil."

But, in spite of all that has been said thus far, it is not to be denied that suffering may be, though it is not necessarily, an indication of a breach of God's law, a symptom of sin. It is sometimes intended as a chastisement, though a wholesome one. And it is this more often perhaps than some of us suspect. Not a few cases of what we call undeserved suffering may in reality not belong to that category. A man who, we feel sure, is good is overtaken by misfortune, and we cry "How unjust!" But it would be well for us to remember that our knowledge of another's character is necessarily superficial and imperfect. Nothing is more difficult than to read the human heart aright. We may have been friends with a person all our life, be in daily and intimate communion with him, and yet may never know him as he really is, never probe his character to the depths. His moral and spiritual life may

be a secret which he guards jealously even from our eyes. And if this be true of our dearest friends, it is especially true of strangers or mere acquaintances. Their outer life offers by no means a certain clue to the nature of their inner life. The misfortune which overtakes them, though we are prone hastily to dismiss it as sheer calamity, totally undeserved, may in reality be the direct consequence of their acts—God's wholesome correction for some violation of His laws.

For there is a recompense even in this world. Human destiny does show that God holds man accountable for the use he makes of his life. The demonstration, it is true, is not always complete, as we have seen. A man's sin finds him out, but it may happen that the only person who knows that he has sinned is the man himself. The connection between conduct and fate is not always traceable by the onlooker. But there are cases in which the Divine justice is vindicated even to him. There are cases in which sin and suffering are clearly displayed in their relation of cause and effect. History, as we have seen, tells us of many nations which, despite their might and magnificence, have been brought low at last as the direct consequence of their wrongdoing. And many an individual life tells a like tale. Though we know of men who, in spite of seeming wickedness, "live, become old, yet wax mighty in power, neither is the rod of God upon them;"[1] we also know of others whose prosperity has been cut short by their very misdeeds. "Evil" does at times, in the Psalmist's words, "slay the wicked."[2] The experience of almost every person who has reached middle age will furnish him with exemplifications of this truth.

[1] Job xxi. 8-9. [2] Ps. xxxiv. 21.

Nay, the close connection between sin and woe is visible to every one, young as well as old. There are certain transgressions which carry their punishment with them. The sinner's own wickedness, in the prophet's language, corrects him; by the most convincing of all proofs, by the natural results of his sin, he is made to see "that it is an evil thing and a bitter, that he has forsaken the Lord."[1] Especially is this true of that kind of transgression which is known as vice. Intemperance is an example. The drunkard, as the direct consequence of his low self-indulgence, has to suffer both in body and in mind. He has to endure physical weakness and distress. For him are the dulled eye, the trembling hand, the besotted brain, the ever-increasing incapacity for the day's work, for the legitimate pleasures of life. He becomes an object of contempt to his acquaintances, and, at length, the object of his own contempt. This is his chastisement, his self-chastisement. For in choosing evil he has chosen its misery also. Surely in all such cases —and this particular vice is but an example—we see the finger of God. He is at work exacting the righteous penalty from the man of evil life. He is upholding to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear the sanctity and the inviolability of His laws—those laws which He has given to men so that, in the highest sense of the Scriptural phrase, they "may live by them."[2]

Nor may we forget that retribution is quite possible without bodily suffering. Part of the drunkard's punishment lies, as we have seen, in the knowledge of his own degradation. Many a transgressor pays his penalty in secret. He may keep a smiling face for the world, but

[1] Jer. ii. 19. [2] Lev. xviii. 5; Ezek. xx. 11.

shame and self-contempt and remorse are tortures far transcending physical anguish or the pain of worldly reverse. And his misery reaches its culminating point in the thought that his sin has brought woe to others which he can never recall. This is the most terrible form that punishment can take, and it is suffered in secret by thousands of persons whose "good fortune" is the envy and the wonder of a thoughtless world.

And the converse of all this is equally true. If transgressors are more often wretched, the good are more often happy, than we are apt to imagine. But to see this clearly we must modify our ideas of happiness. Our complaint that virtue goes without Divine recognition here is as unreasonable as our wonder at the impunity of wickedness. "How seldom," we say, "are the good happy!" But who are the good? And what is happiness? Are we sure that our definitions are sound? Many a man whom the world calls good would fail to establish his claim to the title when judged by the Divine standard. And in like manner many whom the world pronounces miserable may be really happy. If by happiness we mean worldly well-being, a big balance at our bankers, the success of our business schemes, a fine house, beautiful furniture, abundance of so-called "pleasure," then it is true that many good people are unhappy. But if by the word we mean a conscience at rest, the sweet sense of having fought a good fight with our lower selves and conquered, then even in this life the righteous do not go unnoticed by the Master they serve so faithfully. And just as sin often induces its own punishment, so this higher happiness or "blessedness," as we have been told we ought rather to call it, is always

involved in goodness like the fruit that is enfolded in the blossom. And so the wise man in Proverbs well says that "he that soweth righteousness hath a sure reward."[1] It is a sure reward, because it is the natural result of his righteousness. His happiness, his blessedness, comes inevitably. No one can rob him of it.

If, then, we see virtue defeated, maintaining an unequal fight with poverty, enduring worldly reverse, struggling with ill-health and pain, let us not marvel at it. Let us not doubt God's justice. If we could but look into the good man's heart we should see it filled with "the light that is sown for the righteous,"[2] with the illuminating joy of obedience, with that rapturous sense of fellowship with the Supreme which is at once the unfailing fruit of goodness and its meet recompense. And is it not true that against happiness like this the fleeting joys which constitute happiness, as the world defines it, cannot be set for a single moment? Let us compare the best day's pleasure we have ever known with the gladness that has rewarded some loving, some self-sacrificing act of ours, and we shall know how to answer the question.

We have called the joys of virtue its meet recompense. And such they are. God's "eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men; to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."[3] "According to the fruit of his doings"—it is a favourite phrase with the prophet, and it is possible to discern in it the expression of a profound truth. Our surprise at the sorrows of the righteous, the seeming injustice they have often to endure,

[1] Prov. xi. 18. [2] Ps. xcvii. 11. [3] Jer. xxxii. 19.

will cease if we only remember that their reward must needs be akin in character to their goodness. Virtue must bring forth fruit after its kind; its reward, like itself, must be moral, spiritual. A man sows goodness and necessarily reaps blessedness. To reap anything else, riches or enjoyment or physical ease, would be unnatural. "The world," say the Rabbins, "for ever travels its appointed course;" the laws of the physical universe are not suspended in order that the individual life may morally come by its own. "The thief sows the seed he has stolen; shall it not germinate and yield a crop?"[1] And so with the case before us. The sinner enriches himself by his sin; shall we expect him not to know the joys of wealth, such as they are, though his gains are ill-gotten? And, on the other hand, the good man denies himself worldly delights because he cannot attain them without treachery to his conscience. Shall we wonder that his choice is ratified on high? Or shall we think that God ought to interpose between cause and effect and give him worldly prosperity, when he has deliberately and nobly thrown away the instruments by which it may be won? To think so is to deny the reign of law in the universe, nay, to rob righteousness of all its beauty. For if any man, who claims to be good, is disappointed because the unnatural does not happen, because money and pleasure have not fallen to his lot as the guerdon of his goodness, then the very fact proves the hollowness of his claim. The truly good do not set their hearts on these things. Their one aim is perfect self-surrender and the joy it begets; their one disappointment failure to reach that ideal.

[1] *Abodah Zarah*, 54 a.

CHAPTER IX

THE HIGHEST SERVICE—THE FUTURE LIFE

WE are now in sight of a great truth upon which Judaism strongly insists—the truth that the highest service is disinterested service, the highest obedience that which is uninfluenced by the thought of recompense. Virtue for its own sake—it is the noblest conception of duty. It is true that in the Bible, in the Pentateuch particularly, much stress is laid upon rewards and punishments. But the people to whom Lawgiver and Prophet immediately addressed themselves were but untutored men and women —people imperfectly educated morally and spiritually. In their case the idea of recompense was a powerful aid to goodness which could not safely be dispensed with. Even to-day there are thousands of persons in this civilised country who are "kept straight" only by the terror of the law. Hope and fear are powerful influences with untrained natures, and every legislator is bound to reckon with the fact.

But obedience thus coerced is necessarily inferior in quality. When once the stimulus of self-interest is withdrawn the obedience is relaxed. Those who avoid wrongdoing merely from fear of punishment are not really

the better for their obedience. Their behaviour only is affected; their character is unchanged. For what they seek after is escape merely from the consequences of sin, not deliverance from sin itself. What they hate is not the shame and degradation of iniquity, but the chastisement it entails. So that if they could be sure of evading the penalty, they would not scruple to do wrong. Such people are only outwardly virtuous; at heart they are unregenerate. Their obedience is but veiled rebellion. Genuine virtue is independent of hope or fear; it is ingrained. The truly virtuous man is not a hireling, who ceases to serve when his wage is insufficient or unpaid. He shuns evil because it is degrading, and pursues goodness because it is lovely. Those who have attained to this disinterested virtue have realised the highest ideal of service.

Even the Pentateuch, despite its frequent appeals to self-interest, its lavish threats and promises, keeps this ideal before us. "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy,"[1] so we read. Nothing is said in this familiar command about rewards or punishments. The motive, the "sanction," by which the duty of leading a holy life is enforced is simply the thought of the Divine holiness. "Make the Almighty your pattern, your ideal," says the Lawgiver; "strive to be holy as He is holy; love the stranger, for God loveth him."[2] Similarly the Rabbins say,[3] "It is written, 'Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and cleave unto Him.'[4] Is it possible to cleave to a Being who is called 'a devouring fire'?[5] But walk in His ways; imitate His goodness, His loving-kindness

[1] Lev. xix. 2. [2] Deut. x. 18, 19. [3] *Sotah*, 14 a.
[4] Deut. xiii. 4. [5] Deut. iv. 24.

above all." The imitation of God, the Highest—this is what the precept, "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy," sets before us. But it implies more even than this. The thought of the Divine holiness is to act not only as an incentive, but as a deterrent. It is to win the Israelite for purity of life by setting before him a standard of conduct which he is to strain every nerve to reach. But it is also to be an everlasting warning against acts which would offend against the holiness of the Supreme. There is no conception in the old Hebrew religion more beautiful or more fruitful than this. The God of Israel is above everything a Being of unutterable purity; He is "glorious in holiness,"[1] distinguished from the gods of the pagan world by deriving His chief glory from His holiness. In the presence of this holy God the Israelite is always living; and he must see to it that his conduct does not dishonour that pure presence, that it does not clash with his sacred environment. The idea finds notable expression in Deuteronomy,[2] where God is described as walking in the midst of the camp, and where the solemn fact becomes the basis of an exhortation to the Israelite to make the camp holy, a fit abiding-place for its Divine Visitant.

Already in the Pentateuch, then, we meet with appeals to higher motives than the fear of punishment or the expectation of reward. Sin is to be shunned because of the discord it makes between man and God—in other words, because of the degradation in which it involves the sinner; goodness is to be pursued because of the harmony it creates between man and God—in other words, because of its exalting effect upon the good. In short, virtue is its

[1] Exod. xv. 11.
[2] Chap. xxiii. 14.

own best reward, and the highest form of duty is to pursue it for its own sake.

The story of Job indirectly teaches this truth. Job, as even some of the Rabbins admitted,[1] is doubtless a mythical character. But some mind must have conceived him, and that mind, in depicting him as "serving God for nought," clearly intended to set this disinterested service before us as the ideal. Among the Biblical writers none seems to have come nearer to that ideal in actual life than the Psalmists. These inspired singers loved to tell of the joys of communion with the Supreme, a communion to which the path was not worship and prayerful contemplation only, but holiness of thought and aspiration. And in this communion they find their true reward. God is their "exceeding joy";[2] His "loving-kindness is better than life";[3] "to draw near unto Him" is the supreme good.[4] The thought of this holy fellowship makes them indifferent to adversity; the joy of it is beyond the corroding power of worldly reverse. It is true that they look forward with yearning to that joy, and to this extent are influenced by the hope of reward. But the hope is so noble, the reward so spiritual, that no one can charge these great souls with sordidness. If there is such a thing as unselfish service, it is that to which they attained.

The Talmud, in its turn, like the Bible, knows how to inflame the ardour of the commoner spirits for the noble life by depicting the pleasures of obedience and the pains of rebellion. But, like the Bible too, it does not forget that there are more spiritual natures that may be won for God's service by higher appeals. And so we read of an

[1] *B. Bathra*, 15 a.
[2] Ps. xliii. 4.
[3] Ps. lxiii. 3.
[4] Ps. lxxiii. 28.

early Rabbi crying, "Be not like servants that serve the Master for wages; serve God without thought of recompense."[1] "Love God," says another, "even though He slay thee; for are we not taught to love God with our very souls? And what does this mean but that we are to love Him even if He takes the soul from us?"[2] "To love God," asks yet another—"what can it mean but loving service, obedience for very love of it? Peradventure thou wilt say, 'I will be virtuous in order that I may be called Rabbi, or be the head of the schools, or grow rich, or gain eternal life.' Say not so. If thou wouldst love God, do everything from love, without thought of reward. Doth not the Psalmist cry, 'Blessed the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth in His commandments'?[3]—'in His commandments,' so runs the verse, not in the reward to be won by doing them."[4]

Similarly the medieval writer Bachya places at the head of the faithful those who, while cherishing a firm belief in the Divine recompense, both here and hereafter, rigidly exclude it as a motive in their efforts after obedience. "They give themselves eagerly to God's service with the single-hearted desire to promote His glory. To these heights rose the Prophets and the Saints, who surrendered their will to God's, and who by virtue of their sacred covenant with Him yielded up all their dearest possessions, even life itself, for duty's sake. To such as these the words of Scripture[5] refer, 'Gather My saints together unto Me, those who have made a covenant with Me for self-sacrifice.'"[6] And the later Jewish mystics, in

[1] *Aboth*, i. 3.
[2] *Siphrë* to Deut. vi. 5.
[3] Ps. cxii. 1.
[4] *Siphrë* to Deut. xi. 13, 22.
[5] Ps. l. 5.
[6] *Choboth Halebaboth*, iii. 4.

their turn, insist that there are various degrees of heavenly bliss, and that the highest is reserved for such as obey God in this life without thought of recompense. To them that obey in the hope of worldly success, for gain and the like, the reward is given in this existence, and with this existence it ends. To such as serve for the sake of everlasting happiness there are given the eternal joys of which the angels have charge. But to such as render a single-hearted obedience, unmixed with expectation even of a heavenly requital, the Almighty's own hand gives their recompense hereafter in a perfect union with Himself.[1]

Judaism teaches, as we have seen, that death is not the cessation of life, but only an incident in it. Human existence continues after death, but under different conditions—conditions that favour the growth of the soul. Life enters on a new and a higher phase. The captive spirit escapes from the prison house;[2] the bird, liberated from its cage, soars;[3] man breathes an ampler air.

The future state, then, is one of spiritual growth, a state in which the soul has room to expand, to attain to a continually increasing stature. It is a state in which sinners are purged of their transgressions, and the good made better still. "They go from strength to strength,"[4] so the Psalmist exclaims, and the Talmud uses the expression to depict the condition of the righteous in the future life. They go from strength to strength, only at last to appear before God in the heavenly Zion.[5] The recompense of which we catch glimpses even in this

[1] *Reshith Chochmah*, ii. 2.

[2] This was the idea of the Essenes; see Josephus, *Wars*, ii. 8, 11.

[3] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. iv. to Lev. iv. 2.

[4] Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

[5] *Berachoth*, 64 a.

world continues in the world beyond the grave. The transgressor who has not yet worked out his atonement here must complete it hereafter; the just, who can but imperfectly have realised their possibilities in this life, will realise them to the full in the life to come. And this is all we mean by reward and punishment so far as the future world is concerned. The recompense is purely spiritual. The body can have no share in it, for the body is dust. That has gone back to the earth whence it came; "the spirit," in like manner, "has returned to God who gave it."[1]

Judaism, when at its best, has steadily kept before it this idea of the spirituality of the future recompense. Such notions as that of a Resurrection of the Body, of physical torments for the sinner, of a celestial playground, the scene of more or less sensuous pleasures, have found a place in certain phases of Jewish doctrine; but they have been rejected one by one by the best Jewish teachers.[2] For Maimonides they are chiefly allegories, designed to catch the imagination of the vulgar, though embodying some sober truth.[3] And such is the view generally adopted by the modern Jew. For him punishment in the future life affects the soul only. He thinks of it as akin to the remorse which tortures the guilty even in this existence. Some of the Talmudic Rabbins adopted this view. After death, they say, temptation seems like a mountain to the good, as a thread to the wicked; the one weeps for joy because he has passed over it, the other for grief because he has allowed it to

[1] Eccles. xii. 7.

[2] See Hamburger, *Real-Encyclopädie*, vol. ii., art. "Paradies."

[3] Commentary on *Mishnah Synhedrin*, xi. 1; Yad Hachazakah, *Hilc. Teshubah*, viii. 1.

baffle him.[1] After death, they say elsewhere, the body and the soul come before the Divine judgment-seat. Each lays upon the other the blame for the sins of the past. But God decrees that the soul alone shall pay the penalty; for having come from heaven, it alone is responsible.[2] Very striking is the idea of a later teacher that the punishment in the future life consists in the torment of the soul torn by conflicting desires—by its old sinful longings, which it can no longer gratify, and by its yearning after the higher joys which it is not yet pure enough to attain. And agony such as this, he adds, far surpasses all earthly pain.[3]

Nor do we believe in a hell or in everlasting punishment. The pictures of penal fires with which some Jewish writers have embellished their descriptions of a future life are purely imaginary.[4] In our Bible there is no reference to such a place as Hell. Christian translators have chosen to use the word, but they have done so incorrectly. The Hebrew expression *Sheol*, which they so translate, is, as we have already seen, no place of torment, but only the region where the dead lead a colourless existence while awaiting removal to a happier sphere. "There is no Hell," boldly declares a Talmudic Rabbi of the third century.[5] As to Maimonides, he would seem even to deny all punishment hereafter, save a negative one. "The reward of the righteous in the future life," he says,[6] "is spiritual beatitude; the punishment of the wicked is exclusion from it. For the one there is light everlasting, for the other there is death." If suffering there is to be,

[1] *Succah*, 52 a. [2] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. iv., to Lev. iv. 2.
[3] Albo, *Ikkarim*, iv. 33.
[4] For specimens of them see Hamburger, vol. iii., art. "Göttliches Gericht."
[5] *Nedarim*, 8 b. [6] *Hilc. Teshubah*, viii. 1.

it is terminable. The idea of eternal punishment is repugnant to the genius of Judaism. Here and there a Rabbi [1] may be found advocating the notion; but such teaching does not represent true Jewish doctrine. Nay, it does not represent the doctrine of any rational religion. God is supremely just, and He cannot conceivably inflict upon fallible man, prone to error, beset by fierce temptations, endless torments for his sins in this life. "He knoweth our frame, He will remember that we are dust." [2] Experience confirms us in this belief. The punishments of this life are limited. The pangs of outraged conscience do not endure. There comes a time when we have the joyous sense of being at peace once more with God, when we may justly say to the torrent of remorse, "thus far and no further." And surely the tranquillity that is possible for us here will not be denied us in the future life. How beautiful, how obviously true, is the cry of the Prophet, speaking in God's name: "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit would fail before Me and the souls which I have made." [3]

This compassion for frail humanity, this fatherly consideration of God for the souls He has made, is a reality full of consoling significance for us as regards both this life and the next. Even for the sinful soul, rebellious though it has been, there is eternal hope. Its revolt expiated, the heavenly gates will be flung open, so that it too may enter. Very beautifully does an old Jewish writer conceive the righteous as pleading with God hereafter on behalf of the transgressors. "Go forth and heal them," is the Divine response to their intercession. And

[1] Those, for example, of the School of Shammai. See *R. Hashanah*, 16 b.
[2] Ps. ciii. 14.
[3] Isa. lvii. 16.

thus sought out and redeemed, the wicked rise into the life everlasting.[1]

Punishment in the future life, as we have seen, is spiritual, and spiritual, too, is the reward. If Hell is remorse, Heaven is the bliss of conscious communion with the Highest. " Better an hour in heaven," says the Talmud,[2] " than all the pleasures of this earthly life." And that rapture is sublime. " The world to come is unlike this world ; there is no eating or drinking there, no marrying or giving in marriage ; but the righteous sit with crowns on their heads, revelling in the splendour of the Divine glory." [3] And Maimonides expressly warns us that even the crowns are only a figure of speech, and have a purely spiritual significance.[4] For there is no such heaven as some teachers, both Jewish and Christian, have imagined. They speak of a glorious city on high whose very walls and gates they have counted. Heaven is not a place ; for the liberated soul knows neither place nor time ; it is a state of being. Its joys are not the sordid joys of the senses, for the senses perish with the body ; they are the joys of the spirit. The bliss of being near to God—the bliss of which we get a foretaste in this life, and which constitutes the only real happiness that we can attain here—that is heaven. Let us look back and try to recall

[1] *Yalkut* to Malachi iv. 3. See also *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, p. 183 *seq.* The idea here emphasised is the abounding grace of God and the power of prayer to evoke it. There is no suggestion of vicarious atonement or of a Divine or semi-Divine mediator. The intercessors are the souls of the righteous, and they move the Divine mercy not by any suffering of theirs, but by the force of their supplications. The passage represents, perhaps, the furthest point to which Jewish thought has carried the idea of intercession. See above, p. 78 *seq.*

[2] *Aboth*, iv. 17.

[3] *Berachoth* 17 a.

[4] Yad Hachazakah, *Hilc. Teshubah*, viii. 2.

the keenest delight we have ever experienced, and we shall find that it has sprung from some noble self-sacrificing deed. It has lain in the thought that we have won God's smile. Well, that joy, infinitely intensified, will be the reward of the good hereafter. And that is heaven.

With this general conception of eternal life we shall do well to content ourselves. There is an existence beyond the grave; there are larger possibilities of happiness for the soul than this life can offer. This simple conviction is surely enough; to know more is unnecessary. Why essay to fill in the details of the gracious picture? The attempt is but unprofitable guesswork. The greatest teachers of Israel have consistently deprecated it. For them it was enough to know that there was a heaven awaiting the just; its precise nature they could afford to leave out of account. What did concern them was the conduct of their lives here; for upon that depended their hopes of the life hereafter. All else they left in God's hands. We have seen that this is true of the Scriptural writers. It is true also of the Rabbins. The Prophets of the Bible, they declare,[1] portray only an earthly future; but as to the world to come, no eye save God's hath seen what He hath in store for them that trust in Him. And very finely does one of the Rabbinic legends tell how once the Israelites, presenting themselves before Moses, asked him to describe the reward which they might expect in the future world. "I cannot answer you," he said; "but happy are ye, for great good awaits you." And he would say no more.[2] Such a temper becomes us all. Content with the assurance of our immortality, let

[1] *Berachoth*, 34 b.

[2] *Siphrë* to Deut. xxxiii. 29.

us yield ourselves to absolute trust in our Divine Master, who in the next life, as in this, will assuredly order our destiny in perfect wisdom and love.[1]

[1] "As for myself," Moses Mendelssohn makes Socrates say, "I am content with the conviction that God's eyes are ever upon me, that His Providence and justice will follow me into the future life as it has protected me in this, and that my true happiness consists in the development of the powers of my soul. It is such felicity that awaits me in the life to come. More I do not desire to know."—*Phaedon*, towards the end.

CHAPTER X

ISRAEL'S MISSION

CLOSE relations, as we have seen, exist between God and mankind. But it is a cardinal doctrine of Judaism that special relations exist between God and the Israelite. Israel, we are taught, is God's people, entrusted by Divine Providence with the performance of a world-wide religious task. Two important ideas are thus enunciated. The terms usually implied to express them are the Election and the Mission of Israel. Let us consider these two ideas in turn.

Israel has been chosen by God to be a consecrated race—a race distinguished by holiness of life and by the possession of the purest religious truth. We already meet with this idea in the history of the Patriarchs. In an idolatrous age Abraham gains and cherishes the knowledge of the true God; in an age of moral degradation he sets an example of righteousness and purity. To him, then, the Divine promise is given that he shall be the ancestor of God's people: "For I have lovingly chosen him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."[1] The election

[1] Gen. xviii. 19.

of his descendants, then, is the reward for Abraham's fidelity to God and goodness. "The Lord did not choose you because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples; but because the Lord loveth you, and because He would keep the oath which He sware unto your fathers."[1]

But this election rests upon something more stable than ancestral merit. The merits of the descendants play an important part in it. Faithfulness to God and goodness becomes the Abrahamic tradition—a tradition handed down by the Patriarchs to each other in turn, and through them to Israel. The Israelites thus owe their election to their descent, but not to the mere physical fact of their descent only. They become the possessors by heredity of the qualities and the ideals of the Patriarchs. With the Divine promise which has made them the elect, there is transmitted to them the moral and spiritual equipment which justifies its fulfilment. They become the chosen because they deserve to be the chosen. The belief in the one and only God, and a genius for righteousness—these, in spite of frequent lapses into idolatry and sin during the Biblical age, were Israel's great characteristics.

The idea of Israel's election is set forth in striking language in Exodus xix. 6: "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The significance of this declaration will be evident when we remember that it immediately precedes the account of the delivery of the Ten Commandments, the first-fruits of Israel's religion. God is about to reveal His truths and commands to His people. But before the solemn communi-

[1] Deut. vii. 7, 8.

cation takes place its purpose is clearly made known to them. The Divine gift of Religion which they are about to receive is, they are told, to aid them in becoming a holy nation under the Lord. Nay, acceptance of that gift, self-dedication to the religious life, is the very condition of their election. "Now therefore," the Almighty admonishes them, "if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples.[1] Holiness is to be their distinctive badge, and it is to be won through the higher knowledge which the coming revelation is to give them. Their consecration, indeed, is to be twofold. The Divine truth, the Divine commands, are to uplift them; the very thought, too, that they have been chosen to receive the heavenly gift is to uplift them. The proud consciousness of being God's elect is to deepen the sanctity which the attempt to obey His revealed will must impart to their lives. Theirs, then, is no automatic consecration. Their own act joins itself with God's. Hence the frequent use of the word *covenant* by the Scriptural writers as a description of the great Sinaitic event. A mutual compact binds the Supreme and the Israelites. He takes them as His people; they promise to obey Him unreservedly. "All that the Lord hath spoken," they cry, "we will do."[2] Their appointment, their consecration, is crowned and completed by self-consecration, by a voluntary subordination of their energies, their lives, to the Divine will. God is about to show them what is good, in what righteousness

[1] Exod. xix. 5. Compare Deut. xxvi. 17-19. "Ye are the children of the Lord your God"—so the Law declares (Deut. xiv. 1); but we are this, says the Talmud (*Kiddushin*, 36 a), only so long as we evince the obedience of children.

[2] Exod. xix. 8.

consists. They will mightily strive to realise that ideal. He is to disclose His nature to them ; that sublime truth they will cherish for ever as their most precious possession.

Thus the effects of Israel's election are purely religious and moral. In styling ourselves God's people we do not claim to possess any worldly advantage, or even any special share of the Divine love. Worldly advantage every one must needs forgo who takes upon himself the yoke of God's service. This is especially true of Israel, The Jew, as the necessary consequence of his Judaism, assumes obligations from which the rest of mankind are free. He vows himself to the religious life, to the life of self-denial. In one of the most characteristic passages of his liturgy he prays thus : "Thou hast chosen us, O God, from all peoples, and hast given us Thy love and Thy favour ; Thou hast distinguished us above all nations, for Thou hast sanctified us by Thy commands, and brought us near to Thy service, and hast called us by Thy great and holy name." Israel's distinction, then, is that he possesses the Divine truth. He has been chosen to obey. Because God loves him He has laid upon him the yoke of His commands. Thus it is that a Rabbi can pray, "Out of the love and compassion which Thou, O Lord, hast vouchsafed to Thy people Israel Thou hast given unto us this great and holy Sabbath."[1] The pledge of God's affection for His people lies in His gift to them of a special opportunity for service, with its additional joys, but also with its additional obligations. Nay, by taking upon himself the yoke of the

[1] *Tosephta Berachoth*, iii. 7. The idea often recurs in the Prayer-Book ; the Sabbath and the Festivals are given to Israel in token of God's love. See the *Amidoth* and the "Sanctification" for Sabbaths and Festivals.

Law, Israel has been self-doomed to a life of trial. That in the worldly sense he has lost heavily, rather than gained, by his election, is proved by every line of his history. Verily, he has been "chosen in the furnace of affliction." The world has conspired to do him injury just because he has been true to the covenant of Sinai. Again and again he could have purchased safety, wealth, honours, power, had he been content to break that sacred compact. And even when persecution has ceased for a while, he has still had to satisfy the claim upon his self-sacrificing obedience which is ever involved in his election. God has held him fast to the ancient covenant. The ideal it set before him has been higher than that which contented other men; but his failure to reach it has been none the less sternly visited upon him. "You only have I known," cries the Prophet in the Divine name, "of all the families of the earth: *therefore* will I visit upon you all your iniquities."[1]

Nor does Israel's election give him a monopoly of the Divine love. All human beings are God's children, and all have an equal claim upon His care and solicitude. He deals justly, not capriciously with them all. In this life goodness wins its full measure of His approval, whatever the religious beliefs of him who exhibits it; in the future life Heaven is freely opened to every soul alike. There is no magic passport to the Divine favour either here or hereafter. The Divine test of a man's worth is not his theology but his life.[2]

* "The righteous among the Gentiles," Judaism declares, "have a share in the life eternal."[3] Finely does an old

[1] Amos iii. 2. [2] See *B. Kama*, 38 a; *Siphra* to Lev. xviii. 5.
[3] *Tosephta Synhed.* xiii. 2; *Mid. Tehillim* to Ps. ix. 17; *Yalkut* to Isa.

teacher[1] exclaim, "I call heaven and earth to witness that whether it be Jew or Gentile, man or woman, manservant or maidservant, according to their acts does the Divine spirit rest upon them." "Salvation," another authority declares,[2] "is attained not by subscription to metaphysical dogmas, but solely by love to God that fulfils itself in action. That is the cardinal truth of Judaism." The election of Israel does not mean the rejection of mankind. The very title of God's "first-born" given to the chosen race by the Bible implies that all humanity are His children. Every mortal enjoys His fatherly care. "He healeth all who come into the world; to all He crieth, 'Return, ye backsliding children.' None doth He reject; for ever are the gates open to all."[3] His mercies, moreover, are bestowed even upon the godless, upon those to whom a narrower religion would deny the possibility of salvation. "Six-and-twenty times," says the Talmud,[4] "does the refrain 'His mercy endureth for ever' occur in the 136th Psalm, to match the twenty-six generations that lived before the Law was given, but whom God nourished with His grace." "Deeds of mercy," it says elsewhere,[5] "are the Gentiles' sin-offering, reconciling them with God." "Let a man," says a later teacher,[6] "first lead the good life, and then ask God for religious truth." For the good life is the end, religious truth but the means. *

xxvi. 2; *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, Part II., pp. 103, 184; Maimonides, *Hilc. Teshubah*, iii. 5, and in three other passages of the *Yad Hachazakah*.

[1] *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, p. 207.

[2] Chasdai Crescas, *Or Adonai*, ii. 6. 1. For a list of other authorities see Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, p. 375 *seq*.

[3] *Mechilta* to Exod. xiv. 24; *Shemoth Rabbah*, chap. xix. to Exod. xii. 29.

[4] *Pesachim*, 118 a.

[5] *B. Bathra*, 10 b.

[6] *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, p. 162.

Whatever share, then, of the Divine favour we Jews enjoy we must win—win as all other men win it—by deserving it. But it is especially hard for us to win it. For a higher standard of obedience is exacted from us than is demanded from others, and by that does God judge us. More complete self-renunciation, with all its attendant difficulty and pain—that is what our election means. Our consecration involves suffering, and is made effective only through suffering. For though we call ourselves God's people, we have to make good our right to the honoured title, and we cannot make it good save by victory over our lower selves. The Rabbins taught this truth. "God," they say,[1] "gave three choice gifts to Israel — the Torah, the Land of Promise, and Eternal Life—and each was won by suffering." And the saying is always true. Whatever changes are in store for Israel, or for the external shape in which his religion expresses itself, the old ordinance which decrees self-sacrifice as the price of his election will abide. The Law will always be a yoke, though a glorious yoke; and the duty of bending beneath it in humble and glad self-surrender is the characteristic obligation of Israel through the ages.

It is in no arrogant temper that we claim to be the chosen people. We thereby affirm, not that we are better than others, but that we ought to be better. "Israel," say the Rabbins,[2] "is the King's retinue, whose duty it is to look expectantly for the royal commands." To be thus near the King is a privilege, but it imposes special duties. It is the old idea, *noblesse oblige*. We have been called by God to receive the truth and to live a holy life; and that call binds us to higher ideals than those which

[1] *Berachoth*, 5 a. [2] *Siphra* and *Yalkut* to Lev. xix. 1.

satisfy other men. The conception bespeaks not arrogance, but a seemly pride. "Without a certain self-consciousness," it has been well said,[1] "neither individuals nor peoples can survive. It is their backbone. All history teaches that every people regards itself as the chosen, and it exhibits the higher self-consciousness if it does not put forward its defects as merits." There is nothing unjustifiable, to say the least, in the assertion that we have been chosen to receive the Divine truth. If we do wrong to make that assertion, then we sin in company with every sincere and earnest religionist.

Self-sacrifice, then, is the essential condition of Israel's election. The Jew deceives himself who thinks otherwise, who dreams that he can make the best of both worlds, and while gratifying his own desires, even when they sharply conflict with the plain duties of his religion, imagines that he still remains a true Israelite. Judaism is something more than a badge, something more than a birth-mark; it is a life. To be born a Jew does not declare any of us to be of the elect; it only designates us for enrolment among the elect. God signs the covenant, but we have to seal it—to seal it by a life of service. "What makes a man a Jew?" is a question that is often asked. The answer is, two things: membership of the Jewish brotherhood, and loyal fulfilment of the obligations which that membership imposes. To be of the Jewish race but to trample upon Jewish duty is to be faithless to Israel.

But Israel has not been chosen solely for his own moral and spiritual advantage. Great truths and ideals he has, but he has them in trust for the world. The idea

[1] Güdemann, *Das Judenthum*, 2nd ed. 1902, p. 44.

of the Election of Israel has for its corollary the idea of Israel's Mission. The Jew has learnt to worship the one God, the "God of the spirits of all flesh," with whom every human soul can hold communion by its own unaided efforts; and he is summoned to the higher life, the life of holiness. For that truth, for that holy life, it is his great task to help to win others. The Torah, say the Rabbins,[1] is never called the Torah of Priest or Levite or Israelite; it is the Law which "man" is to do, and live thereby.[2] All humanity is to enter into the life-giving heritage. It is with this world-wide aim in view that Israel has received the gift of religious truth. The torch of the higher knowledge has been entrusted to him so that he may hand it on to others. To refuse this sublime task is to abdicate his special function. "If ye publish not My divinity to the Gentiles," the Rabbins[3] picture the Supreme as warning Israel, "ye must pay the penalty for your refusal." If Israel "do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity."

Thus Israel's mission, like his election, is purely religious. His is no worldly vocation; he has been called not for empire, for earthly power, for conquest, but to distribute the spiritual riches that have been entrusted to him. He has been called to be not the master, but the servant of mankind.

And this life-task of his he is chiefly to accomplish by the force of example. Again and again throughout the long centuries the Jew has cheerfully endured affliction rather than betray the spiritual trust thus confided to him. He has borne witness to the true God on the scaffold and at the stake and by the more terrible, be-

[1] *Siphra* to Lev. xviii. 5. [2] Lev. xviii. 5.
[3] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. vi. to Lev. v. 1.

cause more protracted agony of the outcast's life. This heroic constancy has powerfully influenced the minds of men. They have come to see that there must be truth in an idea that has nerved a people to this supreme self-sacrifice, moved them to account the world well lost if its loss has meant the triumph of their cause. Nay, men's thoughts have "widened with the process of the suns." Israel's fidelity to his creed has fixed attention upon the creed itself, and its simple beauty has already begun to conquer widespread homage. His missionary task too has been aided by his virtues. The world acknowledges to-day that the Jew has special excellences, which his religion has fostered. And the acknowledgment is fresh testimony to the power, to the truth of the religion itself. And so the work will go on. By faithfulness to Judaism the Israelite will lay the surest foundation for the triumph of Judaism.

This is the missionary conception which fills so large a place in Israel's religion. The germ of it may be discerned in the Pentateuch, notably in the famous utterance we have already quoted. "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation,"—so Moses speaks to his people in the Divine name. The words are Israel's charter, the Divine authority for an enterprise which will bring blessing to mankind, and "fill the face of the world with fruit." For a kingdom of priests implies something more than a people leading a consecrated, but self-contained life. It means a people whose holiness, travelling beyond the national confines, shall help to consecrate mankind. A priest presupposes a congregation, and a kingdom of priests a world to minister to.[1]

[1] Possibly the idea is more ancient still. It is perhaps embodied in the Divine promise to Abraham which declares (Gen. xii. 3) that through him and

But for the idea in its clearest and amplest expression we must go the Prophets. Both Isaiah and Micah have an identical vision of "the latter days" when the peoples shall "flow" like a mighty river to God's house, saying, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths."[1] And Zechariah foresees a time when "ten men, out of all the languages of the nations, shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you."[2]

With even greater fulness and fervour is the conception of the missionary Israel set forth by the great Seer who speaks to us in the second half of the Book of Isaiah,[3] and who, because of the glowing hope that inspires his message, has been called "the Evangelical Prophet." Israel is God's elect, whom He has taken hold of from the ends of the earth[4]; he is God's witness testifying to the world that He is the Lord, and that beside Him there is no Saviour.[5] But for the accomplishment of this missionary task the Prophet seems chiefly to look, in the first instance, to the nobler spirits in Israel, who in time will lift all their race to their own high level

his descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed. That the promise foreshadows something more than a blessedness which is to be merely the ideal of other nations, as might be inferred from the Hebrew of Gen. xxii. 18, is evident from the clearer language of Gen. xii. 3 and xviii. 18. What these passages unquestionably mean is that the Patriarch's descendants are to be the direct means of blessing the world, and it is in this sense that they are understood by Ben Sira (see Ecclus. xliv. 21). The sole question is what the nature of the wide-world blessing is which Israel is to be the instrument for disseminating.

[1] Isa. ii. 2, 3; Micah iv. 1, 2.

[2] Zech. viii. 23.

[3] Commencing at chap. xl.

[4] Chap. xli. 8.

[5] Chap. xliii. 10-11.

of faith and duty. To these, the spiritual kernel of the people, he probably refers in the sublime prophecy about "the Servant," commencing with the forty-second chapter. They are to be "a light of the nations," illumining the world's moral and spiritual darkness; they are to "open the blind eyes"—the eyes blinded by ignorance; they are to "bring out the prisoner from the prison house"—to set free those who are bound in the bondage of sin. In discharging this heaven-appointed task they will necessarily have to know sorrow, for witness to the truth is always martyrdom, and they can best testify to God who have found Him in suffering.

This is a truth taught again and again in the concluding section of the Book, and it is the theme of the famous fifty-third chapter, which so many readers find hard to understand. In that chapter, to which the three last verses of the previous chapter properly belong, Israel, here, as before, represented by his noblest spirits, conscious of his high vocation, and devoting himself to its fulfilment, is described as God's "Servant," or as His "righteous Servant," who willingly endures pain in order that others may be uplifted. And it is either mankind at large, or the general body of Israel, still unregenerate, which is supposed to be speaking in the greater part of the chapter, giving its impressions and experiences of this suffering Servant. It looked down upon him; it despised and rejected him; his affliction, so patiently borne, it wrongly deemed God's scourge, the punishment of his transgression. Now it knows better. Now it knows that his sufferings were designed for its own moral redemption, that "the chastisement of its peace was upon him, and with its stripes it was to be healed." And so his affliction

was no sign of God's anger, but only the indispensable instrument of an ennoblement more widespread than his own. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." And from the seed of grief the fair flower of joy shall spring at last. Blessing for others shall come as the fruit of his self-sacrifice. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," for "by his knowledge shall God's righteous Servant make many righteous."

Such, in outline, is the meaning of this chapter. It is a song, sombre and solemn, in honour of Israel's mission. It speaks of no one individual, but of a consecrated company who give themselves to suffering for the redemption of a world. Yes, of a world. For even if the Servant stands only for the elect of Israel, the whole race, and through it all mankind, must be blessed by his self-renunciation. And he suffers not that the world may be miraculously saved from transgression, but in order that it may be moved to self-redemption by copying the example of righteousness thus held out to it. There is no magic in this self-immolation except that which resides in the force of example. The heroism with which God's Servant "pours out his soul unto death," his fidelity to the truth and goodness which the fire of affliction is powerless to destroy, will move men, first to admiration of that constancy, and then to reverence for the ideals that have inspired it. And in this sense the ideal Israel is described as bearing the griefs and carrying the sorrows of the world, and even as being laden with its iniquities. It is as if his ennobling, his redeeming influence, should place upon him the sins of men, even as the scapegoat[1] was symbolically laden with the transgressions of Israel, which he was

[1] Lev. xvi. 21-22.

to bear away to some inaccessible spot, whence they should never return to degrade and torture the soul any more.

Such is the Prophet's dream, such the beautiful hope that glorifies his utterances, and lends dignity and grandeur to his and our religion. The world redeemed —won for the godly and the goodly life by faithful, self-denying Israel—this is the idea. No wonder that it has captured the great spirits of our race in every age. No fervent soul can resist its impressive call. Inspired by the enthusiasm of the Prophets, the Rabbins can speak rapturously of the day when Israel's life-task shall be fulfilled, and the whole world be one in confessing the true God. This noble thought dwarfs all others. National disasters and national woe are forgotten in the dream of the moral triumph that will eventually recompense Israel for all his sufferings. Even the loss of the Land of Promise and a life of weary exile are transfigured into a blessed ordinance. God, said a Sage,[1] scattered His people over the earth, for only so could the nations be gained for His service. Like seed sown among mankind, Israel was to yield a bountiful harvest of souls won for the living God.

This faith in the universal triumph of the religious idea as Israel conceives it, finds repeated expression in the Prayer-Book. Thus the familiar prayer known as *Alenu* concludes as follows: "In Thee, O Lord, is our hope. O speed the day when Thy glory and might shall be manifested, when Thy kingdom shall be firmly established upon earth, when all mankind shall call on Thy name, and every sinner turn to Thee. Then all the inhabitants of the world shall recognise and know that unto Thee

[1] *Pesachim*, 87 b.

every knee must bend, to Thee every tongue sware fealty. Before Thee, O Lord our God, they shall fall prostrate, and to Thy name they shall give glory. They will all take upon themselves the yoke of Thy kingdom, and Thou wilt reign over them for ever and ever. For Thine is the kingdom, and to all eternity wilt Thou gloriously reign. For so the Law declares 'the Lord shall reign for ever and ever';[1] and further it is written 'the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the Lord be one and His name one.'"[2]

And the glowing hope finds utterance in the following prayer also: "Put thy fear, O Lord God, we beseech Thee, upon all Thy works, so that all mankind may bow before Thee, and become one band united to do Thy will with a perfect heart;[3] for we know, O Lord, that dominion is Thine, and that strength is in Thy right hand. And so give glory, O Lord, to Thy people, hope to those that fear Thee, and the opening of the mouth[4] to those that trust in Thee. For then the righteous shall see and be glad, and iniquity shall shut its mouth, and all wickedness shall be wholly consumed like smoke, for the proud rule of sin shall pass away from off the earth. Then every creature shall own Thee as its Creator, and everything that hath breath shall cry: The Lord, the God of Israel, reigneth and His dominion ruleth over all."[5]

This is the picture of the future which consoles and inspires the pious Israelite. He looks forward to the time when the beautiful truths about God and duty which the

[1] Exod. xv. 18. [2] Zech. xiv. 9.

[3] For this idea see *Bereshith Rabbah* to Gen. xl. 23 (chap. lxxxviii.).

[4] See Ezek. xxix. 21.

[5] From the liturgy for the New Year Festival. See the remarkable parallel in that magnificent passage, Ecclus. xxxvi. 1 *seq.*

great souls of his race have conceived and cherished will be universally accepted by the world. But this is the limit of his outlook. He never dreams of the world accepting Judaism in its entirety, with all its ceremonial practices as well as its religious creed. There are elements in Judaism which are not of an universal or even a permanent character. They are intended only for Jews, and even for them only temporarily. The external character of Israel's religion has changed from age to age in response to his shifting needs and ideas, and there is reason to believe that it will continue thus to change in the years to come. It is not these transitory constituents which, according to Jewish doctrine, will go to make the future religion of the world. Perhaps by the time that the world is ready for an universal religion these constituents will have passed away even from Judaism. The Rabbins seemed to think so. They speak of the Feasts and Fasts, with the single exception of the Day of Atonement, and of all sacrifices, save the thank-offering, being abolished in the latter days.[1] They even affirm that the old Law will pass away and be replaced by a new one in the Messianic age.[2] Nay, an Isaiah can look forward to the time when the nations will have acknowledged the true God, and Israel's special task have ceased, and with it his election. "In that day," cries the Prophet, "shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria; for that the Lord of Hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance."[3]

[1] *Midrash* to Prov. ix. 2; *Yalkut* to Lev. vii. 12.

[2] *Niddah*, 61 b; *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, Part II., p. 183; *Yalkut* to Isa. xxvi. 2.

[3] Isa. xix. 24, 25.

It is, then, not the changeful, but the abiding and unalterable ingredients of Judaism which will constitute the future religion of mankind. We look forward to the world's acceptance of our creed, of our Theism, of those great and simple truths about God and goodness which Israel has preserved with unfaltering fidelity through the ages. God, One, a Spirit, the universal Father; man, heavenly in origin, free, responsible, endowed with the power of lifting himself to God in prayer and purity without extraneous aid—these are the essential truths of Judaism viewed on its universalistic side. They are truths as eternal as God Himself. And it is this kernel of our religion to which we refer when we speak of the triumph of Judaism in the coming time. Thus it is that the Rabbins can declare[1] that "he who renounces idolatry is in effect a Jew."

* This is how the Israelite pictures his missionary task. But he is far from trusting for its accomplishment to an excessive and an unscrupulous zeal. The reproach was levelled at the Scribes and Pharisees that they compassed sea and land to make one proselyte. But the Talmud shows no trace of activities that would have justified the taunt. The main hope of the fulfilment of Israel's vocation has always been centred in a gradual conquest of men's minds and hearts by the silent influence of the Jewish life. The Jew's own fidelity to his religious and ethical ideals is at length to win the world's allegiance for them. Indeed, the expediency of making proselytes is a matter upon which the Talmudic doctors themselves were sharply divided. While some of them favoured the practice, others as strongly

[1] *Megillah*, 13 a.

opposed it.[1] And this difference of opinion is reflected in Jewish thought to-day. There are Jews who disapprove of making converts, and acquiesce in that step only under stress of necessity; others would welcome proselytes and make their reception easier than it is. The latter view is, however, that of the minority. Again, while there are Jews who hold that the passive influence of Judaism will suffice for the realisation of its mission, there are others who maintain that the Israelite is bound by his missionary character actively to propagate the theistic teachings of his religion. What the latter class advocate is not, it need scarcely be said, aggressive methods, but simply a systematic exposition of the great principles of Judaism for the especial enlightenment of religious inquirers. But these differences of opinion relate to methods only. That Judaism is a missionary religion all Jews agree, and all would repel with equal strenuousness the contrary assertion. Judaism is such a religion in the full sense of the expression. Its ritual the Jew regards as binding exclusively upon himself. But its creed and its ethics he offers to the world in the deeply rooted conviction that, in God's good time, the world will take them and live by them. *

The Jew, then, looks forward to a future of universal religion and righteousness. He pictures to himself a Golden Age; but, unlike the Pagan peoples of old, he places it in the future, not in the past. The world, he holds, is progressive; mankind is slowly but surely marching on to a happier time of faith and goodness, when

[1] See Hamburger, *Real-Encyclopädie*, vol. iii., art. "Ausbreitung des Judenthums."

men "shall not hurt nor destroy: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."[1] That time is called the time of the Messiah or the Messianic era. The great Prophets of Israel loved to dream and to speak of it. They would turn with joy from the contemplation of present woes, national and human, to the thought of an era of unbroken peace and happiness, lying far away in the unknown future. They would comfort themselves and their hearers, under the oppressive sense of widespread moral corruption, with visions of a time when men should "cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold" and serve God "with one consent."[2] Some of their pictures of this Golden Age were clearly allegorical, full of the imaginative glow that characterises the literature of the East. Thus Isaiah can see the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, dwelling peaceably together, and a little child leading them.[3] It is an exquisite picture. But that it is highly poetic is shown by its other details, such as that which describes the lion eating straw like the ox.[4]

Yet another point is to be borne in mind. Not all the Prophetic descriptions of coming joy refer to a remote future, or foreshadow a condition of world-wide happiness. Some relate exclusively to the Prophet's own time, and announce events affecting the destinies of Israel only. Many of these predictions, however, have been interpreted in a directly opposite sense. They have been regarded as foreshadowing the advent of a Messiah—that is, of a man belonging to the House of David, and endowed with almost superhuman gifts of mind and character, who

[1] Isa. xi. 9. [2] Isa. ii. 20; Zeph. iii. 9.
[3] Isa. xi. 6. [4] Isa. xi. 7.

in an age yet to come is to lead Israel back to Palestine, and to inaugurate the reign of religion and righteousness on earth. But in reality what they announce is the coming of a sovereign like King Hezekiah, for example, who lived in the Prophet's own time, and whose rule brought much-needed peace and well-being to his sorely tried people.[1] Even the word "Messiah," as used in the Hebrew Bible, has not that half-supernatural significance which it has come to possess. It means only the "anointed one," and was applied to ordinary Israelitish kings like Saul, and David, and Zedekiah, and even to a foreign potentate like Cyrus.[2] In like manner passages which, according to some interpreters, speak of a Golden Age yet to come, were meant only to portray in highly figurative language a happy state of things that was inaugurated, and came to an end, long ago.[3]

Forgetfulness of these facts has produced much mischief both within and without the pale of Judaism. History is full of Messiahs, of men who have given out sincerely or insincerely that they were Divinely chosen to resuscitate Israel's nationality, and to establish a heavenly kingdom on earth. Multitudes have believed in them, and have only discovered their mistake after much suffering. In Jewish history Bar Cochba in the second century, and Sabbatai Zebi in the seventeenth, and in Mohammedan history the Mahdi of the Soudan in our own day, are familiar examples of these false Messiahs.

It does not necessarily follow, however, that the belief

[1] See *e.g.* Isa. ix. 6-7.

[2] 1 Sam. xxiv. 6; 2 Sam. xxii. 51; Lam. iv. 20; Isa. xlv. 1.

[3] See *e.g.* Isa. ix. 6-7; Hosea ii. 18; Amos ix. 14-15; Zech. ix. 9-17.

in a Messiah or in the Restoration of the Jewish State is a delusion. There are millions of Jews, to say nothing of other religionists, who cling passionately to these beliefs. Among oppressed Jewish communities, such as those in Russia and the East, the belief in the national revival of Israel is a powerful solace and support under galling persecutions. Who would wilfully seal up the springs of so much blessing? Who would dare to tell these companies of sorrowing, trusting souls that their hope is vain, their faith a chimera? No one can say what the future has in store for us. It may possibly be God's will that Israel is once more to enjoy political independence, and be settled in his own land under his own rulers. Nay, it would be rash to declare positively that even the Prophets could not have had this far-off event in their minds when they dreamt of the future. If, then, we meet with Jews who believe in the Return, in national revival, in a personal Messiah, let no one venture to say dogmatically that they are wrong.

But, on the other hand, the fact must be stated that there are many Jews, and their number is probably increasing, who do not and cannot believe in these things. They cannot believe in the Restoration of the Jewish State, for they hold that such an event would impede rather than promote the fulfilment of the great purpose for which Israel exists. The moral and religious education of the world, they maintain, can best be promoted by close contact between Jew and Gentile. Isolation, they argue, even though it be isolation in Palestine and accompanied by national independence, would mean failure for Israel's mission. Those who hold this opinion point in justification to the memorable saying of the

Rabbins, already quoted, that the dispersion of the Jew over the earth was providentially designed as a means of winning the world for religious truth. They remind us also of that other Rabbinic utterance which declares[1] that on the day the Temple fell the Messiah was born, the fulfilment of Israel's Messianic task begun. These persons cherish a strong faith in the future of Judaism; but for them it is a future marked by moral and religious triumphs, not by national glory. It is a spiritual empire, they affirm, that Israel is to win; and it can only be won by the Jew remaining a citizen of the world, and directly influencing the religious life of the world by his creed and his example. Moreover, in common with all Jews, they believe in a future not only for Israel, but for all mankind. They sincerely cherish the Prophetic faith in the advent of a Golden Age of universal peace and brotherly love. But they do not lay much stress upon details. Their picture of the earthly Paradise is purposely vague as is the Jewish dream of the heavenly Eden. A half-Divine figure, who is to change the existing order of things by the waving of a magic wand, has no place in their thoughts. They believe implicitly in the Messianic Age; the idea of a Messianic Person they reject or ignore. They are inclined to agree with the old Rabbi who declared[2] that Israel had no longer a Messiah, seeing that he had enjoyed him in King Hezekiah, meaning thereby that the prophetic utterances which seem to foreshadow a "Prince of Peace" yet to come were fulfilled ages ago.

And surely we are no more at liberty to forbid these

[1] *Echah Rabbathi* to Lam. i. 16.

[2] *Synhedrin*, 98 b.

opinions than we are free to rebuke the minds that reject them. The question whether a Messiah is to be one of the figures of the Messianic Age, or whether Israel is to be a nation once more and the Temple in Jerusalem the religious centre of the whole world, is not a vital question. We can be equally good Jews whatever view we hold on these points. They are details on which freedom of thought can be tolerated without injury to the Faith.

But the same cannot be said of the Messianic Idea. That is one of the essentials of our creed, without which Judaism would have neither meaning nor life. If there is no Golden Age in store for the world, which the Jew is to bring nearer by his belief and his example, if Israel is never to behold the triumph of the great principles to which he has borne such pathetic witness, then Judaism is vain. To despair of that triumph is to confess that Judaism has no purpose to fulfil in God's scheme. It is to deny its truth. If the dogma of the Divine Unity is the foundation of our religion, the Messianic Idea is its coping-stone.

It is this idea of the mission of Israel, a mission whose complete fulfilment is to mark the Messianic Age, which justifies the maintenance of those ceremonial elements of the religion which, as has been explained above, are intended exclusively for the Jew. Possessing no claim to be numbered among the essentials of Judaism, they nevertheless serve a highly important purpose, seeing that they arm the Jew for the great work which Providence has assigned to him. They do this in two ways. First, they serve as badges proclaiming Israel to be a consecrated

race, and thus help to keep him separate and distinct. Secondly, they promote that deeper consecration which flows from holiness of life. These important purposes we propose to expound in detail in the next part of this book.

BOOK II

CEREMONIAL

INTRODUCTORY

JUDAISM is more than a theology; it is a religion. It aims at giving us right ideas about God and Duty; but it also aims at leading us to God and Duty. It seeks to ennoble us in feeling and in act. Judaism, in short, is a practical religion; it is a life. It keeps ever before the Israelite the thought of his consecration; but it also helps him to transform that thought into a reality. It concerns itself with the entire domain of the practical life. It does not say, "Do these acts, for they are holy"; it says, "Make every act holy, however homely and commonplace it may be." It does not tell us to give only certain days to God, but to give every day to Him. The Rabbins insist upon this truth. The Bible, they say,[1] hallows the lowliest acts—ploughing, sowing, reaping, and the like—and elevates them into a service of God.[2] And by their own ordinances the Rabbins gave full effect to this practical side of Judaism. The daily life of the Jew who conforms to their rules is sown thick with religious observances to match the manifestations of the Divine that fill the daily life. In the words of the

[1] *Debarim Rabbah*, chap. x., to Numb. vi. 1.
[2] See Deut. xxii. 10; Lev. xix. 9.

Rabbins themselves,[1] a hundred religious duties await the Israelite every day; he is "encompassed" by them. He recites a special grace or blessing on every occurrence, however familiar; on partaking, for instance, of some enjoyment, or on seeing a rainbow or a thunderstorm, on feeling the splendour of the spring, on inhaling the scent of a flower, on beholding the sea. For every object in Nature, every incident in human experience, tells of God's power and goodness and glory; and so to regard it—to "eat and to bless"—is, as the Rabbins say,[2] "to crown the Creator."

Thus the daily life in all its details is used as a means of bringing the Israelite into close touch with the Highest. And the task is completed by the institution of certain holy rites or observances, some of them picturesque, all of them full of religious meaning. The pious Israelite attaches the Divine name and commands to his door-post in token that in his home God and Duty are enshrined. He lays the fringes on his heart, and with them the call to purity of life. He fastens the phylacteries about his arm as a sign that he has bound himself to the Divine service. He not only engages in prayer three times daily—"evening, morning, and at noonday"[3] —in conformity with time-honoured usage, but he seeks other opportunities of communion with the Supreme. On lying down to rest at night he prayerfully commits his spirit to his Father's care; on awaking in the morning he will thank Him for giving him back his soul. Should some blessing fall to his share, he acknowledges it in thanksgiving; should sorrow light upon him, he greets it

[1] *Jer. Berachoth*, chap. ix., end.
[2] *Yalkut* to Ps. xxxiv. 8.
[3] Ps. lv. 17.

with words of submission, even with a benediction. In the one case he praises the Lord who "is good and beneficent"; in the other he blesses "the righteous Judge." He takes possession of a new house with prayer; his marriage-day becomes an opportunity for reconciliation with his higher self; his first-born he dedicates to God; he hallows with solemn worship year after year the days on which his parents died. All the events of the common life are used to stir religious feeling. In this wise the Jew obeys the Rabbinic exhortation,[1] "Let thy God be thy companion." "The common task, the daily round," are transfigured. While the Jew is doing his work as a denizen of this lower world, he is helping to found a heavenly kingdom. He is like the labourers who are engaged in building a royal edifice. They use only stone and mortar—the humblest materials; but from them springs a palace, stately, glorious.

[1] *Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. civ. 1.

CHAPTER I

THE DIETARY LAWS AND JEWISH SEPARATISM

PROMINENT among the means designed to hallow the daily life is the group of prescriptions commonly known as the Dietary Laws. The Pentateuch lays much stress upon the regulation of the bodily appetites. Not content with insisting upon inner and spiritual purity, it demands outward and physical holiness also. Injunctions like "Ye shall be holy," or "Ye shall sanctify yourselves," which occur so often in Leviticus,[1] are general precepts covering a large number of laws, only some of which strictly belong to the domain of Religion or Morals. They are used to enforce such duties as respect for parents, the worship of the one and only God, truthful speech, honesty, the exercise of charity and love towards all men, etc.[2] But side by side with these exalted duties are to be found an entirely different class of obligations, which, though external in character, are nevertheless included in the acts that realise the idea of holiness. The avoidance of certain kinds of "defiling" food is an example.

If we find it hard to understand how holiness can

[1] Chap. xi. 44; xix. 1; xx. 7, etc.

[2] See Lev. xix. 1-37; and compare Deut. xiv. 1 *seq.*

have anything to do with eating and drinking, it is because we fail to grasp the exact meaning which the Hebrew word *kadosh*, usually translated "holy," bears in Leviticus. If for "holy" we substitute the term "consecrated," we shall get much nearer to its true significance. Israel was to be a consecrated people—that is to say, a people set apart from the nations to be God's own. This idea of separateness is the root-idea of the Hebrew word *kadosh*.[1] The people was to be a people apart, distinguished from all others by an external consecration, by outward rites which in themselves helped to constitute "holiness." Among the factors of this technical purity, which from the Book in which it is especially enjoined is called levitical, the Dietary Laws occupy an important place. The people were exhorted to avoid certain kinds of food of which their neighbours freely partook — the flesh of an animal, for example, that had died of itself,[2] or that had been injured by other animals,[3] or the flesh of beasts and birds of prey, or shell-fish.[4] In like manner, they were forbidden to eat certain kinds of fat and the blood of animals and birds.[5]

Obedience to these commands became a badge, proclaiming the Israelite to be of God's people, and differentiating him sharply from other men.

But this levitical purity was not external merely. It was to beget and nurture that deeper holiness which was the final aim of the Lawgiver. Outward consecration

[1] See, *e.g.* Lev. xx. 26. It is the original meaning of the English word also. The idea of purity and saintliness which the word "holy" connotes is a secondary one.

[2] Deut. xiv. 21.

[3] Exod. xxii. 31.

[4] Lev. xi. 1 *seq.*; Deut. xiv. 3 *seq.*

[5] Lev. iii. 17; vii. 23-27; xvii. 13.

was only to precede and symbolically express an inner sanctity. The people, marked off from other races by distinctive rites, were gradually prepared for the conception of a deeper-rooted separateness, the elements of which were furnished by their religious life. Obedience to precepts like the Dietary Laws — and it must be remembered that those laws are only a part of the "consecrating" legislation of the Pentateuch — made the Israelite feel that he belonged to a race apart.[1] And since that obedience was rendered to God—rendered as a religious act—it was not long before he grasped the higher truth, and saw that his separateness could only be justified and made fruitful by its extension to the spiritual life. It is quite true that parallels to the Dietary Laws of the Israelites are to be found in the usages of other ancient nations. But what Mosaism did was not so much to originate those laws as to give them a higher meaning and purpose, to make them effective instruments for safeguarding the distinctiveness of Israel, together with those yet more important aims which that distinctiveness was to subserve.

Thus the idea of physical separateness was to beget the conception of moral separateness, and the laws we are considering were peculiarly fitted to foster that conception. These forbidden meats were not prohibited arbitrarily; they were repulsive in themselves. "Ye shall eat no abominable thing," cries the Law.[2] Human instinct already tabooed them, already marked them out

[1] Other instances are the laws against outward defilement caused, *e.g.* by touching a dead body (Lev. xi. 24, etc.), against superstitious practices (Lev. xx. 6; Deut. xiv. 1), and against cross-breeding of animals, etc. (Lev. xix. 19).

[2] Deut. xiv. 3.

as unclean.[1] The Israelite was warned not to "make himself abominable"[2] by eating any of these repulsive foods. He was not even to touch them.[3] It was a warning which his better nature seconded. Is it not easy, then, to see how, in course of time, the appeal to that better nature was enlarged, and how the ritual enactments came to be exhortations to avoidance of everything that was morally repulsive? And so, beginning with the endeavour to shun ceremonial defilement, the Israelite came to realise the sinfulness of ethical impurity. That impurity, equally with the outward defilement, was one of the "abominations" of the heathen, and to keep himself free from it came to be the highest sign and expression of his separateness.[4] Never could Israel be so truly a distinct and consecrated people unto the Lord his God as when purity of heart and of life came to crown his abstinence from unclean meats.

To the purposes thus indicated a third must be added —the direct ennoblement of the character. The Dietary Laws did more than suggest moral purity; they promoted it. For obedience to them necessarily demanded self-control; and called upon to exercise self-mastery in some things, the Israelite was taught the duty of exercising it in all things. He was warned to be on his guard against unholy desire generally. And he was not only taught the lesson; he was helped to obey it. Obedience to these laws was to act as a discipline that braced up his

[1] The distinction between clean and unclean animals is recognised in the pre-Mosaic legislation (Gen. vii. 2). The prohibition of eating blood, too, is represented as immediately following the Deluge (Gen. ix. 4).

[2] Lev. xi. 43.

[3] Lev. xi. 8, etc.

[4] See Lev. xx. 22-26, where a close connection between the dietary laws and the laws of moral purity seems to be indicated.

moral energies, and enabled him to resist temptation of every kind.

Such, it may fairly be said, was the supreme motive of these restrictions. The Rabbins were not slow to perceive it. Beneath the immediate purposes of the Dietary Laws they discerned a deeper and a nobler aim. "After all," they say, "what can it matter whether one eats or avoids this or that kind of flesh? But we must look beneath the letter of the law. These oommands were given with the highest of all objects—for the sake of the purity which obedience to them imparts to the moral life."[1] "The ideal Jew," they further declare, "does not say, 'I have no desire to eat swine's flesh, no desire to indulge my sensual cravings'; 'I desire it,' he says; 'but I will conquer the desire for the sake of my Father in Heaven.' For to keep aloof from sin is the true separateness, and only to such as painfully wrestle with temptation cometh the Kingdom of God."[2] And the later teachers echo the doctrine. The Dietary Laws, says Maimonides, are intended as a training in self-mastery; they habituate us to the curbing of carnal desire; they rebuke the temper that makes sensual pleasure an aim of life.[3] In a like spirit Nachmanides declares that the ordinances of the Pentateuch, though their purpose may not be explicitly set forth, "are meant for the good of man"; they are either to "keep us aloof from something hurtful, or to educate us in goodness."[4]

These Dietary Laws are still capable of accomplishing

[1] *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. xliv. to Gen. xv. 1; *Tanchuma* to Lev. xi. 2.

[2] *Siphra* to Lev. xx. 26.

[3] *Morë Nebuchim*, iii. 25. He expresses himself to a similar effect in the fourth of his "Eight Chapters."

[4] See Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, p. 151.

the three purposes above enumerated. They may help to maintain Jewish separateness; they may preserve the idea of Israel's consecration; they may exert a powerful influence upon personal purity. The last two objects are obviously desirable in themselves. They are more even than this—they are vital objects. The consciousness of being an elect people, and the power of setting an example to the world of personal holiness, are alike essential to the fulfilment of our Divinely-appointed errand. Every law that strengthens these qualities merits respect and obedience. It is a law which still fulfils a great purpose. It is a living law, and therefore a law that deserves to live.

As to the first object, however, that of preserving Jewish separateness, a special word must be said. It is clear that if we Jews are to perform our mission, we must keep ourselves a distinct brotherhood. To allow ourselves to be swallowed up by the nations, to lose ourselves in some other religious communion, just as a river is lost in the sea, is to give up all hope of aiding, as Jews, in the conversion of the world to religious truth and righteousness. *As Jews*, be it observed. It is true that we may throw in our lot with some other religious body like the "Theists," with whose creed our own has so many points of contact, and still work for the higher welfare of mankind. But we shall do it as Theists, not as Jews. It needs only that every Jew should adopt this policy of assimilation for Israel to disappear and his mission with him. It may be urged that no great harm will be done if this indeed happens. "What does it matter," it may be asked, "by which particular race or sect the great task is accomplished? Perish Israel so long as God's Kingdom comes."

But the answer is twofold. The Jew owes allegiance to Judaism as well as to his mission, just as every Englishman owes loyalty not only to England's civilising task, but to England herself. The Israelite who deems himself at liberty to forget his Jewish birth and to efface his distinctive Judaism, is like an Englishman who should throw off the ties binding him to his country and take the whole world for his fatherland. There are Jews who do the one thing, and perhaps there are Englishmen who do the other. But though their motives may seem to them excellent, their conduct is none the less disloyal; and loyalty is the first duty of the citizen and of the Jew alike.

But, in the second place, the maintenance of Judaism as a distinct religion is itself faithfulness to the mission. Our task as Jews is to bear witness to the true God, and to the sanctity of the moral law. And is it not clear that this testimony must be especially effective when it is offered by a people knit together by the consciousness of being Divinely called to render it, by an historic people, too, with its roots striking deep down into the past, with an unique record of continuous battle for the Ideal? Is not the witness of such a people the most impressive that could be offered? Is it not best calculated to stir the imagination, and to kindle the respect of the world? To disregard our distinctive Judaism is to throw away these great advantages. Nay, it is to rob Theism of a powerful ally in the task she shares in common with Israel.[1] We

[1] Mr. H. S. Wells, in an interesting forecast of the state of human society a century hence, says (*Anticipations*, p. 317): "The Jew will probably lose much of his particularism, intermarry with Gentiles, and cease to be a physically distinct element in human affairs. But much of his moral tradition will, I hope, never die." By moral tradition Mr. Wells doubtless means traditional

can easily understand, then, the jealousy with which the great teachers in Israel have ever upheld regulations like those forbidding marriage between Jew and Gentile, which aim at preserving the integrity of the Jewish brotherhood.

* And here a word may conveniently be added on the subject of that prohibition. Its starting-point is to be found in the Biblical warning[1] against intermarriage with the "seven nations" of Canaan, which would have led to idolatry, with all its immoral results. In later times the Scriptural enactment was extended and applied to mixed marriages of every kind.[2] And though to-day idolatry is extinct, the principle underlying that extension fully commends itself to the Jewish conscience. It is generally felt that now, as of old, the religion of Israel must protect itself against influences which make for its disintegration. And among those influences is intermarriage, which even if it spares the Judaism of the Jewish party to it, will probably be less tender to the Judaism of the next generation. Husband and wife may agree to train their children as Jews, and faithfully respect the compact. But the force of circumstances will assert itself at last, if not in the first generation, then in the

morality. It is pleasing to know, from the mouth of a writer so deeply steeped in the modern spirit, that the Jewish conception of morality is worth preserving, and that the race which has hitherto preserved it in precept and practice has rendered a valuable service to mankind. But it would be interesting to learn how Jewish morality is to survive when the Jew has perished. Even Mr. Wells does not believe that the millennium will arrive with the end of the present century. So that the extinction of the Jew by intermarriage, and by other contrivances for destroying his particularism, can only be a menace to the world's higher wellbeing. Is it not clear that the Jew must remain distinct if he is to continue efficiently to serve the cause of humanity?

[1] Exod. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3.

[2] Maimonides, *Hilc. Issurē Biah*, xii. 1; *Hilc. Melachim*, viii. 7.

second. In the inevitable struggle between the diverse religions of the parents it is all but certain that the religion of the Jewish parent, since for various reasons it is the harder one to practise, will go to the wall. Let this conflict become general—in other words, let intermarriage become general, and Judaism must disappear. To forbid a union, then, between a Jew and a Gentile, when the latter has not made solemn profession of the Jewish faith, is clearly a justifiable course, seeing that it is dictated by the most elementary instinct of self-preservation. Such a course is not exclusively Jewish. It is adopted by other communions, notably by Roman Catholicism. Nor is this a matter of communal policy only. It is one that concerns the individual conscience also. Every Jew should feel himself bound, even though the duty involves the sacrifice of precious affections, to avoid acts calculated, however remotely, to weaken the stability of the ancestral religion. It is true that occasional unions between Jew and Gentile do no appreciable harm to the Jewish cause, however much mischief they may lay up, in the shape of jealousy and dissension, for those who contract them, and of religious confusion, for the children. But a general practice begins as a rule by being occasional. Every Jew who contemplates marriage outside the pale must regard himself as paving the way to a disruption which will be the final, as it will be the culminating disaster in the history of his people.[1] *

To maintain the identity of Judaism is the Jew's first duty, which is the same as saying that his first duty

[1] See C. G. Montefiore's able argument on this subject in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. xii. p. 642.

is to maintain Jewish separateness. What the nature of that separateness is to be, how far it is to extend, constitutes the great problem for the faithful Jew of these times. Creed alone cannot be a sufficient barrier, for it must needs be lowered at the invitation of Theism. We must rely, it is clear, upon the old safeguards, upon distinctive *practices*. But this is not to admit that the entire ceremonial system which has been slowly built into Judaism in the course of centuries ought to be preserved. That a law or an observance tends to keep up Jewish separateness is by itself no valid argument for its retention. To justify its continued existence it must show that it still serves a moral and religious purpose, that its spiritual vitality is unexhausted. Mere separateness is not an ideal to be cherished. Rightly conceived, it is but a means to an end, and that end is the effectiveness of the Jew as a religious instrument. If it fail to secure that end, it is an unmixed evil.

It is possible to imagine an utterly worthless Jewish survival, to picture an Israel with a corporate life springing exclusively from a blind and ignorant adherence to superstitious customs. Such a separateness would obviously be a calamity, both for the Jew himself and for his cause. It would mean that his own spiritual life had come to an end, that all prospect of the fulfilment of his mission had vanished. No; gratuitous self-isolation gets no support from Jewish teaching. If the Israelite of the Biblical age was warned against intercourse with the surrounding tribes, it was exclusively because of the religious and moral dangers with which it threatened him. And that the Jew, even the Jew learned in the Law, readily consorted in later times with his Gentile neighbours whenever

they permitted him to do so, the story of his life under the Romans, in Mohammedan Spain, and in medieval Europe generally, places beyond doubt. If he became anti-social, it was because society would have none of him. The Ghetto was not of his making, and he had to suffer from intolerance before he began to practise it himself. And when he did sever himself from the world that had thrust him out, it was not in obedience to his religion, but in spite of it. Judaism is the very opposite of an anti-social code.

The Jew, therefore, who gratuitously isolates himself, who declines intercourse with his neighbour, or refuses to conform to the customs of the country in which he lives, condemns his religion and does it harm. He is disloyal to its teaching, and he lowers it in the sight of other men. In civilised countries there are no Jews, save such as are fugitives from religious persecution, who are addicted to separatism in this extreme form. Treated as outcasts in the very land of their birth, these victims of oppression have acquired a sense of isolation which it takes many years of just and kindly treatment to obliterate. But these are exceptional cases. For us it is of more practical importance to remember that the need of separateness is not necessarily a cogent plea for adherence to a lifeless ceremonial. If all that could be said for such regulations as the Dietary Laws is that they divide the Jew from his neighbour, the fact would condemn them. If they deserve to live, it is because without them and the separateness they maintain Judaism cannot live. The need of complete union has to yield to the higher need of self-preservation. Particularism, as it is called, we may admit to be an evil. The disappear-

ance of Judaism, with its missionary task, would be a far greater one. "In a word," to quote a modern Jewish writer,[1] "Israel must be particularist in order to be universalist." This is the answer to those who demur to Jewish ritual as anti-social.

Another familiar objection to it has less weight. It is urged against it that it is Eastern in character, and therefore out of place in Western countries. The argument, if valid, would destroy all Jewish ceremonial. It would do more; it would forbid Jewish belief. There is not one rite of Judaism which is not redolent of the East, reminiscent of some phase of Israel's romantic story. The fact, far from being a defect, is a merit. It is good that the springs of Jewish sentiment should be fed by contact with the life-giving waters of the past. But this charge of orientalism would invalidate not only Jewish, but Christian ritual. The Service of the Church is Eastern from beginning to end. The Book of Common Prayer is largely borrowed from the Bible, one of the most Eastern of books. Palm Sunday gets its name from its characteristic oriental emblem. Easter recalls the Passover; the rite of Communion, the Paschal meal. Expel its oriental elements from the ceremonial of the Church and what would remain of it?[2] And so of Jewish doctrine. Whence comes the dogma of the Divine Unity but from the East? How long would it have taken the Western world to get within sight of the sublime heights of Monotheism, if Judaism had not familiarised it with the great idea? Nay, those who

[1] Lazarus, *Ethics of Judaism*, sec. 159.

[2] Amiel speaks with approval of Christianity as "the Oriental element in our culture." See his *Journal*, January 7, 1866.

use this Eastern argument fail to measure its destructive effect. But for the East there would be no religion worthy of the name. There is but one test by which to judge a religious observance—does it still minister to the religious life? If it does not, it may be disregarded, though only after deep and anxious thought; if it does, it must be retained, even though its retention singles us out from our neighbours, and seems to conflict with Western ideas.

Yet a word remains to be said about the significance of the Dietary Laws—to return to them in conclusion—for the individual life. That they have indirectly contributed to the personal purity which has characterised the Jew throughout the centuries cannot be questioned. They have been a constant admonition to him to enjoy in moderation, to subject his sensual pleasures to the restraints of the moral law, to "separate between the clean beast and the unclean" as a powerful aid towards keeping himself apart from those unclean things whose defilement strikes deeper still, polluting the soul as well as the body. If this object is dear to us in these times, if moral purity retains its effectiveness as an ideal, we shall hesitate long before sacrificing even these aids to it, indirect though they are. Far from these restrictions upon sensual indulgence being out of place in this age of social fusion, they are eminently suited to it. The times are freighted with peril not only for Religion, but for morality. Like the shadows that attend the light, incitements to moral laxity seem to be the inseparable companions of the Jew's new enfranchisement. Instead, then, of rejecting wholesome laws which offer an antidote to prevalent evils, we ought rather to pay them a deeper

homage, to match the increased need of them that is born of our day.

Certainly, the great Prophet who speaks to us in the last chapter of Isaiah did not deem obedience to these precepts unworthy of a place in the religion he taught.[1] It is true that he is seeking, by inculcating that obedience, to save his people from idolatrous worship with all its attendant impurity. But are there not cognate evils from which the Israelite to-day needs especially to be saved? And may not these restrictions powerfully help to save him from them?

And, to repeat what has been said elsewhere,[2] "is there not something spiritually attractive in the idea of the Jew of this age voluntarily submitting to restrictions on his appetites for the sake of duty—forming one of a religious guild, whose special characteristic is its self-control? It ought to be the pride of the modern Jew—and every child should be taught to feel it—that his religion demands from him a self-abnegation from which other religionists are absolved; that the price to be paid for the privilege of belonging to the hierarchy of Israel is continuous and conscious self-sacrifice." The Dietary Laws foster this spirit of self-surrender. Respect for them teaches and helps the Jew, in Rabbinic language,[3] to abase his desires before the will of his Father in Heaven. We cannot lightly let them go.

Such, then, is the true value of these enactments. There are Jews, however, who are fond of looking for it in a totally different direction. These regulations, they

[1] See Isa. lxvi. 17.

[2] *The Ideal in Judaism*, p. 59.

[3] *Aboth*, ii. 4.

say, are purely hygienic; and they appeal, in justification of this view, first to the superior healthiness of the Jewish people, which they ascribe to long-continued observance of the Dietary Laws, and secondly to the testimony of modern science, which approves of those laws on sanitary grounds. But with respect to this contention it must be pointed out that though the hygienic theory is plausible, it receives no countenance whatsoever from the language of the Bible. One object, and one object only, is explicitly assigned to these ordinances—holiness. The regulations for effecting that object may have been purposely chosen because obedience to them would tend to promote health; but this is purely a conjecture, and Scripture offers no evidence to support it. The only explanation that we can safely adopt is that which is furnished by the Bible itself. Moreover, while medical science has proved that many of the foods forbidden by the Pentateuch are causes of disease, it has not yet done so in the case of all of them.

It follows, then, that the Jew who bases his observance of these laws upon their hygienic character, real or imaginary, builds upon a very weak foundation. He places himself at the mercy of every wind of medical doctrine. He pays homage, moreover, to sanitary science, not to a Divine law. It is his bodily well-being, not his moral health, that he cares for. And his obedience, judged from the religious, from the Jewish standpoint, is not to be commended. The only motive with which we should conform to the Dietary Laws is the lofty one set forth by the great Teacher who enacted them. The soul's weal, not physical welfare, says Abravanel,[1] is their

[1] In his *Commentary on Leviticus*, chap. xi.

true aim. And only the obedience which respects that aim is really noble. Those Jews who avoid oysters solely because they are afraid of typhoid fever, or forswear ham only because they dread *trichinosis*, are after all but selfish persons, compared with those who practise this abstinence for moral reasons, because of the ennoblement that comes with it. And though the one class are not to be discouraged in their enlightened self-love, it is the other whose obedience represents the true Jewish temper.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORIC CONSCIOUSNESS—THE HOLY DAYS

JUDAISM is often called an historical religion. It is rightly so called. Judaism is more than the religion of a sect; it is the religion of a people, of a people whose career stretches back almost to the beginning of history. However much Jews may differ among themselves on the question whether the preservation of a national consciousness is desirable, they are at one in recognising the greatness of Israel's past, and the necessity of keeping its memory green. The history of our race is unique. It is the history of a people that has lived for an idea, and above all, for the religious idea. Of no other people can this be said. A nation, as a rule, consciously lives for material things. If it has a distinctly defined ideal, that ideal is usually conquest or empire or commercial supremacy. It is often said that to the ancient Greeks the world owes its art and philosophy, and to the ancient Romans its laws. This, no doubt, is true; but what is more than doubtful is whether those great peoples were intentional benefactors of mankind, whether they exalted the task to which each was providentially called into a sacred purpose, into a mission. The Israelite, on the

contrary, has never lacked this consciousness. He has felt himself summoned to the highest of all vocations. It is true that in ancient times, when he still enjoyed a separate political life, he shared the lower aims of other races. He dreamed of conquest and dominion and national glory. In the time of David and Solomon especially there must have been many who had visions of an Israel great among the nations—great by reason of world-wide possessions and martial prowess. But even while these dreams lasted there mingled with them visions of a truer dignity and a nobler purpose. The sense of consecration towered above sordid ambitions. Israel was always God's people, and to bear witness to God was his supreme aim, the work for which he had been Divinely called.[1] Thus Moses himself could include victory on the battle-field among the rewards he promised for national obedience to the Divine commands; but it was to come as the reward of that obedience only. And if dread of Israel was to fall upon the nations, it was less his warlike achievements that were to excite it than the conviction that God Himself was fighting on the side of His elect. "All the peoples of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee."[2] And as Israel declined in national power, his true vocation revealed itself more clearly to his mental gaze. When Jewish nationality was buried for the second time beneath the ruins of Jerusalem, the Rabbins quietly set up their houses of religious study elsewhere. With keen insight they saw wherein lay the secret of Israel's vitality, for they saw wherein lay his real mission. Not the attainment of

[1] See 2 Sam. vii. 23, 24.

[2] Deut. xxviii. 10.

national grandeur, not even the restoration of the national existence, but the guarding and the dissemination of religious truth—this was Israel's life-work. And this work could go on unimpaired though Jerusalem, and even Palestine, were lost and the Temple was in ashes.[1]

And so, alone among the peoples of the earth, Israel has consciously lived for the religious idea. The fight with the foreign invader in the post-Exilic age, notably the gallant struggle of the Maccabees with the overwhelming might of the Greeks, and even the ill-fated resistance to the Romans in the last days of the Jewish commonwealth, was more religious than political. Those who took part in the conflict struck hard for national independence, but harder still for their faith. And the struggle has continued to this day. The story of the Jews since the downfall of their nationality is the story of suffering and death heroically faced in the cause of religious truth. It is the life-story of myriads of men and women who have accepted all the misery that a hostile world could heap upon them rather than repudiate the faith of their fathers, and with it the duty of bearing witness to their fathers' God.

Surely this is a history to be proud of, and all Jews unite in paying homage to its grandeur. Nor do they fail to see the practical importance of keeping it continually in their thoughts. The memory of a splendid past is a powerful inspiration. The glorious dead call to the living with an eloquence that goes straight to the soul. The memory of the devotion displayed by our

[1] Israel, Saadyah declares (*Emunoth Vedeoth*, iii., ed. Slucki, p. 66), is a nation in virtue only of his religion. His possession of Divine truth is his one unifying bond, the one justification of his existence.

people in bygone days spurs us to a like devotion, though it may have to be manifested under happier conditions. There is not a Jewish youth, with a heart capable of generous emotion, who can ponder the annals of Israel without feeling in it a summons to carry on the glorious record—a summons to display in his turn a self-sacrificing loyalty to the creed and the mission of his race.

Nor is it enough to think of our history in this one aspect only as the inspiring record of our fathers' devotion to the most sacred of causes. Israel's life-story, as a whole, claims our sympathetic consideration. It is good for us to cultivate the historic sentiment. It is good for us, in other words, to feel that we *have* a history, that behind the Jew of this twentieth century there stretches a living chain of generations connecting him by manifold links with the far-off past. To think of ourselves as an historic people, as a people with a story at once moving and venerable, is to increase our reverence for Israel and for Judaism. The two things are closely connected. To discern the dignity of our ancient people is to be bound by fresh ties to its religion. The truth of a religion is the fundamental condition of loyalty to it; but its claim upon that loyalty must necessarily be strengthened by the grandeur of its history. What can be more inspiring than the thought that conceptions so sublime as the Divine Unity, as the kinship of the human soul with God and its inherent power to attain to fellowship with Him, have been for ages the venerated inheritance of our people—an inheritance which they have shed their life-blood to preserve?

This is a truth which we Jews ought to keep steadily

in view in these days. We need to be more deeply penetrated with the consciousness of our true dignity—the dignity with which our mission and our history invest us. No one can deem such pride aught but honourable. Outside observers look for it in us, and are disappointed if they do not find it. The antiquity of Israel and of his religion, his age-long heroic witness to God—this powerfully appeals to the imagination of our neighbours. It would be a glaring anomaly if it did not impress our imagination too; if the Jew, alone among men, were unmoved by his own thrilling story.

To foster the historic consciousness is, then, one of the duties of the Israelite. And the study of Jewish history is an obvious way of fulfilling this duty. Every Jewish child should be as familiar with the story of his people as he is with the annals of the land in which he has been born. Judaism, however, is a practical religion, and does its best to foster this knowledge. It is fond, as we have seen, of giving object-lessons which bring home to the mind religious truth in direct and striking fashion. It gives us similar lessons in Jewish history also. It gives them in the shape of holy days, the observance of which reminds us of some important event, joyous or sad, in the annals of our race, making some episode in the remote past live again in the heart of the Jew of this latter day. Not, of course, that these sacred occasions have been instituted wholly or chiefly for this purpose. Their supreme object is religious. They are especially designed to impress upon us truths, and to remind us of duties, which we might otherwise overlook. Their historical aspect is a subsidiary, though a very important one. Indeed, some of our holy days, as we

shall see, have scarcely any historical significance, while all possess a profoundly religious character. Nevertheless, the commemoration of the past is an act whose value, in the case of Jews especially, cannot be overestimated. It deepens while exercising our historic sympathies; it helps us to feel our kinship with the great souls of our race of a bygone day; it makes us realise our dignity as members of the great House of Israel with its thrilling and ancient story. And in doing this, it deepens our attachment to Judaism. So that in their quality as memorials of the past these sacred days serve a spiritual purpose apart from their religious significance. They are religious just because they are historical.

Let us now take the chief, the most memorable days of the Jewish Calendar in turn, and try to understand why we observe them and what they may teach us.

They may be enumerated as follows:—The Sabbath; the three joyous Festivals—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles; the two solemn celebrations—New Year and the Day of Atonement;[1] the two minor Feasts—Chanucah and Purim; the historic Fast of the Ninth of Ab.

We begin, then, with the Sabbath.

[1] All the foregoing are called in the Bible "holy convocations" (Lev. xxiii. 2), or, to use a possibly more exact rendering, "proclaimed holy days"—days whose observance was enjoined by public proclamation.

CHAPTER III

THE SABBATH

THE Sabbath (Hebrew שַׁבָּת) is ordained in many passages of the Bible. In the second chapter of Genesis its origin is referred back almost to the beginning of time. God, we are told, having made "the heavens and the earth and all their host," hallows the seventh day, the day which marks the completion of His creative task. But it is only later that Israel comes upon the scene. And so to Israel a special precept is given in the Fourth Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." By that precept the Sabbath is formally incorporated among Israel's religious institutions. It is notable, however, that the two versions of the Fourth Commandment, given in Exodus and Deuteronomy respectively, assign different motives for its observance. In Exodus we read: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy . . . for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth . . . and rested on the seventh day."[1] In Deuteronomy there is no reference to the Creation, but instead the following words are introduced: "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a slave in the

[1] Compare Exod. xxxi. 17.

land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."

Thus the Sabbath is at once a religious and an historic celebration. It commemorates the Creation; it brings before the mind the important truth that this infinite universe is not the product of chance, but the handiwork of a Divine Power.[1] But it also commemorates the great deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The Israelite contrasts the welcome rest of the Sabbath day with the cruel servitude of Egypt, and is filled with gratitude to God who delivered him. The Sabbath, then, reminds us of God, first as the Maker of all, secondly as Israel's Redeemer. It has thus a twofold character, a character at once universal and Jewish. It has a claim upon the reverence of every human being who acknowledges God as his Creator, and it has a special claim upon the loyalty of the Israelite. It has, therefore, a double title to Jewish homage.[2]

The Sabbath is, first of all, a day of rest, a day to be marked by the cessation of the weekly round of work. No one can go on toiling uninterruptedly day after day and year after year without impairing sooner or later his powers of body or of mind. Rest is essential to health, and its good effects are most marked when it is periodical, when it comes at regular intervals. This is, doubtless, the great secret of the power of the Sabbath as a restorer of our jaded energies. We may say even more than this.

[1] *Mechilta* to Exod. xxxi. 14; *Morë*, ii. 31; *Cuzari*, ii. 50.

[2] Both aspects of the significance of the Sabbath are set forth in the "Sanctification" for Friday evening.

Medical men now recommend hard-worked people to go away for change of air and scene for a day or two every week as being more beneficial than a far longer holiday taken only once or twice a year. "Week-ends," with the regular intervals of rest which the term implies, are becoming a recognised institution in these days of exhausting occupation. So that experience is demonstrating in more ways than one the wise and merciful character of the Sabbath viewed as a health-giving ordinance.

That it was intended to have this merciful character is clear. The Fourth Commandment, both in Exodus and in Deuteronomy, ordains that not only are human beings, the servant as well as the master, to rest on the Sabbath, but the toiling animals too. This, we may say in passing, is one of the many examples of that tender consideration for the brute which the Hebrew Bible, almost alone among ancient religious codes, so consistently displays. Now, the advantage that animals can derive from the Sabbath is exclusively physical. They are not to be overworked, for overwork means eventual weakness and suffering and possibly death. And the rest that is ordained for them, from a regard for their physical needs, is enjoined upon their owners from a like motive.

But the preservation of the bodily health was only part of the purpose for which the Sabbath was instituted. That the ordinance had other and still more valuable aims is suggested by the religious character with which Scripture invests it. What could have been the use of associating it with such solemn events as the Creation or the Deliverance from Egypt unless it was intended to be a day not only of physical rest, but of spiritual activity

likewise? The Israelite was to ponder those events, and thus to feel himself uplifted in reverence and gratitude to the Being who was at once his Maker and his Redeemer. The Sabbath, then, was to appeal to him in his dual capacity as a child of God, made by the Divine hand, and as one of an elect race ransomed from servitude to be brought near to God's service. The enforced rest of the Sabbath day was not only to preserve his bodily and mental powers, but to afford him an opportunity for that communion with his higher self, which the toilsome week denied him. More or less unheeded on the other six days, on this day at least the soul was to come by its own. And perhaps we may find a hint of this truth in the very phraseology of Scripture. "Keep the Sabbath," says the Lawgiver in one place,[1] "that thy ox and thy ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed." The Hebrew word translated by "refreshed" is connected with the word *nephesh*, "soul," and is used of human beings only, and not of the animals, in this passage. The weary beast is simply to rest—that is all it can do; but the slave and the stranger are to get in addition that higher, that spiritual refreshment for which rest may afford them the opportunity. Thus when, in the second chapter of Genesis, the Almighty is described as finishing the work of Creation, the same expression is applied to Him. He is said, figuratively of course, to be "refreshed," to know the spiritual joy which the Sabbath is designed to yield to His human children.[2]

And so the Sabbath was to be hallowed by a twofold

[1] Exod. xxiii. 12.

[2] See *Mechilta* to Exod. xxxi. 17; *Aboth d' R. Nathan*, ed. Schechter, p. 45.

consecration. It was to be devoted, in the first place, to that duty of safeguarding the welfare of the body which Judaism has always held sacred. And it was further to be dedicated to that better part of man which constitutes his true, his real self. It was, in a word, to be God's day. "One day, at least, of the seven give to Me"—so we can imagine the Almighty pleading with the Israelites. Nor is it only fancy. "Keep the Sabbath," the Israelite is told in the Fourth Commandment; but he is also reminded that it is to be "a Sabbath unto *the Lord thy God*." Not rest only, but rest sanctified and transfigured by spiritual endeavour, is the Sabbatic ideal.

The Rabbins bring out this aspect of the institution with notable clearness. They strenuously insist upon the duty of resting on the Sabbath, and are at the utmost pains to define the acts that constitute work. But they do not forget at the same time to emphasise the higher character of the day. For them it is a day of joy, a day, above all, of religious joy. On the Sabbath, they say, an "added soul" is given to us, an increased capacity for lofty thoughts and holy yearnings.[1] For them the Sabbath was a Queen whose coming changed the humblest home into a palace.[2] It was a foretaste of heaven, so pure and exalted is the happiness it offers to the careworn spirit.[3] A later teacher[4] calls it "the choice flower and fruit of the week." "It has been instituted," he adds, "as an opportunity for fellowship with God, and for glad, not austere, service of Him." And to the pious Jew that gladness was very real. So real was it that the "added soul," originally a figure of speech, came to represent for

[1] *Betsah*, 16a.
[2] *Shabbath*, 119a.
[3] *Mechilta* to Exod. xxxi. 13.
[4] *Cuzari*, iii. 5.

some minds a sober fact. There were teachers who could think of it as actually coming down from Heaven every week, and bringing with it some of the Heavenly bliss. It is scented, they would say, with the perfume of Paradise, and as it reaches earth sorrow and sighing flee away, and peace and joy reign supreme.[1] How much happier and purer would the world be if more of us were blessed with this "added soul," this foretaste of heavenly delights, on God's day!

The twofold conception of the Sabbath above set forth ought still to be kept steadily in view. "Half for the Lord and half for yourselves" is the rule which the Talmud[2] lays down as a guide to the right observance of all our holy days. And we cannot improve upon that rule. The claims of the body and of the soul alike must be satisfied. Neither must be unduly favoured; neither must be neglected for the sake of the other. To devote the Sabbath entirely to pious exercises, and so to make it a day of severe austerity, would be to misuse it. To idle it away, or to give it up wholly to recreation, would be a far greater misuse of it. The paramount object of the Day, we may well believe, is that of leading us to God in thought and in being. Among the boons it offers us, says an old teacher,[3] is, first of all, cessation from labour, with the repose and the intellectual opportunities it brings; but among them too, he adds, we must set prayer and the gathering together of men for religious discussions and for the preaching of the Word. The Sabbath, if it is not to fail of its supreme purpose, must make us conscious of our character and responsibilities as children of God. It

[1] *Zohar* to *Vayakhel.* [2] *Pesachim*, 68 b.
[3] Saadyah, *Emunoth Vedeoth*, chap. iii., near the beginning.

must help us to see this earthly life in its true perspective, to perceive that our daily work derives its real importance from its being a possible service of the Supreme, and that only when it is done for Him—done in a sincere and upright spirit—can it attain to true dignity and worth. Nay, more, it reminds us that we have an immortal soul, which we must strive to keep pure and unspotted in our contact with the world. These are solemn truths which we are apt to overlook amid the toil and cares of the week. The Sabbath comes to afford us a welcome breathing-space amid the haste and turmoil of the worldly life. It gives us time to think—time in which to realise that we are but "strangers and sojourners" here, and that our true home is "beyond these voices," our true vocation the task of earning its peace and joy. Thus while the Sabbath reminds us of Eternity, it emphasises the dignity of this earthly life, the effective preparation for Eternity. It bids us rest, but it also bids us remember the nobility of work. For "only he that labours on the eve of the Sabbath," as the Rabbins say,[1] "shall enjoy the Sabbath;" only he that does his worldly work well and faithfully is fit for heavenly bliss.[2]

No one, then, has kept the Sabbath holy who has not devoted some part of it to religious exercises—to prayer, to serious reading and meditation, to solemn self-communion. But no one has kept it holy who has not learnt from it a deeper respect for his work, however humble it may be. Nay, the Sabbath, with its command to us to rest, is a rebuke to our avarice, our sordidness, our selfish-

[1] *Abodah Zarah*, 3a.

[2] The Rabbins discern in the Fourth Commandment an injunction to work during the week as well as to rest on the Sabbath. See *Aboth d' R. Nathan*, ed. Schechter, p. 44.

ness. It reminds us that we live for higher things than gain, and the ease and the pleasures it helps us to get. This aspect of the Sabbath has been so well set forth by a modern teacher that his words may appropriately be quoted here. "There are higher objects in life than success. The Sabbath, with its exhortation to the worship of God and the doing of kindly deeds, reminds us week by week of these higher objects. It prevents us reducing our life to the level of a machine. The gathered experience of mankind that the break in the routine of work one day in seven will heighten the value of the very work itself, is not lightly to be put aside. The Sabbath is one of the glories of our humanity. For if to labour is noble, of our own free will to pause in that labour which may lead to success, to money, or to fame, may be nobler still. To dedicate one day a week to rest and to God, this is the prerogative and privilege of man alone. It is an ordinance which we may rightly call Divine. Let every boy and every young man, let every girl and every young woman, get out of the habit of ceasing from their work on the Sabbath day at their own peril."[1]

And here it becomes necessary to emphasise the warning we have already given. The Sabbath is a day of rest, not a day of mere abstinence from work. Rest and idleness are not synonymous terms. Rest implies the recruiting of impaired energies, bodily and mental; and this mere idleness will not effect, for idleness is the parent of weariness, and weariness is just what the Sabbath is to cure, not to create. To do nothing is the hardest kind of work, and therefore the one kind of work which must be most strenuously forbidden on the day of rest.

[1] *The Bible for Home Reading*, by C. G. Montefiore, Part I., p. 86.

It is also a source of discomfort and wretchedness, and the Sabbath is to be above everything a day of joy, "a delight," as the Prophet[1] calls it. Rest, then, means not idleness, but change of occupation. What we have to seek on the Sabbath is *recreation* in its original sense of a re-creating, a re-fashioning of the bodily and mental powers. And so those who would make a wise use of the Sabbath will spend some part of the day in pursuits which, because they are different in character from the work of the week, will help to brace them up both in body and in mind. A health-giving walk, with the fresh air to invigorate us, and the beauty of Nature to soothe and gladden us, a pleasant book, a quiet stroll in a picture-gallery—these are types of legitimate Sabbath pleasures. Yes, legitimate, because all pleasures, even though they have no affinity to our daily work, are clearly not suited to the Sabbath. For the Sabbath is a sacred day; and there are certain kinds of enjoyment which, by their very nature, are out of harmony with its inherent holiness. Participation in them on the Sabbath is like the sudden intrusion of a shrill street-organ on a beautiful melody sung by a lovely voice.

It is difficult, almost impossible, to lay down a definite rule on this point, to say, "this sort of amusement is allowable, that sort improper on the Sabbath." The matter must be left to the individual conscience, to each person's sense of what is seemly. What we have to do is to keep in mind the general principle already set forth, that the Sabbath is above everything a holy day, a "Sabbath unto the Lord,"[2] and honestly strive to make

[1] Isa. lviii. 13.
[2] "The holy of the Lord," the Prophet (Isa. lviii. 13) strikingly styles it.

our observance conform to it. Recreation on the Sabbath is not merely permissible, but a duty; but it is a duty whose fulfilment must be subordinated to reverence for the day's sanctity. Not all recreation is commendable. It is possible to buy even recreation too dear. There are people who see no harm in spending part of the Sabbath day in struggling with a crowd at some exhibition or in rushing to and from a concert or a theatre. Surely these amusements cannot fairly be called recreation. They are certainly not a "sanctification" of the Sabbath.

Another illustration suggests itself. It is a moot question how far athletic sports are legitimate on the day of rest. There are people who decide it offhand by saying that such exercises are necessarily permissible, because they promote that bodily health and vigour which it is the aim of the Sabbath to induce. But the question is not settled so easily. Unfortunately there is an almost irrepressible tendency towards excess in modern athletics, and a boy who spends the greater part of his Sabbath in playing cricket or football too often comes away fagged out, in a condition by no means realising the ideal rest which the day is intended to ensure. This of course does not mean that outdoor sports are necessarily unlawful on Sabbath, any more than the danger of overwalking oneself makes it a duty to sit still all day. But it does suggest the necessity for caution and circumspection. Let us seek after recreation on the Sabbath, but let us choose it carefully and wisely, under an overmastering sense of the true character and purpose of the day.

Just a few words more, and we may bring our reflec-

tions on this subject to an end. The Sabbath, we have said, is a season of joy, for without joy there can be no real recreation. The Rabbins lay great stress upon this truth. They emphasise the profoundly spiritual character of the Sabbath, but they also insist upon the duty of making it a day of happiness from the lower as well as the higher point of view. The word "delight" which, as we have already seen, the Prophet uses in his picture of the ideal Sabbath, they interpret to include all those kinds of enjoyment which, while not endangering the repose or sanctity of the day, help to make it bright and lovable. In this respect their teaching sharply contrasts with the doctrine of the Karaites, a Jewish sect of which representatives are still to be found in Russia, and who make a point of obeying all the Biblical commands in their strictly literal meaning. Because there is a law in the Pentateuch [1] forbidding the kindling of a fire on the Sabbath, a law made for the Israelites while they were living in the Arabian desert, the Karaites spend their Friday evenings without fire or light even in the depth of a Russian winter. Thus in their slavish respect for the letter of the Law these well-meaning but misguided persons do violence to its spirit. They make the Sabbath day, which ought to be a delight, a day of misery. The Rabbins displayed a wiser temper; nay, they displayed the true Jewish temper.[2] The Sabbath, as they conceived it, was not to be a day of austerity; it was to be a day of real, though chastened happiness, a day given over to the "joy of the Lord, which is our strength," and which, joy of the Lord though it is, yet includes, as Scripture

[1] Exod. xxxv. 3.

[2] See, for example, *Yoma*, 84 b, 85 b; Maimonides, *Hilc. Shabbath*, ii. 1 *seq.*

itself declares,[1] the physical pleasures that are yielded by good cheer. For surely to press those pleasures into the service of the Sabbath, to hallow our material joys by using them for God's glory, is a religious duty. It is to know, even through them, the "joy of the Lord," and to make it our "strength." This is the uniform teaching of Judaism.

And therefore when ill-informed writers speak of the Jewish Sabbath as an austere institution, as a day of gloomy asceticism like the Calvinistic Sunday still observed in Scotland, they make a serious mistake. It is quite true that the Rabbins very largely extended in one direction the category of acts forbidden as work on the Sabbath, though they also restricted it in another. But even they kept steadily before them the great principle that the Sabbath was meant to be a day of happiness. And we may be quite sure that if they lived in these times and saw that it is just as impossible, without infringing the higher law of the Sabbath, to carry out some of their restrictions as it was in their age to obey the Scriptural precept forbidding the kindling of a fire on the seventh day, they would be the first to repeal those restrictions. They could not help doing so, for they would be bound by the general rule which they themselves laid down. "The Sabbath," they declared, in this respect agreeing with the Founder of Christianity, "is given over to you; you are not given over to the Sabbath."[2] Its observance, they meant to say, must be bent and shaped to fit our own actual condition and needs; it must not be a yoke which harasses and cramps us. And

[1] Neh. viii. 10.
[2] *Yoma*, 85 b; *Mechilta* to Exod. xxxi. 14.

so the Sabbath has always been, even under Rabbinic rule, a season of joy, a season to which the Jew has longingly looked forward for the peace and the simple pleasures it promises to the pious heart.[1]

[1] See Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, p. 297 *seq.*

CHAPTER IV

PASSOVER

WE proceed now to speak of the Three Joyous Festivals—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. These are also known as the Three Pilgrim Feasts (Hebrew שָׁלשׁ רְגָלִים). They were the occasions when, as commanded in Exod. xxiii. 17; Deut. xvi. 16, 17, and elsewhere, all the male Israelites in ancient times journeyed to Jerusalem in order to appear before the Lord in the Sanctuary. They were exhorted not to come empty-handed, but to bring an offering, the value of which was to be determined by the means of the individual. Every man was to give "according to his ability, according to the blessing of the Lord his God."

First, then, we speak of Passover (Hebrew פֶּסַח). This is the name by which the Festival is usually known in these days. It is derived from Exod. xii. 23, which tells how the destroyer "passed over," that is, spared, the houses of the Israelites when the last of the plagues laid low the Egyptian first-born. In the Bible, however, the Festival is called the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Hebrew חַג הַמַּצּוֹת). The word "Passover" really denotes the

Paschal Lamb, the sacrifice of which took place on the eve of the Festival, and it is to the eve of the Festival only that in the Bible the name is given.[1]

The Festival begins on the eve of the 15th of Nisan,[2] the first month of the Hebrew year, and lasts seven days,[3] of which the first and last only are kept as strict days of rest.[4] Like Pentecost and Tabernacles, Passover was formerly an agricultural feast. It came to mark the beginning of the barley-harvest in Palestine, and according to the traditional explanation of Leviticus xxiii. 9-12, an *Omer* (a certain measure) of the new barley was presented in the Sanctuary as a wave-offering by the Priest on the second day of Passover. From the day on which this rite was performed the Israelites were commanded to count seven complete weeks, and on the fiftieth day to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. From the Hebrew word used in connection with the wave-offering this period of seven weeks came to be known in post-Biblical times as the *Days of the Omer*, and in literal fulfilment of the precept in Leviticus the devout Israelite solemnly proclaims on every day during this period, in the course of the Evening Prayer, the number of days and weeks that have elapsed since the Second Day of Passover. The ceremony is called *counting the Omer.*

In keeping in view the agricultural aspect of the Three Festivals the modern Jew performs no unimportant duty. He realises the fact that Israel was once a people who

[1] Lev. xxiii. 5, 6.

[2] All the Jewish holy days, as well as the Sabbath, begin on the evening of the previous day, a usage based on Gen. i. 5.

[3] See, as to the additional day of the Festivals observed by Jews of the orthodox rite, p. 314 *seq.*

[4] Lev. xxiii. 7, 8.

lived by tilling the soil, and that the commercial character which so largely distinguishes his people in these times is not, as is commonly thought, inborn, but is the result of the unkindly conditions in which they have been compelled to live. It is good for us and for the world at large to remember that the history of our race has its idyllic side, that there was a time when the Israelite lived the simple life of the husbandman, and when his ideal of earthly blessedness was that which pictured each man dwelling in peace and security "under his vine and under his fig-tree."[1] Observance of the Three Joyous Festivals will confer no mean benefit upon the Jew in these days if it sets him thinking about the possibility of restoring, in part at least, this happy condition, and of returning to some extent to the wholesome pursuits to which his people so largely devoted themselves in olden times. Agriculture, as the Bible abundantly shows, was the chief occupation of the ancient Hebrews. Life and labour out of doors were peculiarly congenial to them; and even for a far later generation they possessed dignity and charm. "A landless man," say the Rabbins, "is no man; where is his pleasure?"[2]

But the chief significance of the Feast of Passover is derived from the special historical event it commemorates. That event is the Exodus from Egypt. Passover is, above everything, the commemoration of the great Deliverance—a deliverance which transformed a horde of slaves into a people. It is, then, Israel's birthday. From one point of view it is the greatest of all the historical festivals. No other brings the Israelite into such close touch with his people's past. No other so powerfully

[1] 1 Kings iv. 25, etc.

[2] *Yebamoth*, 63 a; *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. xxii. to Lev. xvii. 3.

appeals to his historic sympathies. He is one, for the moment, with his ransomed fathers; he shares with them the proud consciousness of the free, the dignified sense of nationality that is beginning to stir in their hearts. He shares their glowing hopes, the sweet joy of newly recovered manhood.

The events of the Exodus are impressive from yet another point of view. The Israelites were free not only from the degradation of bondage, but from its agony. They were safe from the taskmaster's cruel whip. They were delivered from the fetters of despair. This thought intensifies the effect of the Passover. We feel all the suffering, all the triumph, of our dead ancestors. We share their burdens with them. But we hear too the fateful signal which proclaims that the hour of their redemption has struck; we march forth with them from the scenes of oppression in gladness and gratitude. The ideal of the Rabbins fulfils itself: "In every generation it is for the Jew to think that he himself went forth from Egypt."[1] So indestructible is the effect wrought by these moving episodes of a bygone day!

The value of this self-identification with the past, as a means of fanning the flame of religious feeling in Israel, has already been pointed out. And so we can understand the stress that is laid by Judaism upon the commemoration of an historic event of the first importance such as the Exodus was. Not only is the celebration of the Passover based by the Pentateuch upon that event, but the Sabbath also, as we have seen, derives from it part of its significance. All the days of his life was the Israelite to remember the day of his departure

[1] *Pesachim*, 116 b.

from Egypt.[1] It was the one day that eclipsed all other days in his romantic career. The redemption it witnessed was at once the starting-point of his national life and the well-spring of his religious ideas. On that day "God assayed to take unto Himself a people from the midst of a people," but it was "unto Himself"—He took the people for a consecrated life.[2] To keep green, then, the memory of the Exodus was for the Israelite not only to keep his gratitude to his Divine Redeemer ever fresh, but to ratify again and again his covenant with his religion. Thus in the Biblical age we find the Passover celebrated with especial solemnity at important epochs in the national life; and its renewed observance was a prominent feature of the religious revivals which marked the reigns of pious kings like Hezekiah and Josiah.[3] And it was such considerations as those just set forth that moved the Rabbins in their turn to directly associate certain religious observances with the great Deliverance. Many a rite is to be performed "in memory of the departure from Egypt." The religious act is done reverently and lovingly in gratitude for the ancient Redemption, and thus becomes a type of the deep religious emotion with which that memorable event ever fills the pious heart. Thus, says Professor Lazarus, whatever was most lovely and noble and inspiring became a memorial of the Exodus.[4] For the same reason the group of Psalms (cxiii.-cxviii.) known as the Hallel, which are a thanksgiving for the Exodus, the great typical deliverance, form part of the service on every joyous festival.

[1] Deut. xvi. 3. [2] Deut. iv. 34.
[3] Joshua v. 10; 2 Chron. xxx. 1 *seq.*; 2 Chron. xxxv. 1 *seq.*
[4] *Ethics of Judaism*, sec. 26.

With the Passover there is associated the symbolic *Unleavened Bread.* The Bible takes care to explain its meaning. It is the "bread of affliction"[1]—the bread that vividly recalls the anguish of Pharaoh's down-trodden slaves. And the symbol is well chosen. For unleavened bread is the bread of poverty; it is the bread made in haste by the toiling poor in the East, who have time only to prepare and snatch a hurried meal. We remember how Abraham, having suddenly to entertain the three angels, asks Sarah to bake "cakes," *i.e.* unleavened bread for them. Thus the Unleavened Bread becomes what it is described to be in the Bible, at once the emblem of the Israelites' suffering in Egypt and the symbol of the haste—that is, the joyous eagerness—which marked their departure. When we eat the Unleavened Bread on the Festival we, in a sense, eat the bread of sorrow with our toiling, suffering ancestors, and for the moment share the sorrow itself. And so by the use of such historic symbols Israel is for ever living his life over again.

In the Pentateuch the command to eat the Unleavened Bread is followed by a prohibition forbidding leaven on the Passover. The second precept is not necessarily the consequence of the first. The Unleavened Bread would have no less effectually recalled the sorrows of enslaved Israel had leaven been permitted at the same time. The two ordinances are distinct. If the Unleavened Bread was to be a memorial of the bondage in Egypt and the glad haste of the Exodus, the house swept bare of leaven was to be a symbol of the redeemed people purged from the taint of slavery. In the Bible leaven is aptly chosen as the type of corruption. No leaven was allowed in

[1] Deut. xvi. 3.

certain sacrifices,[1] for they were to represent the purity and the sincerity of the heart that brought them. With the Rabbins leaven was a figurative expression even for sin, for the evil desire that corrupts the soul. "Lord of the universe," so one of the Sages was accustomed to pray, "Thou knowest that our desire is to do Thy will; if we fail, it is because of the leaven that works within us."[2] And the figure is an apt one. For fermentation, as science declares, is a process of disintegration and decay; it is itself corruption. Thus, with leaven banished from his house on the Passover, the Israelite is helped to realise the purifying and ennobling effects which redemption wrought for his ancestors. The demoralisation born of their servitude was at an end; the ransomed people went forth to a sane and wholesome life, to a life of brave and large ideals.

Other symbols helped to bring home the meaning of the Passover to the Israelite's heart. One of them was the *Paschal Sacrifice*. On the night of their Deliverance the people were commanded to partake of a meal that was so solemn and sacred as to be considered sacrificial. It was to consist, first, of the flesh of a lamb or kid that had been roasted whole. The blood of the animal was previously to be sprinkled on the door-posts, which for the occasion became the altar. The unleavened bread and some bitter herbs, themselves an emblem, like the unleavened bread, of the misery of the bondage, were to complete the meal. What was the significance of this lamb? It clearly represented the House of Israel welded into national unity by the hand of its Divine Redeemer. Hence the injunction that not a bone of it was to be

[1] Lev. ii. 11, etc. [2] *Berachoth*, 17 a.

broken, and that small families should eat it in common so as to consume it entirely, without leaving aught till the morning.[1] All the details suggested the idea of an united, a firmly-knit people. The lamb, then, was Israel, and Israel giving himself, like the sacrificial victim, to God, his Deliverer, in obedient and grateful submission. It was, moreover, to be roasted by contact with fire, the purifying agent, again to typify Israel purged of his slavery.

It was a solemn meal that the people thus partook of—solemn by reason both of its symbolic meaning and by the circumstances in which it was eaten. It was eaten in nervous expectancy, for it was to be the last meal of the people in the land of their bondage. At midnight the old hateful life was to end for them for ever. And so they partook of this repast with staff in hand and with girded loins, ready to go forth when the glad hour should strike. It was, as we have said, more than a meal; it was a sacrifice, a solemn act of thanksgiving to their Divine Deliverer, a solemn self-dedication of the people, as they stood on the threshold of national life, to the service of God. It was, what the Pentateuch calls it, a "sacrifice of the Lord's Passover."[2] No wonder this impressive rite, with the fine emotions it kindled, was made to live in all the succeeding years. The Paschal sacrifice became "an ordinance for ever."[3] It ushered in the Passover year by year long after the generation that had shared in the Deliverance had passed away. The victim was slain within the precincts of the Sanctuary and its blood sprinkled on the altar; but the

[1] Exod. xii. 4, 10, 46.

[2] Exod. xii. 27.

[3] Exod. xii. 24.

flesh was eaten at home with the Unleavened Bread and the Bitter Herbs.

And the ancient rite still survives in these days, though necessarily in a modified form. There is no longer a Paschal sacrifice, for sacrifices are things of the past. But there is a Paschal meal, which retains its old religious character. Even the original emblems are retained. The Unleavened Bread and the Bitter Herbs still furnish forth the Israelite's table on the eve of the Festival, and the lamb is represented by a tiny bone roasted on the coals. The old symbols exert the old beautiful effect, teach the old lessons, revive the old memories. For the meal so simple, so meagre, rallies about it as of yore the members of the family, and with them their enthusiasm for the ancient faith. The scattered, even the indifferent, answer to the call of the Passover. The Paschal rite still knits the hearts of Israel together, still fills them with the consciousness that they are one brotherhood. And under the magical influence of these emblems the past lives again, with all its griefs and joys, its humiliations and its triumphs; the heart swells with gratitude for the ever memorable Deliverance; it beats high with hope for the future of Israel.

Thus the observance that ushers in the Passover is still, as it has always been, one of the most powerful constituents of Jewish ceremonial. The Hebrew name given to it is the *Seder*, which means "Order of Service," for there is an elaborate ritual prepared for it. The Unleavened Bread and the Bitter Herbs, together with a confection of fruits and spices known as *Charoseth*, and made to resemble the mortar used by the enslaved Hebrews in Egypt, are eaten solemnly. To them is

added a roasted egg, symbolic of the sacrifice that was offered by the individual worshipper on every Festival in the time of the Temple. The wine that is never absent from any Jewish religious feast is likewise drunk in devout fashion. Supplication and praise accompany each of these ceremonial acts—acts sewn, so to speak, here and there on a fabric of prayer. The *Seder*, as its name implies, is a Service, an unique form of home-worship specially arranged for this unique occasion. That is to say, the form only is unique, for home-worship is an integral part of Jewish life all the year round. But for this night a special Prayer-Book has been compiled. It is called the *Haggadah*, "narrative," because it is essentially a recital of the wonders and the manifold blessings of the memorable Deliverance. But it contains other things also—thanksgiving for the Redemption, and confident supplications for a continuance, in the coming time, of that Divine protection which has been so signally vouchsafed to Israel in the past.

But the meaning and the power of the Passover are not exhausted with the ceremonial that ushers it in. The prohibition of leaven lasts all through the Feast, and so does the solemnity of the Feast itself. The past of our people appeals to us on every day of the Festival—appeals to us with its monitions and its inspiration. Gratitude to God for His mercies to the House of Israel, enthusiasm for the faith, self-denying efforts for the truth and the right, efforts of which our past is one continuous story—these are some of the claims which it makes upon us.

This is the significance of the Passover for the Israelite. But it has a message also for the conscience and the

heart of all mankind. For what does it commemorate? It commemorates the deliverance of a people from degrading slavery, from most foul and cruel tyranny. And so it is Israel's, nay, God's protest against unrighteousness, whether individual or national. Wrong, it declares, may triumph for a time, but even though it be perpetrated by the strong on the weak, it will meet with its inevitable retribution at last. "For One higher than the high regardeth."[1] This is a truth which mankind has still to lay to heart even in these days. The world is thousands of years older than it was when the first Passover was celebrated; but the lessons taught by the ancient Deliverance retain their original force. There are still serfs, white-skinned as well as dark, crying to Heaven against their oppressors. The sinfulness of slavery, with all its attending debasement, has not yet really sunk into the human conscience. And so with cruelty of all kinds. It has not yet vanished from the world. But the Passover brands it as an abomination in the sight of God, who will avenge it now even as He interfered to avenge it on rebellious Egypt. Still, as of old, His children "sigh by reason of their bondage"; and still "their cry goes up to God; and He remembers."[2] Nor can the moral law be defied with impunity because it is a people that defies it. Nations have their responsibilities no less than individuals. Guilt does not cease to be guilt because it is impersonal. If it be true that "righteousness exalteth a nation," it is equally true that "sin is a people's shame,"[3] shame that must inevitably be expiated in national humiliation.

Finally, the Passover affirms the great truth that liberty is the inalienable right of every human being.

[1] Eccles. v. 8. [2] Exod. ii. 23, 24. [3] Prov. xiv. 34.

The Feast of Israel's freedom, its celebration is Israel's homage to the great principle of *human* freedom. Pharaoh enslaved a whole race, and was chastised for his crime by the Divine Hand. But in thus intervening between the slave and his oppressor the Almighty fixed His canon against slavery for all time. He thereby declared that every human being has the right to the freedom which will enable him to develop to the utmost all the powers of body, of mind, of soul, with which God has endowed him ; and that slavery, therefore, with its debasing effects upon the intellect and the character, is a sin against the laws of God Himself. Thus in the childhood of the world the Passover affirmed a truth which the world in its manhood is only beginning to learn. It is scarcely seventy years ago since England, the apostle of liberty, entirely banished slavery from her dominions. The people of the United States were still more tardy in performing this act of simple justice and humanity. And even to-day, as we have said, there are still places on God's earth where His most elementary laws are defied, and where men arrogate to themselves the right of trafficking in the bodies and the souls of His children. Nay, tyranny and oppression in various forms still linger on even in civilised countries. Despotisms still grind down peoples ; the rich still oppress the poor ; the master still takes cruel advantage of his servants. Against all such iniquities the Passover mightily protests. It warns the Israelite against sharing in their perpetration, however indirectly ; and through him the warning is sent forth throughout the world.

CHAPTER V

PENTECOST

THE second of the three Pilgrim Feasts is the Feast of Weeks (Hebrew שָׁבוּעוֹת).[1] It is usually known as Pentecost, a word derived from the Greek, and signifying the "fiftieth day." The origin of both names will become evident when we remember that the Festival falls seven weeks or fifty days after Passover, the whole of which period is, as we have said, scrupulously counted day by day by the observant Israelite. The Festival is also styled in the Bible "The Harvest Feast"[2] and "The Day of the First Fruits."[3] In post-Biblical times it received yet another name: "The Season of the Giving of the Law."[4] Pentecost falls on the sixth of Sivan, the third month of the Jewish year.

In Biblical times the Feast was exclusively agricultural in character. It marked the beginning of the wheat-harvest, just as Passover ushered in the period of the barley-harvest. And to emphasise this aspect of the Feast two loaves made of the new wheat were offered on the altar of the Sanctuary.[5] But besides being the

[1] Exod. xxxiv. 22; Deut. xvi. 10.
[2] Exod. xxiii. 16.
[3] Numb. xxviii. 26.
[4] The Feast is so styled in the Prayer-Book.
[5] Lev. xxiii. 15-21.

Harvest Feast, Pentecost was also the Day of the First Fruits. The two loaves were themselves the first-fruits of the wheat; but Pentecost was a day of first-fruits in a larger sense. With it began the period, extending over the whole summer, during which the Israelite fulfilled the command enjoining him to bring his first ripe fruits of every kind to the Temple in Jerusalem as an offering to God.[1] The fine prayer which he was to recite when performing this duty is given in the twenty-sixth chapter of Deuteronomy. The Talmud[2] has left us a picturesque description of the ceremony of presenting the first-fruits, as it was carried out by the country-folk in Palestine in olden times. The villagers would assemble outside the chief town of their district, and encamp there for the night. At early morn they were roused by the cry of the watchman: "Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God."[3] Those who had come but a little way would bring delicate fruits like green figs and grapes; those who lived at a distance would bring dried figs and raisins. The fruit lay in gaily-decked baskets of willow; but the rich used caskets of gold. And so the pilgrims set forth to the sound of musical instruments. Before them went an ox destined for the sacrifice, his horns decked with gold, and his head crowned with olive leaves. At length they reached the suburbs of Jerusalem, where the rulers of the city, accompanied by the workmen, came forth to greet them. "Enter in peace," they said. And so the joyous procession made its way up to the Temple Mount, and there even King Agrippa would come forth, and, taking one of the baskets, carry it on his shoulder.

[1] Exod. xxiii. 19. [2] *Mishnah Bikkurim*, chap. iii.
[3] Jer. xxxi. 6.

Arrived at the Court of the Sanctuary, they were received by the Levites with song. "I will extol Thee, O Lord," so they chanted; "for Thou hast raised me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me."[1] Then each pilgrim, with his basket on his shoulder, began the declaration in the twenty-sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, "I profess this day that I am come unto the land which the Lord sware unto our forefathers to give us." Finally, the priest solemnly waved the fruits and placed them on the altar, and the worshipper, having prostrated himself, went his way.

The religious purpose served by the command ordaining the offering of first-fruits is easily perceived. The precept admonished the Israelite that all good things came from the Divine Hand, even the products of the soil, though he himself might have laboured for them. He had ploughed, and sown, and reaped; he had delved, and pruned, and gathered; but success had crowned his toil only because God had blessed it. He was reminded, moreover, that God is the real Master of all, that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," and that men are but stewards of their wealth. Even when he laid his gifts upon the altar he in reality only restored to God that which belonged to Him. It is a noble prayer that was offered by David when he had collected the vast store of materials for the building of the Temple. "All things come of Thee," he cried, "and of Thine own have we given Thee;"[2] and this was the sentiment expressed in the ordinance of the first-fruits. Everything came of God; everything belonged to Him; everything that men gave Him they did but give back to Him.

Thus the Israelite was taught the great duty of

[1] Ps. xxx. 1. [2] 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

hallowing his wealth—of hallowing it by humble and wise use of it. What he had was his only by the grace of God. Therefore his heart might not be lifted up with pride when he thought of it. He dared not say, "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth."[1] To the Supreme he was impelled to turn in the hour of prosperity. And so it was that in the prayer which he offered when he laid his basket of first-fruits upon the altar, he remembered the low estate from which God had delivered him. He had been a slave, but the Almighty had set him free; he had been ready to perish, but the Almighty had placed him in a goodly land. And the first-fruits of that land he appropriately was giving to God in lowly gratitude. Moreover, the possessions thus entrusted to him he was exhorted to employ wisely and duteously. Wealth implied responsibility. It was to be used temperately, for the gratification of innocent desires; it was to be used, too, for the relief of poverty and suffering, for increasing the happiness of others. This lesson also is clearly set forth in the passage from Deuteronomy to which allusion has been made. Having solemnly presented his first-fruits, the Israelite was free to "rejoice in all the good which the Lord had given him." But in that joy the poor and the outcast, the Levite and the stranger, were to participate.[2] Only when he had shared his blessings with those who were unblessed, might he enjoy his good fortune. All God's gifts were to be used under a solemn sense of obligation to the Giver.

The Festival still continues to teach these lessons. We till the soil no more; our wealth is no longer reckoned in sheaves of corn or baskets of fruit, in flocks

[1] Deut. viii. 17. [2] Deut. xxvi. 11.

or herds or broad acres. But wealth we all have—yes, even the poorest of us; and the duty of hallowing it by pious use is as imperious as ever. I say the poorest, because there are other and still more precious kinds of wealth than that which is counted in money. Health, knowledge, skill of hand or brain—these are examples. These are some of God's gracious gifts to man, gifts that may make the poorest truly rich. And each brings its responsibilities. Wealth involves the duty of philanthropy, of spending itself lavishly in the relief of human suffering, of sharing itself with poverty. "Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house," say the Rabbins, "and thou wilt offer thy choicest first-fruits to God."[1] Nay, upon the rich is also cast the duty of seeking after that simplicity of life which scorns excessive luxury and enervating self-indulgence. And in a like manner upon the healthy and the strong, the wise and the clever, is laid the obligation of dedicating their gifts to noble ends.[2] "And thou shalt keep the Feast of Weeks with a tribute of a freewill offering of thy hand, which thou shalt give according as the Lord thy God blesseth thee"—such is the command laid upon us by the Law.[3] Every one can bring such a tribute in honour of the Festival. For the gift is to vary with the blessings of the heart that offers it, and there is no life that is not made bright by some gleams of sunshine. And if we can bring nothing else for God's acceptance, we can at least give Him the homage of our gratitude. This may be our first-fruits, and though we have nought else to offer, the Supreme,

[1] *Yalkut* to Isa. lviii. 7.

[2] "If," say the Rabbins (*Pesikta*, 127 a), "thou hast a beautiful voice, stand up in the synagogue and with thy voice honour the Lord."

[3] Deut. xvi. 11.

we may be sure, will accept them, for they are an offering such as He loves. "Whether we bring much or little," the Rabbins teach,[1] "it matters not, if only we fix our heart upon our Father in Heaven." Nay, Scripture said it before them. "To this man will I look," the Prophet tells us in the Divine name, "even to him that is poor and of a chastened spirit, and that trembleth at My word.[2] And was not the poor man's handful of meal in olden days an offering as precious in God's sight as the rich man's costly sacrifice?[3]

But the most impressive part of the Festival's message has yet to be told. Pentecost, like Passover, is an historic as well as an agricultural Feast. The Day of First-Fruits, it is also the Season of the Giving of the Law. This significance is of comparatively late origin. The Bible knows nothing of it. We read in Exodus that the Israelites reached Mount Sinai in the third month after their departure from Egypt, and to them, as they were encamped at the foot of the sacred mountain, was vouchsafed the great revelation of God's Word which is embodied in the Ten Commandments. The Exodus occurred in the first month of the year, and the great Manifestation therefore took place in the third. The precise date is not given in the Bible, but tradition places it at about the sixth day of the month. The post-Biblical teachers used the opportunity thus afforded them, and extended the significance of the Feast of Pentecost by making it a memorial of the Sinaitic Revelation. Thus the Festival has come to be the Birthday of Israel's Religion, just as Passover is the Birthday of Israel's Nationality.

Viewed in this aspect, Pentecost becomes a most im-

[1] *Berachoth*, 17 a. [2] Isa. lxvi. 2. [3] See Lev. v. 11.

pressive celebration. In the synagogues the lesson or "portion" of the day is furnished by the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus, which contain the Ten Commandments, and narrate the imposing events that formed the prelude to their delivery. No one can read the great story unmoved. It is a fitting prologue to the majestic words that follow it. We seem to stand among the myriads of Israel who are assembled to receive the Divine commands from the Supreme Himself. Once more the past lives for us, and we live in it. It is as if, to quote the Rabbinic legend,[1] the souls of all the Israelites yet to be born were gathered at Sinai on the day of the Manifestation, so powerfully does the scene appeal to the Jewish imagination in every age. But even grander than that scene, more awe-inspiring than the quaking earth and the open heavens, are the Ten Words themselves. Their innate majesty impresses every heart; their warnings reverberate in every conscience. At Sinai, say the Rabbins, the Commandments seemed to be spoken to the individual soul. "I am the Lord *thy* God," so the great declaration ran. Each of the assembled Israelites was but one among many myriads, and yet he was alone—alone with the Voice![2] And to-day the Commandments still continue to search out each heart, but each heart in a yet mightier company. Jew and Gentile alike confess their power. They are written on the walls of synagogue and church; they are engraved on the conscience of mankind. They are the world's law for all time. Never will their empire cease. The prophetic cry is true: "The word of our God shall stand for ever."[3]

[1] *Shemoth Rabbah*, chap. xxviii. to Exod. xx. 1.
[2] *Yalkut* to Exod. xx. 2. [3] Isa. xl. 8.

And it is we Jews to whom these commands were first given—given in trust for the world. It is a proud, but solemn thought. Gratefully may we raise our hearts to God on this Festival for having made us the depositary, not of these precepts only, but of the religion they summarise, for having, in the words of our Prayer-Book, chosen us from among all peoples and given us His Law. But with our gratitude must surely mingle a deep sense of obligation. The truths and the ideals which we have received in trust for men we must faithfully cherish—cherish by being loyal to them. The religion we would spread abroad must first animate and ennoble our own lives. They who would be priests, ministering to a world, must sanctify themselves. "Be ye clean," the Prophet exclaims, "ye that bear the vessels of the Lord."[1] And so it is that the memorable Revelation repeats itself every year. The fire of religious enthusiasm is kindled anew—kindled at the flame of God's Word. We are called upon solemnly to accept again our religious heritage, and with it the world-wide mission it implies. The old Sinaitic covenant is renewed. We give ourselves once more to God, and He takes us once more to be His people.

Again, the Feast brings home to us the need of Religion as the guarantee of the moral, the happy life. Delivered from Egypt, the Israelites are bound at Sinai. They are liberated from the old degrading thraldom, only to be placed under the glorious servitude of the Law. For liberty is a snare and a danger if it be not hedged in by duty. They only are truly free who subordinate their inclination to a higher Will, who submit themselves to

[1] Isa. lii. 11.

God's wholesome yoke. But for the Law the Exodus would have been worse than vain. Israel's liberty would have degenerated into licence. Saved from the Egyptians, he would have become a bond-slave to his own evil passions. His higher powers would have been for ever imprisoned. He would not have been free—free to grow, to attain to his full stature. The Sinaitic Manifestation saved him from this danger. It put the coping-stone on the work of Redemption. For, as the Rabbins say, "only they are free who give themselves to the religious life."[1]

The lesson is for every age, for our age especially. There is a spurious as well as a genuine liberty. To be free is to be bound—bound in the fetters of obligation. Liberty implies the right to promote our well-being, but only by means that conduce to the general good. To be free is to have the power of directing our own lives, and not to have them tyrannically chosen for us by others. But this power involves the duty of directing them wisely and nobly, and of so directing them as to develop our highest and noblest capacities. To be free in the lower sense, to live in a free country and under equal laws, and at the same time to be the sport of ignoble ideas, the plaything of vicious desires, is to be a slave, to be bound in the most shameful of all bondage. "I will walk at liberty," cries the Psalmist,[2] "for I have sought Thy precepts." And "only he," say the Rabbins, "is master of himself who lives for God and men; he is free from the power of sorrow, free from the oppressor's yoke, free from death."[3]

[1] *Boraitha d' R. Meir*, ii. [2] Ps. cxix. 45.
[3] *Abodah Zarah*, 5 b; *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. xviii. to Lev. xv. 2.

It is well to bear this elementary truth in mind. For to-day there is an increasing tendency to think that liberty means the right to do what one likes rather than what one ought. There are men of intelligence and authority who openly teach that in matters of morality people may properly be a law unto themselves, that if one feels a natural inclination towards a certain line of conduct, that line of conduct is thereby proved to be right and justifiable. Self-renunciation, which Religion makes the keynote of right living, these teachers declare to be a mistake, a sin. They mock at the restraints which Religion would impose on human liberty. They would have every one free to live in the light of nature, free to shape his actions by his desires, to recognise no moral law external to himself. The consequences of this doctrine are evident. Self-sacrifice being an evil, right and wrong have come to have different meanings; they are beginning to change places. And this moral confusion, so disquieting for all who think of the prospects of goodness in the coming time, is the result of the attempt to make conduct independent of the sanctions of Religion. It is the fruits of a wrong conception of liberty. If we are to have a stable morality, clear-cut distinctions between right and wrong, we must keep steadily before us the idea of a higher Power whose Will, and not selfish desire, is to be our rule of life. We are to be holy, even as He is holy. He is to be our ideal and our law. For Him we are to live; our lives are to be a service of Him, not a service of ourselves. In other words, conduct must find its motive force in self-surrender, not in self-seeking, in obedience to a Divinely illumined conscience, not in abject submission to our lower instincts. And this is bondage,

but splendid bondage. Because it gives play to our noblest impulses, room for the true self to live and grow, it is true liberty.

Such are the lessons that Pentecost may teach us. It is Religion's own Festival. It reminds us of the nobility and the grace which the God-idea, with all its power over conduct, lends to the daily life. And so for the Jew it has, for ages past, been the season of religious initiation. If it led the men and women of Israel to a new Sinai year after year, it also became the occasion for making children know the Law's gracious yoke. It was at Pentecost that the child in the Middle Ages was solemnly taken by his parents to school for the first time, for "the school was looked upon as a second Mount Sinai, and the day on which the child entered it as the Feast of Revelation."[1] Hence it is that in those Jewish congregations which have adopted the rite of Confirmation, the ceremony takes place either on Pentecost itself or on some day closely preceding or following it.

On Pentecost the synagogues, in accordance with old usage,[2] are decorated with flowers. This graceful custom reflects perhaps both aspects of the Feast. The flowers, like the first-fruits, are specimens of the wealth and the beauty with which the Divine Hand has filled the natural world. They give expression to the joy and gratitude with which the thought of these material boons animates us to-day, even as the first-fruits witnessed to similar feelings in the Israelite of old. But they also recall the more solemn side of the Festival. They may be regarded

[1] Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, p. 367. For a detailed account of the quaint procedure followed on the occasion, see Güdemann, *Culturgeschichte*, vol. i. p. 50; and Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, p. 347.

[2] Abrahams, *Jewish Life*, p. 29.

as the type of Religion, lovely like the flowers, at once impalpable and real like their perfume. In whatever way we interpret them they tell of joy, of the joy to which Pentecost, with its gracious message, for ever summons the Jewish heart.

CHAPTER VI

TABERNACLES

THE Feast of Tabernacles (Hebrew סֻכּוֹת) is the third of the Joyous Feasts. It falls on the 15th of Tishri, the seventh month of the Hebrew year, and lasts eight days. The eighth day has come to have a special name, and is known as שְׁמִינִי עֲצֶרֶת, the Eighth Day of Solemn Assembly.[1]

The Feast of Tabernacles is ordained in Exodus xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22, where it is called The Feast of

[1] See Numb. xxix. 35; Lev. xxiii. 36; Neh. viii. 18. According to the Rabbins (*Succah*, 48 a) this eighth day is a separate Festival, one which was formally and solemnly to round off the series of autumn holy days. Alluding to one meaning of the word *Atsereth*, "restraining" or "staying," they tell of God entreating Israel to remain with Him in joyous worship yet one day more. The word *Atsereth* is used in the Bible to denote the last day not only of Tabernacles, but of Passover also (Deut. xvi. 8). It is also applied to the closing day of Solomon's Feast (2 Chron. vii. 9). It may therefore possibly mean "closing" feast here also. This view likewise was not unfamiliar to the Rabbins. Thus they regarded not only the eighth day of Tabernacles as a celebration closing that Festival, but Pentecost as the closing feast of Passover. Hence in the Talmudic literature Pentecost is specifically called *Atsereth*; and since it came fifty days after Passover, *Sh'mini Atsereth* should by analogy have come fifty days after Tabernacles (see *Menachoth*, 65 a; Josephus, *Antiq.* III. x. 6; *Pesikta*, 202 b note). On the other hand, it must be pointed out that the kindred word *Atsarah* denotes a gathering or assembly for a religious purpose, and is employed as a synonym for "festival" (Isa. i. 13; Amos v. 21; Joel i. 14; ii. 15), and even to denote an idolatrous festival (2 Kings x. 20).

Ingathering, and in Leviticus xxiii. 34, and Deuteronomy xv. 13. The importance which was attached to it in Bible times is evidenced by the references in Malachi xiv. and Nehemiah viii.

In Leviticus xxiii. 42-43 we read: "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days: all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths; that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt." This passage, then, sets forth the historical significance of the Feast and the aspect of it which is embodied in its first name, the Feast of Tabernacles.[1] Its agricultural character is suggested by its other name, The Feast of Ingathering.

Among the Rabbins[2] different opinions prevailed with regard to the meaning of the term "booths" in the passage from Leviticus above quoted. Some understood the word literally. The Israelites, they held, actually dwelt in booths or huts at certain periods during their sojourn in the Wilderness. Others maintain that the word is a poetical expression for the cloud which accompanied the tribes on their desert-journey.[3] When they were on the march it went before them to show them the way, and during their encampment it hovered protectingly over the Sanctuary which stood in the midst of the camp. By day it was a shelter from the heat, at night it became illumined, and gave the people light. It was thus a visible sign not only of God's presence, but of His protecting care. Whichever interpretation, then, we place upon the word "booths" in the passage in question, the signifi-

[1] The terms "tabernacles" and "booths" are misleading. "Huts" is more accurate.

[2] *Succah*, 11 b.

[3] Exod. xiii. 21-22; xl. 34-48; Numb. ix. 15-23.

cance of the command to dwell in booths year after year remains the same. The Israelite was thereby reminded of the Divine loving-kindness that had been manifested to his people during their long and trying sojourn in the wilderness. In many and manifold acts had that loving-kindness been evinced. "Thou shalt remember," the Lawgiver himself says in his beautiful description of them, "all the way which the Lord thy God has led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or not. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. And thou shalt consider in thy heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee."[1]

Significant it is that among the blessings here set forth is God's merciful correction of His people. For all our trials have our true happiness for their aim ; they are meant to purify and ennoble us. They are the discipline of a father who loves, though he strikes. Nay, they are inflicted in mercy, not in wrath. And so they are tempered by fatherly consideration for the wayward child. God corrects us, but, as the Prophet says, He corrects us "in measure."[2]

To the Israelite who, in obedience to the Divine command, left his house for the week of the Festival, and

[1] Deut. viii. 2-5. [2] Jer. xxx. 11.

took up his abode in the booth or tabernacle, there were suggested some such lessons as these. An importaut epoch in the history of his people was made to live again before his eyes. This, as we have already seen, was valuable in itself. For to live again in imagination the life of ancient Israel is to replenish the springs of Jewish sentiment from a source that never fails. But the Israelite who thus gave play to his historic sympathies learnt truths of the greatest significance for his personal life. He was led to think of the protection which, in common with his ancestors, he himself enjoyed amid the difficulties and dangers of his earthly pilgrimage. We are all beset by hidden perils which menace our health and our lives, and if we escape them it is only because we are for ever being guarded by an unseen Hand. For us, too, the heat of the sun is tempered, as it was for the wandering Israelites in the Desert. Poisonous germs swarm in myriads in the very air we breathe, but a wondrous mercy robs them of their deadly power. To each of us the old comforting promise is whispered, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror of the night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday."[1] The Divine love is ever with us like a protecting cloud. It shields us from danger; it illumines our darkness; it brings us on our life's way. For more precious even than protection from physical evil, from disease, and pain, and death, is the light, the guidance that enables us to avoid sin, and helps us to gain that most desirable of all Promised Lands—the realm of virtuous happiness. And this boon, too, God gives us, though often it may come in

[1] Ps. xci. 5, 6.

the guise of chastisement. He afflicts us only that we may be numbered among the fortunate people of whom the Psalmist speaks [1]—the people who, as the consequence of God's correction, are taught His Law, His Will, who learn that life is not self-indulgence, but self-surrender, and that only in the joy of obedience are its real delights to be found. For to us, too, the old words are said, "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger . . . that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

The booth or hut which the pious Israelite decks for the Feast of Tabernacles is the symbol of these imperishable truths. It is an eloquent witness to that Divine loving-kindness which "endures for ever"—that loving-kindness which was shown to the Israelites of old, but is evinced also to us, their descendants, in common with all God's children. On entering the Succah during the Feast the Israelite symbolically casts himself upon the Divine love. He goes forth from his house of brick or stone, and trusts himself to a frail hut which the rain may flood and the wind overturn. He submits himself to the Divine protection. He manifests his utter trust in God. This, at least, is the way in which the Rabbins interpreted the emblem. "Go forth," so the Law, they say,[2] commands us, "go forth from thy house and dwell for seven days in a fragile hut"; and a later teacher [3] makes their meaning clear. "The Succah," he says, "is designed to warn us that a man must not put his trust in the size or strength or beauty of his house, yea, though it be filled

[1] Ps. xciv. 12. [2] *Succah*, 2 a.
[3] *Menorath Hamaor*, iii. 4, 6, 1.

with all precious things; nor must he rely upon the help of any human being, even though he be a mighty ruler. But let him put his trust in the great God whose word called the universe into being, for He alone is mighty, and His promises alone are sure."

It is a beautiful interpretation. The old fashion of actually living in the Succah during the Festival is passing away. But happily the Succah itself survives, and every time we enter it, though it be but for a few moments, we should strive to share the pious emotions with which it stirred the Israelite of olden days. The act should be part of no mechanical routine, but a sacred rite at once joyous and sober. It should be a solemn expression of that implicit reliance upon God's goodness, that humble dependence upon His might and wisdom, which beseems us all. For whatever our powers and our possessions, however rich or great we may be, we are utterly poor and ignorant and weak measured against the might and majesty of the Supreme. Nay, all that we have is subject to His Will. We hold it on the frailest tenure. Riches, wisdom, bodily strength, nay, life itself, may be taken from us at any moment. The "Everlasting Arms" that support us may relax their hold suddenly. Verily, "We are strangers and sojourners; our days on the earth are as a shadow and there is no abiding."[1] Therefore let us put all pride far from our hearts, and abase ourselves before the Lord of all blessings, before the God of our life.

The second name of the Festival, the Feast of Ingathering, almost explains itself. Tabernacles comes in the autumn, at a time when the husbandman in Palestine

[1] 1 Chron. xxix. 15.

had safely gathered all the produce of his lands in barn and storehouse and wine-press. It was the time, then, for counting up his possessions, for estimating the wealth that the earth had yielded him, and therefore a time for thinking of God, the Giver. And so the lesson of gratitude for the blessings he had, and of responsibility for the right use of them—the lesson which Pentecost had already taught him—was written again upon his heart.

But especially was the conception of God as the Lord of Nature brought home to him. The heathens celebrated the harvest and the vintage by offering homage to gods like Bacchus and Cybele, who were but deifications of Nature herself. The Israelite was warned against such idolatry. All the fruitfulness of the soil, he was reminded, was due to the goodness and might of the Supreme. It was due to no inherent powers of Nature, but to the greatness of Him who is Nature's author. And so he was enjoined[1] to take on this Festival specimens of the varied products of the earth, representatives of the food and the fruit, of the flowers and the shade-giving trees, and with them "rejoice before the Lord"—before Him as the source of all earth's teeming bounty. To-day the command is still obeyed. During the Feast the golden citron and the palm-branch, which is decked with sprigs of flowering myrtle and graceful willow, lend additional poetry and grace to the rites of the Synagogue.

Moreover, the Festival not only fixed the Israelite's thoughts upon God as the source of all his blessings, but reminded him of the duty of purifying his joy. It came at the time of the vintage, which has ever been celebrated with exuberant gladness in every land and in every age.

[1] Lev. xxiii. 40.

But the rejoicings which have marked that happy time have not always been innocent in character. They have too often degenerated into wild and licentious revelry. The Festival, with its holy rites and teachings, saved the Israelite from such excesses. It sanctified the season of the vintage. It set wholesome bounds to the festivity with which that season was greeted. It said to him in the Psalmist's phrase "rejoice; but rejoice with trembling."[1] It taught him the duty of hallowing joy, of hallowing it by self-restraint, by associating with it the thought of God and consideration for the needy and the sorrowful.

And the lesson has been well learnt. In every age the Jew has known how to keep his festal observances sweet and pure. While even to-day and in this country a general holiday, even a religious holiday, is often dishonoured by drunkenness and riot, the Jew remembers that his Feasts are "the Feasts of the Lord,"[2] to be marked by enjoyment indeed, but to be dignified by temperate, by religious enjoyment. Gladsome as the Festival is, a strain of solemnity has ever mingled with the gladder elements of its liturgy. Ever and anon the cry "O God, help us; O God, prosper us!" still breaks in upon the festive exclamations of joy and praise. It is a remnant of the old Temple ritual,[3] and expresses the dominant idea of the Feast, the idea that if our happiness is to be pure, if it is to be true, it must centre in God. In the hour of our joy it behoves us to turn to Him with entreaties for His help to save us from our lower selves, for that spiritual well-being which alone redeems earthly well-being from failure. "If God is here," so the great

[1] Ps. ii. 11. [2] Lev. xxiii. 2. [3] *Succah*, 45 a.

Hillel used to remind the people when the rejoicing of the Feast was at its height, "then all is here."[1] Only the memory of the Divine Presence could make their happiness full and real.

Nor has the Israelite kept his Festival well if his joy, though chastened and religious, is a selfish joy. On each of the Festivals he is commanded to remember the needs of the poor and the miserable. Not only is he, with his household, to rejoice before the Lord, but "the Levite and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow" are to rejoice too.[2] Acts of charity and loving-kindness are to play an important part in his holiday-making. And to this gracious ordinance the pious Jew pays scrupulous homage. The eve of every Festival finds him dispensing his benevolent gifts, and so helping his poorer brethren to know on the Feast some of the gladness which fills his heart.

Joy, then, is to be tempered and ennobled by duty. But—and this the Festival also teaches—joy is itself good. "Serve the Lord with gladness," cries the Psalmist,[3] and we may almost see in the words an assertion of the truth that we may serve Him *by* gladness. To rejoice is a religious duty. Perhaps the notable exhortation in the sixteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, which forms part of the passage ordaining the Feast, is yet another suggestion of this truth. "Thou shalt be altogether joyful"—so runs the command. In connection with no other Festival is such a precept given. The Rabbins, then, were justified in styling Tabernacles "The Season of Joy," just as they designated Passover "The Season of Freedom," and Pentecost "The Season of the Giving of the Law." It would seem as though the Festival was instituted for the specific

[1] *Succah*, 53 a. [2] Deut. xvi. 14. [3] Ps. c. 2.

purpose of gladness, as though the religiousness of joy was to be indicated by ordaining a special celebration in its honour. Just as the ancient Romans would consecrate a temple to some abstract idea, to Fortune, for example, or to War, so Israel dedicated a Festival to Joy. Only, while the Romans deified those ideas, and worshipped War and Fortune as gods, the Israelites bowed to the Almighty alone and worshipped Him who was their "exceeding joy."[1]

It is a beautiful truth which the Festival thus commends to us. God would have us rejoice, and the heart's gladness is one of the most acceptable sacrifices that we can bring Him. The story of Israel's life is full of tears; but never has he forgotten to welcome the rays of happiness that have mingled now and again with the gloom of his experiences. Never has he thought that God can be served only by sadness, that piety is necessarily self-mortification, that gaiety of heart is a sin. No one has more clearly discerned the blessedness of sorrow; no one has felt more keenly its wholesome discipline. But while the Israelite has had insight and fortitude enough to thank God for it, he has also been able to praise Him for his joys, to praise Him for them inasmuch as they are means of approaching Him. "Where God dwelleth," say the Rabbins,[2] "there is no sorrow; for doth not Holy Writ declare that 'strength and gladness are in His place'?"[3] "The Divine spirit," they say elsewhere,[4] "cometh not at the beck of useless grief, but at the call of joy—joy sanctified by Religion."[5]

[1] Ps. xliii. 4. An account of the festivities with which Tabernacles was celebrated is given in *Succah*, 51 a *seq*.

[2] *Chagigah*, 5 b. [3] 1 Chron. xvi. 27. [4] *Shabbath*, 30 b.

[5] This joy Maimonides (*Hilc. Lulah*, iv. 15) calls "a great service" of God.

The saying epitomises the whole genius of Judaism. Not in shunning the opportunities for happiness that lie across our life's path does our duty consist, but in accepting them with grateful and pious hearts. The Jew does not seek in a monastery to flee from the pleasures of the world. He goes forth to seek them, for he owes it to God to use them for the renewal of his strength in his daily work, as a solace in his daily cares; and he owes it to God to use them well, as a discipline for himself, as a blessing for others. Nay, the capacity for joy is a real thing, and calls for exercise. If self-development is a duty, it must needs be right to give play to the impulses that would lead us to happiness. We are not free to starve and to stunt any side of our manifold nature. And so even joy may help to fashion the complete man. It may form one of the many diverse threads that go to make the fabric of the full and the godly life.

CHAPTER VII

NEW MOON AND NEW YEAR

We have now to speak of two Holy Days widely different in character from the three Festivals of which we have just given an account. They are New Year and the Day of Atonement; and they are unlike the three Pilgrim Feasts in being not joyous, but solemn occasions. They are different from them in another respect also, for they neither have an agricultural character nor commemorate any historical event. Their message, indeed, is less for the race than for the individual. They appeal to the human rather than to the Jewish side of our nature. In other words, they are the most universalistic of our sacred days. They are occasions which all religionists, whatever their particular creed, might conceivably join in celebrating. For while they tell us very little, and that little but incidentally, about Israel's past, they say much to us about sin and redemption, about repentance and amendment, about man's waywardness and God's forgiveness—subjects which are of imperishable interest for every human soul.

Let us consider these two great celebrations in turn. And first let us speak of New Year.

New Year (Hebrew רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה) falls on the first of

Tishri, the seventh month of the Hebrew year. This is the traditional and most familiar name of the Festival. In accordance with the Biblical precept (Exod. xii. 2) Nisan was regarded as the "head," or beginning, "of the months." But the year, that is the civil or secular year, began with Tishri; and on the first of that month we Jews are still accustomed to alter the year's date.[1] The name "New Year" does not occur in the Bible.[2] The Scriptural titles of the Festival are: The Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24), and, more simply, the Day of Blowing the Trumpet (Numb. xxix. 1). In the Prayer-Book the first of these two names appears in a modified form as the Day of Memorial.[3]

The meaning and purpose of this "holy convocation" are not explicitly set forth in Scripture. We are left to infer them. Nor is it difficult to do so. We have to remember that the first of Tishri is not only a New Moon, but the seventh New Moon. Now, in the Biblical age every New Moon was regarded as a solemn occasion.[4] It was the beginning of a new division of the year, and as such was calculated to awaken serious thoughts in the Israelite's mind. It brought home to him the rapid flight of time; it reminded him that he was but "a

[1] The arrangement which made the New Moon of Tishri the beginning of the year is post-Exilic, and is supposed to be a commemoration of the return from the Babylonian Captivity (Ezra iii. 1; Neh. vii. 73). See M. Friedmann's article on "The New Year" in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, i. 67.

[2] The Hebrew expression *Rosh Hashanah* occurs, however, in Ezek. xl. 1, where it signifies "at the beginning of the year."

[3] The conception of the Festival as a "Day of Judgment" is comparatively late. See Friedmann's article, p. 73.

[4] 2 Kings iv. 23; Isa. i. 13; lxvi. 23; Ezek. xlvi. 1; Amos viii. 5, etc.

stranger and a sojourner" here on earth. And so we find it marked by suspension of work, by special sacrifices, and above all by the solemn Sounding of the Trumpet in the Sanctuary.[1] The trumpet-note was symbolically to carry the remembrance of Israel up to God, who would hear the sound and graciously think of His people. The ceremony of Blowing the Trumpet was performed, indeed, not only on the New Moon, but on all the Holy Days.[2] It was invested with increased importance, perhaps, on every New Moon, but certainly on the seventh New Moon. Certain also it is that Tradition has clothed every New Moon with special sanctity.[3] It is the time of atonement. With the new month a new period of time begins, and what occasion could be more appropriate for the endeavour after the new life, after amendment and reconciliation with God? This is the significance given to the New Moon by the Prayer-Book, and that significance it still retains. The New Moon is still, as it always was, a minor holy day, marked by serious thought and contrite supplication. One of the special prayers which go to sanctify it is in this strain: "Make this new month, O Lord, a month of happiness and blessing, of salvation and forgiveness. Grant that it may be the end of all our sorrows, the beginning of our soul's redemption." But, solemn as the New Moon is, it is yet a time of gladness. The Service held on it includes the Hallel, the Psalms of praise and thanksgiving[4] which are recited only on joyous occasions, like the three Pilgrim Feasts for example.

The solemnity that clung to every New Moon was

[1] Numb. x. 10; xxviii. 11.
[2] Numb. x. 10; Ps. lxxxi. 3.
[3] *Mishnah*, *Shebuoth*, i. 4; *Cuzari*, iii. 5.
[4] Ps. cxiii.-cxviii.

necessarily heightened in the case of the seventh New Moon. Among the Israelites seven was a sacred number. The seventh day was the Sabbath, the seventh year the Sabbatical Year;[1] seven Sabbatical Years brought the Jubilee.[2] Thus it was that the seventh New Moon came to be the holiest of the New Moons. The special characteristics that marked the observance of the New Moon were accentuated, and acquired a fuller significance. The seventh New Moon became the Day of Blowing of Trumpets *par excellence*. The rite from which it acquired that name was invested with increased solemnity. The sound of the Trumpet was always the symbolic assurance of the Divine grace and love, but its message became on this occasion especially clear and certain. With increased intensity Israel felt himself held by the Supreme in merciful remembrance. Thus the seventh New Moon became also the Day of Memorial *par excellence*. But the Divine grace would not be vouchsafed unless the worshipper's heart had been duly prepared to receive it. What form was that preparation to take if not that indicated by Tradition? What could revive God's loving thought of His people except the people's own repentance? What could restore Israel to the Divine favour except the endeavour after a better life? The Day could only be a Day of Memorial if the New Moon's admonition had woven itself into the Israelite's consciousness.

Such is the impressive significance that has clung to the New Year Festival for centuries past. The Day of Memorial reminds us that the one way of making our peace with God is to remove the causes that have estranged us from Him. If we would have Him merci-

[1] Lev. xxv. 4. [2] Lev. xxv. 8.

fully and forgivingly mindful of us, we must be mindful of our responsibilities to Him and to our higher nature. So that the Day of Memorial is a day for human as well as Divine memories. It should bring us face to face with ourselves; it should help us to understand our true moral position; it should set us asking "What am I doing with my life?" It should spur us to the task of self-recollection, self-scrutiny.

And the symbolic act of Sounding the Shophar, the trumpet of horn, which is performed in the Synagogue in obedience to the Scriptural precept, is intended to bring home to us this aspect of the Day's meaning. That the horn, rather than the trumpet of silver,[1] should have been designated by Tradition[2] as the instrument to be used in the performance of the rite is doubtless due to the impressive character of its note. In Biblical times the Shophar was used for proclamations, especially on solemn occasions such as the Jubilee[3] and days of humiliation,[4] and also for sounding an alarm in time of war. Thus Amos[5] asks "Shall the Shophar be blown in a city and the people not be afraid?" The great manifestation at Sinai is heralded by the sound of the Shophar, which strikes terror into the hearts of the assembled people;[6] and the dread day of the Lord, predicted by Zephaniah,[7] is "a day of the Shophar and alarm."[8]

This will explain the selection of the Shophar for the characteristic ceremony of the New Year Festival. Its impressive note matches the solemnity of the Day. Nay,

[1] See Numb. x. 1-10.
[2] *Mishnah*, *Rosh Hashanah*, iii. 2.
[3] Lev. xxv. 9.
[4] Joel ii. 15.
[5] iii. 6.
[6] Exod. xix. 16.
[7] i. 14 *seq.*
[8] Compare Ezek. xxxiii. 2; Joel ii. 1, etc.

it sounds the alarm for the wayward heart; it is a bugle-call to the conscience; it warns the slumbering soul of its peril. "Awake, ye sleepers," it says, to use Maimonides' stirring interpretation, "awake, ye sleepers, and ponder your deeds; remember your Creator and go back to Him in penitence. Be not of those that miss realities in their hunt after shadows, and waste their years in seeking after vain things which cannot profit or deliver. Look well to your souls and consider your acts; forsake each of you his evil ways and thoughts, and return to God, so that He may have mercy upon you."[1] And truly the message comes at a most appropriate time. It is indeed a word in season. New Year's Day joins its appeal to that of the Day of Blowing the Trumpet. For no one can realise that another chapter in his life has closed without chastened feelings. Even the most worldly and frivolous—those who are wont to live only for the passing hour—are sobered by the thought. That life is both fleeting and uncertain is a truth that presses upon the mind with especial force as the old year ends and the new begins. Time speeds on, and we go with it; nay, though we have seen the old year close we can never be sure of seeing the end of the new. We are utterly in God's hands. And so we are led to turn our thoughts to Him, to remember that He has given us our lives in trust, to use in His service. And since life is so fleeting and frail, we must needs begin this right, this serious use of it at once, and begin it by entering upon the task of self-examination and self-ennoblement which is its essential preliminary. New Year, say the Rabbins, should inaugurate a new life.[2] Thus the voices of the Festival

[1] *Hilc. Teshubah*, iii. 4. [2] *Mechilta* to Lev. xxiii. 24.

blend themselves into one message. The admonitions of the Day of Memorial are interpreted by the note of the Shophar—interpreted to every heart, so that he that runs may read—and the impressive associations of New Year's Day lend them additional solemnity. The momentous duties of introspection and penitence could not be preached at a more congenial season.

New Year's Day, then, is a solemn occasion, though not a mournful one. Unlike the ordinary New Moon it is not marked by the recital of the joyous Hallel; but, on the other hand, the prayers with which we mark its advent have little in them that is sad. A day of chastened memories, a day for reflecting upon our frailty of frame and character—that is the aspect in which the Prayer-Book presents it to us. But beneath this sombre sense of weakness, both physical and moral, there lies in the worshipper's heart the serene certitude of God's justice and mercy. If we pass away, He will redeem us; if we have sinned, He will help our resolve to sin no more. We are not morbidly to fix our thoughts upon ourselves alone; we are bidden to turn them also to God. Our littleness, but His greatness too, is to be the theme of our meditations. And so among the most impressive, as well as the most ancient passages of the New Year liturgy are those which celebrate the Divine majesty, which tell of the kingdom of Heaven to be established on earth in the Messianic time, as well as of God as the Searcher of hearts and as the great Sovereign who has revealed His will to mankind.[1] Sublime conceptions

[1] These passages occur in the Additional Service, and in the Talmud are severally known as *Malchioth*, *Zichronoth*, and *Shophroth*, *i.e.* confessions of the Divine Rule, Providence, and Revelation. See *Rosh Hashanah*, 32 a.

all of them, and they clothe both the liturgy and the Day with grandeur.

With New Year commences a sacred period known as the Ten Days of Penitence, so called from the especial duty to which they are consecrated. The last of these days, the Day of Atonement, is the most solemn of them all ; nay, more, it is the most solemn day in the whole year.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

THE Day of Atonement (Hebrew יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים or יוֹם כִּפּוּר) falls on the tenth of Tishri, and is ordained in Leviticus xvi. 29-34; xxiii. 26-32. In both passages it is styled "a Sabbath of solemn," or complete, "rest," an expression which is applied to no other sacred day except the Sabbath.[1]

The purpose of the Day of Atonement is clearly indicated by its name. It is intended to complete and crown the work of the penitential season by finally reconciling the soul with the Almighty. It marks not only the conclusion, but the culminating point, of the Days of Repentance. Implicitly trusting in the Divine forgiveness the Israelite believes that his contrition, if it be really sincere, will atone for him, will make him "at one" once more with his Heavenly Father. The Day, then, is devoted to a supreme effort of penitence, to a mighty endeavour after communion with the Almighty. It is spent in prayer and meditation. The synagogues are thronged with worshippers, whose number and fervour

[1] Exod. xxxi. 15; the expression is also applied to the Sabbatical Year (Lev. xxv. 4).

bear eloquent witness to the importance of the Day and to its hold upon the Jewish heart.

It is kept, too, as a Fast, in obedience to the command given in each of the two passages above cited. The Israelite is there enjoined to observe the Day of Atonement by "afflicting his soul," an expression which in the Bible is a synonym for fasting. Thus in a memorable chapter in Isaiah,[1] which, it is conjectured, is part of a sermon actually preached on the Day of Atonement, the Prophet asks "Is such *the fast* that I have chosen? the day for man *to afflict his soul?*" And the parallelism shows that the expressions are interchangeable.

In ancient times the Service on the Day of Atonement was of the most elaborate and imposing character. Many sacrifices were offered, and the High Priest ministered in the Holy of Holies, the innermost part of the Sanctuary, which even he was forbidden to enter during the rest of the year. On this day, moreover, he performed the most solemn parts of the Service attired not in his golden robes, but in simple vestments of white linen—emblems of the lowliness and purity of thought, the self-abasement and sincerity, which especially beseemed each worshipper on an occasion so sacred and momentous. But perhaps the most striking part of the Day's ritual was the formal expiation of sin that was twice made by the Pontiff in obedience to the Scriptural ordinance.[2] He made "atonement" for himself first; and thus purged, symbolically, of his own transgression, he was fit to seek forgiveness in turn for the sins of his kindred and those of Israel at large. The Mishnah[3] has preserved the actual words

[1] Isa. lviii. 5; see also *ibid.* verse 3 and Ps. xxxv. 13.
[2] Lev. xvi.
[3] *Yoma*, iii. 8 *seq.*

used by the High Priest in this threefold rite. They are words of confession, and they are still repeated in the synagogues at one of the most impressive moments of the Day. And the Mishnah goes on to record how, when the vast congregation of worshippers heard the awful name of God pronounced by the High Priest, they fell on their faces and uttered the old sacred cry, "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever." Thereupon the High Priest proclaimed the words so anxiously awaited by the expectant multitude, "Ye are pure"—words echoing the Scriptural promise[1] of Divine pardon won by the force of the Day's solemnities.

The existing liturgy for the Day of Atonement reproduces these stirring pictures of ancient times, and in the form used in some synagogues it also contains a medieval poem bewailing the fact that they are but pictures, memories only, not realities. A gifted writer has thus aptly paraphrased the lament :—

> Happy he that day who saw
> How, with reverence and awe
> And with sanctity of mien,
> Spoke the priest : "Ye shall be clean
> From your sins before the Lord,"
> Echoed long the holy word,
> While around the fragrant incense stole.
> Happy he whose eyes
> Saw at last the cloud of glory rise,
> But to hear of it afflicts our soul.
>
> Happy he who saw the crowd,
> That in adoration bowed,
> As they heard the priest proclaim
> "One, Ineffable, the Name,"
> And they answered, "Blessed be

[1] Lev. xvi. 30.

God, the Lord, eternally,
He whom all created worlds extol."
Happy he whose eyes
Saw at last the cloud of glory rise,
But to hear of it afflicts our soul.[1]

In its broader aspects the sentiment to which the poet has thus given expression may well find an echo in our own hearts. We may still lament the loss of the beautiful Sanctuary and the sacred rites that moved our fathers to such fervent worship. Above all, we may sigh for the fervour itself, for that mystic realisation of the Divine Presence, that self-abandonment in prayer, that unalterable conviction of God's mercy and goodness, which seem to have vanished with the past. But one thought may temper our regret. It is the thought that the grandeur which once marked Israel's public worship had no essential connection with the success of his endeavour after atonement. The effects of contrite prayer, of prayer of any kind, are independent of the place in which it is offered; and God will forgive us equally whether we seek Him in a splendid temple or in the humblest shed. Everything depends upon the sincerity of the suppliant. Nay, though the Talmud loves to dwell on the splendour of the ancient Sanctuary and the grandeur of its Services, it does not conceal the fact that all this magnificence bred in the last days of the Temple a dangerous formalism. When the Sanctuary fell, they say,[2] there fell with it the wall of iron that had severed Israel from his God. The extraordinary splendour of the Services had led the worshipper to put his trust in them alone, and so to overlook the one saving force that was in his own breast.

[1] From Solomon Ibn Gebirol in *The Jewish Year*, by Alice Lucas, p. 68.
[2] *Berachoth*, 32 b.

And so we may take courage. Let us earnestly seek after reconciliation with God, and it will be ours—yes, even though we offer Him no ornate worship, and speak to Him only in halting words. And this is the one supreme lesson that the Day of Atonement may teach us. It is the lesson of which the Rabbins remind us when they say [1] that the All-merciful requires but one thing—the heart. Sincerity—this is the only title to the Divine love. God demands nought else; but this at least He will have. Especially must we remember this truth on the Day of Atonement, seeing the tremendous issues that are involved in its success or failure. There are those who ascribe some magical atoning power to the mere utterance of prayerful words, however insincere or unfelt. They have, they imagine, but to say, "I have sinned," without feeling the slightest pang of penitent sorrow, in order to be forgiven straightway. Others pin their faith to the mere fact of fasting. Because they have conformed to the ritual precept which bids them abstain from food and drink for a whole day, they think they have done all that was required of them, and have won their right to forgiveness. Others, again, attribute a miraculous effectiveness to the Day itself. Its mere advent, they persuade themselves, will adjust their moral account, and automatically strike out their offences from the Heavenly records.

All such notions, which only delude and injure those who cherish them, are repugnant to common sense. And if there are Jews who do cherish them, it is not because of the explicit teachings of Judaism, but in spite of them. The Bible and the Rabbins alike denounce such folly. In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, which appropriately forms

[1] *Synhed.* 106 b.

one of the Scriptural lessons for the Day, we find it emphatically condemned. The inspired speaker sternly rebukes those who think that God can be pleased with mere fasting, unaccompanied by any serious attempt at amendment. "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and Thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and Thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find your own pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and contention, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye fast not this day, so as to make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I have chosen? The day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a rush, and to spread sack-cloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?" And then, in language as just as it is eloquent, the Prophet goes on to describe the true, the acceptable fast: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth like the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee: the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am."[1] In a like spirit Joel exclaims, "Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God."[2]

And the Rabbinical doctrine echoes these noble

[1] Isa. lviii. 3-9. [2] Joel ii. 12.

homilies. It is not external rites, says the Talmud,[1] that win forgiveness, but inward sincerity; for we read in the book of Jonah[2] that God pardoned the people of Nineveh, not because of their sackcloth and ashes, but because of their amendment: "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which He said He would do unto them; and He did it not." Moreover, we are explicitly warned against the notion that the Day has any magical expiatory power, that its salutary effects are automatic. "If one says, 'I will sin, for the Day of Atonement will absolve me,' then the Day absolves him not."[3] For repentance is something more than ritual observance, something more even than contrite prayer. It is an inner change wrought by the penitent with difficulty and pain. It is "a fierce warfare with the heart."[4]

The chief, the real aim, of the Day of Atonement is the reformed life. "If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far from thee."[5] All the external elements of the Day's observance—its worship and its austerities—are intended to promote this supreme purpose. They cannot do duty for it. The act of fasting is partly to serve as a self-imposed chastisement that is suggested by a mournful recognition of our disobedience and unworthiness. In Scriptural phrase "we afflict" ourselves with the pains of long abstinence as an acknowledgment of our guilt. And the act has a reflex influence. For hunger and weakness tell upon the conscience; they mortify our pride, break down our obstinacy, cast us down before God in humility and contrition. But fasting does more even than this.

[1] *Taanith*, 15 a. [2] iii. 10. [3] *Mishnah*, *Yoma*, viii. 9.
[4] *Orchoth Tsaddikim*, chap. xxvi. [5] Job xi. 14.

Taking us away from such carnal occupations as eating and drinking, it helps us to fix our thoughts upon the needs of the soul. It makes the Day one of physical abstinence and self-denial, but also of correspondingly increased spirituality. Nay, more, it admonishes us that life is not wholly or chiefly physical, nor worldly enjoyment its true aim, but that there are higher things "by which man lives, and wholly therein is the life of the spirit," that "man doth not live by bread alone, but by all that cometh out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." [1]

If the Fast brings such truths home to us, it comes near to achieving its real purpose. But when it degenerates into a formal routine, when it is regarded as an effectual atonement in itself, it becomes mere blind superstition, the worst foe of Religion. And the remark holds good to some extent even of our worship. Unfelt prayer and insincere protestations of repentance stand self-condemned. No words can sufficiently brand the folly and impiety of those who think to win the Divine favour by the mechanical reading of many pages of prayers, or worse still by the utterance of promises of amendment which they do not mean to fulfil. "For him who says, 'I will sin and repent,' repentance is of no avail." [2] But it is quite possible to spend the Day even in fervent worship and yet virtually to make it a failure. We may be truly sorry for our shortcomings, sincere in our entreaties for pardon, earnest in our desire for reconciliation with the Highest, but unless to crown all this we solemnly resolve to make a better fight for Duty henceforth, the Day will have done little for us. It will

[1] Isa. xxxix. 16; Deut. viii. 3.

[2] *Mishnah*, *Yoma*, viii. 9.

have brought us a few hours of spiritual exaltation, but not that steadfast determination to break with evil habit in which alone are to be found its supreme purpose and its true blessedness. In a word, the success or failure of the Day can only be determined when it has long passed. The sole test is the degree of moral and spiritual strength it has permanently given us, with which to oppose our most deeply rooted failings, our everyday temptations.

Nor must our efforts be concentrated upon ourselves. Sin affects others besides the sinner. There are those whom we have wronged—deliberately wronged—and until we have made reparation our atonement cannot be complete. "If," say the Rabbins,"[1] "thou hast sinned against thy brother, first go and reconcile thyself to him, for otherwise the Day of Atonement cannot absolve thee."

Amendment, then,—this is the last link in the long chain of spiritual effort which we call atonement. It is the most vital link of all. Even the Divine forgiveness, in whatever sense we understand the term, is impossible without it. For how can even God, merciful though He is, forgive those who, while they are heartily sorry for their rebellion, make no real attempt to break with it, who, while they mourn the wrongs they have inflicted upon their fellow-men, make no attempt to repair them? "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; He looketh on the heart"; and if the heart, though torn with remorse, is still hugging its sin, can He possibly hearken to its penitent cry? Those who seek after reconciliation under such conditions are likened by the Rabbins to one who thinks

[1] *Mishnah*, *Yoma*, viii. 9.

to cleanse himself by bathing, when the source of his defilement is fast locked in his hand.[1] The effort is vain. To purify desire, to ennoble the will—this is the essential condition of atonement.

Nay, it *is* atonement. For we speak of reconciliation and pardon; but what are they save figures of speech? The reconciliation we have really to effect is with our higher selves, with our conscience which we have outraged, with our souls which we have sullied. The changeless mind of God knows no such mutations as are implied in the idea of wrath. What we style His anger is really the resentment of our better nature, its stern protest against the shame in which our sin has involved us. And so with forgiveness. "God is not a man that He should repent." Changefulness such as the notion of pardon would attribute to Him is inconceivable in the Perfect One. If He knows not the feeling of anger, He knows not the change involved in forgiveness. The only reconciliation possible for us is self-reconciliation. And by that self-reconciliation it is that we, again figuratively speaking, make our peace with God. We who have put ourselves far from Him, we whose iniquities have, in Prophetic phrase, "separated between us and our God," raised "a barrier of iron," in the words of the Rabbins, between Him and us, go back to Him in thought and feeling like a wayward child to the father it has offended; we break down the obstacles to spiritual union with Him that our iniquity has created.[2]

And that sense of recovered fellowship we call forgiveness. The change is not in God, but in ourselves. His

[1] *Taanith*, 16 a; compare Ecclus. xxxiv. 25, 26.
[2] Compare *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, chap. xviii. p. 384.

love never suffers alteration. And therefore in our endeavour after atonement it is upon our own hearts, our own lives, that we have chiefly to fix our thoughts. It is *we* who have to change, if reconciliation is to be ours. For how are we to get recovered peace, how be at one with our better selves, while the sin which is the cause of our disquiet, the source of the inward discord that torments us, is still dragging us down? And so the reformed life is the only atonement. "Repentance," cry the Rabbins,[1] "repentance makes man a new creature; hitherto dead through sin, he is fashioned afresh." In its higher significance the saying is profoundly true. Repentance changes the heart indeed; it flings the sinner in grief and utter submission at the feet of God. But if it is real, it changes his life too; it makes him a new man in the fullest sense of the expression. And therefore if we could possibly imagine our having to choose between prayer and performance, between contrition and amendment, it would be our duty to let the prayer and the contrition go, and base all our hopes of pardon upon the firm foundation of the good life.

And yet in spite of what has just been said, it would be wrong to think that God's anger is after all only a figurative expression for our own discontent with ourselves, and therefore nothing to be dreaded. It is this and something more. It stands also for the suffering that transgression inevitably brings in its train sooner or later. It is not because the Divine wrath is a figure of speech that retribution is unreal, and that the sinner may count upon impunity. Though, strictly speaking, God is never angry, man is none the less accountable for his life, and

[1] *Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. cii. 18, and *Yalkut in loc.*

the wholesome ordinance which has decreed suffering as the expiation of guilt, remains unimpugned. The mistake so many make lies in thinking that it is possible to evade that ordinance. When they speak of forgiveness they mean escape from punishment. That is the great boon which the Day of Atonement is to secure for them. It is this that they have in their minds when they passionately beseech God to overlook their offences. It is a grievous mistake—a degradation of the purpose of the Day, a degradation of the purpose of God. Let it be said once more [1] that the only remission we have the right to ask for, is the remission of guilt. As to the penalty, not even God Himself, to say it reverently, can forgo any part of it. For once the sin has been sinned it must produce its effects, even as the seed begets the flower. "Every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge." [2] It is God's law in the moral, no less than in the physical world, and God must be true to it because He must be true to Himself. And because it is God's law it is good. The penalty is not an evil to be shunned, but a supremely wise and salutary ordinance to be patiently endured, even to be welcomed. For in the Divine scheme what we call punishment is not inflicted angrily or aimlessly; it is veiled blessing, the germ of human ennoblement. It is the good physician's bitter medicine, unpleasant to the taste, but containing the promise of healing and peace.

Therefore, when we pray for God's forgiveness, let us not ask for the repeal of a decree that is justice, nay, mercy itself. For how, save through his suffering, is the sinner to pay homage to the great principle of goodness that he has defied? How, save by punishment, is he to

[1] See above, p. 125.

[2] Jer. xxxi. 30.

be purged of the taint of transgression, made worthy of enjoying once more the Divine companionship? Those blessings are all that we ought to ask for, and pain will cheaply purchase them. To be a prey no longer to the haunting sense of guilt, to know that we are reconciled to our higher selves and therefore to our Father, to feel that we are no longer undeserving of His love, no longer ashamed to meet His gaze—this is the most precious of all boons; and though it may have to be won through suffering, it may yet claim from us all our power of fervent entreaty. No; the dominant motive of our prayers on the Day of Atonement should be not the fear of punishment, but the fear of sin; and what, asks a Jewish writer, is it to fear sin but to dread its shame?[1]

For no religion has a truer conception of the sinfulness of sin than Judaism, and the proof is in the Day of Atonement itself. As we have seen, it demands sincere penitence as the very first condition of reconciliation, the cleansing of the heart from the "defilement," to use the Rabbinic language, of transgression.[2] Nay, transgression, the Rabbins say, defiles even when it is unintentional; for it taints the soul—the soul that has lived in Heaven![3] And this, perhaps, is the meaning of the Psalmist's cry, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned."[4] His sin is an offence against man, but it has involved him in an impurity which has cut him off from the Divine fellowship, nay, has offered dishonour to God. It is a consequence

[1] *Reshith Chochmah*, i. 3 (end). Similarly another late writer calls that the best repentance which is induced by pure love to God, and not by dread of His wrath.—*Orchoth Tsaddikim*, chap. xxvi.

[2] *Yoma*, 39 a.

[3] *Tanchuma* to Lev. iv. 2; *Reshith Chochmah*, i. 4 (beginning).

[4] Ps. li. 4.

which expels every other from his thoughts. And this degradation, with its attendant sense of estrangement from the Highest, is the one thing to be feared. "Cast me not out from before Thee, and take not Thy holy spirit from me"[1]—that is the sinner's most bitter cry. To be severed from God—that is sin's most bitter fruit. The Talmud teaches the truth in its turn: "He that transgresses, though it be in secret, thrusts God away from him."[2]

Nor are the sins for which the Day of Atonement is to help us to atone ritual sins merely or chiefly—offences against Judaism in its narrower aspect as a ceremonial system—but transgressions of the moral law. The Day appeals to us less as Israelites than as men, less as custodians of a particularistic code than as possessors of immortal souls which we have to keep ready for Heaven. And therefore it is that in the Service of the Day we are reminded most often of those moral offences which, because all the world deems them shameful, involves those who commit them in the deepest degradation. For to the true Israelite sin is not merely violation of a law, even of a Divine law. It is this and more; it is an offence against one's better self, an injury done, as one teacher phrases it, to the "higher man,"[3] which needs for its expiation not only homage to the law, but self-reconciliation. The sincere penitent, according to the writer just quoted, says to his soul, "O my soul, how could I have refrained from having compassion upon thee?"[4]

The Day of Atonement emphasises this aspect of sin. Further, it reminds us of the ease with which evil habit

[1] Ps. li. 11. [2] *Chagigah*, 16 a. [3] *Reshith Chochmah*, i. 5.
[4] *Reshith Chochmah*, iii. 5. Compare *Choboth Halebaboth*, chap. vii.

fastens itself upon us, of the fatal facility with which small failings, if unheeded, infect and disintegrate the character, just as poisonous germs in the blood insidiously undermine the bodily health. At first a spider's web, but finally a cable—so the Rabbins[1] characterise sinful habit. In its earlier stages a touch will free us from it; later on we are in fetters. The Day of Atonement comes annually to give us an opportunity for just that periodical revision of our conduct which alone can save us from this danger. It tells of the great things that true penitence may effect, but it also warns us of the mischief that springs from persistent indifference to our moral condition. "No sin," finely says Bachya,[2] "is too great for God to pardon, but none too small for habit to magnify." Sincere repentance, steadily persevered in, will effect a revolution in the moral life; but, on the other hand, the lightest sin, again and again repeated, may involve its ruin. "A fretted cable is broken at last; but a silken thread, doubled many times, how strong it is!"[3]

Judaism, then, never loses sight of the real significance of sin. Evil habit becomes a chain binding in an ignoble servitude him who should be one of God's freemen. The transgressor sins against his own soul. But, more even than this, he sins against his fellow-men, if not directly, then indirectly. There are certain offences which constitute wilful assaults on the rights and the well-being of others. They directly inflict suffering on our neighbour. But does not every sin of ours wrong him? Does it not injure him by its evil example, by the incitement it holds out to him to come and do likewise? This aspect of transgression has not escaped the attention of our wise

[1] *Succah*, 52 a. [2] *Choboth Halebaboth*, chap. vii. [3] *Ibid.*

teachers. Jeroboam sinned, say the Rabbins;[1] but not content with chronicling his iniquity, the Scriptural historians again and again set forth the far-reaching evil of which it was the parent. They speak of "the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and wherewith he made Israel to sin."[2] For, as the Rabbins add,[3] to cause another to sin is even worse than to slay him; it is to compass his death not only in this world but in the next.

It is in this light that we have to regard conduct. We are all responsible not only for our own lives, but for the influence they exert upon the lives of others. And from that responsibility there is no escape. No one, however solitary, lives his life alone. Socially bound up with others, he comes into moral contact with them at a thousand points. What he is he helps them to be; his evil example is a poisonous germ which finds lodgment in their hearts, and there begets offspring after its kind. Thus, as Amiel has well said, "every life is, as it were, a beacon which entices a ship upon the rocks, if it does not guide it into port." The thought must needs give the sinner pause. Against himself he may possibly not refuse to sin, but he will surely shrink from contributing to the moral undoing of others—some of them, perhaps, his own flesh and blood, to whom he is attached by his very heart-strings. For vicarious suffering is a very real thing. The sins of the fathers *are* visited upon the children, and the children's upon the fathers. So perfect is human solidarity that one evil deed will destroy the happiness and the moral well-being of countless individuals, even of generations. And for this chain of evils, issuing

[1] *Aboth*, v. 18. [2] 1 Kings xiv. 16, and elsewhere.
[3] *Bemidbar Rabbah*, chap. xxi. to Numb. xxv. 15.

from his own sin, what man, ask the Rabbins, can atone?

And then there are the direct effects of transgression. Against these, too, we are impressively warned. For sins against our fellow-men atonement is hard, it may even be impossible. How can the evil-doer be sure of repairing the wrong he has done to another? Can he ever make good the loss he has inflicted, recall the years he has darkened, make the woe he has caused as if it had never been? Nay, can he be sure of finding his victims when he has resolved to make reparation? What if they have disappeared? What if they be dead?[1]

Such is the power, such the significance of sin, according to the Jewish conception. And the Day of Atonement is the outcome of that conception. Because sin is so terrible, a special effort must be made to escape from its bondage. Thus the Day comes every year. For Judaism recognises the need of periodical self-scrutiny. Every day the good man will seek to realise his moral position; his whole life will be a penitent endeavour. He will strive to keep his garments always white, for who knoweth when the King may summon him to the banquet?[2] But, since those who perform this wise act are few, a special day has been dedicated to the task of introspection. For if repentance is to be effectual, it must be taken in hand before sin has been woven into the texture of character. Nay, whilst Judaism teaches that God is ever ready to accept the sinner's contrition even if it be whispered with his last breath, it rightly places far above it the penitence of those who still feel the mighty stress of temptation.

[1] See *Choboth Halebaboth*, chap. vii.

[2] *Shabbath*, 153a.

"Humble thyself," it admonishes us,[1] "before thou be sick; and in the time of sins shew repentance. Wait not until death to be justified." And "Repent," it urges us again, "whilst thou art a man."[2] For what God would have is the devotion of our life when it is at its best, when submission is pain and obedience struggle, not the homage of our last hours, when life has lost its savour and sin its glamour.

And here a very natural question presents itself. The Day of Atonement has been ordained for Israel. But what of those who stand outside the Jewish pale? Are they denied the means of atonement and reconciliation? The answer is No. Just as Israel has no monopoly of salvation, so he has no exclusive right of way along the path that leads to it. Judaism teaches not only that the Divine love is freely offered to all men, whatever their religion may be, but that their religion is itself the instrument by which they may win it. They are sure of the Divine fellowship if only they will follow the good way that their conscience points out to them. The Day of Atonement does not give the Jew a privilege denied to other religionists. It simply confers a special obligation upon him—the obligation of employing its gracious offices, of striving after the moral redemption which it places within his reach. God judges men not by a rigid, uniform standard, but by the standard laid down for each man individually by his moral ideals and opportunities. For the Jew there is salvation in Judaism, but not in anything inferior to it; for its high obligations, once realised, become

[1] Ecclus. xviii. 21, 22.
[2] *Abodah Zarah*, 19a; *Reshith Chochmah*, iii. 1.

a binding law which he may not desert for lower conceptions of duty. But to the Gentile the means of redemption are given in his own moral and religious ideas. He needs not Judaism in order to be "saved." There is salvation for him outside the Law. "For whatever act a man performs, even if it fulfil none of the precepts of the Torah, will ensure him eternal life if only he does it in sincerity, influenced by the fear of God."[1]

This is one of the characteristic verities of Judaism. and the Day of Atonement brings it home to us. And of another truth, equally characteristic and equally great, does it remind us. It is the truth that the aspiring soul—the soul that earnestly seeks after redemption—can realise its desire by its own unaided efforts, without the intervention of a mediator, Divine or human. This noble conception has already been enunciated in these pages, but it may appropriately be again set forth here. For it is, so to speak, incarnate in the Day of Atonement. On the great Day of Reconciliation the human spirit puts forth its supreme effort, attempts its most momentous enterprise. It seeks to recover its lost communion with God, to climb to the spiritual heights from which sin has cast it down. It seeks to be itself once more. The task is momentous, for the boon is priceless. And yet, as Judaism declares, the task can be performed, the boon can be won, by the soul itself, thanks to the boundless mercy of God. On this Day each worshipper, however sin-laden, is exhorted to take his burden straight to the Almighty, with the certainty of being heard and pitied. He needs no one to plead for him. His penitence and his settled determination to amend will be

[1] *Marpë Lanepesh*, 6 a.

his best, his only effective plea. It will be this because God is merciful, nay, because He is righteous. "For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."[1] Human merit is small, but the Divine pity is infinite, and in the abundance of that pity God stoops from His high throne and lifts the wayward heart into His loving embrace. Yes, in His pity He does it. The effort after redemption must come from the sinner himself, but the Divine grace will bless it and bring it to fruition. God's mercy is all-powerful. He will pardon our sin just "because it is great,"[2] just because our contrition is by itself powerless to expiate it. "If men have virtues," the Rabbins declare,[3] "He gives them of the fruits of their deeds; if they have none, He gives them of His grace. Can there be compassion greater than this?" Nay, He almost becomes the suppliant. He *offers* His love to us, guilty though we are. He entreats us to accept it by our penitence. "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto Me, My Father? . . . Return, ye wayward children; I will heal your waywardness"[4]—so the paternal heart is pictured as calling to us all. God fanning the spark of penitence with the breath of His compassion, joining His forces to the sinner's in pleading with His own justice, and yet doing all this without taking from the sinner either the right of appeal to the Divine heart or the duty of toiling for his own redemption—this is the characteristic conception of Judaism, and it has made the Day of Atonement possible.

[1] Ps. ciii. 14. [2] Ps. xxv. 11.
[3] *Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. lxxii. 1. [4] Jer. iii. 4, 22.

CHAPTER IX

THE MINOR FASTS AND FEASTS

BESIDES the important days already enumerated, certain other occasions are marked for observance in the Jewish Calendar. They are: the four Fasts observed respectively on the 17th of Tammuz, the 9th of Ab, the 3rd of Tishri, and the 10th of Tebeth; the Fast of Esther, observed on the 13th of Adar in memory of the Fast ordained by that Queen;[1] the Feast of Chanucah or Dedication, which begins on the 25th of Kislev, and the Feast of Purim celebrated on the 14th of Adar.

Tradition sees an allusion to the four fast days in Zechariah viii. 19, where we read that "the fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth" are in future to be "to the House of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts."

The Fast of Tebeth commemorates the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar,[2] the Fast of Tammuz the breaching of the walls,[3] the Fast of Ab

[1] Esther iv. 16.
[2] 2 Kings xxv. 1; Jer. lii. 4.
[3] 2 Kings xxv. 3, 4; Jer. lii. 6, 7.

the destruction of the Temple,[1] and the Fast of the 3rd of Tishri the murder of Gedaliah.[2]

Of these anniversaries the Fast of Ab is the most important,[3] for it recalls the final disruption of the Kingdom of Judah twenty-five centuries ago. But with it Tradition[4] has associated also the destruction of the Temple by the Romans under Titus more than 600 years later. It is thus the anniversary of a twofold disaster; it recalls a twofold destruction of Israel's independence. Of all the Fasts above mentioned it possesses the greatest vitality. But even its observance is on the wane. Like its companions, it draws its authority from Tradition alone. Like them, it is nowhere formally instituted in the Bible. There are Jews, moreover, who go so far as to deny that it can properly be regarded as a sad anniversary.[5] In their view the downfall of the Jewish State, far from being a calamity, was a beneficent event, for it directly contributed to that dispersion of the Jews which has powerfully helped to publish their creed to the world and so to promote the fulfilment of their great mission.[6] We mention this opinion, but do not adopt it. The downfall of the Jewish State has doubtless been overruled by Divine Providence for blessing. But for our ancestors it was a dire calamity none the less; and the fathers' sorrows may well evoke a responsive throb from the hearts of the sons. The

[1] 2 Kings xxv. 8, 9; Jer. lii. 12, 13.

[2] 2 Kings xxv. 25.

[3] See *Rosh Hashanah*, 18 a, where the observance of the Minor Fasts, with the exception of the Fast of Ab, is considered optional.

[4] *Taanith*, 29 a.

[5] Even so great an authority as R. Jehudah, the Prince, desired to abolish its observance. See *Megillah*, 5 b.

[6] See p. 163.

precise manner in which the mournful character of anniversaries like the Fast of Ab should be recognised may fairly be left to individual feeling; but to remember that they are mournful can do nothing but good. It can hardly fail to feed and nourish that historic consciousness which, as we have seen, is of vital importance for the well-being of Judaism.[1]

The Feast of Purim commemorates the events recorded in the Book of Esther. For ages past, Jewish custom has greeted the advent of this Feast with deeds of charity and goodwill. It is a time for "sending portions one to another and gifts to the poor."[2] Joy has found its natural and its noblest expression in the effort to weave itself into other lives. There is no better way of honouring the Feast of Purim than by conforming to this gracious usage. If it helps to break down the barriers between rich and poor, to knit friends and dear ones faster together in love, its observance will indeed be justified.

It remains to speak of the Feast of Dedication. Beginning, as we have said, on the 25th of Kislev, the Feast of Dedication (Hebrew חֲנוּכָּה) is kept eight days. Like Purim, it is a minor Festival—that is to say, it is not marked by suspension of work as is Passover or Pentecost or Tabernacles. The institution of the Feast is recorded in the Talmud,[3] and the events it commemorates are set forth in detail in the two Books of the Maccabees, which form part of the Apocrypha, and by the Jewish historian Josephus.[4] Every one who

[1] See p. 198 *seq.* [2] Esther ix. 22. [3] *Shabbath*, 21 b.
[4] *Antiquities*, xii. 5 *seq.*

would be acquainted with some of the most thrilling passages in the history of heroism should consult those authorities.[1] But it may be desirable to give a bare outline of the story here.

The events of which we have to speak belong to post-Exilic times—that is, to a period subsequent to the Babylonian Captivity. When Babylon fell before the Medes and Persians, the Jewish exiles necessarily had the conquerors for their new masters. From them they received permission to return to Palestine, where they established a commonwealth subject to Persia. For a long period the little Jewish State appears to have enjoyed a comparatively calm and uneventful life, which was not materially disturbed when, with the rest of the Persian Empire, Palestine fell, in the fourth century B.C., under the rule of the Greek conqueror, Alexander the Great. On the death of Alexander his dominions were divided among his generals. Palestine, however, became the object of a long-continued struggle between them, and, no matter which side was victorious for the time being, had to pay the cost in disaster; so that, as Josephus says,[2] "the Jews were very like to a ship in a storm, which is tossed by the waves on both sides." Seized at first by Egypt, Palestine was, after many vicissitudes, finally annexed to Syria, of which the seat of government was Antioch in Asia Minor. The ruler of this Syro-Grecian kingdom, early in the second century B.C., was Antiochus IV., surnamed Epiphanes,

[1] The reader may also be referred to Graetz's *History of the Jews*, English edition, vol. i. chaps. xxii., xxiii.; to Lady Magnus's *Outlines of Jewish History*, chaps. iv. and v.; and to Montefiore's *Bible for Home Reading*, vol. ii. sec. 5.

[2] *Antiquities*, xii. 3. 3.

the "Illustrious," or more correctly, the "God manifest." [1]

Previous to Antiochus' accession to the throne, the Jews had not found the Greek yoke intolerable. As long as they paid their tribute regularly they were, as a rule, allowed to manage their own affairs without serious molestation. But a change came over the situation as soon as Antiochus began to reign. This foolish man was determined to deprive his subject States even of the semblance of independence. His desire was to make them thoroughly Greek. And it so happened that internal quarrels among the Jews seemed to afford him the opportunity of carrying out this design in Palestine. Riots arising out of the fierce rivalries of opposing claimants for the High Priesthood gave him the pretext for interference which he was seeking. He issued tyrannical decrees against the Jews, merely in some cases for the sake of making his power felt. These decrees, arbitrary and cruel though they were, would probably have been obeyed had they affected only the political interests of the people. But they struck a blow at the Jewish Religion, and the blow was intentional. Antiochus was quite clever enough to see that if he was to succeed in crushing the Jews, he must aim at their Judaism, the one source of their vitality. But he miscalculated the strength of their attachment to the ancestral faith. He imagined that they would tamely submit to have their most precious possession wrested from them. Attacks on their political rights they might tolerate, but when

[1] All the Macedonian kings were worshipped; but Antiochus IV. laid especial stress upon his divinity. (See E. R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, ii. 154.)

their religious freedom was assailed their patience was changed into angry resistance. Men with gentle hearts were filled of a sudden with the courage and fury of lions. It would not be true to say that all the Jews in Palestine were thus transformed. There were some weak-kneed men among them who were quite ready to obey the tyrant's orders even though obedience meant public apostasy. They valued bodily ease more than a quiet conscience. Some of them, too, were attracted by the graceful but sensuous ceremonial of Greek worship, so different from the simple and elevated rites of the Jewish religion.

But these Hellenist, *i.e.* Greek-loving Jews did not really represent the temper of the people at large. Its true exponents were the Maccabees and their followers. These men offered a sturdy and successful resistance to the edicts of Antiochus. He forbade the Jews to practise any of the ordinances of their religion. He ordered them to eat forbidden food and to offer public sacrifice to idols. The first reply of the brave hearts among them was martyrdom. They yielded themselves to torture and death rather than obey. But soon a different spirit took possession of them. An aged priest named Mattathias, who lived at Modin, a small town near Jerusalem, thought that if the Jew had to die for his religion he ought to die for it fighting. And so when a royal emissary set up an idolatrous altar in Modin, and called upon the people to take part in the unholy rites, Mattathias slew the officer and then fled with his five sons to the hills. Here he was joined by a band of men as brave and zealous as himself, and here he carried on a successful guerilla warfare until his death.

He left gallant sons to carry on his work, and one of them, Judah the Maccabee (Judas Maccabeus), he had specially designated for the command of the little Jewish army. The title "Maccabeus" is said to be derived from a Syriac word meaning "hammer." It was certainly an appropriate name for a man who was destined to strike so resolute a blow for the Jewish cause; and its appropriateness was speedily manifested. Though his followers were few in number and, worse still, without military training, Judah led them forth from their fastnesses in the mountains and boldly engaged the huge, well-trained legions of Antiochus. He was everywhere successful—at Bethoron, at Emmaus, at Bethzur. The solid phalanx of the Greeks could not stand against the determined onslaughts of a handful of men whom the call of conscience had inflamed with desperate courage, men who, like the Puritans in England centuries later, went into battle with a prayer on their lips and with the thought of God in their hearts.

The immediate result is well known. Having beaten off the enemy, Judah regained possession of Jerusalem and the Temple. The Greeks had defiled the Sanctuary by idolatrous worship. To re-consecrate it to the service of Israel's God was, then, the hero's first thought. And this solemn act was performed on the 25th of Kislev in the year 165 B.C., a date ever memorable in Jewish history.

It is to commemorate this glorious story that the Feast of Chanucah, of Dedication, has been instituted. The festival lasts eight days, and the traditional explanation is that when the sacred lamp was about to be kindled at the re-consecration of the Temple, only a small flask

of oil undefiled by the idolater could be found. It was deemed sufficient for the requirements of one night only, but it miraculously lasted for eight nights.[1] Thus the Feast was kept eight days. The story, of course, is only a picturesque legend. But it deserves to live, since in figurative form it shadows forth that wondrous force of Israel which, apparently so slender, has yet enabled our race in every age to withstand the mightiest foes. Again and again, as in the time of the Maccabees, has our people's life seemed all but spent; but again and again has it been renewed.[2]

To-day the Feast is marked, in accordance with Rabbinical precept, by a joyous illumination in the synagogue and the home at nightfall. On the first evening a single light is kindled, but each succeeding evening another is added, until on the last night of the Feast the illumination has grown to eight lights. Thus do the pious go in their service of praise and duty from strength to strength.

The kindling of the lights, which has become the characteristic rite of the Festival, is a reminiscence of the solemn re-lighting of the holy candlestick, which formed part of the re-consecration of the Temple by the Maccabees. It was the only element of the dedication-ceremony

[1] *Shabbath*, 21 b.

[2] The real explanation of the eight days over which the Festival extends is furnished by the First Book of the Maccabees (iv. 52 *seq.*). The re-consecration of the Temple is there described as lasting eight days, and is styled "the Dedication of the Altar," an expression used in the Bible (Numb. vii. 88) of the consecration of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, which extended over a like period. It is probable, therefore, that the earlier solemnity suggested the duration of the later one. According, however, to 2 Maccabees vi. 7, the idea of observing the first Feast of Dedication for eight days was borrowed from the Feast of Tabernacles, which the outlawed Maccabees had recently kept "after the manner of wild beasts," and for which therefore the new Feast was a compensation.

which could be introduced into the synagogue and the home, the others being such acts as the offering of sacrifice, the burning of the incense, and the setting forth of the shew-bread.[1] It was a peculiarly appropriate rite, moreover, to associate with the Feast of Dedication. For light is a symbol of joy, and joy is the dominant note of the Festival, as it was the ruling sentiment of the Maccabean warriors. "The Lord is God, and He hath given us light," so the Psalmist cries, and we can imagine the glad exclamation breaking forth from the lips of the heroes as they thought of the loving-kindness of the Lord in the midst of His Temple.

The Feast is further marked by the recital of the Hallel (Ps. cxiii.-cxviii.). This group of Psalms, as has been already stated, forms part of the Festival liturgy; but its character and perhaps its origin also make its recital especially appropriate to the Feast of Chanucah. According to many modern scholars, the Psalms in this group were composed in the age of the Maccabees, and possibly in honour of the great dedication of the Temple in the year 165 B.C.[2] Be this as it may, the 118th Psalm in particular might well have been sung on that memorable occasion. It breathes a thanksgiving for some wondrous deliverance from dire peril, from imminent destruction, such as the Maccabees would have been moved to offer. In their distress they had called on the Lord, and He had answered them with enlargement. He was on their side, what, then, could man do to them? All the nations had encompassed them, but in the name of the Lord they had cut them off. God had chastened

[1] See 1 Mac. iv. 50, 51; 2 Mac. x. 3.
[2] Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*, Lecture I.

them sore, but He had not given them up unto death. Such might well have been the language of the victorious warriors as they made their way up the Temple Mount on the Day of the Dedication. And then, on their reaching the Sanctuary, one can picture them as taking up again the words of the Psalm and crying, "Open to me the gates of righteousness, I will enter them and praise the Lord," and being answered by the Priests, "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter therein." And then, as the gates swung back, there must have followed some such outburst of glad thanksgiving as the Psalmist's "I will give thanks unto Thee, for Thou hast answered me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad on it."

It is because the Festival enshrines memories of the glorious past that it keeps its strong grip upon the Jewish heart. In one respect a minor Feast, it is in other respects a very great Feast indeed. It tells a story of valour which, while it appeals to all who honour courage, is especially calculated to quicken the pulse of the Jew. For it is a story of valour displayed for the Religious Idea, in defence of the solemn trust, in pursuance of the sacred mission, confided to Israel. It is good for Jewish lads to include warriors of their own race in their gallery of heroes, to be able to say, "My people has produced its brave men equally with the Greeks and the Romans and the English." But still better is it for them to feel that these brave men drew their courage from the purest of all sources, from a passionate love for their religion, from

a veneration for the good and the true and the morally beautiful. The Maccabees boldly faced overwhelming odds, not for their own selfish ends, but in a spirit of self-sacrificing fidelity to the holiest of all causes. They threw themselves upon the enemy in the temper that takes the martyr to the stake; they did it not for gain or glory, but solely for conscience' sake. They felt that God was calling to them, and they could not hold back. Theirs was an unique effort. Others before them had displayed a noble courage on the battlefield. But what they had fought for was their fatherland and their mother tongue, their hearths and homes. "To fight for Religion was a new thing."[1]

Such heroic constancy may well secure our admiring homage for its own sake. But it claims our reverence also for its results. The victory of the Maccabees was no barren achievement. It rendered solid benefits to the Jewish cause. But for the Maccabees Judaism would probably have perished. It would have gone down before the cruel cunning of the Greeks. And with it would have perished a mighty bulwark against the encroachments of Paganism with its gross immorality. The little Maccabean band was like a rock in the midst of a surging sea. Standing almost alone in their day, the heroes beat back the forces that threatened to involve all mankind in a common demoralisation. They kept a corner of the

[1] Lazarus, *The Ethics of Judaism*, sec. 32. Compare the appreciation of a recent non-Jewish writer: "There shone out in that intense moment the sterner and sublimer qualities which later Hellenism, and, above all, the Hellenism of Syria, knew nothing of—uncommon fidelity to an ideal, endurance raised to the pitch of utter self-devotion, a passionate clinging to purity. They were qualities for the lack of which all the riches of Hellenic culture could not compensate. It was an epoch in history."—E. R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, ii. p. 174.

world sweet in an impure age. They held aloft the torch of pure religion at a time when thick darkness was covering the nations.

And so we Jews may well keep their memory green. Nor is this a duty incumbent upon us alone. Let it always be remembered that if Judaism had perished, Christianity would never have been born. The veneration of the Jew for the Maccabees ought, then, to be shared by Christendom. It is so shared to some extent. We all know how nobly that great master of music, Handel, has celebrated the devotion and valour of the Maccabees. Nay, there is an all but forgotten Feast of the Church which is intended to commemorate them. "Both in the East and in the West," a Christian divine[1] tells us, "August the 1st was sanctified as the spiritual 'Birthday of the Maccabees.'" And he adds that "the story of the Maccabees was, in truth, much more thought of by the ancient Church than it is by us (*i.e.* by modern Christians), and we might well be led by this to 'consider our ways and be wise.'" Certainly, the services which the heroes and martyrs of the Maccabean age rendered to unborn Christianity, nay, to the twin-cause of Religion and Goodness, deserve greater homage from the world at large than they have hitherto received.

[1] Cheyne, *The Origin of the Psalter*, note to Lecture I.

CHAPTER X

PUBLIC WORSHIP

ONE of the most effective instruments for preserving the Jewish consciousness is public worship. To take part in that worship is a duty which the Jew owes to his Judaism. No Israelite who disclaims that obligation can be regarded as really true to his religion. There are people who claim to be considered good Jews, though they habitually refrain from entering a synagogue. It is a claim which cannot be conceded.

Something more even than personal devoutness is involved in the question. A common worship is doubtless a powerful help to individual prayer, and the heart that seeks after communion with God is assuredly aided in its quest by being one of a multitude all intent on the same aim. But this is a personal question with which we are not now concerned. We are considering the influence of public worship not upon the man, but upon the Israelite, and for the Israelite it has still greater significance and effectiveness than for the man. The Service of the Synagogue is something more than an expression of the needs and emotions of the worshippers who take part in it. It is, besides this, and even above this, an

expression of Jewish needs and emotions. It is an expression of the joys and sorrows, a proclamation of the hopes and faith, of Israel.

It is, moreover, Israel's witness to his God. Every worshipper in the Synagogue in effect declares his loyalty to Judaism. He identifies himself with its creed; he renews the ancient covenant between his people and the Almighty. The Jew who systematically holds himself aloof from the communal worship takes no part in this public confession of faith, this public acknowledgment of obligation. When the roll of God's army is called he fails to answer to his name. Nay, more, he cuts himself off from the powerful influence which the Service of the Synagogue must inevitably exert upon his sentiments and his life as a Jew.

For the Synagogue is the one unfailing well-spring of Jewish feeling. There we pray together with our brethren, and in the act become participators in the common sentiment, the collective conscience, of Israel. Nay, there we pray with a mightier company still, with the whole house of Israel. We become members of a far greater congregation than that of which we form a physical part. We join in spirit our brethren all over the world in their homage to the God of our people. It is impossible to exaggerate the impressiveness of such a thought. Under its influence our worship acquires a deeper fervour, a heightened dignity; our attachment to Israel is strengthened; our enthusiasm for our great mission is renewed.[1]

It is easy, then, to understand why Hebrew should have kept its place for so many centuries in Jewish

[1] See *Cuzari*, iii. 17.

public worship. Living in different countries and speaking diverse tongues, the Jews have by common consent retained their sacred language as the medium of public prayer. They have done so because, as we have already explained, Jewish public worship is the act of united Israel, the act of an organised brotherhood, not that of a congregation, brought together by chance, or even by a common prayerful impulse. And Israel has but one language—that in which his Scriptures are written. That, then, must necessarily be the language in which he expresses his aspirations after his God.

Hence, too, the many references to Israel in the Jewish liturgy. The Service of the Synagogue contains comparatively few prayers referring to merely personal needs. The congregation prays as a section, nay, as the representative, of Israel. On the other hand, Hebrew literature, both Biblical and Rabbinic, is rich in devotional passages intended for private use, examples of which are to be found in the Prayer-Book.[1]

* The truth above set forth deserves sympathetic attention in these days. It is an anomaly that the study of Hebrew, the language of Israel, should be doomed to increasing disfavour among Jews at a time when it is being cultivated with growing ardour by non-Jewish scholars. Let it be said here once for all that to know Hebrew, the language in which the Divine oracles have been given, the language of Lawgiver and Prophet and Psalmist, is one of the primary duties of the Jew. It is a duty quite independent of the language in which public worship is conducted. Even if the Service of the

[1] For additional examples of such prayers see *Berachoth*, 16 b *seq.*, 60 b; *Jer. Berachoth*, iv. 2, and below, p. 351.

Synagogue were no longer rendered in the sacred tongue, the study of Hebrew would still be a solemn obligation for the Israelite. On the other hand, there are certain considerations on this subject now put forward by thoughtful Jews whose devotion to Judaism cannot be questioned. They deserve careful attention, and are therefore set down here.

Even if Hebrew, it is argued, were as diligently studied by Jews as it deserves to be, it would still not be the proper language for prayer in these times. The most learned Hebrew scholar does not think in Hebrew; he thinks in his mother-tongue. The mother-tongue, then, is the language naturally designated as the language of prayer. This is no novel plea. It was urged by pious and learned Jews centuries ago. "If," said one of them,[1] "one come to thee who doth not know Hebrew, and he is God-fearing and devout, direct him to pray in the language with which he is most familiar; for there can be no prayer unless the heart understands, and if the heart knows not what the lips utter, what profit hath a man of his worship?" And the saintly teacher who wrote these wise words was a staunch Talmudic Jew. Need we, it is urged, be more rigid? Nay, may we not go a step further and plead that the language most fitted to express the devotional feelings of the individual is necessarily the proper language in which to conduct public worship.

That there is much force in the argument cannot be denied. It is true that Jewish public worship is essentially the devotional act of collective Israel, and not of individuals. It is also true that any congregant is at liberty during the Service to give expression to his

[1] *Sepher Chassidim*, 588.

personal needs and feelings in silent prayer in his mother-tongue. But in spite of this, there are important reasons why the ancient custom of retaining Hebrew as the sole language of public worship should be modified. The present age appears to be marked by a decline in the practice of private prayer. People seem to pray less commonly than of old in their homes, and to be less inclined to pray independently in the House of God. It is a fact to be lamented, but mere lamentation is useless. We must try to mend the evil if we can. And the only way to mend it is so to alter the form of public worship as to ensure it some of the attributes of private prayer. Its historic function—that of appealing to the corporate conscience of Israel—must still be jealously safeguarded.[1] And therefore Hebrew must still be considered the language of the Service, and of such parts of it, in particular, as possess a special solemnity, either intrinsic or acquired. Those prayers, above all, should be retained in the original language which proclaim the faith and the hopes of Israel. To ask every Jew to learn at least as much Hebrew as will enable him to understand and feel those prayers is surely not too much to require of him even in these days when education has come to have the widest connotation, and is more exacting

[1] Reference may here be made to the effect produced upon Daniel Deronda when he attended a Service in the Synagogue for the first time. He "gave himself up to that strongest effect of chanted liturgies which is independent of verbal meaning. The most powerful movement of feeling with a liturgy is the prayer which seeks for nothing special, but is a yearning to escape from the limitations of our own weakness, and an invocation of all Good to enter and abide with us; or else a self-oblivious lifting up of gladness, a *gloria in excelsis* that such Good exists; both the yearning and the exultation gathering their utmost force from the sense of communion in a form which has expressed them both for long generations of struggling fellow-men."—*Daniel Deronda*, chap. xxxii.

than ever in its demands. Less than a tithe of the time devoted by a Jewish schoolboy to the Greek and Roman classics, the literatures of races alien from his own, would suffice to ensure him a knowledge of the language in which the great Seers and Poets of the Bible preached and sang. But the rest of the Service should be so ordered as to make it appeal to each congregant in his individual capacity. It should be in the language of the country, and it should consist of prayers interpreting, with as much faithfulness as is possible in a fixed liturgy, the religious ideas and the spiritual wants of living men and women. Each congregant should be able to feel that, no longer a mere spectator of rites which affect him only remotely and indirectly, he is a sharer in the Service; that, so far as he personally is concerned, public worship is, what the Rabbins say all prayer ought to be, "the service of the heart." [1]

Two changes, then, are necessary to give effect to these ideas—the use of the vernacular, and the addition to the Service of new prayers embodying the special thoughts and aspirations of the age. Neither would be an innovation. Each would be merely a return to ancient practice. Prayer in the language of the country, even in the synagogue, is no new thing. Two thousand years ago the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria offered public prayer in Greek, and somewhat later, in the Rabbinically-governed congregations of Palestine and Babylonia, certain parts of the Service were rendered in Aramaic, the language best understood by the people. The Prayer-Book still contains some of these Aramaic prayers. The *Kaddish*, one of the most cherished utter-

[1] *Taanith*, 2 a.

ances of the Synagogue, is a notable instance.[1] So that to-day the Jews all over the world now and again offer public prayer in a language which is neither Hebrew nor their own mother-tongue, but the vernacular of a generation long passed away.

Nor is the other necessary change without a precedent to support it. New prayers, to correspond with new wants, have from time to time been added to the Jewish Prayer-Book. The history of our liturgy is the history of continuous growth from the time of the early Rabbins to a late period in the Middle Ages. It was only at that period that this healthy process of expansion and of self-adaptation to ever-changing needs suddenly ceased. The cessation, historians tell us, marked the beginning of the dark age of Judaism. But that age has, we are justified in believing, now come to an end. A brighter era is dawning, an era of increased spiritual energy and wider religious thought. Shall we not learn, then, from the bright epochs that have gone before it, and do our best to make our public worship a living thing, an expression of the noblest aspirations of the Jewish heart, a source of strength and comfort to it amid the cares and perplexities of everyday life? *

[1] The Rabbins, *Mishnah Sotah*, vii. 1, permit important passages like the *Shemang* and the *Amidah* to be read in the language best understood by the individual worshipper. And they evidently intend this permission to apply to public prayer. See *Sotah*, 33 a, and *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim*, ci. 4. For examples of similar usage in the Middle Ages see Zunz, *Ritus*, pp. 41, 52 *seq.*; and Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, p. 344 *seq.*

CHAPTER XI

THE SYNAGOGUE AND ITS SERVICES

THE early history of the Synagogue is obscure. More or less informal meetings for reading and studying the Law were held on Sabbaths and Festivals at an early period, as early perhaps as the Babylonian Captivity. Out of these meetings in process of time grew the Synagogue (a Greek word meaning Assembly), which became a place not only for religious study, but for prayer. In the 74th Psalm, verse 8, there is a reference to "the Synagogues of God," and the passage implies that they existed in various parts of Palestine. In Jerusalem they were to be found side by side with the Temple, and even within the precincts of the Sanctuary itself. Synagogues also sprang up in foreign cities like Alexandria and Rome.

In its earliest form of which we have any record the Service consisted of the *Shemang*,[1] with its introductory and concluding benedictions, the "Eighteen Blessings" (Hebrew, *Amidah*, *i.e.* the prayer recited "standing"), called "prayer" *par excellence*, and on certain occasions,

[1] Deut. vi. 4-9; xi. 13-21; Numb. xv. 37-41.

such as Mondays and Thursdays,[1] Sabbaths and Holy Days, a reading from the Pentateuch also. On Sabbaths and Holy Days a lesson from the Prophets (Hebrew, *Haphtorah*, "supplement") was added, followed by a discourse.

These Scriptural lessons were read in the original Hebrew, but were translated into the vernacular (Aramaic in Palestine, Greek in Greek-speaking countries) for the instruction of the congregation, the translation or paraphrase being interpolated into the reading at regular intervals. For the purpose of these readings the Pentateuch was divided into 154 sections, which were recited on consecutive Sabbaths. Thus the Pentateuch was read throughout once in three years. This was the original system. In later times the practice grew up of completing the reading of the Law in one year,[2] and in connection with it the Pentateuch was divided into fifty-four sections. But long after the new arrangement became general there were still congregations that adhered to the ancient system,[3] and the same divergence of practice exists at the present day.

The lesson from the Prophets (*Haphtorah*) was taken from either the "Earlier" or the "Later Prophets," and it was selected on account of some more or less close similarity in point of subject-matter which it bore to the Pentateuchal lesson for the day. No Prophetic Book was read throughout on any Sabbath or series of Sabbaths; nor were the selected passages necessarily read in the order

[1] These were market-days in the towns, and days on which justice was administered.

[2] A two-year cycle is also mentioned (Zunz, *Ritus*, p. 55).

[3] *Ibid.* p. 55. In Egypt synagogues in the same town would follow different systems.

in which they occur in the Bible. Different congregations, too, might have different schemes of Prophetical readings.

The practice of reading the Prophets on Sabbaths and Festivals still survives.

Originally the Pentateuchal lesson was read by the congregants themselves, a certain number of worshippers, varying with the occasion, being selected for the purpose.[1] On Sabbaths at least seven took part in the reading, on Festivals five, on the Day of Atonement six. Each person was called in turn and read his part of the lesson. The ceremony of Calling to the Law, which still obtains in many congregations, is a survival of the ancient arrangement. The recital opened and ended with a benediction pronounced by the first and last readers respectively.

The regulation prescribing the number of persons to be called to the Law on various occasions is still adhered to; but the benediction is recited by each person both before and after the reading of the section. This is the orthodox practice. In Reform synagogues the portion of the Law is read by the minister, who, following the ancient usage, recites the introductory and closing blessings once only.

Thrice every day the pious Israelite turns to God in prayer. The passage in Psalm lv. 17 is supposed to refer to this custom; and Daniel, as we read,[2] conformed to it. Thus three Services—the Evening, Morning, and Afternoon Services—are held daily. On Sabbaths and Holy Days, including New Moon, a fourth Service, known as the Additional Service (Hebrew *Musaph*), to corre-

[1] In some congregations, however, the lesson was read throughout by one person (*Jerus. Megillah*, iv. 3).

[2] Daniel vi. 11.

spond with the additional sacrifices anciently offered on these occasions, immediately follows the Morning Service.[1] The Evening and Morning Services include both the *Shemang* and the *Amidah*, the Afternoon and the Additional Services the *Amidah* only.

The custom of reciting the *Shemang* every day may possibly be older even than the Synagogue itself. Josephus[2] affirms that it originated with Moses. Certain it is that the recital of the *Shemang*, which opens with the Israelite's declaration of faith and duty: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might," has always formed the chief and the most solemn constituent of the Jewish liturgy.

In conformity with ancient usage, certain benedictions are still closely associated with it. At Morning Prayer two—known respectively as יוצר אור and אהבה רבה—precede it, and one—known as אמת ויציב—follows it. In the evening two—מעריב ערבים and אהבת עולם—precede it, and two—אמת ואמונה and השכיבנו—follow it. These benedictions are still very properly regarded as important parts of the liturgy.

The *Amidah* appears to have attained its present shape about the time of the destruction of the Temple in the year 70; but its origin must be referred to a much earlier period.[3] Though still known as the "Eighteen Blessings," from the number of its original paragraphs,

[1] Probably all the daily services were designed to correspond with the daily sacrifices in the Temple. The Additional Service is of comparatively late origin, dating from the period immediately subsequent to the Fall of the Temple. That it was of a minor obligatory character is evident from *Berachoth*, 30 a, b.

[2] *Antiq.* IV. viii. 13.

[3] The *Amidah* anciently existed in many variants, and has never had an absolutely uniform text. See S. Schechter in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*,

it really consists of nineteen benedictions, a prayer, forming the twelfth benediction, directed against slanderous apostates, having been added in the first century of the present era.[1] The *Amidah* is divided into three sections, of which the first and third, each containing three paragraphs, respectively consist of praises and thanksgivings; the intermediate portion is made up of petitions.[2] In its complete shape the *Amidah* was, however, and still is, recited only on week-days. Special variants were prepared for use on Sabbaths and Holy Days, consisting of the first and last sections, together with one special prayer appropriate to the occasion. On those days, then, the *Amidah* consists of seven blessings only.[3]

Such were the ingredients of the Service in the early days of the Synagogue. But every succeeding age made additions to them. Passages from the Bible, from the Psalms particularly, were added, and these were supplemented by new prayers, some of them the prayers of eminent Rabbis which had been treasured up in the recollection of their disciples, and later on by poetical compositions (*Piyutim*). Thus the Jewish liturgy has now become an extensive and complex production. But all the additions thus made have not been universally adopted. Some have found only restricted acceptance;

vol. x. p. 654 *seq.*; G. Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu*, i. p. 299 *seq.*; and Zunz, *Vortraege*, 2nd ed., p. 380 *seq.*; *Ritus*, p. 3.

[1] This prayer, however, being regarded as obsolete in sentiment, is omitted from the Prayer-Book of the Reform Jews.

[2] The first and third sections are the oldest. Originally each worshipper, it would seem, filled up the interval between them with private supplications varying with the needs and feelings of the moment. See *Berachoth*, 34 a; Zunz, *Vortraege*, 2nd ed., p. 381.

[3] The *Amidah*, however, for the Additional Service on New Year has three intermediate benedictions, or nine in all. See p. 256, note.

some, taking merely local root, have been adopted in one country or even by one community only. If, then, we except the constituents already mentioned, it may be said that virtually there is no uniform Jewish liturgy. The *Shemang* and its blessings, the *Amidah*, and the readings from Scripture, are still, as they have ever been, the sole essentials of the Synagogue service.[1]

Of the later constituents of the Service above enumerated the *Piyutim* demand further notice. They are a characteristic feature of the Jewish Prayer-Book. Nothing exactly corresponding to them is to be found in any other liturgy. In regard to subject, they have a very wide range. Not exclusively devotional, they often treat of Jewish history, of religious doctrine, and even of minute points of the ritual law. In medieval times, when the Synagogue was as much a place of religious study as a house of prayer, and when, moreover, it offered the only refuge, nay, the only relaxation save that afforded him by his home, which the Jew could enjoy amid the troubles of life, the *Piyutim* were grateful and even precious additions to the Service. They were sources both of edification and comfort. Performing the functions of the sermon, they helped to deepen the worshipper's knowledge of his religion and, at appropriate seasons like those of the Festivals, to fix his thoughts upon some momentous epoch in the story of his race. That they once served a highly useful purpose is undeniable. But it is equally certain that in course of time their usefulness greatly declined, if it did not disappear altogether.

[1] This observation applies only to the liturgy of the Rabbinite and the Reform Jews. With the exception of the *Shemang*, the Prayer-Book of the Karaites does not contain even the constituents above mentioned; it has no blessings for the *Shemang*, save יוצר אור, and no *Amidah*.

As long as these compositions were written by men endowed with the true poetic gift and with deep spiritual sensibilities, men like Jehudah Halevi, like Solomon Ibn Gebirol, like the two Ibn Ezras, much could be said in their favour. But this was not always the case. Every poetaster thought he had a right to try his 'prentice hand at writing *Piyutim*, and what was far worse, his effusions were too often foisted upon the Synagogue. At a time when the liturgy was still in a fluid state, the Chazan or Reader was allowed to make additions to the Service at his own pleasure, and he would often introduce poetical exercises from his own or another pen without much regard to their merit. These, though they were originally intended as temporary additions, to be recited by the Reader only, were eventually, owing in a measure to the invention of printing, incorporated as fixed constituents of the Prayer-Book, which each congregant felt himself bound to repeat. Lacking devotional character, they were also very inferior from the literary point of view. Their style was as bad as their Hebrew. It will readily be understood, then, how easily the use of them in the Synagogue degenerated into a mechanical formalism. Another objection to them—one that has especially made itself felt in modern times—is based on the fact that their introduction helped to unduly prolong the Service. They were partly the result, but partly also the cause of the development of the elaborate chanting by the Reader which has received the name of *Chazanuth*.

The objections to the *Piyutim* were not overlooked even in early times. Great Rabbis like Maimonides, Joseph Albo, and even that protagonist of orthodoxy, Joseph Karo, besides the poets of the better class already

enumerated, were their more or less determined opponents. In these days, when the character and purpose of the Synagogue have undergone considerable change, when long services are more irksome than ever to the average congregant, and when pulpit instruction has become a recognised ingredient of public worship, the arguments against the *Piyut* have increased in force. It is fast disappearing from the liturgies of even "orthodox" congregations in western countries like England and the United States. But the change is only part of a larger movement. The desire for an improved form of worship—one which, besides being readily understood by the multitude, shall give expression to the religious needs and thoughts of the age without ignoring the ideas and aspirations which form the deathless heritage of the Israelite—is growing more imperious every day. From what has already been said, it is manifest that the realisation of this desire would merely be a return to the order of Service, so simple and moving and withal so majestic, that contented our fathers in the early days of the Synagogue.[1]

In accordance with ancient custom the Service of the Synagogue is conducted in Hebrew. But in some congregations the practice is growing up of reading some portions of it in the vernacular. It is a practice that is not without support from ancient usage.[2]

In congregations following the orthodox rite the Rabbinical regulation is still upheld which requires a quorum

[1] For the history of the growth of the Jewish liturgy, see Zunz, *Gottesdienstliche Vortraege*, especially chaps. i. and xxi., and *Synagogale Poesie* (*die Ritus*), *passim*.

[2] See above, p. 295.

of ten adult males (*Minyan*) in order to form a congregation.[1] If fewer than this number are present, *public* worship, in the technical sense, cannot be performed, but the Service is read with the omission of certain passages, the Kaddish, for example, in the same way as though the congregants were praying separately in private. Among the Reform Jews, however, the institution of *Minyan* has fallen into desuetude.

In most synagogues, too, the custom of separating men and women still prevails. But this practice likewise has died out in some Reform congregations, those in the United States especially. Its rigid enforcement dates perhaps from the Middle Ages; in Talmudic times it is not impossible that men and women may have prayed together.[2]

The general rule of Jewish public worship is that supplication should be offered standing, as is still the practice in some Christian congregations.[3] But the propitiatory prayer known as *Tachanun*, which includes Psalm vi., is exceptionally said by the worshipper with his head bowed on his arm. Actual kneeling, however, is not permitted, save in reform synagogues of an advanced type, except

[1] In the eyes of the Jewish law a youth becomes religiously adult at the age of thirteen. He is then *Bar Mitzvah*, capable of performing his ritual duties (*Aboth*, v. 21). The verse cited in support of the regulation fixing ten as the minimum number required to form a congregation is Numb. xiv. 27, where the ten spies are styled a "congregation."

[2] See Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, p. 25.

[3] During the early centuries of Christianity standing at prayer was the rule, and kneeling the exception. It was the practice of the Church in early times not to kneel at prayer on Sundays or during the interval between Easter and Whitsuntide; and it was enacted by the Council of Nice that, on those occasions, prayer should be offered by members of the Church in a standing posture and no other. Kneeling was derived from the Old Testament, and denoted humility of mind; hence it was especially required in actions of penance. See *Christian Antiquities*, by the Rev. J. E. Riddle, 2nd ed., p. 392.

at certain points of the Service on the Day of Atonement. The prohibition is connected with warnings like that in Leviticus xxvi. 1. But the passage forbids only *idolatrous* kneeling, and, as we know, kneeling in prayer was customary both in the Temple and without it. Solomon kneels at the consecration of the Sanctuary,[1] and Daniel in his chamber in Babylon.[2] In some Eastern synagogues the congregants during the Middle Ages knelt at evening prayer.[3] The prohibition of kneeling is of comparatively late origin.

It is also customary for Jews to pray with covered heads, though in some modern synagogues this custom too is disregarded. Its purely oriental character is obvious. To uncover the head is in the East a sign of levity; to keep it covered, then, is essential to the reverence due to so sacred an act as worship. But already in the Middle Ages, when the Jews had begun to assimilate Western ideas, the practice of keeping the head covered during prayer lost some of its importance. The French Jews, with whom the Jews of Norman England were ritually allied, would go up bare-headed to read the Law.[4] On the other hand, a medieval German congregation is mentioned, the members of which were accustomed, in Mohammedan fashion, to leave their shoes outside the Synagogue.[5]

Instrumental music is, as a rule, not used in the Synagogue. To play on a musical instrument is a violation of the Sabbatical Law as laid down by the Rabbins.[6] This is the main origin of the objection.

[1] 1 Kings xxviii. 4. [2] Daniel vi. 10. [3] Zunz, *Ritus*, p. 56.

[4] Zunz, *Ritus*, p. 59. See also Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, p. 278 *seq.* [5] Güdemann, *Culturgeschichte*, iii. 97.

[6] *Erubin*, 104 a; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim*, 338, 1.

Minor reasons for it are the somewhat sombre character which, since the destruction of the Temple, it is felt ought to mark Jewish public worship,[1] and the notion that the organ, the musical instrument usually employed in public worship, is specifically Christian. All these considerations, however, are fast losing their force for modern Jews. A broader interpretation is now being placed upon the Sabbatical Law, and even in orthodox synagogues musical instruments, the organ among them, are, in view of their usefulness as aids to devotion, beginning to be commonly used on important occasions, though not on the Sabbath. In some countries, in Germany particularly, the organ is played on Sabbath also, even in synagogues that can scarcely be styled Reform.[2] Moreover, an organ was played on Friday evenings in one of the synagogues in Prague some centuries ago.[3]

Every synagogue contains two objects—The Ark, or shrine, in which the manuscript of the Law (Pentateuch) is deposited, and the Platform (Almemar), from which the Law is read and the Service conducted. At one time the Reader recited the prayers standing immediately before the Ark ; now he recites them from the Almemar. The Ark is always placed at the further end of the synagogue ; the Reader's platform either adjoins it or stands by itself near the centre of the building. An endeavour is usually made, when planning a synagogue, so to contrive it that the worshippers, when facing the Ark, shall look towards Palestine. Thus in England they would look towards

[1] *Orach Chayim*, 560, 3.

[2] In the thirteenth century instrumental music was used in the Bagdad Synagogue on the Middle Days of Passover and Tabernacles (Zunz, *Ritus*, p. 57).

[3] Zunz, *Vortraege*, 2nd ed., p. 49.

the east or south-east, in Australia towards the north or north-west.[1]

The copy of the Law in the Ark is of course in Hebrew. It is written by hand on parchment in the manner prescribed by ancient tradition, without vowel-points, and without divisions into chapters or verses. It is rolled in the form of a scroll, and it is customary to cover it with a mantle or robe, and to deck it with gold or silver ornaments. It is from this scroll that the Pentateuchal lessons are read. The lessons from the Prophets are read from an ordinary book.

Before the Ark there hangs in most synagogues the Perpetual Lamp, which, as its name implies, is kept continually burning, as was the lamp in the Sanctuary of old. The light, impalpable and never extinguished, may be regarded as typifying the spiritual and indestructible flame of Religion.

Another article of synagogue furniture is the eight-branched candlestick used on the Feast of Dedication. It usually stands near the Ark.

To make all the accessories of public worship, nay, every religious emblem, as beautiful as possible, is deemed a religious duty by the pious Israelite.[2]

There were no ministers, as we understand the term, in the early days of the Synagogue. The Law, as we have seen, was read by a certain number of worshippers specially selected for the duty. As to the prayers, they were recited by a member of the congregation, who gave his services as a free gift. Nor was he a permanent

[1] It is customary to look towards Palestine at private prayer also. "But," say the Rabbins (*Berachoth*, 30 a), "let him that doth not know in which direction to turn, fix his heart upon his Father in Heaven."

[2] *Jer. Peah*, i. 1.

minister; he would share his sacred duties with other members. He was known for the time being as the *Sh'liach Tsibur*, the "messenger" or "delegate" of the congregation. A professional ministry is of comparatively recent origin in Judaism. It was only in late times, when the knowledge of Hebrew declined, that the sacred duty of performing the service was assigned to a specially designated Reader, now called the *Chazan*.[1] The sermon or discourse was delivered by the Rabbi, who, despite his title, was still regarded as a layman. He received no emolument for his ministrations. "The greatest of the Rabbins," says Maimonides,[2] "were porters, smiths, hewers of wood and drawers of water, and they asked nothing of the community, nor would they take anything when it was offered to them." And this self-denying spirit continued to be the ideal even after the Talmudic age.

[1] The title, however, was originally given to a functionary somewhat resembling the modern beadle or verger.

[2] *Hilc. Matnoth Aniyim*, x. 18.

CHAPTER XII

THE JEWISH CALENDAR

THE ordinary Jewish year consists of twelve months—Nisan[1] (corresponding with April), Iyar (May), Sivan[2] (June), Tammuz (July), Ab (August), Ellul[3] (September), Tishri (October), Cheshvan or Marcheshvan (November), Kislev[4] (December), Tebeth[5] (January), Shebat[6] (February), and Adar[7] (March). These names the Jews brought back with them from the Babylonian Captivity. Of the old Hebrew names in use at an earlier period only four are preserved in the Bible—Abib, the month of "the Green Ear"[8] (corresponding with April), Ziv, the month of "Beauty"[9] (May), Ethanim[10] (October), and Bul[11] (November), the months of "Rain" or "Floods."

In leap year another month, known as the second Adar, is added. The year then consists of thirteen months.

The Jewish year commences with the seventh month, Tishri. On the first day of that month falls the solemn

[1] See Esther iii. 7; Neh. ii. 1. [2] Esther viii. 9.
[3] Neh. vi. 15. [4] Zech. vii. 1; Neh. i. 71. [5] Esther ii. 16.
[6] Zech. i. 7. [7] Esther iii. 7, etc.; Ezra vi. 15. [8] Exod. xiii. 4.
[9] 1 Kings vi. 1. [10] 1 Kings viii. 2. [11] 1 Kings vi. 38.

Day of Memorial, to which the additional name of New Year, or New Year's Day, is accordingly given. The Creation is affirmed by Tradition[1] to have taken place on that day; and the Creation is theoretically the starting-point of Jewish chronology. The date of the present year, *i.e.* the year in which this book is published, is 5664, which means that, according to the traditional reckoning, 5664 years have elapsed since the Creation.

The year thus begins with Tishri. But Tishri is still regarded as the seventh month, in conformity with the command in Exodus xii. 2, which enjoins the Israelite to consider Nisan, the month of the great Exodus from Egypt, as the first of the months. Hence, in the list of the months given above, Nisan stands first.

The months are lunar, *i.e.* they correspond in duration with the time it takes the moon to make one revolution round the earth. The English word "month" is derived from the word "moon"; similarly the Hebrew words for month are *yerach* (from *yareach*, the "moon") and *chodesh*, the moon's "renewal." It takes the moon about 29½ days to go round the earth; and that, strictly speaking, should be the length of each month. But as it would have been clearly inconvenient to divide a day between two months, the Jewish months alternately consist of 30 and 29 days. Thus Nisan, the first month, has 30 days, Adar, the last month, 29. In leap year, however, the first Adar has 30 days, and the second Adar 29. Moreover, Cheshvan and Kislev are not always respectively short and long. In some years they are both short, in others both long. The variation is designed, among other things, to prevent the Day of

[1] *R. Hashanah*, 10 b.

Atonement from immediately preceding or following a Sabbath.

Twelve months of alternately 29 and 30 days comprise altogether 354 days. But the solar year, *i.e.* the time it takes the earth to go round the sun, consists of about 365¼ days, or roughly 11 days more; and this annual revolution has to be kept in view in fixing the Calendar. It has to be kept in view because the Pentateuch ordains that the Jewish Festivals shall be observed at certain agricultural seasons—Passover at the time of the first ripening of the barley, *i.e.* in the Spring; Pentecost at the time of the wheat harvest, *i.e.* in the Summer; Tabernacles at the period of the "Ingathering," *i.e.* in the Autumn. But the Pentateuch also fixes certain days of the month on which the Festivals are to be celebrated. Thus Passover was to be observed on the 15th of Nisan, and so on. It therefore became necessary to take into account the discrepancy of eleven days just mentioned. To have neglected that discrepancy, and to have regarded the year as consisting of only 354 days, would have resulted in the Festivals' being celebrated at altogether wrong seasons. Every year would have been an additional eleven days short, and, as a consequence, the Festivals, though falling on fixed days of the month, would have fallen at varying seasons. Passover, for example, would have fallen in the Spring in one year, in the Summer in another, in the Autumn in yet another, and so on with the rest of the Feasts. Thus much confusion would have resulted, and the object, moreover, for which each Festival was ordained would have been defeated. Imagine Pentecost, the Day of First Fruits, the day when the Synagogue should be made gay with flowers, falling in

the Winter, or Tabernacles, the Feast of Ingathering, which was to be marked by bright emblems like the verdant palm and the golden citron, coming when the snow is on the ground. On the other hand, it was not possible to take the solar year of 365 days and divide it into twelve calendar or artificial months, as is done in the case of the ordinary Calendar. For the Pentateuch indicates that the months are to be lunar months. Every new moon had to be observed as a minor festival, and the months have been lunar from time immemorial.

It thus became necessary to harmonise the lunar and solar years. And this was effected by means of the Second Adar. A simple sum in arithmetic will show that in 19 years the 11 days which constitute the difference between the solar and the lunar years amount to 209 days, or almost exactly 7 months. It was therefore arranged to add a Second Adar seven times in 19 years, *i.e.* on the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years of the series or cycle. Each of these years consequently is a leap year.

The Jewish Calendar, then, as it now exists, is entirely based upon astronomical principles. The period at which it attained its present scientific form is uncertain. But its adoption in that form cannot safely be assigned to an earlier period than that of the close of the Talmudic Period in the year 500. There are grounds for placing it even a century later.

There was a time, however, when scientific calculation played little, if any part in the fixing of the Calendar. The early Rabbins were probably acquainted with certain astronomical rules, but they placed their chief reliance upon actual observation of the heavenly bodies, and

especially upon the observation of the moon. This practice remained in force for centuries. The keystone of the system was the date of the new moon. Witnesses claiming to be among the first to have seen the new moon were examined on the 30th day of the month by the Synhedrion, the great religious council in Jerusalem, who, if the evidence were satisfactory, formally proclaimed that day to be New Moon. To give this evidence was considered a duty so sacred that witnesses coming from a distance were allowed on their journey to violate the Sabbatical law.[1] If, however, the evidence were untrustworthy, or no witnesses came forward, the month was declared to begin on the following day.

Now, this was all plain sailing for the Jews of Jerusalem, and for those who lived sufficiently near to be informed by beacons or by messengers. But what of the Jews living in distant towns? Upon the date of the New Moon depended the date of any Festival that fell in the month, and no individual was at liberty to fix such dates for himself. That was a solemn act which could be performed only by the Synhedrion or its President. Moreover, the people were anxious to keep their Holy Days simultaneously with their brethren in the Holy Land. To escape from this difficulty they adopted, with the approval of the Rabbins in Palestine, the plan of keeping the Festivals on two days instead of one.[2] An exception, however, was made in the case of the Day of Atonement, for it was felt that a two days' fast would have overtaxed the power and endurance of

[1] *R. Hashanah*, 21 b, 22 a.

[2] This is still "orthodox" practice, and in conformity with it Passover lasts eight days, Pentecost and New Year two, and Tabernacles nine.

most people. Even in the town where the Synhedrion sat, whether it was Jerusalem or some other place, the New Year Festival, which falls on the first of the month, was at certain periods kept two days, since it was uncertain which day might be declared to be New Moon.[1]

But the adoption of the Second Day Festival, if it was ever universal among the outlying Jews, soon ceased to be so. During the Talmudic period a large and important body of Jews lived in Babylonia, where the writ of the Palestine Rabbins often did not run. Some congregations loyally kept the Second Day; others did not. Moreover, when in process of time the progress of astronomical science made it possible to fix the dates of the New Moon and the Festivals by calculation, the Second Day came to be recognised as superfluous. And though the Babylonian Rabbins admonished their flocks to disregard this fact and to uphold an institution consecrated by long usage, the admonition was not universally obeyed. In Egypt, too, where there was a considerable Jewish community, the observance of the Second Day was systematically disregarded. It is true that in later times Jewish practice became more uniform, and so remained for many centuries, but the divergence has in recent years begun to be marked once more. The Second Day, it will have been noticed, has never, except perhaps in the case of New Year, been observed, as a

[1] Maimonides, *Hilc. Kiddush Hachodesh*, v. 7 *seq*. The practice, however, was by no means settled. Zunz (*Ritus*, p. 84) states that the Second Day of New Year was not observed in Palestine at some period previous to the twelfth century. See also the *Maggid Mishnah* on Maimonides, *Hilc. Yom Tob*, i. 21. Holdheim suggests that the custom of keeping a two-day New Year in Palestine was really due to regard for its solemn character. More than one day was needed for the adequate fulfilment of the moral tasks it brought. See his *Glaubens und Sittenlehre*, 1857, p. 71.

rule, in Palestine. But of late years its non-observance, extending even to the New Year Festival also, has spread among the Jews elsewhere, more particularly in Western Europe and in the United States.

Nor is this laxity without arguments to justify it. The Second Day Festival owes its origin only to the difficulty of ascertaining in pre-scientific times the exact dates of the New Moon and the Festivals. But in these days, when astronomical events can be calculated beforehand with absolute precision, the institution has lost its purpose. Moreover, even the Synhedrion, zealous as it was for the maintenance of old observances, never established the Second Day Festival by formal decree. When the Jews in Babylonia and Egypt became restive under the yoke of the ordinance, the Rabbins in Palestine contented themselves, as we have seen, merely with an exhortation to them to uphold a time-honoured institution.[1] The observance of the Second Day was, then, nothing more than a custom voluntarily adopted by a large section of the Jews outside Palestine.[2] Moreover, it has never been marked by the ritual strictness of the First Day. Certain acts forbidden by the Rabbinical Law on the First Day are permitted on the Second.[3] In these times, however, when, owing to economical conditions, the observance of an additional day of rest involves hardships unknown in former ages, it is more than doubtful whether the plea based upon the sanctity attaching to ancient custom any longer retains its force. The Rabbins were always averse to imposing irksome restrictions upon the community. They saw that a little done for the

[1] *Betzah*, 4 b; *Jer. Erubin*, 3, end.
[2] Maimonides, *Hilc. Yom Tob*, i. 21. [3] *Ibid.* i. 22 *seq.*

sake of Religion in a willing and cheerful spirit is far better than much done grudgingly. And the Second Day Festival in these times is certainly a case which might well be dealt with in their sagacious temper. The burden it imposes is heavy, and even those who submit to it would welcome relief. Nay, the interests of Religion itself are involved. The Second Day, observed under a sense of hardship, almost inevitably carries with it an unwillingly celebrated First Day. The one reacts upon the other.

We have spoken of the liberal temper of the Rabbins. They manifested it in connection with this very matter of arranging the Holy Days. Though they instituted the Second Day Festival, they never instituted a Second Day Fast. Not only did they shrink from engrafting the institution upon the Day of Atonement, but they actually forbade that course. The community might be able to feast comfortably for two days, but to make them fast for that time would have been an intolerable tyranny. The liberalism of the Rabbins went even beyond this point. Not only did they prohibit the Day of Atonement's being kept for more than one day, but they so contrived matters as to prevent it from falling immediately before or after the Sabbath. For they held that two consecutive days of strict rest would have entailed great public inconvenience. But the inconvenience that would thus have been inflicted upon the community in ancient times would not have exceeded the hardships which the Second Day Festival involves in these times.

Nor is this all. We have said that the Rabbins deliberately contrived matters so as to prevent the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement from falling on consecutive

days. And this exactly represents what they did. For in their anxiety to prevent this contingency, they did not scruple to transfer the New Year Festival, and, with it, the Day of Atonement from their right astronomical dates to other and more convenient ones. Thus if the new moon of Tishri occurred after the hour of noon they would, according to their settled practice, declare the next day to be the New Year Festival. But if this day happened to be a Wednesday or Friday, they postponed the Festival for yet another day, in order to prevent the Day of Atonement from falling on Friday or Sunday. Thus the most sacred Holy Days in the year might be entirely shifted from their proper dates, merely from a regard for the communal convenience. This was a piece of wise liberalism which deserves respect and admiration. And those who urge that the same broad-minded policy should be adopted in dealing with the Second Day Festival have certainly a strong case. The time seems to have come when the demand for the abolition of the Second Day Festival should be formally conceded by conservative authority. The institution is slowly dying; but it is manifestly more reverent and becoming to abrogate formally an ancient custom than to allow it to perish of sheer neglect.[1]

[1] The facts set forth in this chapter have been taken from, among other sources, Lewisohn's *Geschichte und System des Jüdischen Kalenderwesens* (Leipzig, 1856), the article "Kalender" in Hamburger's *Real-Encyclopädie*, vol. ii., and Friedländer's *Jewish Religion*, 1st ed., p. 360 *seq.*

BOOK III

MORAL DUTIES

INTRODUCTORY

* THUS far we have spoken of the special obligations that devolve upon us as Israelites. But we cannot, it is clear, regard them as comprising the entire realm of duty. Every human being, however low in the scale of intelligence or civilisation, has a sense of responsibility, if not to himself, at least to others. If he has a religion, then he has also a sense of responsibility to a Higher Power. He feels bound by more or less defined obligations as a subject of the Divine King, as a child of the Divine Father. These obligations he shares, then, in common with all other religionists. They are distinct from the specific duties which are imposed upon him by his particular religion. Thus, as Jews, we owe God a certain attitude of mind resulting from our belief in Him as the Being who has entrusted our race with its sacred mission. We owe Him, for example, gratitude, homage, implicit obedience to the law He has laid upon us. But even if we were not Jews, we should still owe Him certain duties akin to these, and yet not identical with them—duties devolving upon us in our quality of human beings cherishing the religious idea.

Thus human obligation must have one of three objects—God, Oneself, One's fellow-creatures. To these

obligations we refer when we speak of moral duties, or, more shortly, of morality or ethics.

It is possible, however, for morality to exist without Religion. There are schemes of human duty, which leave belief in God altogether out of account. The code of the Chinese philosopher Confucius, the system of Gautama Buddha, the great Indian teacher, and, to come down to modern times, the Positivism of Auguste Comte, are examples. Nor do they lack imitations in our day. There are living teachers who declare that Duty can be efficiently enforced without appeal to what is called the religious "sanction," and there is a large number of persons who agree with them. Many unquestionably good people in this country are trying to live their lives without Religion. But it is a dangerous experiment. All our experience goes to show that Religion exercises a powerful influence upon conduct. It is at once a curb and a spur. It tells us of God, of whose will righteousness is the fulfilment, and against whom wrong-doing is a sin, a base and ungrateful rebellion. It thus suggests a motive for goodness which a mere godless morality cannot supply. The God-fearing man has all the incentives to virtue that actuate the unbeliever. He has the sense of what is due to himself—due to his own dignity as a rational being, endowed with the capacity for noble thought and action, and also of what is due to his fellow-men, members with himself of the great human family. But, in addition, he has the consciousness of being a child of God, of being summoned to the good life not merely because it is good, because it is something seemly and beautiful in itself, but because it is the life that delights his Heavenly Father.

Here, then, we have one important point of difference between the morality of the believer and that of the unbeliever, or Agnostic as he often calls himself. The latter sees a brother in his fellow-man, the other has, in addition, a Father in God. And love for the father is ever a mighty impulse to brotherly love. The thought of their parent—his very memory—is often the only force that keeps the children true to each other. It is an exhortation to mutual loyalty that avails when the mere fact of brotherhood appeals no longer. Thus does the thought of God tend to strengthen and preserve the obligations imposed by human fellowship. Sympathy with suffering, for example, is a natural instinct of the human heart. It can assuredly exist independently of religious belief. But no less certain is it that the feeling is most potent when it is joined to religious belief, and is nourished by it. To think that the compassionate man wins the Divine smile, that he is a man after God's own heart, is to have a mighty incentive to merciful deeds, which the Agnostic must always lack.

But there is something else to be said. The religionist believes that goodness is a link between him and God; that it is a fulfilment of the destiny assigned to him with his spiritual nature; that, created in the Divine image, he is brought by every just and tender and loving deed nearer in being to Him who is his example. The thought of God as his ideal—an ideal which is ever inviting him to come nearer by the way of righteousness—is a powerful moral inspiration for which no adequate substitute can be found. It is set forth, as we have already seen, in the memorable words: "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy."[1] Because God is holy, and because we

[1] Lev. xix. 2.

are children of God, partakers of His immortal nature, therefore we will strive to be holy in our turn. And so all virtue becomes endowed with a deeper sanctity, a heightened beauty, an added virtuousness. Justice is lovely in itself, but it is lovelier still when its pursuit brings us into closer fellowship with God. We all have compassion for human misery, but the compassion becomes quicker, deeper, is transformed into a nobler self-surrender, when it has the Divine compassion for its example and its inspiration. This is the religious theory of ethics. And certainly thus far it has verified itself. The world's great work of philanthropy has hitherto been mainly carried on by God-fearing men and women. They have given themselves with heroic self-sacrifice to the cause of humanity because, with their love for humanity, there has mingled in their hearts love and devotion to the Highest.

Morality, then, gains in depth from the Religious idea. But it gains also in fulness. Duty towards Self—what we may call subjective morality—is enriched to an incalculable degree by the sanctions of Religion. The man who realises that his very nature links him to God, is necessarily characterised by special virtues. The soul is a precious possession which he must jealously cherish. No speck must mar its beauty. It must be given back to God unspotted as it was received. And so self-reverence issues in self-control, in temperance in its widest sense, in chastity, in purity of word and thought as well as of deed. The God-fearing man will be pure, to use the Rabbinic phrase,[1] in his inmost chamber, because, though hidden there from the gaze of man, he is still in

[1] *Beza*, 9 a.

the company of God, his Judge and his Ideal. His morality will not be moulded after the world's narrow and shifting standards; it will conform to the highest that is in himself; it will seek to realise the vision he has seen in his best moments. It will be fashioned after the pattern shown to him on the Mount.

Again, the morality that is based upon Religion must necessarily have one department exclusively its own. It is that which comprises certain duties that have to be performed towards God—duties of which He is the special object. One example is the duty of prayer, with all the hope and trust and humility of which it is the expression, all the hallowing influence upon the daily life which issues from it. These are precious things which the unbeliever must always miss, though he may know how to value them.

For the religionist, moreover, goodness is the Divine choice, an image of the Divine will and character. "The righteous God loveth righteousness."[1] There is something that answers to purity and truth and pity in the very heart of things; they correspond with what philosophers are fond of calling "the ultimate reality." In short, the whole secret of the effective appeal which goodness makes to the human heart lies in its supernatural authority. Right and wrong—why do I reverence the one and hate the other, if it be not because they are respectively the expression and the negation of a Will infinitely mightier and wiser than that of mortal minds? The "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" of Conscience are as real, as imperious, as the laws that hold this globe of ours poised in space, and govern the lives of its countless inhabitants.

[1] Ps. xi. 7.

Just as I pay homage to the grandeur of those physical ordinances, so I bow before the majesty of the decrees that distinguish for me between right and wrong, between good and evil. This is the ultimate, the only real sanction of virtue. God, and not man, has made the moral law, and I must perforce obey it. For what God does—God, the Lord of this well-ordered universe—He, in Rabbinic phrase,[1] must needs do well. In conforming to the moral law, I am making myself the instrument of His designs. I become a fellow-worker with Him. As the Talmud says:[2] "He who does a moral act associates himself with God in His creative task."

But the unbeliever is denied this safe foothold. For him the moral law is not absolutely, but only relatively good. It is merely the expression of human experience, individual conscience but the echo of the social conscience. What guarantee, then, is there that he may not come to question the authority upon which the moral law rests, and deny the reality of the distinctions between right and wrong? He may conceivably argue that those distinctions are only artificial after all, and thus will feel no shame at setting them at nought when he has the chance. If a man thinks that honesty has no intrinsic excellence, that it has come to be a virtue only because it has proved to be the best policy both for the individual and for society, his temptation to steal is obviously increased. Morality, divorced from Religion, always threatens to issue in moral confusion, in that putting of "darkness for light and light for darkness" which the Prophet denounces.[3]

[1] *Berachoth*, 60 b.

[2] *Shabbath*, 10 a; *Mechilta* to Exod. xviii. 13. See Lazarus, *Ethics of Judaism*, sec. 15.

[3] Isa. v. 20.

So true it is that, in the words of the Sage,[1] "by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."

Nay, must not the very severance of morality from Religion inevitably tend to weaken the power of goodness? The fear and the love of God are powerful incentives, directly fostering that self-surrender which all virtue, worthy of the name, implies. But the decay of the religious sentiment must necessarily bring with it a relaxation of moral fibre. The man who loses his sense of the Divine, with all the reverence and the humility and the love that attend it, must needs lose some of his respect and affection for righteousness also. If the God-idea has no sanctity, no meaning for him, it will not be long before virtue itself becomes less beautiful and less real in his sight. The unbelief of our day has extended from the verities of Religion to the supremacy of goodness. Denial of God has moral negation, not merely for its companion, but its child.

Well, then, has an old Jewish moralist[2] likened virtues to pearls strung upon the thread of the fear of God. Break the thread and the pearls are scattered! *

[1] Prov. xvi. 6. [2] *Orchoth Tsaddikim*, Introduction.

CHAPTER I

DUTIES TOWARDS GOD—HUMILITY AND KINDRED VIRTUES

* It is clear, as we have said, that it is only a morality based upon Religion which can take cognisance of duties towards God as a branch of ethics. Books on ethics considered from a purely philosophical standpoint will say nothing about them. It may be urged indeed that duty to God belongs to the sphere of Religion rather than of Morals. But the objection would in reality be an objection to the particular place assigned to the subject in this book, not to its having any place in it. As soon as we have Religion, we must necessarily feel the sense of obligation towards the subject of Religion, *i.e.* God. In fact, we have defined Religion as belief in God and the sense of responsibility to Him. In grouping these duties under the head of morals, we are only following the example of most writers on religious ethics.

By some writers, however, it is pointed out that it is improper to speak of specific duties towards God, seeing that all duty, as fulfilled by religionists, is performed with Him in view. To this the answer is, that while all duty is obedience to Him, compliance with His will, there

are certain duties of which He is the exclusive object, and these we may properly put into a class by themselves and label duties to God. Thus benevolence is from the religious standpoint a duty to be done for God towards others, whilst submission to the Divine will is a duty to be done not only for God but towards Him. *

Our duties towards God spring directly out of the religious idea. Religion teaches that there is a Supreme Being, perfect in power, and wisdom, and goodness, the Maker of the Universe, and the Father of mankind. Intellectual assent to this truth involves ethical consequences. We cannot think of God without being touched emotionally. His perfection begets in us a humble sense of our own deficiencies, physical, intellectual, moral. His might fills us with awe and reverence. The thought of His goodness moves us with gratitude. The conception of His love kindles love in us. These emotions are the direct offspring of the God-idea. To cultivate them as desirable things, to regard them as virtues worthy of acquisition, is the primary duty towards God of the religious mind.

We owe, then, to our Divine Master humility, reverence, and gratitude. "I am but dust and ashes," Abraham cries [1] as he draws near to entreat God's grace for the sinful city, and the crowning virtue of Moses is his meekness.[2] Nay, even in Ahab, deep-dyed with transgression though he is, a redeeming quality is discerned in the humility which brings him in submission to God's feet.[3] Job [4] casts himself down before the Divine Majesty ; and it is the meek

[1] Gen. xviii. 27.
[2] Numb. xii. 3.
[3] 1 Kings xxi. 29.
[4] Job xlii. 6.

who are to inherit the earth, nay, with whom God Himself takes up His abode.[1] "The greater thou art," cries Ben Sira,[2] "humble thyself the more;" and, "indeed, indeed," a later Sage[3] admonishes us, "be very lowly of spirit, for what is the hope of mortals but the grave?" It is to teach him humility that the priest has to perform the lowly task of removing the ashes of the sacrifice from the altar.[4]

And no other feeling is possible for the virtuous mind whose virtue draws its sustenance from Religion. The greater it is, the more it will humble itself, for its greatness only reveals its limitations the more clearly. How pitifully its knowledge is dwarfed by the revelation—a revelation which that knowledge alone makes possible—of a boundless realm which is for ever shut against human exploration! What is its wisdom measured against the infinite wisdom that meets it in nature at every turn? Hence it is that every truly gifted man has been at the same time lowly of spirit. He has known enough to realise his ignorance; he has been great enough to recognise his littleness. It is because Moses humbly refrains from looking upon God when He reveals Himself in the flaming bush that he deserves to see Him face to face.[5] And so the good man will put all pride from his heart. Even in externals will he strive after humility. He will avoid all parade and ostentation as offences against his Maker. He will cultivate modesty of demeanour and simplicity of life. "It is becoming in a man," says an old Jewish teacher,[6] "to be moderate in all things, even in his style

[1] Ps. xxxvii. 11; Isa. lvii. 15.
[2] Ecclus. iii. 18.
[3] *Aboth*, iv. 4.
[4] Lev. vi. 10; see *Choboth Halebaboth*, vi. 6.
[5] *Tanchuma* to Exod. iii. 6.
[6] *Orchoth Tsaddikim*, chap. i.

of dress. He will avoid the excessive finery which sets other people gaping at it."

And with humility reverence must needs go hand in hand, for they are but different aspects of the same temper. The thought of God's greatness inevitably begets wonder and awe. "Who would not fear Thee, O King of nations? for it beseemeth Thee; forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their royal estate, there is none like unto Thee."[1] But with the dread there mingles joy. The Psalmist[2] bids all the earth tremble before the Supreme; they are to say among the nations, the Lord reigneth. But in the same breath the poet exhorts the heavens to be glad and the earth to rejoice.

Closely akin also to humility is gratitude. If our strength is utterly small compared with the Divine might, it is to that might we owe the things we cherish most. Whatever joys we have are the fruits not of our unaided efforts, but of the Goodness that has blessed those efforts and brought them to the ripening. Therefore the good man, for whom piety fills in the outlines of goodness, is necessarily a grateful man. Not unto him but unto God be the glory for all that he possesses and enjoys.[3] Not his power or the might of his hand hath gotten him this wealth, but the Lord, who hath given him that power and blessed it.[4] Never will his heart be lifted up with pride or self-sufficiency. He will throw all his energy into his pursuits, into his struggle for daily bread, into his fight for wealth, for station, for fame, into his quest of knowledge, feeling that his own efforts must lay the foundation

[1] Jer. x. 7.
[2] Ps. xcvi. 9-11.
[3] Ps. cxv. 1.
[4] Deut. viii. 17, 18.

of his success. But in his inmost mind he will treasure the conviction that all his toil is useless unless it is blessed by God, that except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it.[1] And so, when success comes, and he gets his heart's desire, he will remember to sanctify that success with gratitude.

Nor is it only the realisation of desire that will find him grateful. The Divine blessing is with men always, manifested in the commonest objects, the most familiar incidents of the daily life, in vigour, too, of body and brain, in the beauty of the world, in the wonders of human achievement, in the fellowship and the love of men. For all such boons the good man will keep an appreciative, a thankful mind, nor suffer their familiarity to dull his grateful sense of their value. "For every single breath that a man draws," say the Rabbins,[2] "let him praise God."

To these obligations is to be added the duty of implicit trust. The Divine power and goodness which have manifested themselves since the beginning of things will continue to the end. God's "mercies never fail; they are new every morning."[3] And the might that has brought the universe into existence and framed the laws that sustain it will always continue. Never does the hand of the Lord wax short. God is supremely trustworthy, and to trust Him is the very foundation of moral duty as Religion conceives it. Moreover, He does everything well, though we mortals, with our imperfect faculties, are not always able to perceive the harmony that lies beneath life's jarring notes, to discern "the soul of good in things

[1] Ps. cxxvii. 1.
[2] *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. xiv. to Gen. ii. 7.
[3] Lam. iii. 22, 23.

evil." Therefore the righteous man will surrender himself utterly into God's keeping, knowing that he is in just, and wise, and loving hands, and that, whatever his fate may be, it has been ordained by unalterable goodness. If happiness be his portion, he will greet it with humility and gratitude, acknowledging that all his joys have come to him from the Divine bounty. If, on the other hand, sorrow be his lot, he will bear it with patience and submission, bravely resigning himself to a Will that is not merely mightier than his, but incomparably wiser. Following the Rabbinic precept,[1] he will bless God both for the good and for the evil.

And this virtue which lends to human life some of its deepest beauty, is one of the qualities that Judaism singles out for especial honour. Absolute faith in God's goodness and integrity is the constant theme of the Scriptural writers, who passionately bid us trust in the Lord, "the Rock Everlasting," whose saving power and tender love are unchangeable as He is—those great souls who, when life seems dark and desolate, when the world is hard and friends grow cold, can still be sure that the Lord will gather them in, can still joy in the God of their salvation.[2]

This was the temper of the Israelite in later times also. "Acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven" is a favourite phrase of the Rabbins. By it they imply complete surrender to the Divine decrees in every circumstance of life, but especially the ready and loving surrender that is not grudged, but is the free-will gift of the soul that proffers it.[3] Thus in a memorable

[1] *Berachoth*, 33 b.

[2] Isa. xxvi. 4; l. 10. Ps. xxvii. 10. Hab. iii. 18.

[3] This idea is emphasised by the author of the *Marpë Lanephesh.* See p. 8.

passage[1] it is said that the stranger who yields himself to the Divine commands is dearer to God even than Israel was at Sinai, for he comes without the constraining terror of thunder and lightning, and voluntarily making himself at one with the Highest, submits to the "yoke of the kingdom of Heaven." What act, cry the Rabbins, can be more lovely? In like manner, they ask,[2] why does the *Shemang*, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is One; thou shalt love Him with all thy heart," come in the liturgy immediately before the words, "Hearken diligently unto My commands"? Because, they answer, a man must first take upon himself the "yoke of the kingdom of Heaven," by proclaiming the sovereignty of the one God, and then proceed to fulfil His Law. For absolute, whole-hearted submission is the essential condition of true obedience.

Thus the good man, as Judaism pictures Him, will live his life in company with the Highest; he will abide in "the shadow of the Almighty." The Divine will be ever in his thoughts, to shape and hallow his acts. He will go his way in the world, do his work, pursue his pleasures, but all as under the eye of the Master, as a service done for Him, as an act of worship, solemn yet glad withal. A medieval writer has expressed this idea in words of simple beauty: "And now, my son,"—so he pleads with his reader—"hearken to my voice; love the Lord thy God. Set thy heart to know Him and to declare His Unity. Do thy work until eventide; remember to love Him at all times. See, He stands before thee! He is thy Father, thy Master; submit thyself to Him. Ah! happy is he whose heart trembleth with the joy of

[1] *Tanchuma* to Gen. xiv. 1. [2] *Mishnah Berachoth*, ii. 2.

the Lord, and is for ever singing to its Maker! He bears patiently the Divine yoke; he is humble and self-denying; he scorns the world's vain pleasures; he lives by his faith."[1] It is a temper such as this which finds expression in the familiar hymn of the liturgy known as the *Adon Olam*, the concluding lines of which have been paraphrased as follows:—

My God and my Redeemer He,
My Rock in sorrow's darkest day,
A help and refuge unto me,
My cup's full portion when I pray.

My soul into His hand Divine
Do I commend; I will not fear,
My body with it I resign,
I dread no evil; God is near.[2]

From what has been said it will be clear that the mainspring of the service of God must be love. It may seem a strange thing to speak of love for a Being so infinitely exalted as God. But the Bible does not deem it strange. The very same book, Deuteronomy, which speaks of God as "a devouring fire,"[3] bids us love Him with all our "heart, and soul, and might."[4] Indeed, in one and the same passage it places both fear and love among the essentials of the good life: "And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him."[5] For the mercy of the Supreme is as real as His power, and if the latter may properly fill us with

[1] Introduction to the *Rokeach*.
[2] *The Jewish Year*, by Alice Lucas, p. 184.
[3] Deut. iv. 24. [4] Deut. vi. 5. [5] Deut. x. 12.

dread, the former may as reasonably inspire us with love. Nor are the two emotions incompatible. We can both fear and love a human parent; why not, then, the Divine Father? All that is needed is that the fear should be noble, not abject and cringing. The right fear of God is not dread of His punishment, dread of an imaginary hand for ever uplifted to strike, but the awe that springs from the thought of a might and a perfection, compared with which the best of us are weak and sinful indeed. It is the fear not of the slave, but of the child.[1] It is the fear that casts out all other fear. "Whoso feareth the Lord shall not be afraid."[2] And so it comes to this, that the true fear of God is, as a Jewish writer has defined it,[3] the fear of the *degradation* of sin; "for how," he asks, "shall a man rebel against the King in His very presence?" And love, instead of putting it to death, feeds and nourishes it. For only the loving child can know the fear that shrinks from transgression because his offence will make him unworthy of his sonship. "Such fear," says yet another writer,[4] "*is* love."

But in what sense are we to understand the word love as applied to the relations between man and God? Not in the ordinary sense, it is clear. The love that we give to a human being—one whom we can see and embrace, whose beautiful face or eloquent eyes move us with tender feeling—is obviously out of the question here. But love can exist independently of such palpable objects; and, when it does, it is love, as the Rabbins remind us,[5] in its purest and most imperishable form. An ocean may

[1] This thought, too, is insisted upon in the *Marpë Lanephesh*, p. 7.

[2] Ecclus. xxxiv. 14.

[3] *Reshith Chochmah*, i. 3.

[4] *Orchoth Tsaddikim*, chap. v.

[5] *Aboth*, v. 16.

separate parent and child, and yet their mutual love lives on. "Many waters cannot quench love"—the love that is real. Death itself may tear two kindred hearts asunder, but it does not wholly kill the emotions that made them one. Those emotions survive while one heart is left to beat. Nay, must we necessarily have seen a person in order to love him? Is it not possible to feel drawn towards one whose face we have never beheld, and of whose kindly deeds we have only read?

And so, though it is an unseen God who is our Father, we can still love Him; and because our love for Him is necessarily spiritual, it is the highest kind of love. It is, moreover, a love that is justified. For God, though invisible to the eye of the flesh, is manifest to the subtler gaze of the soul, revealed in the illumination of prayer or in calm hours of meditation. Nor is it an unknown Being we are asked to love. We cannot look upon God's face and read His character there; but His beneficent work in nature and in our own lives is before us, and from that we can learn about Him and in a measure know Him.

Thus the precept that bids us love God is no figure of speech. It is an intelligible, a practical command. Because God is our benefactor, therefore we must needs be grateful to Him. And, in like manner, because God is lovable—for "His tender mercies are over all His works" [1] —therefore we must needs love Him.

And how are we to show this love? Precisely in the same way as we show it to an earthly parent—by obedience, and especially by the quality of our obedience. The child who lavishes caresses on his mother may or

[1] Ps. cxlv. 9.

may not be a truly loving child. His kisses are not love, but at best only the signs of it. They may prove deceptive after all, and merely conceal a void which love should have filled. The one test of the child's sincerity is obedience, and the length to which he carries that obedience. And so there is only one way in which God's children can really evince their love for Him; it is by service, and particularly by unselfish service. Hence the appropriateness of the title of God's "lover" or "friend" which the Bible[1] gives to Abraham. He fulfilled the command "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect";[2] the single-hearted obedience which does not "reason why," and which asks for nothing in return, was his distinguishing characteristic. And, in like manner, those who implicitly obey the Divine Will are called God's "lovers" in the Second Commandment.

As we have seen already,[3] the Rabbins clearly discerned the truth here set forth. Disinterested service of God they placed highest in the scale of virtuous action. "What," asks the Talmud,[4] "means the verse, 'the law of loving-kindness is on her tongue'?[5] Is there a law that is not of loving-kindness?" The answer is that the law obeyed for its own sake, without the expectation of reward, is the law of love. And this has been the consistent doctrine, nay, the uniform practice of the pious men of Israel in every age. Love expressing itself in complete self-renunciation has been for them the high-water mark of duty.[6] They have lived only for God, and when the need has arisen they have died for Him.

[1] Isa. xli. 8.
[2] Gen. xvii. 1.
[3] See above, p. 141 *seq.*
[4] *Succah*, 49 b.
[5] Prov. xxxi. 26.
[6] See *Siphrë* to Deut. vi. 5.

Absolute self-surrender, the spontaneous obedience that looks not beyond itself—this is the ideal. Certainly, neither the expectation of reward nor even the fear of punishment is to be undervalued as a powerful motive of conduct. If these incentives did not throw their weight into the scale, virtue would suffer far more frequent defeat. The service of love, rendered from sheer love of goodness —in other words, for love of God Himself—is a height to which only great souls attain. But it is the noblest service, and we ordinary people must set it before us as our goal, which we are always striving to reach, though we may be fated never to attain it.

Love to God, then, is the base and crown of duty as Judaism presents it to us. Significant indeed is the fact that the great declaration of the Divine Unity in Deut. vi. 4: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is One," is immediately followed by the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and might." Here we have the quintessence of Judaism in its twofold aspect of belief and duty. The One God and Love—these are its leading ideas. But both are essential ideas. If we cannot have Judaism without the conception of the Divine Unity, so we cannot have it without that perfect submission and self-denying obedience to the Supreme which is the necessary ingredient of human love for Him. It is a fine story that is told of the martyr Akiba in his last moments. Despite his sufferings he proclaims the *Shemang*, and turning to his disciples, says, "I have at last solved a riddle that has always perplexed me. I never could see how it was possible to love the Lord with all one's soul. Now when I am yielding up my soul for Him, the meaning of the words has been made clear

to me." And so, once more hurling the *Shemang*, the Israelite's life and death cry, at his tormentors, he surrendered his spirit to God.[1]

With the teachers of a later age love to God was an equally dominating passion. It expressed for them the whole religious life. Thus one of them, in a striking picture of the ideal Israelite, says that "his thoughts are as a mass of heated coal, which love for God has fused and set aglow."[2] "Those who serve God from love," says another,[3] "will be like servants who lay out gardens and pleasaunces with which to delight their absent lord when he returns." Love will deck life and make it blossom as the rose. And Bachya, in his fine description of love for God, says,[4] "The soul prostrates herself before the Supreme in awe at the thought of His might and majesty, and in this attitude she remains until He stills her dread and gives her courage. Then she quaffs the cup of love. She gives herself to Him in whole-hearted trust and submission. She has no desire but Him, no thought but for His service. Every movement of the body is to do His will; every utterance of the tongue has His praise and glory for its aim. For blessings there is thanksgiving, for tribulation there is patience. Even as it is related of one of the Saints, who was wont to rise in the night and pray in this wise: 'O God, Thou hast given me over to hunger and nakedness; Thou hast plunged me into the darkness of night. But so hast Thou taught me Thy greatness and power. If Thou wert to burn me with fire, I could but love Thee all the

[1] *Berachoth*, 61 b; *Jer. Sotah*, 20 b. [2] Introduction to the *Rokeach*.
[3] *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, chap. xxviii. p. 560.
[4] *Choboth Halebaboth*, x. 1.

more; if Thou wert to slay me, yet would I trust in Thee.'"

Yet one more teacher may we quote: "The crown of all intellectual striving, the highest of all excellences, is love to God, which drives out all other love. To that goal should the renunciation of worldly enjoyment lead us, so that the soul of its own free-will turns to its Creator and becomes a sharer in the light supernal. Such love as this is bound up with a joy before which all other delights fade away. So to love the Supreme that we make His service our one preoccupation, that for which we are ready, if need be, to die—this is the fear of God as Holy Writ pictures it to us. Happy the soul that knows such rapture!"[1]

[1] *Orchoth Tsaddikim*, chap. v., as summarised by Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, p. 156.

CHAPTER II

PRAYER

THE finest expression of our feelings towards God is action. Our reverence for Him is best proved by obedience to His will, our trust in Him by patient acceptance of sorrow as His wise ordinance, our love for Him by self-surrender. But it is only natural that we should desire to utter what we feel towards Him. If we revere or trust or love a human being, we shall not be content to let our actions speak for us; we shall interpret ourselves to him now and again in words. And so with the Supreme. We long to tell Him all that is in our heart, to assure Him of our gratitude, our homage, our submission.

Not that He needs to be so assured; for He knows what we feel without speech from us. "For there is not a word in my tongue, yet lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it all."[1] But for our own sakes, for our own ease and comfort, we would speak. Nay, we would do so not only to relieve our overcharged hearts, but for the very joy of the speech itself, for the happiness of communion with Him

[1] Ps. cxxxix. 4.

whom our soul loveth. And to this desire we give effect in prayer.

Prayer is the soul's speech to God; and it takes different forms to match the various emotions it would express. Thus, when it would give utterance to our hopes and our needs, it takes the form of *petition* and *supplication.* God is the dispenser of all good, the Lord of human destiny, and to Him we naturally turn with requests for the boons we crave. But all prayer is not petition. Sometimes the memory of blessings, rather than the desire for them, fills the heart to overflowing, and moves us to seek God's face. Then prayer takes the form of *thanksgiving.* We thank God for His mercies, for mercies shown not to us alone, but to others—to our beloved, to our fellowmen of various sorts and conditions, to the nation of which we form a part, to the great world at large. Or, again, we think of God's might and goodness as revealed in the majestic universe, His handiwork, and then we offer Him words of *praise* and *adoration.*

Of all the various kinds of prayer those are the highest that ask for nothing—nothing, at least, for ourselves. It is both natural and right that we should tell our Father of our needs; the very telling of them soothes and comforts us. In times of difficulty or sickness or trouble it is an immeasurable solace to pour out our hearts to One who will listen patiently and lovingly. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee"—so the Psalmist[1] exhorts us, and assuredly his words are the outflow of personal experience. But it is well to remember this rule: that the more unselfish our prayer, the nobler it is. Our supplications should be

[1] Ps. lv. 22.

for others rather than for ourselves; and when we pray for ourselves our prayers should be less about worldly than about spiritual things. Following the example of our Prayer-Book, we should ask sparingly for material benefits—for worldly success, for social power, for the glad life—and beg rather for higher blessings—for courage under affliction, for strength under temptation, for guidance in moral perplexity. The dream of Solomon is a valuable object-lesson, showing us the things we ought chiefly to pray for. Disdaining to ask for long life or riches or victory over his enemies, the King confines his request to the understanding heart that will enable him to do justice among his people.[1] And to all our petitions for worldly boons we should add, at least mentally, the condition, "If it be for my true good, O Lord." For no mortal can unerringly discern what are the things that make even for his own well-being. The gift he covets and prays for so passionately may prove a bane rather than a blessing. Only the Supreme, with His infinite knowledge, can see what will benefit and what harm us. Therefore, let us leave the matter wholly with Him, nor say one word that would seem to pit our insight against His, to aim at coercing His will.

* And this raises the question whether the prayer that takes the form of supplication can really attain its object. Can God's will be altered by mortals, even by mortals uplifted in fervent entreaty? God works in the world by law, fixed and unalterable. He knows even the future, and ordains it, moreover, in supreme wisdom and goodness. Is not, then, a prayer like that for rain or

[1] 1 Kings iii. 5-15.

fine weather or for individual boons, such as riches or health, utterly vain and even impious? This is a difficulty that constantly presents itself. How are we to solve it?

That God works by law is unquestionable. And, therefore, to pray for rain or similar benefits with the deliberate idea of bringing about a breach of law—in other words, of bringing about a miracle, and thus of altering God's will and even His very nature—is to ignore the teachings not only of science, but of common sense. The Rabbins long ago saw that Prayer has its limits, that there are requests that ought never to be uttered. As an example they cite the case of a man who, on approaching the street in which he lives, and hearing cries proceeding from it, exclaims, "I pray that this mishap may not be in my house."[1] This is clearly a vain prayer. Is not the same to be said of supplications for fine weather and the like? Under certain conditions, rain is inevitable. To ask that it shall be withheld is to ask that the play of cause and effect in Nature shall be arrested, that the benign laws shall be suspended, upon which depends the well-being of the universe. Hence all such prayers, besides being vain, are selfish. The ordinance, in obedience to which rain falls, is one that makes for the general good. To pray that rain may cease or fall in our district is to seek the benefit of the few to the disadvantage of the many. Moreover, it often happens that while rain is needed in one district, a continuance of fine weather is needed in the district immediately adjoining it. The showers that will revive the drooping

[1] *Mishnah Berachoth*, ix. 1. For other examples, see e.g. *Sepher Chassidim*, 95 and 794.

vegetation in one place will flood and devastate the fields elsewhere. Plenty for us may mean famine for others.[1]

It is clear, then, that all such supplications, when intended as attempts to alter God's wise ordinances, to alter His mind, are improper. But this does not mean that they are improper from every point of view, that they ought never to be offered. In seasons of drought or deluge, as well as in the hour of anxiety and distress, it is both natural and seemly that the heart should seek relief in prayer, in telling God of its needs. To that end our petitions should be restricted. Let us lay our wants before our Father, and be content with that simple act, not attempting or desiring to do what is impossible, and what, if it were possible, would be disastrous—to constrain a will that is always beneficent.

And, in truth, all such prayers are so restricted in practice. No intelligent person, when he offers supplication for rain, or indeed for any material boon, intends to bring about a suspension of God's law. All he really does is to express the hope that it may be the Divine will to grant his request, to express the hope, in other words, that there may be nothing in God's law to prevent its being granted. His prayer is less a petition than the utterance of an aspiration. Were it otherwise, it would indeed be impious. For God's decrees, to say it once more, are necessarily wise and good. The heat that parches the earth, the torrent that floods it, are no less the offspring of mercy than the tempered sunshine and the fertilising shower. Never must we dare to suggest

[1] It is on these grounds that Jehudah Halevi sets congregational prayers above private petitions. The former, he says, asks for nothing that can harm the individual (see *Cuzari*, iii. 19).

that they are aught but blessings by praying for their cessation. But we may hope for that cessation and give utterance to the hope. We may go on asking that the natural visitation which involves thousands in ruin, or the affliction which is causing misery to us and to our dearest, may come to an end, if only we are careful to add in thought, if not in words, "But whatever be Thy will, O God, we will dutifully accept it." *

Thus the Talmud gives us this typical prayer: "O God, the needs of Thy people are many, but their knowledge is small. Give every one of Thy creatures his daily bread. May this be Thy will! Amen."[1] Implicit submission to perfect wisdom—this must characterise all our supplications. The prayer of an ancient Sage, "O Lord, let Thy will be done in Heaven, and help us to find peace in it on earth, and do what seemeth good in Thy sight"[2]—this should be the model for our own prayers. For then if what we deem a blessing is given to us, it will be well, and if not, it will also be well. Whether our petition directly succeeds or fails, it will bear fruit. The thought that we have told our trouble to the one Being who is able to help us, and who will help us if it be for our true welfare, is the source of unutterable solace and peace. Our supplication gives us strength, because, greater than supplication, it is communion — the contact of the dejected soul with the Divine spirit, which comes to us with healing on its wings.

* And thus the other part of our difficulty is solved. If our lives are foreknown and therefore foreordained, what is the use of Prayer? But as soon as we cease to

[1] *Berachoth*, 29 a. [2] *Ibid.*

think of petition as the formulation of a claim, and regard it as the expression of a hope, the problem vanishes. Hence it is that an old Jewish writer exhorts us to frame our prayer in the widest terms, to ask for general rather than specific benefactions. To do otherwise, he says, is an attempt to coerce the Divine will. "When thou supplicatest a mortal it is right and seemly that thou shouldst tell him exactly what thy needs are, for how else is he to know them? But when thou prayest to God, be reticent, nor indicate the way of thy deliverance; for He knoweth wherein thy true well-being lieth better than thou."[1]

Nevertheless, as has been said, to express our needs to God, even though they be but material needs, is but to obey a natural and an ineradicable impulse of the human heart. And despite the Divine foreknowledge, it is no more superfluous to do so than it is to engage in any of the other activities of everyday life. The fatalist could make out quite a plausible case for his refusal to earn his daily bread. But his practice would never square with his theory. No; whatever cold reason may urge, men will always go on telling God of their hopes and fears and wants. "Even though a sharp sword hang above thy head, desist not from supplication"—so say the Rabbins,[2] and their words echo the doctrine of every heart. *

But what we have said applies only to material gifts. When we ask for higher blessings, for moral strength, for guidance, for the assurance of forgiveness, for comfort in sorrow, our supplication may take a bolder, a more confident tone. For if we know anything about

[1] *Marpë Lanephesh*, p. 20 a. [2] *Berachoth*, 10 a.

God, we know that He desires us to have these blessings. Nay, we know that our prayers for them are sure of being answered, for they answer themselves. The guidance and fortitude and peace they ask for come to the suppliant as the result of the action of his prayer upon his heart and his life. As the Jewish philosopher Albo has said, "Even though he be the veriest sinner, his supplication fits him to receive the Divine mercy, and so helps him to obtain it."[1] And thus an old Rabbi can affirm, "If thou hast prayed, and prayed yet again, it is already declared to thee that thy prayer is heard."[2]

In fine, as we have seen, prayer influences not God, but ourselves. He does not need our worship. Our wants, our yearnings, our lightest thoughts are known to Him as soon as they are known to us. It is for our own sakes that we need to pray. It is a need far greater than the trivial wants that form the burden of many of our petitions. We too often pray for little, even for worthless things, for favours that are more than doubtful. But what we most need, though we do not always see it, is the help that comes from prayer itself—help to bear our load more bravely, to face temptation more resolutely. Nay, we want to get the mood of surrender, to realise that we are but as little children in the hands of a loving, yet infinitely wise Parent, humble servants of an august Master. And, therefore, even when our prayers seem to fail, they succeed; for they effect that spiritual uplifting which is far more worth having than the things we pray for.

And so we may go on asking for worldly boons for ourselves, and especially for others, if only we ask for

[1] *Ikkarim*, iv. 16. [2] *Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. xxvii. 14.

them in the right spirit. But we shall do well to centre our hopes and our prayerful energies upon those higher blessings which bring peace and fortitude to mind and heart and soul. This seems to be the ideal of the Psalmist. "In the day that I called," he exclaims, "Thou answeredst me; Thou didst enlarge me with strength in my soul."[1] "Ask God," says a great teacher, "to forgive thy trespasses, to implant the love and fear of Him in thy heart, so that thou mayst serve Him with joy; invoke His mercy upon thyself and thy beloved, so that none of you may fall into the power of sin."[2] Inward illumination, a satisfied conscience, strength to sin no more, the joy of communion with our Heavenly Father, of submitting ourselves to His will—these are the gifts for which we not only may, but should offer supplication. For they are the things in which God Himself delights. And we cannot ask for them too often. To pray for them is to offer the ideal prayer.[3]

That this was the view taken by our great teachers is further proved by the prayers they offered. To those already quoted we add the following specimens:—

"O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit, and to them that curse me let my soul be silent and lowly as is the dust. Open my heart to Thy Law, and let my soul pursue after Thy commandments. And as to them that devise evil against me, do Thou speedily bring their designs to naught and their plans to confusion. 'May the words of my mouth and

[1] Ps. cxxxviii. 3.

[2] Introduction to the *Rokeach.*

[3] The Rabbins include among the offences that were most common in their day that of *iyun tephillah*, which Rashi explains to be the utilitarian view of prayer which limits its value to the Divine favours it may win (see *B. Bathra*, 164 b).

the meditation of my heart be acceptable unto Thee, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer!'"[1]

"May it be Thy will, O God, that we return to Thee in perfect penitence, so that we may not be ashamed to meet our fathers in the life to come."[2]

"Unite our hearts, O God, to fear Thy name; keep us far from what Thou hatest; bring us near to what Thou lovest; and deal mercifully with us for Thy name's sake."[3]

"May it be Thy will, O God, that love and peace and brotherliness dwell among us! May our hopes of Heaven be fulfilled! Grant that the good inclination may uphold us. Fill us with the desire to fear Thy name, and do Thou give us our soul's peace. Amen."[4]

"May it be Thy will, O God, that I walk in Thy Law, and cleave to Thy commandments; lead me not into sin or temptation or contempt. Let not evil desire rule over me. Bend my will to Thine. Keep me from sinful men and worthless companions. Help me to cling to the good, and give me grace in Thy sight and in the sight of those about me. Amen."[5]

To these examples may be added the following prayer cited by Bachya,[6] as expressing the true devotional spirit: "O God, I stand before Thee, knowing all my deficiencies, and overwhelmed by Thy greatness and majesty; for Thou art high and exalted, and I am contemptible and vile, unworthy to supplicate or even to praise Thee. But Thou hast commanded me to pray to Thee, and hast suffered me to offer homage to Thy

[1] From the *Daily Prayer-Book;* the original is in *Berachoth*, 17 a.

[2] *Jer. Berachoth*, iv. 2. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Berachoth*, 16 b.

[5] From the *Daily Prayer-Book*. The original is in *Berachoth* 60 b.

[6] *Choboth Halebaboth*, chap. viii.

exalted Name according to the measure of my knowledge, and to make my humble submission unto Thee. And because Thou hast thus honoured me, I am emboldened to lay my supplication at Thy feet.[1] Thou knowest best what is for my good. If I recite my wants, it is not to remind Thee of them, but only so that I may understand better how great is my dependence upon Thee. If, then, I ask Thee for the things that make not for my well-being, it is because I am ignorant; Thy choice is better than mine, and I submit myself to Thine unalterable decrees and Thy supreme direction. 'O Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in matters that are too great and too wonderful for me. Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul like a child with his mother; like a child is my soul within me.'"

But, as we have said, prayer is wider than supplication. The truth finds ample recognition in the Jewish liturgy, in which thanksgiving and praise hold the largest place.[2] Nor do those utterances conflict with our conception, however exalted, of the Divine nature. The Supreme is certainly beyond the reach or the need of our homage. The Psalmist's famous utterance in the Divine name[3] may be interpreted in the widest sense: "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee;" it is not for mortal man to nourish the Infinite even with his adoration. But though our praise and our thanksgiving can confer nought

[1] A similar thought is expressed in the introduction to the *Rokeach:* "Say to thyself whilst thou prayest, 'How honoured am I in being suffered to offer a crown to the King of Glory—I who am but clay; I will rend the bonds of my heart, and in awe and humility will I enter the Divine Gates.'"

[2] "Praise God first," say the Rabbins (*Berachoth* 32 a); "thy requests must come afterwards."

[3] Ps. l. 12.

upon "the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth," to us it can ensure much. It can satisfy a very real need of the soul—the need to express itself to the Source of its joys, to the God of its life. Nay, is it not true that prayer itself begets devotion? "While we meditate the fire kindles." The payment of our tribute to God, far from removing the sense of indebtedness, leaves us more grateful, more humble than ever. In the clearer atmosphere of worship we see more plainly than before the distant heights of the Divine majesty and goodness. For our own sakes, then, for the sake of the fulness it gives to our spiritual life, we must obey the natural promptings of our heart, and, like the Psalmist,[1] "sing unto the Lord as long as we live."

And to sing suggests the temper in which we ought to pray. The joy of communion with the Divine—that should be the worshipper's dominant emotion. There have been Jewish teachers who have gone as far as to deprecate all intrusion of our personal cares and anxieties upon our devotions. "If," says one of them,[2] "there be grief in thy heart, put it away from thee at prayer-time; for when thou standest before the great King it is of thy love for Him, and not of thy troubles, that thou hast to think."[3] Worship is to neutralise every disquieting influence and to flood the spirit with joy. It is to be communion even more than supplication. The Jewish Prayer-Book seems to have been framed under the sway of such ideas. It contains, as we have already said, fewer petitions than praises; but besides this the sombre

[1] Ps. civ. 33.

[2] Introduction to the *Rokeach*.

[3] Still later mystics aimed at an utter annihilation of self as the ideal condition in prayer. See Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, p. 29. Compare James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 70.

sense of sin, however acute, is never suffered to intervene between the worshipper and glad adoration of his Divine Master.

It need hardly be said that Prayer, if it is to have any value, must be sincere. There is a vast difference between saying prayers and praying. To repeat the mere words thoughtlessly, in a manner as mechanical as the revolutions of the Buddhist's prayer-wheel, is to deceive ourselves and to dishonour God. It is to grasp the shadow instead of the substance, nay, to degrade an act which should be eloquent of religious feeling into a manifestation of gross impiety. It is possible to say many prayers, and yet not to pray; it is possible to say nothing, and yet to be lifted by the soul's emotion into the nearer presence of God. "When ye make many prayers," God warns all insincere suppliants, "I will not hear."[1] On the other hand, Hannah's lips gave forth no sound; they only trembled.[2] But God heard her, for her plaint went up from her heart.

Sincerity in Prayer is a duty we owe to God. Our wise teachers have much to say on this subject. Prayer they call "the heart's service."[3] Insincere prayer they liken to a body without a soul. It is the empty husk of worship—useless, contemptible. "Let not thy prayer be a matter of fixed routine, but heartfelt supplication for mercy at the Divine footstool."[4] The pious Jew of ancient times, we are told, before venturing to pray, would spend an hour in meditation, "so as to fix his thoughts on God."[5] Only that man's prayer is answered,

[1] Isa. l. 15. [2] 1 Sam. i. 13. [3] *Taanith*, 2 a.
[4] *Aboth*, ii. 13. [5] *Mishnah Berachoth*, iv. 1.

say the Rabbins, who lifts his hands with his heart in them.[1] One Rabbi even declares that if a man does not feel devout, he should refrain from prayer for the time being.[2]

The prophets of old thundered against the men of their age who fancied that the Supreme would be satisfied with burnt-offerings, while their hands were full of iniquity.[3] But no less foolish, no less impious, are those of our day who think that God will be pleased with unfelt protestations of obedience and humility and reverence, who fancy that it is enough to draw near to God with their lips while their hearts are far removed from Him.[4] The heart, the Rabbins teach, must be purified, every defiling deed must be put away, before prayer is attempted.[5] Neither levity nor indolence, they say again, neither austerity nor worldliness, must be our mood in prayer, but joy springing from very love of communion.[6]

The Rabbins warn us, too, against attaching any importance to the mere length of our devotions, against imagining that saying many prayers can take the place of praying. Prayer *need* be neither long nor short—its length should depend upon the frame of mind of the worshipper—it *must* be sincere. The Rabbins [7] point to the example of Moses who, on one occasion, prays for forty days and forty nights,[8] and on another is content with a single sentence: "O Lord, heal her now, I beseech thee."[9] And both prayers were heard.

[1] *Taanith*, 8 a, in allusion to Lamentations iii. 41. [2] *Berachoth*, 30 b.

[3] Isa. i. 10-17; Hosea vi. 6, and the Prophets, *passim*.

[4] Isa. xxix. 13.

[5] *Yalkut Hamachiri* on Isa. i. 15. The saying is based on Job xvi. 17: "There is no violence in my hand, and therefore my prayer is pure."

[6] *Berachoth*, 31 a. [7] *Ibid.* 34 a. [8] Deut. xix. 18. [9] Numb. xii. 13.

What prayer has been for the Jew, his history and his literature alike abundantly testify. It has been his solace when darkness has settled on his life, his song when the clouds have broken. Israel is a praying race. "The voice is Jacob's voice, the hands are the hands of Esau;"[1] and the Rabbins,[2] aptly applying the verse, say, "Let others rely on the arm of flesh, Israel's weapon is prayer." The Psalter is a book of prayer from beginning to end; it is an unique book. It has not its equal in devotional literature either for inherent beauty or for living power. It is the world's hymnal; and in it Israel has expressed his real soul. And what the Psalmists did in their day the later singers of Israel did in theirs. The medieval Jewish poet would forsake every subject for the highest of all themes. He disdained to sing of aught save the loving-kindness of God, to utter any longing save a passionate desire to be at one with the Supreme and to be shown His salvation. Thus the greater part of Jewish poetry, ancient and modern, is devotional. The poet consecrated his gift of song to its Divine Giver. And so Israel's poetry is an eloquent monument to his genius for prayer and to his faith in its power. It is an exhortation too. It bids us prize our spiritual heritage. It enjoins us to hand on our fathers' trust in the efficacy, the blessedness of worship.

> More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of—

so the modern poet declares; and we, who have helped the world to pray, must bear witness to the truth in our own lives.

[1] Gen. xxvii. 22. [2] *Yalkut* to Gen. xxvii. 22.

CHAPTER III

SINCERITY

THE obligation of sincerity is not limited to Prayer. It extends to the whole domain of conduct. What has been called "inwardness"—purity of heart, that is to say, as well as of act, the hallowing of thought and feeling as well as of life—is a duty we owe to God. Just as He cannot possibly accept mere lip-service as a substitute for fervent prayer, so He cannot accept the outward semblance of goodness in discharge of the debt of obedience.

At every stage of its development Judaism has preached this truth with no uncertain voice. To love God is, as we have seen, the crown of the Israelite's duty. But it must needs be a sincere love—a love that is rooted in the lowest strata of our being. To quote once more the familiar and famous passage, we are enjoined to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and might. What God demands is the obedience of the entire self. That self may be poor and small, our capacity for service may be meagre, but if we give it all to God, He will be content. "It matters not," say the Rabbins, "whether a man gives little or much, if only his heart goes out with it to his Father in Heaven."[1]

[1] *Berachoth*, 17 a.

God does not ask us for more, but less will not satisfy Him. This is the meaning of the command, "Single-hearted shalt thou be with the Lord thy God."[1] No divided allegiance must we offer Him. "Beware," say the Rabbins, "of giving God merely a share of thy heart."[2] In the same spirit the Psalmist prays, "Lo, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; create in me, then, a pure heart, O God."[3] And another Psalmist, drawing a picture of the ideal man, speaks of him as having not only clean hands, but a pure heart—in other words, as being righteous in thought as well as in act.[4] Such a man "is what he seems."[5] He is free from the slightest taint of hypocrisy; goodness is interwoven into the very texture of his character. "My son, give me thy heart,"[6] is the appeal of the teacher of righteousness to his disciples; and Micah includes among the essentials of the noble life the *love* of mercy.[7] The ideal of goodness is realised not by conduct that merely *looks* merciful, but by acts of genuine compassion which spring from the very love of it.

How powerfully the Prophets of Israel inveighed against insincere religion is well known. "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."[8] "Though ye offer Me your burnt offerings, I will not accept them: but let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."[9]

And the admonitions of the Rabbins are informed with the spirit of Holy Writ. Mere surface-goodness, religion used as veneer to hide the falsehood beneath—this they singled out for especial denunciation. The

[1] Deut. xviii. 13.
[2] *Siphrë* to Deut. vi. 5.
[3] Ps. li. 6, 10.
[4] Ps. xxiv. 4.
[5] *Yoma*, 72 b.
[6] Prov. xxiii. 26.
[7] Micah vi. 8.
[8] Hosea vi. 6.
[9] Amos v. 22, 24.

contrary is usually supposed to be the truth by those who know of Judaism only by hearsay. The term "Pharisaic" has come to be a synonym for religious hypocrisy. But the Pharisees, as a body, were the very opposite of hypocrites. Some of them, it is true, used their membership as a cloak for insincerity. They paraded a piety they did not possess. They scrupulously practised the rites of religion, but lacked the religious spirit. But they were not fair samples of their sect, and no one was more ready to acknowledge the fact than their worthier companions. The Rabbins were Pharisees of the first water, but they were unsparing in their condemnation of the hypocrites, who disgraced their order and, worse still, Religion itself.[1] It is true that the Talmudic Sages invested religious ceremonial with an importance which strikes the modern mind as exaggerated. But they were none the less spiritual-minded on that account. They were legalists, but not formalists. They valued ritual, but righteousness far more. Especially did they abhor the merely external piety that masked the corruption within. "He that steals a measure of wheat and says a prayer over the bread is a blasphemer."[2] "Thou shalt not bear[3] the name of the Lord thy God in vain." "What," the Rabbins ask,[4] "do these words mean? They mean that thou shalt not put on thy phylacteries, on which the Divine Name is inscribed, and then go and sin." "The highest wisdom," they say elsewhere,[5] "is goodness. Let, then, not a man study the Law and thrust away his father and mother."

[1] See *Sotah*, 22 b.
[2] *B. Kama*, 94 a.
[3] Exod. xx. 7, according to the literal meaning of the Hebrew.
[4] *Pesikta*, 111 b.
[5] *Berachoth*, 17 a.

They shuddered at imposture and deceit of every kind. "Four classes of men," they declared,[1] "will never see God's face—the scoffer, the liar, the slanderer, the hypocrite." And to quote a medieval teacher, "Deceit is a worse sin than eating swine's flesh. The latter is forbidden only once in the Pentateuch, the former many times."[2]

And, conversely, of preaching sincerity, of extolling the duty of "inwardness," the Rabbins were never weary. "One thing God requires above all—the heart."[3] "The whole worth of a benevolent deed lies in the love that inspires it."[4] "The essence of goodness is good intent."[5] "Whoso serves God from any motive save love of service is a sordid and useless creature; better had he never been born."[6] "Like the Ark of the Covenant the good man will be golden within as well as without."[7] The "study of the Law" is extolled by the Rabbins with almost excessive iteration, but they knew how to put even that pious duty into its proper place. It was the auxiliary of the religious life, not the substitute for it. Without purity of act and aim it was useless. "He," they declared, "who is learned in the *Torah*, but hath not the fear of God before his eyes, is like a treasurer who possesses the keys of the inner doors, but lacks the keys of the outer ones. How shall he enter?"[8] "Evil thoughts," they further say in characteristically bold fashion, "are more deadly than sin itself."[9] Finally, they declare[10] that the eye that lusts not shall see God.

[1] *Sotah*, 42 a.

[2] From the smaller *Sepher Chassidim*, fifteenth century, quoted by Güdemann, *Culturgeschichte*, iii. p. 221.

[3] *Synhed.* 106 b.

[4] *Succah*, 49 b.

[5] *Megillah*, 20 a.

[6] *Berachoth*, 17 a.

[7] *Yoma*, 72 b.

[8] *Shabbath*, 31 a.

[9] *Yoma*, 29 a.

[10] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. xxiii. to Lev. xviii. 1.

And if thought and feeling be pure, the entire life will be pure, even that part of it which is hidden from the world's gaze. The truly good man will not be content with the approval of his fellows. The sole reward that will satisfy him is God's approval, and that is the guerdon only of the sincerely righteous. He will think of himself as living not merely in the eye of the world, but under the all-seeing eye of the Supreme, and the thought will be a constant admonition to secret goodness, a constant warning against secret sin. This a Jewish writer[1] calls "the inmost fear of God." Virtue the good man will love because it binds him faster to God in being and in spirit; evil he will hate because it severs him from the Supreme. "Know that the Holy One is within thee; therefore let thy life be holy," a fit temple for the Divine.[2] "Whoso sins in secret thrusts away the Divine presence."[3]

Notable is the Scriptural warning[4] against cursing the deaf. He knows not that he is being reviled, but he that reviles him sins none the less on that account, for he sins against God; evil must be dreaded and shunned for its own sake. And therefore, as the Rabbins point out,[5] the warning is aptly followed by the command "Thou shalt fear thy God." Since there is no man to punish the sin the appeal is necessarily made to the conscience. "Avoid this shameful act," says the Law, "because, though it may not harm thy neighbour, it will assuredly harm *thee*; it will soil thy soul." Nay, still further does Jewish doctrine take us. We are warned to be on our guard against even unintentional sin because,

[1] *Reshith Chochmah*, i. 4. [2] Introduction to the *Rokeach*.
[3] *Kiddushin*, 31 a. [4] Lev. xix. 14. [5] *Siphra* to the verse.

though unintentional, it is a defilement; it "taints the higher man."[1]

The good man, then, will take as his motto the Psalmist's cry, "I set the Lord continually before me."[2] He will bear in mind the Rabbinic exhortation: "Remember three things if thou wouldst not sin—the all-seeing Eye, the all-hearing Ear, the recording Hand."[3] And so his standard of goodness will not be the world's, but that which his conscience sets him, and his public life will be but the mirror of the life he leads in private. His public charity will find its counterpart in acts of loving-kindness done when the world is not looking on. He will show himself thoughtful to the members of his household. He will be considerate and just to his servants. He will be pure, once more to quote the Rabbinic phrase,[4] in his inmost chamber. "In all that thou doest," says a later teacher,[5] "let the thought of God lead thee, for God requires the heart, and He sees everything. Therefore be chaste in private even as thou art in the street and the market-place, for thine own walls are the witnesses against thee."[6]

And the Prayer-Book is a reflection of this exalted doctrine. Every morning the Jew begins his worship of Almighty God by laying to heart the admonition, "For ever let a man be God-fearing in private as well as in public; let him acknowledge the truth, and speak the truth in his heart."[7] In this wise does the devout Israelite

[1] *Reshith Chochmah*, i. 5.
[2] Ps. xvi. 8.
[3] *Aboth*, ii. 1.
[4] *Beza*, 9 a.
[5] The smaller *Sepher Chassidim*, quoted by Güdemann, *Culturgeschichte*, iii. p. 214.
[6] Compare *Taanith*, 11 a.
[7] See *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, chap. xxi. p. 441. In some ancient liturgies the admonition is immediately followed by Psalm xv.: "Lord, who shall sojourn

seek to consecrate the day just begun; on this holy foundation does he rear the fabric of the day's work. And later on, in his morning prayer, he asks God to "unite his heart, so that he may truly love and fear Him." The words are an echo of the Psalmist's petition,[1] and they ask for the Divine blessing on the suppliant's endeavour to give his whole self to the Almighty's service.

in Thy tabernacle? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart," etc. See Maimonides' order of prayer in the first volume of his *Yad Hachazakah*.

[1] Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

CHAPTER IV

DUTIES TO SELF—THE PHYSICAL LIFE

THE duties that we owe to ourselves may be stated in general terms to be those of self-preservation and self-development.

If we regard man as a combination of body, mind, and soul, our duties to Self may be divided into three groups to correspond with those constituents.

To preserve and promote the physical health is, then, a duty. It is a duty which Jewish teaching has consistently enforced. Judaism refuses to regard the body as vile, and its well-being as unimportant. The handiwork of God, it is worthy of all care and reverence. Nay, it is the temple of the soul, and some of the sanctity of the indwelling spirit is imparted and clings to the enclosing shrine. Thus even man's physical frame deserves to be honoured. Moreover, the care of the body means prolonged life; and life, as Religion regards it, is but the opportunity of serving God. Every act, therefore, that maintains and strengthens the physical powers is a virtuous act. Every act that enfeebles them is a sin.

In the Bible health is included among the blessings that reward the godly life; and everyday experience

justifies its being so included. For the laws of health are Divine; they are part of the great revelation vouchsafed to us in Nature. To obey them is to secure the well-being that ever results from conformity to the Divine will. This was one of the earliest truths that the Israelites had to learn when they went forth from Egypt: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt give ear to His commandments, I will put none of the diseases upon thee, that I have put upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee."[1] In like manner the Israelites are assured that if they faithfully serve God, He will remove sickness from their midst.[2] All such promises are intelligible and trustworthy, for they are the expression of natural law.

Health-culture, then, far from being trivial or optional, is a positive obligation. "There is no riches," says Ben Sira,[3] "better than health." Even the physical life is worth living, and we hold it in trust for noble uses. Its preservation, therefore, is an object eminently worthy of the good man's efforts. Self-murder is a crime,[4] for it is desertion from the momentous battle we are placed here to fight. Moreover, there is such a thing as indirect and unintentional self-murder. There is the persistent neglect of personal health—the defiance of sanitary and hygienic laws and over-indulgence in the pleasures of the senses. All this, too, is an offence against the moral law.

Equally wrong is the objection to natural means of healing which characterises certain religious sects even in these days. We have no right, in cases of sickness, to

[1] Exod. xv. 26. [2] Exod. xxiii. 25. [3] Ecclus. xxx. 16.

[4] Gen. ix. 5, according to the Rabbinical interpretation; see *Midrash Rabbah* on the passage.

endanger our lives or the lives of others by relying exclusively upon supernatural aid. God has placed the resources of medical science within our reach, and while recourse to them is, in effect, to invoke His help in the persons of His chosen agents, to reject them, even though the motive be religious, is at once churlishly to contemn His gifts and sinfully to neglect our physical well-being. The wise man has well expressed the Jewish view of this question: "My son," he exhorts us,[1] "in thy sickness be not negligent; but pray unto the Lord, and He shall heal thee. . . . Honour a physician according to thy need of him with the honours due unto him; for verily the Lord hath created him. . . . The Lord created medicines out of the earth; and a prudent man will have no disgust at them." It follows that the culture of the body, including what is known as athletics, is commendable. Every child, the Talmud declares,[2] ought to be taught to swim.

Life, according to the Rabbins, is a sacred thing, a gift of God, to be treated reverently in oneself as well as in others. Nothing must be done to abridge it. Thus when a Sage, suffering at the stake, is adjured by his disciples to let the flames take hold of him quickly so that his agony may not be needlessly prolonged, he refuses, saying, "God alone can take my life; I may not."[3] To use the familiar simile, we are placed on earth as sentinels, who must not quit their post until they are relieved.[4] On the other hand, the Rabbins specify cases in which the sacrifice of one's life is justifiable as the alternative to worse evils.[5]

[1] Ecclus. xxxviii. 9, 1. 4.
[2] *Kiddushin*, 29 a.
[3] *Abodah Zarah*, 18 a.
[4] So Mendelssohn in his *Phaedon*, part i.
[5] See *Gittin*, 57 b; *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. xxxiv. to Gen. ix. 5.

But life is not to be regarded sordidly. The gift of God, it must be cherished as the opportunity of realising the best ideals we know. Its value resides not in the wealth or ease or enjoyment it may yield us, though these are not improper objects of endeavour, but in its power of ministering to the highest good, to moral well-being. The right standard by which to appraise life is the ethical, not the material and worldly standard. This is the Jewish way of appraising it, and it is illustrated by the Talmudic law which permits the Sabbath to be violated for the healing of the sick. "Break the Sabbath," it enjoins, "so that this sick man may live to keep many Sabbaths."[1] When life is in danger, say the Rabbins, it is a duty to violate the Law; and, they significantly add, the violation is not to be relegated to the Gentile; the greatest in Israel are to share in it, so imperious and sacred is the duty.[2] In a similar spirit the Talmud, expounding the Psalmist's words,[3] "the dead praise not the Lord," declares[4] that "the dead have lost the opportunity of obeying the Divine commands." For obedience is the especial task of this earthly life, and hence passionately to cling to life is not only an instinct, but a virtue. It is such doctrine that has saved the Jew from despising this world. He seeks to live in it as long as he may, because the life of service is his vocation. But to the life of service—of efficient service—physical well-being is an important aid. And so the Jew is taught to value health as the key which unlocks the large domain of dutifulness.

To promote the bodily health, then, is a sacred obligation. Thus many a commonplace act assumes a religious

[1] *Yoma*, 85 b.
[2] *Ibid.* 83 a, 84 b.
[3] Ps. cxv. 17.
[4] *Shabbath*, 30 a.

character. It becomes homage paid to the great King, reverence done to man fashioned in His likeness. Eating and drinking, the observance of personal cleanliness—all the acts, indeed, which preserve and perpetuate life—safeguard God's gift and show respect for the physical frame He has made. Thus the great Hillel, on his way to the bath-house, tells his disciples that he is about to perform a religious rite. For, he explains, it is a sacred duty to tend the body, upon which God has stamped a Divine beauty.[1] Nay, so intimate is the connection between body and spirit that these familiar acts may be regarded as avenues to the higher life. Personal cleanliness, the Rabbins declare,[2] is the foundation of spiritual purity; it is the path by which one attains to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is, then, next to godliness. And the duty is far-reaching. Bed, board, and raiment, says an old writer[3]—everything we touch—must be clean. "The apparel," says the Talmud,[4] "honoureth the man."

All the familiar acts, therefore, that tend to preserve the physical life are to be performed reverently and in the name of God, under a solemn sense of obligation to Him. A certain sanctity cleaves to them. They are to be done, according to Rabbinic ordinance, with prayer. George Eliot puts her finger on one of the chief characteristics of Judaism when she appreciatively speaks of its "reverence for the human body, which lifts the needs of the animal life into religion."[5]

Judaism, it will be seen, has nothing in common with

[1] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. xxxiv. to Lev. xxv. 35.

[2] *Abodah Zarah*, 20 b.

[3] *Orchoth Tsaddikim*, chap. i., quoted by Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, p. 150.

[4] *B. Kama*, 91 b.

[5] *Daniel Deronda*, chap. xlii.

the ascetic temper that would cultivate the spirit by neglecting the body. It has no sympathy with the unclean devotee, or with the "saint" who tortures himself for the good of his soul. It draws no sharp distinction, in regard to ethics, between body and spirit; it does not regard them as independent, water-tight compartments. Both go to make the man, and both deserve care and culture. Even the senses, then, have their rights. The physical life cannot be sustained save by their gratification. Nor is the pleasure yielded by their gratification to be looked at askance as something on the borderland of sin. It is legitimate, seeing that it is the fulfilment of God's plainly-declared will. By making the satisfaction of bodily needs pleasurable He has set the seal of His approval upon it. He desires that men should seek the way of life through happiness—even through physical happiness; and sourly to refuse the lower joys when He proffers them to us is not only ingratitude but rebellion. "Defraud not thyself," says the Wise Man,[1] "of a good day; and let not the portion of a good desire pass thee by." "In the hereafter," the Rabbins boldly affirm,[2] "every man will be called to account for the earthly pleasures he has rejected." The total abstainer, according to Judaism, is not the best type of the moral man. His self-denial is not goodness, but only the prop of goodness. The ideal is not a timid, an almost cowardly flight from life's pleasures, not "a fugitive and cloistered virtue," but the courageous self-command that can enjoy without hurt. The Rabbins account for the sin-offering which the Nazarite is commanded to bring[3] by saying that the very

[1] Ecclus. xiv. 14. [2] *Jer. Kiddushin*, chap. iv. (end).
[3] Numb. vi. 14.

abstinence from strong drink, which has been part of his penance, is a sin.[1] The religious man, they declare, will not mortify his body by fasting, for he unfits himself thereby for the service of Heaven.[2] "Our religion," says Jehudah Halevi,[3] "has three elements: fear, love, and joy. Through any of these canst thou draw near to God. And thy humiliation on a fast-day is not more acceptable to Him than is thy gladness on a Sabbath or Festival, if only thy gladness come from a devout and dutiful heart."

Judaism, then, "demands not the extinction or the suppression of desire; it asks us to regulate, to purify, to ennoble it."[4] There is nothing inherently commendable in self-renunciation. Only its effects can justify it. If it is fruitful, if it helps us to perform our life's task better, if it makes us more efficient servants of God and men, then it is the most beautiful manifestation of human goodness. But if morally it leads nowhere, if, as sometimes happens, it impedes the fulfilment of the simple duties that lie next to our hand, then it is to be deprecated. The distinction is suggested in the doctrine of the Rabbins who, in one and the same breath, style the man who gives himself to fasting a saint and a sinner.[5] Self-mortification, practised for ends far higher than itself, is a virtue; practised for its own sake, it is a vice.[6]

And, therefore, though Judaism does not approve of the ascetic temper, it is far from encouraging the materialist's

[1] *Taanith*, 11 a. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Cuzari*, ii. 50.

[4] Lazarus, *Ethics of Judaism*, sec. 243. [5] *Taanith*, 11 a.

[6] "Here," says a modern teacher (Moses Luzatto, *Mesilath Yesharim*, chap. xiii.), "is the true rule on this subject: The worldly pleasures which a man needs not it is his duty to eschew; but those which for one reason or another he does need he cannot renounce without sin. This is the safe rule. But its application to the various circumstances of life must be left to the intellect and the conscience."

view of life. It has no place for monks or hermits, who think they can serve God best by renouncing the world; but, on the other hand, it sternly rebukes the worldliness that knows no ideal but sordid pleasures, no God but Self. It commends to us the golden mean—the safe line of conduct that lies midway between the rejection of earthly joys and the worship of them. If asceticism too often spurns the commonplace duties of life, excessive self-indulgence unfits us for them. In each case we lose some of our moral efficiency. But in the latter case there is added an inevitable degradation. The man who mortifies his body for his soul's sake has at least his motive to plead for him. But the sensualist has no such justification. He deliberately chooses the evil and rejects the good. Forfeiting his character as a son of God, he yields himself a slave to unworthy passions. It is the same with the worldly man, who lives only for sordid ends such as wealth and the pleasures it buys. He, too, utterly misses his vocation. His pursuit of riches may be moral in itself; he may be a perfectly honest man. But his life is unmoral all the same, for it aims at nothing higher than itself.

Moderation, then, is the keynote of Jewish ethics. The second cup, the Rabbins style the "cup of punishment";[1] but they do not forbid the first.[2] Let us enjoy the good things that God has given us, but let us enjoy them under a sense of obligation to the Giver. To "eat the fat and drink the sweet" is a positive command which the Bible often repeats; "for the joy of the Lord is our strength."[3] The happy life is the vigorous, the healthy life—the life

[1] *Berachoth*, 51 b.

[2] Compare Ecclus. xxxi. 27-30.

[3] Neh. viii. 10; compare *e.g.* Deut. xxvi. 11.

that yields the amplest service. But then the joy must be "the joy of the Lord," hallowed by the consciousness of His august Presence, restrained and purified by a sense of the innate dignity of man himself. Never must our pleasures be carried beyond the point where, ceasing to be self-culture, they become self-profanation, where, instead of service, they become revolt. Temperance, in the widest meaning of the word—this is the part of virtue, even as it is the part of wisdom. It is the first condition of self-preservation. But wisdom is not necessarily virtue. The right temperance is that which springs, not from a calculating prudence, but from self-reverence. Moderation is the safeguard of health, and health may properly be the motive of self-restraint. But we ought to think of it as the condition of something more desirable still, as the antecedent to the true, the godly life. Temperance should be moral. The man who keeps sober because he dreads the physical pains and penalties of drunkenness is ethically far inferior to his companion whose temperate habits spring from horror of the drunkard's degradation. The one fears to be ill, or unfit for work or pleasure; the other fears to fall in his own sight as well as in the sight of God and his fellow-men. Religion would encourage the nobler temper. "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"[1]—this is ever the cry of the good man.

[1] Exod. xxxix. 9.

CHAPTER V

THE PHYSICAL LIFE (*continued*)

If the preservation of health is a duty, industry is also one. The busy man is a healthy man. He is also the self-reverent man. Idleness is a degradation, for it is shameful to let our energies rust for want of use, nay, to live idly in a world which is seething with life, and from which a thousand voices are for ever summoning us to share in its fruitful activities. None of us can live his life alone. We are all members of the great human brotherhood, and are bound, therefore, to contribute by labour of some sort to the common welfare. The fact that we have enough for ourselves does not dispense us from the obligation of work. It only changes the direction of our task, and makes it nobler than ever. The "independent" man may devote himself wholly to the well-being of others; he may contribute to it directly rather than indirectly, and therefore more efficiently. Instead of planning and toiling for his own advancement he has to think and work for the general good.

Judaism is unstinting in its praise of industry. The Bible is not only a book about Religion; it is a picture of busy, strenuous life. We see God's people worshipping,

but working too. For work is itself a religion. It is a discipline calling into play some of our finest qualities —energy, sincerity, self-restraint, patience, cheerfulness. Therefore the Rabbins[1] exhort the rich man, who does not need to labour, to go and busy himself in his field. Greater even than the God-fearing man, they declare,[2] is he who eats of the fruit of his toil; for Scripture declares him twice-blessed. Great is work, they say elsewhere,[3] for it honours the worker. The man diligent in his business shall stand before Kings; let him not stand before mean men.[4] And among the wondrous things of the world that move the Psalmist to admiring song is the spectacle of the day-labourer going forth to his work until eventide.[5]

The modern jargon about "gentlemanly" occupations gets no countenance from Judaism. Were there not shepherds and husbandmen among the Prophets? "Hate not laborious work," cries Ben Sira,[6] "neither husbandry, which the Most High hath ordained." All work is noble that is done nobly. The only dishonourable occupation is that which the worker has himself dishonoured by deception of any kind. He who does not teach his son a handicraft, say the Rabbins,[7] teaches him to steal. Religious study was their ruling passion, but they could still admire and find time for the humblest toil. "Beautiful it is when the study of the *Torah* goes with worldly work; it is a safeguard against sin."[8] "'Choose life,'" God says,[9] "and life means work—yes, even handwork."[10]

[1] *Aboth d' R. Nathan*, ed. Schechter, p. 45.
[2] *Berachoth*, 8 a; the reference is to Ps. cxxviii. 2.
[3] *Nedarim*, 49 b.
[4] Prov. xxii. 29.
[5] Ps. civ. 23.
[6] Ecclus. vii. 15.
[7] *Kiddushin*, 29 a.
[8] *Aboth*, ii. 2.
[9] Deut. xxx. 19.
[10] *Jer. Peah*, i. 1; *Kiddushin*, i. 7.

And the Rabbins preached what they practised; for many of them were common day-labourers. They divided the day, we are told,[1] equally between prayer, study, and work. And, great Sages though they were, they knew how to respect the industry of the humblest workman. "I am a child of God," said one of them, "and my neighbour is His child too. My work is in the town, his in the fields. I rise early to my work, and he rises early to his. He boasts not of his work; I will not boast of mine. And if thou sayest that I do great things, and he small things, I ask: Have we not learnt that it matters not whether a man accomplish much or little, if only he fix his heart upon his Father in Heaven?"[2] It is a fine story that is told[3] of Abba Joseph, who, though a Rabbi, was a builder's labourer. While at his work one day he is accosted by a man who would drag him into a theological discussion. The Rabbi refuses. "I am a day-labourer," he says, "and cannot leave my work; say quickly what you would and go."

Nor is work an evil to be bewailed, and if possible avoided. It is a blessing. Far from being the primeval curse, it was our first parents' solace, as it is the solace of the human race, their descendants. When, according to the legend,[4] Adam learnt that thenceforth the earth was to yield thorns and thistles, he wept. "What!" he cried, "shall I and my beasts eat out of the same manger?" But when he knew that he was to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, that human industry might make the earth smile again, he was comforted. Work is the great

[1] *Midrash Rabbah* to Eccles. ix. 9.
[2] *Berachoth*, 17 a.
[3] *Shemoth Rabbah*, chap. xiii., to Exod. x. 1.
[4] *Pesachim*, 118 a.

anodyne. It brings us forgetfulness of sorrow, and courage to face it. The cares of life would often crush us had we not its saving support. Nor does it only deliver us from misery, it prevents us from knowing it. The busy have no time to be sad, and of all wretched men the idle are the most miserable. That they easily fall a prey to moral evil too is an equally familiar truth. Those are most active in wrong-doing who have "nothing to do."

Neither is work to be honoured merely for the worldly boons it wins, because it is the avenue to wealth, and ease, and social power. The salt of health, physical, mental, and moral, it is also the safeguard of a noble independence. Every man owes it to himself to cherish that precious possession. The Sages hold it shameful in the last degree for a man to look for his sustenance to others. "Better," says Ben Sira,[1] "is the life of a poor man under a shelter of logs than sumptuous fare in another man's house. With little or with much be well satisfied; it is a miserable life to go from house to house." And a later teacher echoes the doctrine: "Live on the coarsest food rather than be dependent upon others."[2] And even if a man devote himself to a life of religious study, his want of self-reliance is not to be excused. Such a man, Maimonides roundly declares,[3] "profanes the Name, dishonours the Law, and quenches the light of Religion." From this degradation we are to do every honourable thing, however menial, to save ourselves, even to "flaying a carcase in the street."[4] In the Grace after Meals the Israelite prays to be delivered from the need of "either gift or loan from

[1] Ecclus. xxix. 22, 23.
[2] *Orchoth Tsaddikim*, quoted by Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, p. 131.
[3] *Hilc. T. Torah*, iii. 10.
[4] *B. Bathra*, 110 a.

flesh and blood." Self-reliance is one of the elements of the good life. To be forced to accept charity or extraneous aid of any kind is often a necessity,[1] but always one that involves a certain humiliation. The dignity that is innate in every man suffers dishonour. That industry may deliver us from this miserable extremity is not the least of its merits.

The inherent nobility of work is a truth that needs to be more diligently taken to heart in these days. The number of persons who regard labour as a blessing is diminishing fast. Men's best energies are spent not upon work, but upon the attempt to escape from it. Never has steady toil fallen into such disrepute. The mania for speculation and gaming, which is eating away the heart of latter-day morality, owes nearly all its origin to a contempt for patient industry. Men would get wealth without being at the pains of working for it. And too many of those who do work submit to the necessity in a grudging spirit. Their occupation yields them no delight. They go to it late and leave it early. Let us not undervalue recreation. A man may make himself a slave to work, as he may to pleasure, and suffer all a slave's degradation. But there is a golden mean in all things. If we ought not to give ourselves to toil, body and soul, to the injury of the physical health and to the detriment of the intellectual and the spiritual life, we ought also not to disparage it as a necessary evil. The many holidays which people manufacture for themselves in these days are not so much the outcome of a need for recreation as the result of a dislike and even a contempt for steady and sustained labour. Men lose all pride in their work.

[1] "He," say the Rabbins (*Peah*, 11 a; Maim. *Hilc. Mat. Aniyim*, x. 19), "who is in dire need and is too proud to accept charity, sheds human blood."

Instead of making it their life's task, in the fulfilment of which they find true ennoblement, they regard it as the mere means of living. And so, having degraded it, is it any wonder that they dislike and evade it? How can that be aught but an irksome burden which has long since been robbed of every attribute of dignity?

Nor is the mischief confined to any one class; it permeates the entire social structure. If it infects the man in the City, it takes hold also of the day-labourer in the workshop. He, too, is fast losing that joy in his work, that proud sense of creation, which transforms the artisan, however humble his task, into the artist. There are many honourable exceptions, but the average toiler is not so much a workman as a working-man, an automaton bound by a hard fate to go through a monotonous round of toil as the alternative to starvation. He works like a machine, and, alas, allows himself to be used as a machine by plausible agitators. And the result is the same as it is in the case of his "betters." He dislikes his work and flies from it as soon as he can; what he does he does half-heartedly. At the stroke of twelve he throws down his hammer, though the nail be only half driven home. And since his whole heart is not in his labour the quality of his work suffers. Doubtless the extended use of machinery and the minute subdivision of labour, which are the characteristic features of existing industrial methods, are in part answerable for the temper of the modern worker. It is difficult for a man who has to saw planks all day to feel much enthusiasm for his task. It is monotonous; it makes nothing outright; it gives no play to the worker's individuality. But the unpopularity of work is not entirely accounted for by these facts. It must chiefly

be ascribed to the change that has come over the attitude of men's minds generally towards steady industry, an attitude which all classes seem to share, the man of business and the artist equally with the day-labourer.

Work, then, is sacred in itself. It fosters and develops some of our best energies. Nay, rightly considered, it is a service of God. The great men of the Bible, says Maimonides,[1] "gave themselves willingly and reverently to the humblest tasks—to tilling the soil, to keeping sheep, to ordering their households—because they saw in them the path by which to approach the Supreme." Through worldly toil we may attain to the higher life.

And so work must be regarded reverently. Neither dishonesty nor deceit must sully it. Nay, the very choice of it must be well-considered. The selection of a business or profession is a serious step, and one that ought to be taken in a serious spirit. The inherent sanctity of work, as the means by which, in the lower sense, we are to live, and as the great instrument with which we may accomplish our Divinely-appointed mission on earth, demands this temper from us. But it is demanded from us also as a direct obligation to ourselves. To choose a congenial occupation, one suited to our particular capacities and tastes, is surely a duty. For only such an occupation will achieve its true purpose by calling forth our best powers of body and mind. The badly-chosen vocation is followed without enthusiasm, without sincerity; and while it is necessarily ill done, and thus is a source of discredit to ourselves and an injury to the community, it misses one of its chief aims, inasmuch as it leaves some of our best capacities undeveloped. It stunts our growth. There is

[1] *Morë*, iii. 51.

no more disheartening spectacle than that of the man who has made a wrong start in life, who finds himself tied to tasks which he dislikes and even despises. The choice of one's life-work deserves to be made anxiously and prayerfully.

We have referred to integrity in business; and there are certain callings to be shunned because, besides lowering one's moral tone, they offer direct temptations to dishonesty. Betting and gambling are examples. The man who deliberately resorts to such means of obtaining a livelihood wilfully degrades himself. He substitutes low methods of earning his bread for higher ones. He contemns his noblest possibilities. And that is clearly self-degradation. And in what does the shamefulness of betting and gambling consist? It consists, first of all, in the neglect of sustained, arduous, self-denying industry for intermittent and easy activities. It consists further in the renunciation of tasks that promise health to body and mind for those that breed an unwholesome excitement. But it consists also in the rejection of honest labour for pursuits that foster cupidity and offer special incentives to deception and dishonesty. In a word, all such occupations are demoralising. And, therefore, whether they are made a regular means of gaining a livelihood, or are only resorted to occasionally in the hope of increasing one's earnings, they stand equally condemned. No one can ever have recourse to them without being debased. Let a man, say the Rabbins,[1] see that he teach his son a cleanly trade; and they gave practical effect to their opinions when they ordained[2] that gamblers and betting

[1] *Kiddushin*, 82 a.
[2] *Mishnah Synhed.* iii. 3.

men were incapable of giving evidence in a Court of Justice.[1]

Life, we have said, is worth living. Every act is to be avoided that weakens our hold upon it. It is to be cherished as a blessing, not regarded as a burden to be shuffled off with a sigh of relief. The Jewish view of death is characteristic. The pious Israelite does not look forward with longing to the cessation of life. When the Master's call comes he will be ready for the summons, and he will so live as to be ready for it. But he does not wish for death. He desires life as a space in which he may do the utmost good of which he is capable, not only for his fellow-men, but, in the highest sense, for himself also. He is not a pessimist. For him this world is not a vale of tears. It is a beautiful world, and men must keep it beautiful by the inherent graciousness of their own lives and by the joy they weave into the lives of others. On the other hand, the true Israelite does not think of this world as his home. It is but a halting-place on the journey from one point in eternity to another —"the ante-chamber to the palace,"[2] "a wayside inn,"[3] the port where we must equip our bark if we would fare safely on our fateful voyage in the great Beyond.[4] The Jew does not fix his thoughts exclusively upon the future life, but he equally refuses to confine his outlook to this life. If he does not regard death as a release, he is also

[1] The evil of gambling, viewed from the social standpoint, is also noted by the Talmud. The gambler "contributes nothing to the stability of the world." In other words, he is a social parasite. See *Synhed.* 24 b.

[2] *Aboth*, iv. 16.

[3] *Moed Katon*, 9 b.

[4] *Midrash Mishlê*, ed. Buber, to Prov. vi. 6.

far from awaiting it with dread. It is the ordinance of God, and therefore the ordinance of perfect wisdom. "Fear not," says the Sage,[1] "the sentence of death; remember them that have been before thee, and that come after. This is the sentence from the Lord over all flesh; and why dost thou refuse when it is the good pleasure of the Most High?"

The pious Jew, then, treads these lower paths with a brave and cheerful heart, with a heart all the braver and the more cheerful because, in death as well as in life, he is in the hands of a loving God. He "goes forth to his daily work," but he knows that it is only "until eventide." He gives himself to worldly pursuits and pleasures; he walks in the ways of his heart and in the sight of his eyes, but he remembers always that for all these things God will bring him into judgment.[2] For him both earth and heaven are real, both spheres of the true life. But while the lower sphere is in itself good, as a preparation for the higher it gains an ampler worth. Yes, as a preparation in the best sense of the word. We ought to think of Heaven not as the reward of this life, but as a nobler continuation of it. Jehudah Halevi sums up the whole matter. The servant of God, as Judaism conceives him, he says,[3] does not separate himself from the world. This earthly existence is no burden for him; he does not spurn it, for it is the good gift of God. Rather he loves life, for it is the means by which he may win life everlasting, and the nobler he proves himself in this world the higher is his degree of fitness for the world to come.

[1] Ecclus. xli. 3, 4. [2] Eccles. xi. 9. [3] *Cuzari*, iii. 1.

CHAPTER VI

THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

ALL the considerations that urge us to promote the health of the body impel us also to cultivate the well-being of the mind. Our intellectual powers are God's handiwork, and all that handiwork ever is, as it was at the beginning, "very good." We must not spoil it by neglect or deliberate misuse. Nay, to cultivate our minds is to live, and to live is to serve.

The attainment of knowledge, then, is a sacred duty. It is dictated by something higher than merely prudential motives. Knowledge is the passport to worldly success; but while it is proper to value it on that account, we ought to prize it far more because its attainment means self-culture, the development of God-given faculties, the fulfilment of a God-given mission—in a word, because it means self-realisation. "Whoso findeth me," cries Knowledge, "findeth life; but he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul."[1]

The pursuit of knowledge has ever been extolled by Judaism. Learn, know, teach—how often do these words occur in the Pentateuch! They are an exhortation to get

[1] Prov. viii. 35, 36.

the highest form of knowledge, Religion, but also to ponder and master the whole science of living. That the Lawgiver meant his hearers to cultivate their thinking powers as well as their emotions, to reason about Religion as well as to feel it, is certain. For the Pentateuch is the champion of enlightenment. It denounces superstition;[1] it would have us possess an intelligent, a reasoned creed. Alone, then, among the religious codes of antiquity it is the friend of the intellectual life. Consider again the Book of Proverbs, the typical example of a series of works which, from their leading characteristics, have been styled the "Wisdom Literature." The wisdom there extolled has the fear of God for its base and crown, but the writers evince an æsthetic appreciation of the charm that knowledge imparts to its happy possessors. "Wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom: yea, with all thou hast gotten get understanding. She shall give to thy head a chaplet of grace; a crown of beauty shall she deliver to thee."[2] Equally glowing is the panegyric pronounced by the author of the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon. For him, too, wisdom is the ideal good. "When I am come into my house I shall find rest with her, for converse with her hath no bitterness, and to live with her hath no pain, but gladness and joy."[3] Nay, wisdom has the widest connotation. Solomon, the impersonation of wisdom, is a sympathetic student of Nature, and makes its wonders the theme of his songs. "He spake," we are told,[4] "of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of

[1] See *e.g.* Lev. xix. 26; Deut. xiv. 1.
[2] Prov. iv. 7-9.
[3] Wisdom of Solomon viii. 16.
[4] 1 Kings iv. 33.

creeping things, and of fishes." And a later writer assigns to his knowledge a yet larger scope. "He knew"—so we read[1]—"the constitution of the world and the operation of the elements, the circuits of years and the positions of stars, the violences of wind and the thoughts of men, the diversities of plants, and the virtues of roots—all things, either secret or manifest."

Even the Rabbins, though for them the study of the Scriptures was the highest of all joys, could keep a place in their affections for secular learning. "He is a low man," they say,[2] "who lacks knowledge, yes, even though he be learned in the Torah." For the Torah must be studied with intelligence; it is, to use the Rabbinic figure, like the sea; only the swimmer, who knows how to guide himself through the waters, can plunge into it with safety.[3] "If," the Rabbins ask, "thou lackest knowledge, what hast thou gotten? if thou hast gotten knowledge, what dost thou lack?"[4] They lauded the study of science—of medicine, of astronomy; loving Hebrew, they praised the beauty of Greek.[5] Nay, knowledge is but the means, and its end is that sane and intelligent application of it which alone is wisdom. Both are needed to make the complete man. It is possible to have knowledge, and yet to lack the power of using it; it is possible to be ignorant, and yet to have a counterfeit, a dangerous wisdom. The one, say the Rabbins,[6] is to have bread without condiment, the other to have the condiment without the bread.

Nay, to exercise our mental gifts is itself a religion.

[1] Wisdom of Solomon vii. 17-21.
[2] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. i. to Lev. i. 1.
[3] *Midrash Rabbah* to Cant. i. 2.
[4] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. i. to Lev. i. 1.
[5] *Megillah*, 9 b. [6] *Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. cxix. 73.

To get knowledge is to get a clearer sight of the Divine. The man, the Rabbins declare,[1] who might study astronomy and will not, sinfully shuts his eyes to the signs of God's working in the universe. Science is the handmaid of Religion, and to disdain her teaching is to refuse the knowledge of God.

Thus it is that one of the most important prayers in the Jewish liturgy—the *Amidah*—includes a supplication for the gifts of the intellect. The pious Jew offers the petition thrice daily, thus setting the hall-mark of religion upon knowledge and understanding, and declaring them to be among the most desirable things.[2] Nor has it been an unmeaning petition. There have doubtless been times when the Jew has been plunged in the darkness of ignorance, when, owing to long-continued persecution, a narrow religiosity has constituted for him the sum total of the higher life. But far more often he has evinced an insatiable passion for intellectual joys. There have even been times when he stood almost alone as the torch-bearer of science, when, but for his loving offices, knowledge and culture might have disappeared from the world.

As Jews, then, we are bound to the intellectual life by special obligations. Only the highest motive should inspire our endeavour after it. Knowledge must be pursued for its own sake. "The Crown" must not be used for sordid ends.[3] While we cannot altogether ignore the value of intellectual gifts as the passport to worldly success, we may still preserve some of the ancient spirit, and prize them far more for the true self-realisation of which they are the instruments. Wealth, social influence, material comfort—these things it is not necessary to

[1] *Shabbath*, 75 a. [2] See *Berachoth*, 33 a. [3] *Aboth*, i. 13.

despise. But higher than them all let us set knowledge itself, with the discipline and the strength and the self-development that are secured by its pursuit. For we cannot trifle with our higher powers, we cannot basely use knowledge, without a certain degradation.

But the pursuit of knowledge and the culture of the mind does not constitute the whole of our duty. There are certain virtues, such as contentment and cheerfulness, which make for mental health and well-being. "Who," asks a Sage,[1] "is the wise man?" And he answers, "He who rejoices in his portion"—he who, whether he have little or much, keeps a satisfied and glad heart. The maxim contains a whole philosophy; it summarises an entire section of Jewish ethics. The Scriptural and the Talmudic writings vie with each other in praising the contented spirit, in castigating the narrow, envious mind that can discern no blessings save those which are denied it. God's servants, the Prophet declares,[2] are they that sing for joy of heart, and the Divine spirit, the Talmud affirms,[3] rests not upon the sad and the woebegone, but upon those who do their duty and are glad. There is no nobler or wiser prayer than that in which Jacob, disdaining to ask for the pleasures of life, supplicates only for its commonest necessaries, for "bread to eat and raiment to put on."[4] Agur prefers a similar request: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the bread of my portion."[5] For the simpler our wants, the less room there is for disappointment and repining, and the greater therefore are our chances of happiness.

[1] *Aboth*, iv. 1. [2] Isa. lxv. 14. [3] *Shabbath*, 30 b.
[4] Gen. xxviii. 20. [5] Prov. xxx. 8.

The avaricious man is an unhappy man, as the word "miser" itself suggests. His nature first makes him the prey of consuming desires, and then forbids him to satisfy them. He says to gold, "Be thou my god," and so lives without religion. Not that we are to despise wealth, or to regard those who possess it as sinners and enemies of society. After all, wealth is a term of relative significance. What seems superabundance to one person is but a sufficiency for another. And if wealth ceased to be a legitimate object of desire, a potent factor of human progress would disappear. To denounce money as the root of all evil, and the rich as necessarily evildoers, is the part not of morality, but of foolishness. Those who do so forget that, in the eyes of the class socially beneath them, they themselves are rich, and that they, in their turn, may as justly be made the object of scornful condemnation. What true morality requires of us is not to despise wealth, but to appraise it rightly. A proper object of human efforts, it must not be their highest object. Its pursuit must be subordinated to duty—to integrity as regards others, to contentment, with its attendant peace, as regards ourselves. Never must the desire for riches become a fetish to which we sacrifice our moral health and our tranquillity of soul. An old teacher has set forth this truth: "Despise not riches. Honour the wealthy if they are benevolent and modest. But remember that the true riches is contentment."[1]

Nor ought we to be satisfied with bearing our lot, whatever it may be, uncomplainingly. We should "*rejoice* in our portion." To be always dwelling on the dark side of things instead of looking for their

[1] *Sepher Maaloth Hammidoth*, Lemberg ed. 1850, p. 61 *seq.*

brighter aspects, is to lose our own dignity and rebelliously to impeach God's wisdom. Nay, to take the lowest ground, it is to be one's own worst enemy. The discontented, the jealous, the pessimist, those who meet troubles half-way and "feel a thousand deaths in fearing one," sow for themselves a rich crop of evils. They suffer in mind, but in body too. "A tranquil heart," says the Sage,[1] "is the life of the flesh, but envy is the rottenness of the bones." How often is the physical health undermined by these moral ailments! Truly, "a merry heart is a good medicine."[2] And a later Sage echoes the doctrine: "Remove sorrow far from thee; for sorrow hath destroyed many, and there is no profit therein. Envy and wrath shorten a man's days; and care bringeth old age before its time."[3] The man who has a cheerful outlook on life, who takes the buffets of fortune with a smile, has within him the source of all well-being, physical and mental, but moral as well. For to bear a grudge against life is to have a fruitful incentive to wrong-doing. It is to feel impelled to redress by violent means the wrong that fate seems to have done us. By no accident is it that a warning against covetousness is included in the Ten Commandments. For there is scarcely any crime that may not spring from such seemingly little sins.[4] They are man's undoing. They are, according to the Rabbins,[5] the sins that kill. "Keep discontent far from thee," says a medieval writer;[6] "envy a man nothing save his virtues."

Finally, we owe to ourselves the duty of cultivating the welfare of the soul. Of all God's gifts to us it is the

[1] Prov. xiv. 30. [2] Prov. xvii. 22. [3] Ecclus. xxx. 23, 24.
[4] See *Sepher Maaloth Hammidoth*, p. 62 *seq.*
[5] *Aboth*, iv. 21. [6] Introduction to the *Rokeach.*

noblest, and therefore to be cherished with the utmost solicitude. We have to cultivate, then, our higher nature; we must grow in spiritual stature. We are children of the Lord our God. And as His children we must live. To regard ourselves from this point of view is, as we have seen, to have a special incentive to right-doing. Nay, it is to have disclosed to us possibilities of ennoblement which otherwise might always be hidden from us. The appeals of duty acquire an added force when we see in it a debt not to God only, but to our higher selves. Truth, for example, is an obligation which we owe to all men; but its scope and sanctity alike are enlarged by the thought that falsehood is a sin against our immortal souls, against the Divine within us. Those who know that thought will shrink from deception, even when it cannot do any real harm to others. It is enough for them that they themselves will be harmed—their spiritual purity sullied, their souls besmirched.

And so a whole domain of virtuous effort opens before such minds. They feel themselves invested with a dignity which they dare not lower. Acts which to others seem venial are to them unpardonable. It is under the influence of such thoughts that many a Jew has attained to positive saintliness of life. He has felt himself bound to be true to something more than the mere letter of his bond, to be, in Rabbinic phrase,[1] "*within* the line of right," and to seek after an obedience wider than that demanded by any written code. This virtue the Rabbins style *middath chassiduth*, "the attribute of piety," or "saintliness." "Sanctify thyself," so ran their motto,[2] "in the things that

[1] *Mechilta* to *Yithro*, chap. ii.; *B. Mezia*, 30 b, etc.
[2] *Yebamoth*, 20 a.

are permitted to thee," by denying thyself, that is, something of what is allowed.[1] "For so," says a medieval teacher,[2] "shalt thou sanctify thy life, and make it a holy service of God." In other words, the conscience of the pious Jew, transcending the letter of the commandment, will be informed with reverence for its spirit. He will render a larger obedience than is actually demanded from him, for it is there that all his honour lies. The Talmud indeed speaks[3] of an imaginary code of duty, "the Mishnah of the Saints," whose prescriptions, ampler and higher even than those of the Law itself, the truly good man will obey.

But all these nobler efforts—these "works of supererogation," to borrow a term from another theology—the pious Jew has ever felt to be an obligation which he owed to himself—to himself doubtless as an Israelite—but still ultimately to himself as a child of God, as a human being, "crowned with honour and glory," and bound to realise his noblest possibilities. This was the incentive that spurred the saintly souls of our race towards perfection. And though we of humbler clay may not hope to attain to their success, we ought all to cherish their inspiring motive. Self-reverence, the sense of obligation to the godlike that is in us all—this we ought to cultivate. For with it grow both our moral strength and our moral horizon, our power to live nobly and our conception of noble living.

The cultivation of the spirit further includes the

[1] See Nachmanides on Lev. xix. 2, cited by S. Schechter in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. x. p. 9.

[2] Introduction to the *Rokeach*.

[3] *Jer. Terumoth*, 8 (end).

cultivation of the religious sentiment. It is a common mistake to imagine that faith in God may be dismissed from the thoughts as a matter of little or no moment. "Be virtuous," we are apt to exclaim; "let who will be religious." But this attitude is not fair to ourselves. Religion, far from being an unimportant matter, is one of tremendous importance both for the happiness and the right conduct of life. Whether there is a God or not, and if there be, whether He controls human destiny and takes note of human actions, whether death ends all or is only the beginning of an ampler existence—these are questions which manifestly have a close bearing upon the well-being of every thoughtful mind. Nay, as we have pointed out, they partly influence our ethical conceptions. Conduct, it has been said, is three-fourths of life. But Religion is three-fourths of conduct. And if this be so, it becomes a solemn duty to deepen those religious intuitions which we share with all human beings, to strengthen our hold upon the Divine verities, to give play to our aspirations after a Divine ideal, to grasp the outstretched hand with which God would draw us to Himself. Not that, as we have already seen, we ought to make the future life occupy our thoughts to the exclusion of this life, or that we are to yield ourselves up to a sterile religiosity. But there are vast problems confronting us all, problems which spring out of our everyday experience; and we owe it to ourselves not lightly to put them aside, but to face them seriously, and, if we can honestly do so, let Religion furnish their solution. Nay, that communion with the Divine, which Religion ensures us, that nearness to God which was the exceeding joy of the Psalmists, is surely the truest bliss that man can attain in this life, even as it

is the most fruitful source of moral inspiration. To attain to this inestimable happiness must needs be the aim of all true self-culture. For he only is the fully grown man whose nature is developed on every side. If it is wrong to stunt our physical or mental growth, it is at least equally wrong to starve the spirit, to let our higher energies rust. Judaism does not favour specialisation of any kind. It does not ask us to exercise one set of faculties, however exalted, to the exclusion of other and lower powers. It does not ask us to be religious devotees. But it does ask us to be fair to ourselves, to take note of and to develop those higher gifts which are as real and at least as precious as our bodily or mental endowments. Religion need not be a vocation, but it ought to be a life.

CHAPTER VII

DUTIES TO OTHERS—THE GOLDEN RULE

OUR duty to our fellow-men, or social duty as it is sometimes called, is set forth in general terms in the memorable injunction: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[1] This is the famous Golden Rule, and a Talmudic Sage has well styled it the one comprehensive maxim of Biblical ethics.[2] Love, it tells us, must be the motive principle of our dealings with our fellow-men. Those, then, who declare that the Pentateuch does not teach the religion of love make their assertion in the teeth of this great maxim.

Nor does this command stand alone. The duty of love is impressed upon the Israelite again and again. In the 34th verse of this 19th chapter of Leviticus he is exhorted to love the stranger; and the command is repeated in other parts of the Pentateuch, notably in Deuteronomy x. 18, 19, where we read that God "loveth the stranger; love ye therefore the stranger." Never, the Israelite is admonished, can he come nearer to that Divine ideal which he is for ever to keep before him than when he shows loving consideration for the friendless alien.

[1] Lev. xix. 18.

[2] *Siphra* to the verse.

Love is the corner-stone of the Rabbinical ethics also. "My sons," God is pictured[1] as saying to men, "my sons, do I require aught of you for Myself? No. All I ask of you is that ye love one another."

This great duty, moreover, is to have the widest interpretation. We are to pay the debt of love not to this man or to that, but to *all* men. For we are to love our *neighbour*, and that the word neighbour means our fellow-man, without distinction of race or nationality or creed, is evident from the wording of the verse already cited: "The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself."[2]

It is sometimes urged that the stranger here referred to is only the naturalised foreigner, who has thrown in his lot with Israel, and not the real alien, who comes and goes, whose ideas and interests are centred in his own people and his own land. But observe the sentiments to which the appeal is made. Why is the Israelite to love the stranger? Because he was himself a stranger in the land of Egypt.[3] And what sort of stranger was he there? Was he a trusted and an honoured guest, sharing the blessings, and therefore the obligations of citizenship? No, but the most alien of all foreigners, a slave, suspected and despised, a being isolated from the national life and persistently refused the joys of civic fellowship. "You know," cries the Lawgiver to this whilom slave, "you know from bitter experience what such a position means; you know the misery of it; and, because you know that misery, beware of inflicting it upon others." Is it not

[1] *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, chap. xxviii. p. 572.

[2] See also Exod. xi. 2; Judges xiv. 11.

[3] Deut. x. 19.

clear, that the appeal, as a means of securing consideration merely for the protected and prosperous stranger, who was already sure of it, would be utterly unmeaning? All its force lay in its being a plea for the casual visitor, the stranger in the ordinary sense of the word, who was as friendless as the Israelite himself had been in Egypt, and who might easily be made as miserable.[1]

Nay, the obligation is wider still. We are to love even our enemy. The Golden Rule tells us so. We have only to read the entire verse to perceive this. "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear a grudge." Why? "Because," says the Law, "thou art bound to love thy neighbour as thyself." Vengeance can be thought of in connection only with an enemy; so that the command to love our neighbour becomes a command to love our enemy. And again the precept does not stand alone. The Israelite is exhorted in the plainest language to help his enemy in his hour of need: "If thou meet thy enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, thou shalt surely help with him."[2]

But to love our enemy is only one of the duties enjoined by the Golden Rule, one that is especially instanced by the Law because of the extreme self-mastery it demands. The precept itself is susceptible of countless applications. Logically it must be so. If my neighbour means my enemy, it must also mean my fellow-man. If I am to do the harder duty, I am clearly bound to do the easier. But the Law leaves us in no doubt on this point.

[1] The precept is the more notable since, by the admission of a modern critic (Holzinger on Exodus in Marti's *Commentary*, p. 249) who is none too sympathetic to the Pentateuchal legislation, the Egyptians hated foreigners.

[2] Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.

Our neighbour is our equal, whom we are not to rob or deceive, our inferior, whose wage we are not to withhold, the rich and the poor alike, to whom we are to do no injustice, even the sinner, whom we are to rebuke, but not to hate.[1]

The Talmudic doctrine is equally broad. All men are brothers—members of the same human family, sons of the same Heavenly Father. Love is due to them all alike; no consideration of race or creed can cancel the debt. "Love all men," cry the Rabbins.[2] Against the Sage who calls the Golden Rule the most comprehensive precept of the Torah, another quotes, as still greater, the opening verse of the 5th chapter of Genesis: "This is the book of the origins of man," which declares all men to have been created in the Divine image and therefore to be equally entitled to human love.[3] "The heathen is thy neighbour, thy brother; to wrong him is a sin."[4] "If," says the Talmud,[5] "two men claim thy help, and one is thy enemy, help him first." "Every day," says an old teacher,[6] "the Israelite supplicates in his prayers for various boons—for knowledge, wisdom, forgiveness. In this petition let him include both friend and foe; for how can he rightly ask God for blessings which in his heart he does not desire his neighbour to have?" And in his daily life the pious Jew has ever tried to rise to the height of this noble argument. Old devotional manuals contain a beautiful formula to be recited as an introduction to the morning prayer: "Lo, I solemnly set myself to obey the command 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'—O

[1] See Lev. xix. 13, 15, 17.
[2] *Aboth*, i. 12; *Aboth d' R. Nathan*, 52.
[3] *Siphra* to Lev. xix. 18.
[4] *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, chap. xv. p. 284.
[5] *B. Mezia*, 12 b.
[6] *Orchoth Tsaddikim*, chap. ix.

God, forgive, I pray Thee, those that have wronged me; forgive them in this world and in the next."[1] Before approaching the Supreme in prayer the Israelite has to purge his heart of all harsh feeling even towards his enemies.

We are, then, to love our neighbour. But the Law does not leave the matter there. We are to give our love in generous measure, not to dole it out with niggardly hand. We are to love our neighbour as *ourself.* What does this mean? Hillel answered the question when he summed up the moral law in the saying, "What is hateful to thee do not unto thy neighbour."[2] In other words, to love our neighbour as ourself is to put ourself in his place, to regulate our conduct towards him by the thought of what we should desire from him were our positions reversed. We are to let our imagined need suggest the measure of our treatment of his actual need. Thus, if we were at the mercy of our enemy, we should desire him to spare us; and so we will spare our enemy when he is at our mercy. If we were a stranger in a strange land, how gratefully should we welcome some kind act which showed us that we were not entirely friendless! Thinking thus, we will be kind to the stranger. The Law, indeed, as we have seen, expressly bids the Israelite give his imagination play in this last-mentioned case. "Ye know," it says,[3] "the *soul* of the stranger, seeing that ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Nay, appeal is made to the Israelite's former misery to enforce the duty of kindness not only to the stranger, but to the enemy

[1] See, *e.g.* *Sepher Hanhagath Haadam* ("The Book of Daily Conduct"), Amsterdam, ed. 1717, p. 10; and the citation from Moses of Coucy (thirteenth cent.) in Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, p. 144.

[2] *Shabbath*, 31 a. Compare *Tobit*, iv. 15.

[3] Exod. xxiii. 9.

who has caused that misery: "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian because thou wast a stranger in his land."[1] The thought of the wrong which the Israelite has suffered at the hands of the Egyptian, far from justifying a desire for revenge, is to rebuke it. "Thou knowest," he is reminded, "what suffering means, for this man afflicted thee; therefore spare even him."

* In other words, the Golden Rule affirms that all men have an equal claim with us to well-being. We possess no rights in this respect which we do not share with our neighbour. In modern philosophical language this is expressed by saying that no man is an *individual*—that is to say, a being with exclusive rights, which he may vindicate at the expense of others. Every man is a *person*, a man with a neighbour, with whom he shares his rights; and those rights he has accordingly to assert with an eye to the general good. "Each man," it has been aptly said, "must count for one, and for no more than one." Social morality, then, consists not in using our fellow-man, not in exploiting him, but in serving him, in practically recognising that he occupies a co-ordinate position with ourselves in the great republic of humanity. Thus we come back to the old Scriptural conceptions. All men are members of one great family, and all social obligation is summed up in the command to love them as oneself. The ancient Prophet had this idea before him when he cried[2] "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why, then, do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?"

Thus the love which is enjoined upon us is seen to be, after all, but another name for justice. Forgiveness,

[1] Deut. xxiii. 7. [2] Mal. ii. 10.

forbearance, charity, merciful acts of every kind, become the rightful due of our fellow-man, who, like ourself, is a unit of the human brotherhood. A distinction is sometimes drawn between justice and love, and the Pentateuch, which insists so strongly upon the grandeur of justice, is declared to have been properly superseded by the teaching of the Christian Scriptures which make the gentler virtue the exclusive ideal. But the distinction, with the argument founded upon it, is unwarranted. There is no real difference between justice and love. Love *is* justice. If my neighbour deserves my love, it is his due. Love, to be moral, must be justifiable—naught, that is, but justice. If people recognised this truth more clearly, they would be saved from the exaggerated and ill-considered philanthropy which works evil in the attempt to cure it. Deeds of mercy, too, would be done more mercifully. It is because charity, for example, is given so often as an act of grace, and not as a debt due to the poor, that it is given so ungraciously, and thus fails to achieve its great end—the closing of the rent that divides the social organism.

Carefully pondered, the Golden Rule is seen to be eminently sane and practical. We may be told that it demands an impossible self-abnegation. "How," it may be asked, "can I really love my enemy? At best I can but tolerate him. Or how can I love the stranger of whom I know nothing, and who may be utterly unworthy of such a feeling, or the sinner, with his repulsive wickedness, or the beggar in his unsavoury rags? It would be positively unnatural to admit such persons to that inmost sanctuary of my heart which I reserve for my dearest, for my wife, my child, my friend." Then, again, there is the

expression "as thyself." "How," it may be asked, "can I love any one exactly as myself? A certain degree of selfishness is necessary even for the personality which moral teachers concede to me. A conflict between my interests and those of my neighbour is at times unavoidable. If I am to act at all, I must choose between them. I must either sin against the Law by preferring my interest to his, or equally sin against it by preferring his to mine. The attempt to love my neighbour as myself must issue in a deadlock!"

But all these difficulties arise from misconception of the purport of the maxim. We forget that it is only a general precept, which we are to apply rationally according to the special requirements of each case. And the Law shows us how to apply it in one special case—that of our enemy. It tells us to forgive him, to crush out of our heart all vindictive feeling. Such self-suppression it calls love. It never means us to go beyond this point. It does not expect us to offer to the man who has wronged us that holy gift of tender affection which we rightly keep for those who share with us our homes and our lives. The Law does not demand this, because it never demands the impossible. It never asks us to wrong our dearest by throwing open to every one that inmost sanctuary of our hearts which should enshrine them alone. And as with our enemy, so with the sinner and the beggar and the alien. We are to treat them kindly, tenderly—with the kindness and the tenderness which we ourselves should yearn for if we were sinners, or beggars, or strangers in a strange land. If we were in such a plight, what should we hope for? Should we hope that our neighbour would show us the affection he lavishes upon his wife and

children? Surely not, but only that our need, our weakness, our suffering, would be lovingly considered and patiently dealt with. And this is all that the Law means in such cases by love; for this is all that the case demands, all that it deserves. Exhortations to further, to impossible self-denial—resort to moral paradox—it studiously avoids.

And then as to the second difficulty. It is quite true that sometimes our neighbour's interests seem to clash with our own, and that any action whatsoever is possible only if we prefer one to the other. But again the difficulty vanishes if we remember that the Golden Rule is a general, not a specific axiom. It sets forth the moral ideal—indicates the direction which moral effort should take. Its practical applications are left to us. The Law does not concern itself with cases of real or fancied collisions of interests. It simply says, "Here is a rule, a principle of action; make it your guide. If a poor man implores your aid, give it to him; if a sinner comes your way, be merciful to him; for such aid and such mercy you would need if you were ever in his position. Put yourself in his place, and so realise his need and your duty." But when it comes to a seeming conflict of interests, it is easy to see how the Law would have us act. Is my altruism, my self-sacrifice, to be unlimited? Am I to sell all my goods and give the money to the poor? Am I to make myself a pauper that the pauper may cease to be one? Or am I to say, "No; to do so would be to wrong myself with the idea of righting my neighbour, to accept a state of dependence in the hope of making him independent. Nay, if this be my duty now when I am rich, it will equally become his duty

when I am poor, which would reduce the whole thing to an absurdity." But the Law does not say that this is our duty. Never are we told to strip ourselves of our rights in the attempt to safeguard the rights of others. If my neighbour has a claim upon me, I have an equal claim upon him. I am a person, a member of the great human family, as he is. If I forgo my rights for his sake, I wrong myself and him too, for I help to give him more than his due; I help him to wrong me, and so connive at his injury. The Golden Rule implies this. "Love thy neighbour as thyself," it says—*as* thyself, not less, but also not more. "Thy wrong," it tells us in effect, "can never be his right; if he is thy neighbour, thou art his." No; unlimited self-surrender is impossible. Rivalry there must be, if the world is to go on. But—and this is the great point—the rivalry must be maintained under moral conditions. I may rightly contend with my fellow-man for the prizes of life; but I must not overreach him. All is not fair in love and war.

But rivalry does not imply a conflict of interests, as ethics understands them. In truth, there is no such conflict. To do my best for my neighbour is, after all, to do the best for myself. Philanthropy and self-love are identical. For true self-love means self-realisation in the higher sense; it means the development of our best capacities. And that self-realisation, that development, can be attained only by way of morality, by acts of justice and kindness and brotherly love. If ever there is a seeming collision between our neighbour's well-being and our own, if ever we hesitate between serving him and serving ourselves, it is only because we form a wrong conception of well-being, and mistake selfishness for self-

service. We seek to assert ourselves as individuals, with rights that tower above those of our brother, instead of regarding ourselves as persons merely coequal with him. "The claims of individuals," says a modern writer,[1] "conflict, always and necessarily; the claims of persons never. The moral task, therefore, lies in obeying the law of reason which embraces the lives of our fellows as well as our own: 'Be a person, and respect others as persons':—

> To thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man."

And what is this but the Golden Rule writ large? The "law of reason" which this writer extols is the law of Moses. *

Social duties may conveniently be grouped under four heads: (1) The Family; (2) Society; (3) The State; (4) The Religious Community.

We proceed to consider them under each of these divisions in turn.

[1] James Seth, *A Study of Ethical Principles*, 3rd ed. p. 212. To Professor Seth the author is indebted for the train of thought in the concluding paragraphs of this chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAMILY

* THE Family is the foundation of the social edifice. But for its stability and well-being neither Society nor the State could exist. The Home is the nursery of all the virtues. "If," say the Rabbins,[1] "a man sin against those of his own household, he will inevitably come to sin against his neighbour." To promote domestic peace and well-being is, then, a duty incumbent upon all the members of the family alike. Parents and children, husband and wife, brothers and sisters, master and servant, are bound together by an organic tie. Their relations are not mechanical, but moral. And the obligations that bind them together are mutual.

The parent owes a duty to his children. He is bound to do everything that will promote their personal welfare and fit them to be worthy members of Society and of the State. The good parent will therefore do his utmost to develop every side of his children's nature. He will sedulously care for their bodily health; he will give them the education that will exercise and discipline their intellectual powers; he will provide them—his sons more

[1] *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, p. 289.

particularly—with the special training that will enable them to maintain themselves honourably when they go forth into the world.[1] Pithily do the Rabbins remark[2] that he who does not teach his son a trade virtually teaches him to steal.

Thus the good parent will subject his child to a continuous and systematic discipline, one which errs neither on the side of undue severity nor of harmful laxity.[3] But love will always be his ruling sentiment, and gentleness will prevail with him over severity, even as it is always mightier with the child himself. He will, in Talmudic phrase,[4] repulse his child with the left hand, but draw him lovingly with the right. Nor will the parent be content with equipping his children only in body and in mind for the battle of life. He will see to it that they have a moral and spiritual outfit likewise. The Israelite is enjoined by the Pentateuch[5] not only to lay the Divine commands upon his own heart, but to teach them diligently to his children; for if the children are "taught of the Lord," then "great will be the peace" of the children.[6] Though worldly advancement is a legitimate aim, the real test of success in life is goodness. The parent, then, will take care that the formation of Character keeps pace with the child's physical and intellectual culture. And since Character can only be securely rooted in the fear of God, he will see that his moral training is inspired by Religion. This is the child's claim upon the parent. To be taught of God is his inalienable right. He, say the Rabbins, who denies a

[1] See *Kiddushin*, 29 a; *Jer. Kiddushin*, i. 7; *Sepher Chassidim*, 325, 963.
[2] *Kiddushin*, 29 a.
[3] See Prov. xiii. 24, and *Midrash Mishlē* to the verse.
[4] *Sotah*, 47 a. [5] Deut. vi. 7. [6] Isa. liv. 13.

child religious knowledge robs him of his inheritance.[1] The good parent, says a medieval moralist,[2] will care for his child's body, but still more for his soul.

The parent, then, is bound to his children by solemn, nay, sacred obligations. He is answerable to his conscience, and since every child is a potential citizen, to society also, for their well-being. With him it largely rests to determine not only his children's happiness, but their moral destinies. And Religion heightens the force of these obligations. Children are the gift of God,[3] "a heritage" received from His hands;[4] and, like all heavenly gifts, they must be dealt with under a sense of responsibility to the Giver. To the parent are given human souls in trust for the Supreme, and those souls he has to preserve, as far as in him lies, from the defiling touch of sin. Nay, the parent, to use the Rabbinic idea,[5] stands towards his children almost in the place of God. He has to be a law unto them, to distinguish for them between good and evil, in a large measure to fashion their fate for them. How anxiously, then, will he scrutinise his methods of training! And, since example is mightier than precept, how careful will he be to keep his own life pure![6] *

The child owes duties to his parents. So important are those duties that they are deemed worthy of a place in the Decalogue. "Honour thy father and thy mother"—so we are enjoined in the Fifth Commandment. Respect for the doctrine, the wishes, the person of the

[1] *Synhed.* 91 b.
[2] *Orchoth Tsaddikim*, quoted by Güdemann, *Culturgeschichte*, iii. p. 228.
[3] Gen. xxxiii. 5; Isa. viii. 18, etc.
[4] Ps. cxxvii. 3.
[5] *Kiddushin*, 30 b.
[6] See *Sepher Chassidim*, 374.

parent is the child's duty. Filial affection is nowhere insisted on in the Bible, for it is a natural feeling which rises unbidden in every human breast. Nay, a brute beast which lacks discourse of reason will evince it. But filial reverence is a less instinctive, and therefore less common virtue; and so the Law specifically enjoins it. The Book of Proverbs is full of maxims aiming at the inculcation of this virtue. "My son, keep the commandment of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. Bind them continually upon thy heart, tie them about thy neck. When thou walkest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee."[1] Just because it is the parent that speaks, his commandment must be cherished with affectionate reverence. But that commandment is wise and goodly, an echo of the Divine doctrine. Therefore let the child prize it as his dearest treasure. Let him bind it upon his heart, tie it about his neck, like a precious jewel. And all his life it will repay his love in abundant measure. It will guide him, save him, bless him. Nay, to adopt the Rabbinical interpretation,[2] it will lead him safely through this difficult world into the joyous life hereafter. And this beautiful quotation from Proverbs may be matched by many others from the same Book.[3]

The Talmud, too, is full of the topic. It enumerates[4] the distinctive signs of the dutiful child:—He does not stand in his father's place, nor sit in his seat, nor contradict him. The Rabbins have little admiration for Esau's character as a whole; but they lavish unstinted praise

[1] Prov. vi. 20-22.
[2] *Midrash Mishlê* to the passage.
[3] See also Ecclus. iii. 3 *seq.*; vii. 28.
[4] *Kiddushin*, 31 b.

upon his devotion to his father. Filial reverence they place among the highest of all virtues. No excellence can atone for the lack of it. Let not a man, says the Talmud,[1] to cite a passage already quoted, think that because he is learned in the Law he may contemptuously thrust away his father and mother. Of a Rabbi it is told [2] that when he heard his mother's footsteps, he would say, " I rise before the hallowed presence that approaches." And the Rabbins themselves are fond of instancing a certain Gentile as the type of the good son. Once, so runs the story, the Elders went to him and offered him a large sum of money for certain precious stones which they needed for the High Priest's breastplate. Tempting as the amount was, he refused it because the key of the chest containing the gems was under his father's pillow, and he would not disturb him.[3] Nor must reverence for parents end even with their life. It ought to last as long as the child's heart beats. He will keep their memory green, and whenever he speaks of them it will be with words of loving veneration.[4] Filial reverence of this beautiful kind has ever been a Jewish characteristic.

With the parents may be associated the aged, the scholar, and the teacher, to all of whom the debt of respect and deference is due. " Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and thou shalt fear thy God."[5] The last words of the verse are the usual addition to warnings against cowardly sin. For to slight the aged, who cannot resent the offence thus offered them, is nothing but cowardice. It is not merely a breach of good manners ; it is the mark of a

[1] *Berachoth*, 17 a. [2] *Kiddushin*, 31 b. [3] *Ibid.* 30 b.
[4] *Ibid.* [5] Lev. xix. 32.

feeble, a despicable character. And if age demands tender consideration, the claim is increased when to age is united learning. If knowledge and wisdom are desirable things, their possessors surely deserve honour at our hands. This duty is forcibly inculcated by the Talmud.[1] But to the teacher from whom we have ourselves gained knowledge and wisdom a special measure of respect must be shown. "Let the fear of thy master be unto thee as the fear of Heaven," say the Rabbins.[2] The right attitude of pupil to teacher is exemplified by the Talmud in many detailed injunctions.[3]

* Husband and wife are bound to each other by special obligations. The married state, according to Jewish teaching, is an ideal state. It has been Divinely instituted for the happiness of the individual and for the well-being of human society. It is, moreover, a responsible, a holy condition. Conjugal obligation is invested with the most sacred character. Nowhere in the Bible is the dignity of marriage more strikingly set forth than in the beautiful account of the creation of woman that is given in the second chapter of Genesis. "It is not good," the Almighty says, "that man should be alone;" and woman is created to be his complement, to give him the happiness that he cannot find within himself. She is, in Scriptural phrase, to be "his helper" and yet "his equal." For that is doubtless the significance of the Hebrew words in the passage just referred to which are usually translated "a helpmeet for him." Thus all talk about the superiority of either man or woman is idle. They are

[1] See *e.g.* *Kiddushin*, 33 a. [2] *Aboth*, iv. 12.
[3] See *e.g.* *Kiddushin*, 33 a and b; *Berachoth*, 27 b.

co-ordinate. Each has a distinct place to fill in God's scheme of life. Each has something to offer to the common stock of happiness that the other lacks.

The Bible seems to set its seal upon this truth. Women, like the wives of the Patriarchs, like Miriam and Deborah, Hannah and Huldah, Ruth and Esther, play an important part in the sacred story. Again and again are men rescued from the consequences of their own folly, and even the State from impending calamity, by a woman's hand. The last chapter in the Book of Proverbs is the noblest picture of womanly virtue and the finest tribute to woman's worth in the whole range of sacred literature. "A virtuous woman," says the Sage elsewhere,[1] "is a crown to her husband," and it is woman's wisdom that "buildeth her house."[2] On the other hand, the Bible shows how woman can be man's evil genius likewise. Jezebel must be set against Abigail, Zeresh against Esther, Delilah against Deborah. If man is the king, woman is the power behind the throne, and she can use her opportunities mightily either for good or for evil. Influence so vast may well content her. Not in ousting man from his kingdom, but in showing him how he may rule it wisely, lies her mission. Thus one of woman's grandest tasks is that of noble inspiration. The mother is the educator; no teacher can rival her in the power of moulding the character of her child. Therefore let her find her greatest privilege and her holiest vocation in the training of her children for the good life.

Nor does her obligation end there. Never can a woman more truly realise the ideal of wifely duty than when she seeks to be her husband's conscience, silently

[1] Prov. xii. 4. [2] Prov. xiv. 1.

holding out to him a lofty pattern of conduct, to which, for her sake as well as for its own, he strives to conform. Never can she set herself a more exalted task than that of deepening all his better instincts, of encouraging all his holy impulses. The Rabbins are not unmindful of this lofty conception of woman's duty. She well fulfils her mission, they say,[1] when she leads her children to the schoolhouse, and saves her husband from transgression. That man's life, they add,[2] is indeed enriched who is wedded to a virtuous woman, for with the wife rests the power to make the husband noble or ignoble. And so they say,[3] that whatever blessing dwells in the house comes from her. For the rest, they enumerate among the necessary qualifications of the good wife a gentle temper, tact, modesty, industry.[4]

But if the wife must be energetic in all good suggestion, the husband must show himself forbearing and considerate to her. If "strength" must be her "clothing,"[5] his authority must be tempered by gentleness and love and reverence. "He," say the Rabbins,[6] "who loves his wife as himself, and honours her more than himself—to him the Scriptural promise[7] is uttered 'thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace.'" "Thy wife," they further say, "has been given to thee in order that thou mayest realise with her life's great plan; she is not thine to vex or grieve. Vex her not, for God notes her tears."[8] The married life, according to the Rabbins, is the full

[1] *Berachoth*, 17 a.
[2] *Shabbath*, 25 b; *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. xvii., to Gen. ii. 18.
[3] *B. Mezia*, 59 a.
[4] *Sotah*, 3 b; *Ketuboth*, 72 b; *Jer. Ketuboth*, 5-6.
[5] Prov. xxxi. 25.
[6] *Yebamoth*, 62 b.
[7] Job v. 24.
[8] *Ketuboth*, 61 a; *B. Mezia*, 59 a.

life; through it alone do the husband and wife truly realise themselves. The unmarried man, they declare, is not a complete man; he does not attain his true moral stature. He lives without happiness, without religion, without blessing.[1] The widower lives in a darkened world.[2] In many an utterance the Rabbins commend the exercise of wisdom in the choice of a husband or wife, for they discern the important part played by the parents, by virtue of their example and of the law of heredity, in the fashioning of the child's moral nature.[3] The one great requisite is character.[4] Especially do they condemn those who marry for money or from sordid motives of any sort.[5]

Since marriage is a holy, a Divine covenant, it must not lightly be terminated.[6] "He," say the Rabbins, "who puts away the wife of his youth, for him God's very altar weeps."[7] Into the conditions under which Jewish law sanctions a dissolution of the marriage-tie, or into the general principles involved in this question, we cannot now enter. It is enough to point out that since marriage is a union for the highest ends, it is but right to make it dissoluble when those ends are being frustrated. But in what circumstances this general rule is applicable is a question which we cannot now discuss.

That the sacredness of the marriage-bond must receive homage in the mutual fidelity of husband and wife is self-evident. This elementary duty is enunciated in the Seventh Commandment, and the prophetic words:[8] "Take

[1] *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. xvii., to Gen. ii. 18.
[2] *Synhed.* 22 a.
[3] *Pesachim*, 49 b; *B. Bathra*, 110 a; *Kiddushin*, 70 a; *Bemidbar Rabbah*, chap. xxi., to Numb. xxvii. 5.
[4] *Sotah*, 27 a.
[5] *Kiddushin*, 70 a.
[6] See Mal. ii. 14; Prov. ii. 17.
[7] *Synhed.* 22 a.
[8] Mal. ii. 15.

heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth," echo the solemn utterance. Domestic peace, nay, social well-being, are founded upon reverence for the marriage vow. But positive treachery is only the extreme instance of conjugal transgression. The sacred compact of the marriage day is broken whenever either party to it proves unfaithful to any of the obligations that marriage imposes. Each has vowed in God's hearing to love and honour the other, to minister to the other's happiness in fullest measure. To be unmindful of this solemn pledge is to be doubly false; it is to break a covenant made both with man and with God.

Such being the sanctity of the married state, it behoves every one to enter upon it in a serious and solemn spirit. The husband and the wife should choose each other with due regard to the higher ends that marriage has been designed to fulfil. They have, then, to consider their mutual fitness for each other in respect of character, of education, of intellectual sympathy. For upon that fitness their happiness vitally depends, and without happiness there cannot be that joint service of God which it is the great purpose of marriage to make possible. Thus the Rabbins say[1] that husband and wife, when they are made truly one by a common nobility, bear God's impress in themselves; but let them miss this higher union, and then, in place of the Divine, they carry about with them a devouring fire. With prayerful hearts, then, should man and woman choose each other, and in prayer should they seek to obtain for their choice the highest ratification. There is no occasion in life when the Divine blessing and guidance are more fitly invoked

[1] *Sotah*, 17 a.

than on the bridal day, when a youth and a maiden take each other, in the widest and the most solemn sense of the words, for good or for evil, for weal or for woe. Helpers of each other's joy, they are henceforth also to be the custodians of each other's well-being. The marriage ceremony itself, then, is properly invested with a sacred character; its solemnisation appropriately becomes a religious rite. *

Nor are husband and wife, parent and child, the only members of the family upon whom obligations devolve. Brothers and sisters have to make their contribution to the happiness of the home, to avoid strife, to be gentle and forbearing and unselfish. "Behold," cries the Psalmist,[1] "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Nor is this all their duty. They have to seek the highest good of the household by ministering to its intellectual joys, and by helping each other in the endeavour after the worthy life. The ideal which they have to keep steadily before them is not their personal good merely, however lofty their conception of it, but the good of the family. They have to regard themselves not only as individuals, but as members of a holy organisation, one which, by common effort, may be made a worthy unit of the State, nay, even a temple of God. This is the Jewish conception of family life. Judaism has ever sought to hallow the home, to make it a shrine at which the parents minister to the congregation of the children. Prayer has been the incense, and love the sacrifice. All the chief virtues of the Jewish character have had the home, with its mighty incentives and its hallowed associations, for their nursing-place.

[1] Ps. cxxxiii. 1.

Again, mutual duties subsist between master and servant. The bond that binds them is more than a mere business contract; it is ethical. The payment of the stipulated wage does not discharge the employer of all his responsibility; the completion of his work does not exhaust the obligation of the servant. The one owes, not money only, but just treatment to the worker; the other owes not work only, but just treatment to the master. In the one case the payment must be fair; in the other the work must be honest. The worker deserves his due wage. To take advantage of his ignorance and to pay him less, is to wrong him, even though he is content to accept less. On the other hand, the master deserves fair service. To "scamp" one's work, to do it in slovenly fashion, to "sweep a room, but not the corners," is to be guilty of deception.

And these simple axioms expanded comprise all the ethics of labour. Whether the master be the head of a household or a business, whether the worker be a domestic servant, or an artisan, or a shop hand, they apply with equal force. Each side must be true to the other. Very striking is the Scriptural precept:[1] "Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbour nor rob him; the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee until morning." Consideration for the wage-earner, nay, mere justice, will urge the master to pay him his earnings as soon as they are due. To withhold them is to be guilty of the "oppression," the "robbery," which is denounced in the first part of the verse. The command is repeated later on in the Pentateuch,[2] when the words are added "for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it." To the

[1] Lev. xix. 13.

[2] Deut. xxiv. 14, 15.

possible plea of the master that it is enough if he pay the wage agreed upon, the Law replies "No; you owe the worker still more; you owe him regard for his need, consideration for his feelings. He has set his heart upon getting his wage when his work is done, and to disappoint him would be a cruel injustice." In Rabbinic phrase,[1] it is "to take his life."

No corresponding warning is given to the worker. The servant is never explicitly commanded in the Bible to deal fairly with his employer by giving him honest service. For in primitive times the master was all-powerful and could effectually protect himself. But acts like that of the overseers,[2] with whom no reckoning was necessary because "they dealt faithfully," were none the less the ideal in the Biblical age. Abraham's old retainer; Joseph; Saul's armour-bearer, are examples of the faithful servant. "Seest thou a man diligent in his work? he shall stand before kings"[3]—the Wise Man's praise implies a censure of all indolent and careless workmen, whether they toil for themselves or for others.

More explicit is the later literature. The unfaithful workman, say the Rabbins,[4] is a robber. He does God's work deceitfully.[5] "With all my strength I served," cries Jacob,[6] and every servant must, in like manner, put all his strength into his work.[7] The workman is even warned[8] to nourish himself well so that he may have the needful energy and vigour with which to serve his master. And thus it is that the Rabbins frame a short form of prayer for the day-labourer;[9] for the employer's time

[1] *B. Mezia*, 112 a.
[2] 2 Kings xii. 15.
[3] Prov. xxii. 29.
[4] *B. Mezia*, 78 a.
[5] *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, chap. xv. p. 296.
[6] Gen. xxxi. 6.
[7] Maimonides, *Hilc. Sechiroth*, xiii. 7.
[8] *Jer. Demai*, vii. 4.
[9] *Berachoth*, 16 a.

must not be unnecessarily used even for devotions. And, says Maimonides,[1] just as the master is warned against defrauding the workman of his just wage, so the workman is warned against defrauding the master of his rightful service, against working by fits and starts, for example, or idling away odd moments, and thus "spending the day dishonestly."[2]

* Thus all such devices as restriction of output, which are sanctioned by modern industrial policy, are condemned by the moral law as Judaism expounds it. An appearance of altruism may be given to these expedients by the plea that they provide work for the unemployed. But it is easy to show that while the working classes may possibly be benefited,[3] the nation, as a whole, is injured by being handicapped in the industrial struggle with foreign rivals. For all such devices, too, a further excuse may be found, and not without some show of reason, in the shortcomings of the master. But no unrighteousness can justify unrighteousness. The workman who does less work than he has agreed to do, or does it negligently, commits an immoral act. No extenuating circumstances can alter its character.

But the duty of master and servant will take them beyond the mere letter of their bond. They will do acts of kindly service to each other that are not specified in the contract. The master will show kindly consideration for his servants. His bearing towards them will be gentle and courteous; he will see that the conditions in which they work are healthy; he will interest himself in their

[1] *Hilc. Sechiroth*, xiii. 7.

[2] Cf. *Mesilath Yesharim*, chap. xi.

[3] Competent judges deny even this. See *Industrial Democracy*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, p. 450.

welfare, even in matters outside the sphere of their service.[1] In short, he will put no narrow interpretation upon the relations that subsist between him and them. His servant will be not his servant only, but his "neighbour," his brother, his friend. "If," asks Job,[2] "I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what shall I do when God riseth up? Did not He that made me make him?" And this, too, is the point of view from which the workers will regard their employer. They will consider their interests not as conflicting, but as being identical, with his. To serve him faithfully will be faithfully to serve themselves. To go out of their way to save him from loss will be to ensure their own gain in the worldly sense, but also to give them that moral profit which accrues to every worker who is true to himself and mindful of the dignity with which labour is clothed. If juster relations more generally prevailed between master and servant to-day, if employer and workman were animated by greater good feeling towards each other, and formed a clearer conception of the identity of their respective interests, the cause of industrial peace and of national prosperity would be the gainer.

Labour is neither the slave of capital nor its superior. The two are co-ordinate; they are not rivals, but partners, bound by regard for their individual interests, at least, to promote the interests of each other. In combination they make for the well-being of a people, the well-being of the world. They are equal in dignity. But, and this is the chief point to be remembered, their dignity can only be

[1] *Niddah*, 47 a; *Mechilta* to Exod. xxi. 2; *Siphra* to Lev. xxv. 43; Maim., *Hilc. Abadim*, ix. 8.

[2] Job xxxi. 13-15.

upheld by the personal worth of their representatives. "Seest thou a man diligent in his work? he shall stand before kings." The noble saying cannot be too often quoted. The veriest day-labourer is royal, if he behave royally, if he honour his work, and does it bravely and faithfully, in a spirit of loving self-denial. Whereas let him degrade it by indolence, by neglect, by narrow insistence upon phantom rights, and it will avenge itself by degrading him.

Finally, the head of the house must exercise diligent supervision over the house itself. He must see that its condition is such as to ensure the safety and the general welfare of its indwellers. The Pentateuch sets forth his responsibility in this respect: "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence."[1] And to the principle thus laid down the Rabbins give the widest application. The owner of the house, they declare,[2] must suffer nothing to be done within his domain calculated to harm its occupants or his neighbours. For example, they say,[3] a man must not keep a rickety ladder or a ferocious dog on his premises. These, it need hardly be added, are only typical illustrations of the owner's duty. Any act calculated to injure others that we do or suffer to be done in our quality of head of the household is a violation of the old Pentateuchal precept. The ideal Jewish home, then, will be a healthy home in the widest sense of the word. It will satisfy the requirements of hygiene and sanitation;

[1] Deut. xxii. 8. [2] *Siphrë* to the passage.
[3] *B. Kama*, 15 a.

it will be dedicated, as far as the capacities of its occupants admit, to the intellectual life; it will be filled with the sweetness and light of goodness and religion. It will realise the Psalmist's fine ideal:[1] "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart; I will set no base thing before mine eyes." *

From the association of the family to the communion of friendship is no difficult transition. It is not good for man to live alone. The isolated life is an unnatural life. Society rests on a mutual pact. If my neighbour needs me, it is obvious that I must need him, for I am *his* neighbour. Nor is my need of him restricted to common necessaries, to the things that go to the making of the physical life. I want something more: interest, sympathy, affection—in a word, fellowship. The services of my butcher or my baker will appease my hunger for food; they will leave wholly untouched my craving for the higher joys that companionship supplies. And that craving is imperious. It must be satisfied or I perish; my happiness withers, my natural affections die for want of exercise, my moral growth is hindered. Better not to be in the world than not to be of it. "Either friendship," cries the hero of a famous Talmudic story,[2] "or death." Therefore all human beings, particularly those who have not yet entered the married state, need the joys of friendship. The Rabbins discerned the need. "Get thee a companion," they say,[3] "one to whom you can tell your secrets," to whom you can reveal your whole self. The friend they have in view is one with whom we can live

[1] Ps. ci. 2.
[2] *Taanith*, 23 a.
[3] *Aboth*, i. 4; *Siphrè* to Deut. xxxi. 14.

the religious life in common, one whose inspiration will quicken all our better impulses. He is to be a godly man, a keeper of the commandments.[1] For "in fellowship Religion has its founts"; or, to use the Rabbinic figure,[2] the fire of the higher life is the product of many flames; separate them, and you trample it out. Friendship, then, is a holy bond, and it must be used for the holiest ends, for the realisation of one's noblest potencies, both intellectual and spiritual. A friend should make us wiser and better, or he is no friend.

Hence the duty of caution in the choice of a friend. Among the gifts he offers should be that true companionship, that sympathy with our ideas and aims and hopes which will save us from the terrible sense of being alone in the wide world. To him we should be able to turn in our troubles and doubts and perplexities as to a second and a calmer self, and get that "hearty counsel" which the Bible compares[3] to sweet perfume. But from him also we ought to obtain moral sustenance and strength. He must be one "who in his soul is as our own soul, and who will grieve with us if we should miscarry."[4] A friend, then, is not to be chosen at random; he must be sought for diligently and wisely. He must be proved.[5] "He that maketh many friends," that is, makes them lightly, says the Wise Man,[6] "doeth it to his own destruction: but there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." We shall seek for our friends among the best of our acquaintance. They are to be "godly men," as we have seen. For just as a worthy friend may be our moral

[1] Ecclus. xxxvii. 12.
[2] *Taanith*, 7 a.
[3] Prov. xxvii. 9.
[4] Ecclus. xxxvii. 12.
[5] See Ecclus. vi. 7.
[6] Prov. xviii. 24.

salvation, so a worthless one may be our moral undoing. "In choosing a friend"—so the Rabbins tell us [1]—"go up a step." But our friend once proved and secured, we must "grapple him to our soul with hooks of steel." Friendship is a possession too precious to be at the mercy of a passing whim or the plaything of ill-temper. For "a friend loveth at all times," and even his "wounds" are "faithful." [2]

The Bible is the record of some noble friendships. The mutual affection of David and Jonathan, the touching fidelity of Ruth to Naomi are classical examples of this beautiful virtue. The Rabbins too felt its poetry. How, they ask, did Job's companions know of his affliction? Each, they answer, had a flower which they identified with him, and when it drooped they knew that he was troubled.[3] The power of sympathy could not be expressed in more charming fashion.

[1] *Yebamoth*, 63 a. [2] Prov. xvii. 17; xxvii. 6.
[3] *B. Bathra*, 16 b.

CHAPTER IX

INTEGRITY IN BUSINESS

THE good man will be upright abroad as well as at home. He will be strictly honest in his business life. Not only will he not commit the vulgar crime of stealing, but he will shrink with abhorrence from fraud and deceit of every kind. Significant is the warning,[1] "Ye shall not steal, neither shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another," which puts the offènces of false action and untruthful speech into the same category with the heinous crime denounced by the eighth Word of the Decalogue. Deception in business is robbery. The tricks of trade are not less dishonest because they are not punishable by the law of the land, or because the custom of the trade sanctions or condones them. Merely to imply, even without warranty, that spurious pictures are genuine, to say that an article is reduced in price simply because the additional price has first been put on, to employ the misleading exaggerations of the conventional advertisement—all such devices are violations of the moral law as laid down by Judaism. Honesty and truthfulness are the first debt due from a man to his neighbour. If

[1] Lev. xix. 11.

there is no certainty of that debt being discharged, there is an end to all mutual confidence, to all real intercourse between man and man—an end to society itself.

It is needless to show by further quotations how emphatically the duty of honesty in its widest implications is enunciated by the Bible. With equal force is it inculcated by the Rabbins. The first question, they say,[1] that a man will have to answer on the judgment day is, "Hast thou been honest in thy business?" The Talmud is at the pains to lay down the most minute rules with the object of preventing the smallest cheating in trade. The shopkeeper, for example, must examine his weights and scales at regular and frequent intervals, in order to make sure that they are true; wine must be sold without sediment; trade advertisements must not be misleading; if unsound goods are offered for sale, the customer must be told that they are defective.[2] He who gives false measure is classed with the hypocrite and the blasphemer, whose sin God will never forget.[3] Neither the Day of Atonement nor even repentance will suffice to expiate the sin of robbery; full restitution must come first.[4] To steal, however, with the idea of restitution, even of more than restitution, is a crime.[5]

The Rabbins sternly reprobate, moreover, certain commercial offences which seem to have been considered venial in their day, as they are so deemed in ours—the making of "corners," for example, in commodities, par-

[1] *Shabbath*, 31 a.

[2] *B. Bathra*, 88 a (compare Ecclus. xlii. 4); *Siphra* to Lev. xix. 36; *B. Mezia*, 40 b; Tosephta, *B. Mezia*, iii. 27; Maim., *Hilc. Mechirah*, xviii. 1.

[3] *Aboth d' R. Nathan*, p. 86; *B. Bathra*, 90 b.

[4] *Yoma*, 85 b.

[5] *B. Mezia*, 61 b.

ticularly in food-stuffs.[1] The receiver, they further declare,[2] is worse than the thief.

The honest tradesman will be true to his bond. What he has said he will fulfil.[3] He will be honest even in thought. Once he has made up his mind to take a certain price for his goods, he will not raise it if he has the chance.[4] Nor will he demand twice the amount of his debt, in order that he may the more easily recover the true amount.[5] Overreaching of every sort he will abominate. His lightest word, his yea and his nay, will be righteous.[6]

And the buyer must be as honest as the seller. The Midrash[7] has the story of a Rabbi who buys a camel of a Gentile. His disciples discover in the saddle a quantity of precious stones, and congratulate their master. He promptly rebukes them. "Go," he says, "and restore the gems to their owner; I bought a camel, not precious stones."

And honesty, it is superfluous to add, is a debt due from us to our *neighbour*—to every man, without distinction whatsoever. The Talmud and the later Rabbinical literature are full of injunctions on this point. Deceit is always a flagrant sin, no matter who the victim of it may be. Nay, to cheat a Gentile is even worse than cheating a Jew, for besides being a violation of the

[1] *Aboth d' R. Nathan*, p. 86; *B. Bathra*, 90 b.

[2] Maim., *Hilc. Genebah*, v. 1; *Hilc. Gezelah*, v. 1 *seq.*

[3] *B. Mezia*, 47 b; *Pesachim*, 113 a.

[4] *Kiddushin*, 30 b; *Maccoth*, 24 a (where the instance of *R. Saphrah* is cited), with Rashi on the passage.

[5] *Shebuoth*, 31 a.

[6] *Siphra* to Lev. xix. 36. The strictest honesty in business is enjoined by the medieval teachers also. See, *e.g.* *Sepher Chassidim*, 311, etc.

[7] *Debarim Rabbah*, chap. iii., to Deut. vii. 12.

moral law, it brings Israel's religion into contempt, and desecrates the name of Israel's God.[1] "Righteousness, righteousness shalt thou pursue."[2] "Why," asks an old teacher,[3] "is the word repeated? To teach that we must be honest whether we gain or lose, both in act and in speech, towards both Jew and Gentile."[4]

Among the dishonourable practices incidental to trade is that of usury. But it is necessary at the outset to draw a distinction between usury and interest, the one being an unjust, the other a reasonable and legitimate charge for the use of money.

Usury is in every case forbidden by the Pentateuch, because it constitutes that "oppression"[5] which the Mosaic law so sternly denounces.[6] Interest, too, it forbids when the borrower is an Israelite, or a stranger settled in Palestine.[7] But in the case of the foreigner it permits it.[8] That is to say, it allows a reasonable rate to be charged for the use of money that will enable the borrower to make a profit in his business. To charge such a rate is a perfectly legitimate transaction, and no

[1] *Chulin*, 94 a; *B. Kama*, 113 b; Tosephta, *B. Kama*, x. 15.

[2] Deut. xvi. 20.

[3] See *Seah Soleth*, p. 6 b.

[4] For other citations from the later authorities see Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, and Güdemann, *Culturgeschichte*.

[5] Exod. xxii. 21; xxiii. 9; Lev. xxv. 14.

[6] A specific statement to this effect was embodied in the Declaration of the famous Paris Synhedrion in 1807. See Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, xi. 301.

[7] Lev. xxv. 35-37.

[8] Deut. xxiii. 20. According to one Talmudic authority (see *B. Mezia*, 70 b, and compare Abravanel on Deut. xxiii. 19, 20), however, the passage ought to be understood as permitting not the exaction of interest from the foreigner, but the payment of it to him. If this interpretation is correct, then the Law would really place the foreigner in a more favoured position than that of the Israelite.

good purpose would have been served by its prohibition. To forbid it would not only make such a business as banking, with all its aids to commerce, impossible, but commerce itself all but impossible.

But why should the Mosaic Law have made a distinction in this matter between the Israelite and the Gentile? The answer is that it did so simply for the benefit of trade. In a primitive community, consisting almost exclusively of natives and settlers, commerce is unknown, and loans can only be a species of charitable aid. They are therefore kept by the Law within the sphere of philanthropy. A loan to an impoverished man must be a benevolent act, and no exaction of interest must mar its kindliness. But when the community grows, and establishes commercial relations with other communities, lending becomes a part of the ordinary machinery of business, and cannot be discouraged without injury to trade. Thus the Pentateuch allowed interest to be taken from the foreigner. The old regulations, however, prohibiting the taking of interest from an Israelite remained in force. But usury, as we have said, was always deemed shameful. Both Prophet and Psalmist [1] number among the characteristics of the good man his refusal to "put out his money to usury"; and the Rabbins declare [2] that the reference is to the taking of usury, not only from the Israelite, but from the Gentile. They go further, and forbid the taking even of interest from the Gentile.[3]

In these days, when the taking of moderate interest is essential to the existence of commerce, the Jew will

[1] Ezek. xviii. 8; Ps. xv. 5. Compare Jer. xv. 10.

[2] *Maccoth*, 24 a. Compare *B. Mezia*, 70 b.

[3] Weiss, *History of Jewish Tradition*, iii. 314; cited by Güdemann, *Culturgeschichte*, ii. 242.

without scruple resort to it in the ordinary course of business. From the poor man, however, who requires a loan to help him in his need, he will of course exact no interest. And it is almost superfluous to add that by the poor man is meant any necessitous person, no matter what his creed or nationality may be. On the other hand, the Jew will regard usury, whether exacted from rich or poor, from Israelite or Gentile, with the deepest abhorrence. The usurer's trade he will reprobate because, like all offences committed by Jews in the public eye, it is, in Rabbinic phrase, "a profanation of the Name," inasmuch as it dishonours Judaism and its Divine Author.[1] But he will also abominate it because it is essentially immoral, because it is an example of that "oppression" which, as we have seen, the Pentateuch, echoing the mandates of the moral law, so sternly condemns. For no trade is more cruel than that of the usurer, who often ruins his victim body and soul, taking from him not only his substance and his happiness, but his integrity too.

The professional usurer is branded by the Talmud with relentless severity. His evidence could not be accepted in a court of justice. He shared this disability with the gambler, the betting man, and the thief.[2] "Mark," say the Rabbins,[3] "the blind folly of the usurer. If a man were to call him a scoundrel he would fight him to the death. And yet he takes pen, ink, and paper, and in the presence of witnesses solemnly writes himself down a rogue, and a denier of Israel's God." The usurer, they add, breaks all the commandments; his sin is as flagrant

[1] See below, p. 505 *seq.*

[2] *Misnah Synhed.* iii. 3; Maim., *Hilc. Eduth.* x. 4. Maimonides, following the Talmud, includes in the category the borrower also.

[3] *B. Mezia*, 71 a.

as murder.[1] A medieval writer[2] classes him with those who clip the coin or use false weights and measures; "their punishment will certainly overtake them." To such lengths, indeed, does the Talmud carry its horror of the practice that it even condemns the payment of what it quaintly calls "verbal usury." Thus if a man borrow of another, and merely because he is his debtor, greets him in the street, he does a wrong act. He is guilty of paying usury in words.[3] Nor does usury bring odium upon the lender and the borrower only. The sureties and the witnesses—all the parties to the nefarious transaction—are caught in the hateful net. For usury is like the bite of a poisoned snake; it is a small thing in itself, but its deadly effects are far-reaching.[4]

The usurer's trade, then, is a violation of both the letter and the spirit of Judaism. The medieval Rabbins warn the money-lender against attempting to shelter himself behind the Mosaic enactment,[5] which might seem to justify him in taking usury of the Gentile. That enactment, they declare, applied exclusively to the foreigner in the Mosaic age, but it has long since been inoperative.[6] Judaism, indeed, has no love for the money-lender's trade, however innocuous a form it may take. It does not

[1] *Shemoth Rabbah*, chap. xxxi., to Exod. xxii. 25; *B. Mezia*, 61 b. For Philo's invective against money-lending, see his essay "On Humanity," Bohn's ed., section 6.

[2] *Sepher Chassidim*, 1078, 1081.

[3] *B. Mezia*, 75 b.

[4] *Shemoth Rabbah*, chap. xxxi., to Exod. xxii. 25.

[5] Deut. xxiii. 20.

[6] See Abravanel's Commentary on Deut. xxiii. 19, 20. There were authorities, however, who took up a different position, and held that the insecurity of Jewish property excused money-lending. See Güdemann, *Culturgeschichte*, i. 25; and Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vi. 197; ix. 49. Note, however, the view expressed in the concluding sentence of the last passage.

reserve its condemnation for the usurer who drives harsh and unconscionable bargains or, as the direct consequence of his business system, panders to extravagance and vice. Even the respectable money-lender falls under its disapproval. Far better, say the Rabbins,[1] that a man should take a small sum and trade with it, and earn his bread with difficulty, than get rich by money-lending. There is a taint clinging to the trade which no one who values comeliness and dignity of life will ignore.

Nor does it become less objectionable when the money-lender restricts his dealings to the Gentile. Whether there is anything inherently wrong, from the point of view of general ethics, in professional money-lending, is a debatable point. Great authorities on morals take sides on the question. And it must be confessed that no sound reason can be urged for singling out money as the only commodity upon which a profit ought not to be made. To uphold the distinction would be, as we have already suggested, to condemn the banker equally with the money-lender. There are certain branches of banking which are quite indistinguishable from the processes of the less reputable profession.

The truth is, that the money-lender's vocation is objectionable, not because of any vice inherent in itself, but by reason of its evil results. Carried on fairly it may be a perfectly harmless and even useful trade. If it is denounced by social opinion, it is because it has too often degenerated into usury and become the source of the dire mischief which usury inevitably begets. This is the explanation of the odium which attaches even to respectable money-lending. For the good Jew that odium is its

[1] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. iii., to Lev. ii. 1.

all-sufficient condemnation. It is not enough for him to say, "My hands are clean; the terms on which I lend my money are honest and fair; I need not trouble about anything else." Public opinion is a force which no man may properly disregard. Least of all may the Jew defy it, for besides his own good name he has the reputation of his people to defend. And he compromises that reputation when he devotes himself, however innocently, to a calling which, because it has been so often prostituted to the vilest purposes, has become an object of universal distrust and repugnance. "There shall cleave to thy hand nought of the accursed thing"—no, not even the semblance of it. For the world is only too prone to judge the Jew harshly, and to include the race in the blame which, rightly or wrongly, it metes out to the individual. Therefore the Israelite will often deny himself a liberty which abstract considerations would permit. And he will be especially careful to do so in this particular instance, seeing that the world has come to regard usury as a Jewish practice, and thus to include a rapacious cupidity among Jewish characteristics. And so some of the motives which forbid him to practise usury will urge him to shun even the better sorts of money-lending. He will keep ever before him that wholesome horror of *Chillul Hashem*—of profaning the Name—which is so powerful an ingredient of his ethical consciousness.[1]

[1] The relation of Jews to usury from the historical and ethical points of view is discussed by Güdemann in his *Culturgeschichte*. See especially i. 129 *seq.*; ii. 70 *seq.*, 241 *seq.*; iii. 181 *seq.*

CHAPTER X

TRUTHFULNESS AND KINDRED VIRTUES

HONESTY and integrity are duties as wide as the social life. Obedience to them is not to be confined to the counting-house or the market-place. It must permeate all our intercourse with our fellow-men. It must not be put on and off like a garment; it must be part of our very selves. The truly good man will be trustworthy in every respect. "Who," asks the Psalmist, "shall dwell in God's tabernacle"—be worthy of the Divine fellowship? And he answers, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not."[1] The good man's word will be his bond. Self-interest will never persuade him to break it.

And he will be the very soul of truth. Not only will he shrink from downright falsehood as from an impure thing, but he will not palter with the truth. He will scorn the refuge of the truth that is half a lie. He will not prevaricate. He will not be silent when duty demands speech, nor deem his conscience absolved because he merely allows, without directly producing it, a wrong

[1] Ps. xv. 1, 2, 4.

impression to be created. To suppress the truth or to suggest what is false will be for him the equivalent of a lie. A typical illustration of this duty is given in the Talmud.[1] Two Rabbis, walking abroad, meet another who, thinking that they have come out expressly to greet him, thanks them for the honour. One of them deprecates his gratitude. "We do not deserve your thanks," he says; "we were simply taking a walk." His companion expresses surprise at his conduct; he ought not to have disturbed the pleasant impression of his colleague. "Nay," answers the Master, "even such a deception would be a sin."

The duty of truthfulness is repeatedly enforced by the Bible. "Ye shall not deal falsely, nor lie one to another"—so runs the Levitical command.[2] The men whom Moses selects as judges and rulers over his people are to be "men of truth."[3] "Love truth and peace," cries Zechariah.[4] The Psalmist, too, in one of the noblest utterances of the Psalter, exclaims[5] "Lo, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; create in me, then, a pure heart, O God." And the Sage[6] bids us "Strive for the truth unto death." On the other hand, falsehood is hateful, so hateful that it is included among the great sins condemned by the Decalogue. The Ninth Commandment is a warning against it. "Lying lips," says the well-known maxim,[7] "are an abomination to the Lord;" and "a lie is a foul blot on a man."[8] Nor can falsehood ever really prosper. It is inevitably seen to be the cheat it is. "The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment."[9]

[1] *Chulin*, 94 a.
[2] Lev. xix. 11.
[3] Exod. xviii. 21.
[4] Zech. viii. 19.
[5] Ps. li. 6.
[6] Ecclus. iv. 28.
[7] Prov. xii. 22.
[8] Ecclus. xx. 24.
[9] Prov. xii. 19.

And the Rabbins echo the doctrine. Truth is one of the pillars of the world;[1] human society would be impossible without it. It is "God's own seal."[2] False speech is idolatry,[3] the liar an outcast from the Divine fellowship.[4] Men punish him, too, for he is not believed even when he speaks the truth.[5] Keep your promises to children, the Talmud exhorts us,[6] lest you teach them to slight the truth.

There is such a thing, moreover, as a lying silence. "Keep thee far from a false matter," says the old Lawgiver,[7] and the Rabbins[8] see in the precept a warning against withholding the truth, against being silent when regard for truth bids us speak. They extend their condemnation, indeed, to all insincerity, however slight. Of the good man the Talmud says[9] *tocho keboro*, "he is what he seems"; there is a perfect correspondence between his words and his thoughts. Thus the Rabbins warn us[10] against saying one thing with the lips and another with the heart. It is wrong, they declare,[11] to offer hospitality to one who, we know, is certain not to accept it, or to ask the price of goods when we have no intention of buying. All such acts create a false impression, and though the impression may do little harm, its falseness suffices to condemn it. A man's very suggestions must be truthful, says an old manual of conduct.[12] "Lie not even in jest," says another.[13]

The reverence of the Rabbins for truth is often

[1] *Aboth* i. 18. [2] *Shabbath*, 55 a. [3] *Synhed.* 92 a.
[4] *Sotah*, 42 a. [5] *Synhed.* 89 b. [6] *Succah*, 46 b.
[7] Exod. xxxiii. 1. [8] *Shebuoth*, 31 a. [9] *Berachoth*, 28 a.
[10] *B. Mezia*, 49 a. [11] *Chulin*, 94 a; *B. Mezia*, 58 b.
[12] *Sepher Hanhagath Haadam*, Amsterdam ed. 1717, p. 35.
[13] The smaller *Sepher Chassidim*, cited by Güdemann, *Culturgeschichte*, ii. 222.

expressed in striking form. Thus while they strongly insist upon the homage due from the disciple to his religious teacher, there are certain cases in which they dispense him from that duty. A Master, for instance, says to a disciple, "I have issued process against a debtor, but I have only one witness. You know that my claim is just, and that I would not speak falsely for twice the amount. Be, then, my second witness, though you have no direct knowledge of the matter at issue." In such a case, says the Talmud,[1] the disciple must refuse, for so will he obey the command, "Keep far from a false matter." The Master's claim is unquestionably just, his allegation indefeasible, but the disciple would none the less be guilty of falsehood were he to support them.

* Truth, then, is a debt due from each man to his neighbour. But is this a rule without exception whatsoever? Are there circumstances in which truthfulness ceases to be a duty? This is a question which has been discussed in all ages, and it is one, moreover, which forces itself upon our attention from time to time in practical life. Occasions often arise when truthfulness comes into conflict with some other moral obligation. One duty must of necessity be sacrificed. Which is it to be? The classical example of the difficulty is as good as any. A father lies ill in one room; his child lies dead in another. Ignorant of the calamity, he asks his wife how the child is. Knowledge of the truth will make the man worse, perhaps kill him. The wife replies that the child is better. Has she done wrong? Conscience answers, No. On what ethical principle is this answer based?

[1] *Shebuoth*, 31 a.

In order to determine this point let us examine another case. As we are walking along the road a terror-stricken man flies past us, followed after an interval by another with a weapon in his hand. The second man inquires which way the fugitive has gone. To direct him rightly is to connive at a possible murder; to put him off the scent is to prevent it. We choose, of course, the latter alternative. Why "of course"? Clearly because the would-be assassin is a person who does not deserve the truth. He will not make a right use of it. Truthfulness is essentially a moral obligation; but it obviously ceases to be an obligation when its consequences would be immoral. In other words, truth, like every other virtue, has no supremacy of its own. Its sanctions are outside itself. All its empire is *derived*—derived from its ethical possibilities. By its success or failure to realise those possibilities it stands or falls. It must be judged by its fruits.

We are now able to see why the mother of the dead child did right in keeping the truth from her husband. Had she told it he would have used it to his injury. In his weak state the blow would have prostrated him, and still further postponed, if it did not entirely prevent, the resumption of his work in life. He was not in a condition, then, to make a proper use of the truth. To withhold it from him was a positive duty.

Truth is great, but it must be virtuously used. And in this respect it is exactly like every other ethical obligation. It is possible for a moral duty to be pressed to a point where it ceases to be moral. "Be not righteous overmuch"—so the Biblical Sage warns us.[1]

[1] Eccles. vii. 16.

If there is one especial characteristic of Jewish ethics, it is its insistence upon the secure middle course in conduct, which, while it keeps us from actual wrong-doing, is also a safeguard against the extravagance which merely parodies virtue. Moderation, even in goodness, is its keynote.[1] To give the thief who has stolen our coat, our cloak also, or to turn the left cheek when the right has been smitten, is certainly to show ourselves forgiving to our enemy; but it is to do so at the expense of morality. It is to do evil with good intent. For it is to confirm the evildoer in his wicked course, to his own moral hurt and to the injury, moreover, of those respectable citizens whom he is encouraged to mark out as his next victims. Non-resistance in such cases, far from being a virtue, is a crime. It is the same with charitable obligation. Charity is praiseworthy as long as it really blesses him who receives it. When it merely gratifies a false sentimentalism in the rich, or fosters improvidence and idleness in the poor, it is mischievous and blameworthy. To sell all we have and give to the poor seems the noblest altruism. In reality, if it were ever done, it would be the height of selfishness. It would be indolently to let our feelings run riot, and further to deny ourselves the opportunity of discharging many duties in life, each of which is as important as that of relieving poverty. And if to these results be added the encouragement of such vices as improvidence and imposture, we have a sufficiently formidable array of evils. And yet many of them are wrought every day by good people who do not see that it is possible to ride a duty to death, and so to distort a virtue as to make it indistinguishable from wrong-doing.

[1] See Maim., *Hilc. Deoth*, i. 4; also his *Eight Chapters*, chap. iv.

Judaism keeps this consideration steadily before us. With all its profound reverence for truth—to go back to that subject—it perceives that there are circumstances in which the claims even of truth must yield to higher demands. We owe the truth to others, but only to those whom the truth may help and bless, "for otherwise," as Bacon says, "in feeding the stream thou driest the fountain." For the sake of peace, says the Talmud,[1] we may disguise the truth, or withhold it; and yet the Rabbins had a horror of deception of every sort. For truth becomes a fetish when worship of it leads to the break-up of love, to the stealing from another of peace and hope, of all the hidden store that goes to nourish the healthy life.

But, it need hardly be said, we have been dealing with exceptional cases. Absolute fidelity to truth is the general rule, and only under the strongest compulsion, only under a profound sense of duty must we venture to depart from it. Yes, under a profound sense of duty. For it is only duty that can set us free, seeing that it does so to bind us again. The question we have to ask ourselves in cases of difficulty is, Will the truth promote or hinder the higher well-being of him to whom I deliver it? Let us be careful to put the question in these terms, and there will be no danger of moral confusion, no danger of sophistry. For the test, be it observed, is the effect which the truth will have upon him who receives it. The effect it will have upon *us* is beside the question. If to others the truth threatens to come in hurtful shape, then we

[1] *Yebamoth*, 65 b. Compare the quaint illustration from the conduct of the Supreme Himself (*ibid.*). Contrast, however, Rabh's rebuke to his son. (*Yebamoth*, 63 a.)

may withhold it. But, as for ourselves, there can be no such reservation. No calculation of sordid self-interest must make us false in act, or in speech, or even in thought. Never must the treasure be flung away for a lower prize. Truth must be our sovereign, whatever we may suffer in consequence of our loyalty to it. The ideal man of the Psalmist must be our pattern—the man who "sweareth to his own hurt, yet changeth not." *

Our fellow-man claims from us not only fair dealing but fair judgments. "In righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour"[1]—the command is primarily addressed to the judge on the bench; but its warnings come home to every heart, for they are aimed at one of the commonest of failings. We sit in judgment on our neighbour every day, and our verdicts are none too merciful. The Law cautions us against these unjust judgments, and the Rabbins enforced the warning. "Judge not thy neighbour until thou hast put thyself in his place; judge all men charitably."[2] The Golden Rule is to be applied in this instance too. In relation to our neighbour each of us is judge and defendant in turn. To-day we arraign our fellow-man, to-morrow he will be trying us. How apt, then, the appeal that is made to us to show him that fairness and consideration which we shall rejoice to have shown to us when our hour of arraignment comes! We are to call imagination to our aid, and determine his rights by formulating our own. But we are to put ourselves in his place more completely still. Imagination is to have yet wider play. We have to place ourselves at our neighbour's standpoint. This act of his which we

[1] Lev. xix. 15. [2] *Aboth*, ii. 4; i. 6.

are reviewing—what are the circumstances in which he performed it? what were his temptations? To ask these questions is almost inevitably to judge him mercifully. For we shall remember how easily we ourselves might have fallen in similar conditions. Nay, we have only to recall our actual shortcomings in order to be lenient to the failings of others. "If," say the Rabbins,[1] "thou bid thy neighbour remove the splinter from his eye, he may well retort 'first take the beam from thine own.'" Not that we are to forgo our hatred of wrongdoing. A sin must for us be always a sin. It is for the transgressor that Religion makes its gentle appeal, not for his offence. Like R. Meir's noble wife,[2] we must still pray that *sin* may disappear from the earth, while we interpose a kindly word for the *sinner*.

But not all those upon whom we are wont to pass judgment so glibly are sinners. Every day people are to be found who merely seem to sin; they are the victims of appearances. Suspicion fastens upon them, and too many of us leap straightway from suspicion to condemnation. Religion rebukes the act. It would have us take the very opposite course. "Judge your neighbour charitably," it tells us. "Instead of condemning him because you suspect him, condemn your suspicions. Because he is not proved to be guilty believe him innocent. Keep your faith in the goodness of your fellow-men until irrefragable proof compels you to give it up."

And this faith in human nature is in itself a moral duty. Cynicism, that worst form of pessimism which refuses to believe good of any one, is a sin. "Despise no man," say the Rabbins.[3] Even of the evildoer let us not

[1] *B. Bathra*, 15 b. [2] See *Berachoth*, 10 a. [3] *Aboth*, iv. 3.

despair; God, as the Bible is for ever declaring, does not do so. How, then, shall we? No man is wholly evil, even as no man is wholly good. There are excellences and defects in every character; the differential element is the proportion in which they are mixed. Therefore let us cast off no one as a moral pariah—despair of no one as irretrievably lost. Judaism, hopeful in all things, is especially optimist on this point. There is good, it would have us believe, in every nature, and good that may grow. No man, however degraded, is past redemption. Of the sinner, as of the grapes in the Prophetic apologue,[1] we may well say, "Spare him, for there is a potential blessing in him." Ever memorable is the precept in the Law,[2] which forbids the infliction upon a criminal of more than the prescribed number of lashes, "lest thy brother become vile in thy sight." "Criminal though he is," says the Pentateuch, "he is still thy brother, and there is a last indignity which even he has not earned, an ignominy which even he must be spared." Abraham's intercession for the guilty Cities of the Plain is one of the noblest incidents in the Patriarch's story. He received his call from God, the Rabbins declare,[3] because he could thus plead for his fellow-men.

If harsh judgments are sinful, more sinful still is the expression of them. The former we keep to ourselves; with the latter we poison the minds of others. Evil-speaking is an offence which is as despicable as it is common. To spread a lying report to another's detriment, with the full knowledge that it is false, is one of the most dastardly acts. If there could be an unpardon-

[1] Isa. lxv. 8. [2] Deut. xxv. 3.
[3] *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. xlix., to Gen. xviii. 25.

able sin, it would surely be this. So heinous is this offence that a warning against it is embodied in the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." The command is repeated in Exodus xxiii. 1, and is clearly not limited to testimony in a court of justice. The actual place or circumstances can make no difference. Lying testimony, wherever or however uttered, is always a flagrant sin. And so the Rabbins imagine God saying of the slanderer, "There is no room in the world for him and Me."[1]

But for one who commits this crime there are thousands who spread not so much false reports as evil ones. They speak ill of their neighbour, and find absolution in the thought that they speak only the truth. But the fact is no real justification. The sin of evil-speaking consists partly in the cynicism it betokens. The tale-bearer finds a mean pleasure in discovering and proclaiming human frailty. Evil-speaking is often nothing more than idle talk, and many people are addicted to it who, in other respects, are good-natured enough. It helps to beguile a dull half-hour; it gives a spice and a fillip to conversation. It is a recognised social pastime. The Rabbins[2] deplore it as one of the commonest of sins, and in this respect, at any rate, the world has not changed since their day. But idle and apparently harmless though it is, there is always a certain amount of ill-feeling at the bottom of it. Both speaker and listener take pleasure in the detection and contemplation of their neighbour's shortcomings. It is impossible to explain the attractiveness of this sin in any other way. In a healthy nature the thought of human defects can beget only disappoint-

[1] *Erachin*, 15 b. [2] *B. Bathra*, 164 b.

ment and regret. "Love," says the Sage,[1] "covereth all transgressions," and the maxim will bear the widest application. The true lover of men will jealously hide their infirmities, not gloat over them. Hence evil-speaking is in itself evil; its mischievous effects only heighten its wickedness. It is a confession of cynicism, and cynicism is a sin. No wonder that the Psalmist,[2] in portraying the ideal man, speaks of him as one who "backbiteth not with his tongue."

The backbiter, moreover, is a coward and therefore despicable, even though he can prove all his charges. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer," says the old Law,[3] and the conclusion of the verse is significant: "Thou shalt not stand against the blood of thy neighbour." To defame another is to slay him, and to slay him after the manner of the bravo, by stabbing him in the back. Nay, as the Rabbins point out, the mischief is wider still. The backbiter, they say,[4] slays three: his intended victim, the listener, and himself, and, they point out,[5] the listener most certainly of all, for he is the one who is morally corrupted most.

From whatever point of view we regard it, the offence is miserable enough. It is sufficient to spoil an otherwise fine character. A good man of evil speech the Rabbins[6] aptly liken to a palace built next to a tannery; that one defect destroys all his grandeur.

The Rabbins indeed are unsparing in their denunciation of evil-speaking. Even idle gossip, when its subject is our neighbour's failings, they condemn, though it may be truthful enough.[7] Nor is actual speaking needed to

[1] Prov. x. 12. [2] Ps. xv. 3. [3] Lev. xix. 16. [4] *Erachin*, 15 b.
[5] *Shab.* 56 b. [6] *D. Eretz Rabbah*, 3. [7] See Maim., *Hilc. Deoth*, vii. 2.

constitute the evil. A look, a smile is enough, or a sudden silence even more eloquent than speech, as though one should say, "I could tell a tale if I liked." The "fine dust of evil-speaking"—thus the Rabbins characteristically style such subtle innuendo.[1]

And, as we have already seen, they warn us against being accomplices in the transgression. The society of the habitual defamer is to be shunned.[2] Why, the Talmud asks,[3] have the fingers been made flexible? So that, it explains, we may stop our ears with them when evil is being spoken. And, indeed, we have only to refuse to listen to the tale-bearer in order to kill his sin. Deprive him of an audience, and his occupation will be gone. The Psalmist keeps this ideal before us. "O when," he cries to God,[4] "when wilt Thou come unto me?" And, answering his own question, he says, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will suffer not the froward or the proud or the slanderer. He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall minister unto me." It is a fine picture of domestic purity, all the finer because it is not the conventional one. Evil-speaking none the less surely sullies the home because its shamefulness is not commonly recognised. But to shut our doors against it is to bid holiness enter in and, with it, God.

If, then, we cannot speak well of another, it is well to impose upon ourselves the rule of silence, for harmless speech easily degenerates into dangerous speech. Either we ourselves overstep the line of safety, or others do it for us. No phenomenon is more familiar than the

[1] See *Hilc. Deoth*, vii. 4.
[2] *Ibid.* vii. 6.
[3] *Ketuboth*, 5 b.
[4] Ps. ci. 2.

distortion which a comparatively innocuous report suffers in its passage from mouth to mouth. And though we are not directly responsible for the exaggeration and its attendant injustice, we are still accountable for it in a measure, inasmuch as it was our hands that set the mischievous ball rolling.

But while we may say only what is favourable *about* our neighbour, *to* our neighbour we may freely say what we know, or what we have heard, though it be to his disadvantage. We are bound to do so, for we thus give him the chance of defending himself if he is innocent, or of purging himself by penitent confession if he is guilty. The Law is explicit on this point: "Thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbour, and not bear sin because of him."[1] Silence in such a case is culpable. Certainly, to tax the reputed evil-doer with his offence calls for courage, and too many prefer the cowardly and ineffectual alternative of secret condemnation. The good man will take the directly opposite course. He will avoid even the appearance of condoning iniquity. A man's transgression must be brought home to him, in justice to society, nay, out of kindness to the man himself. But the only way of doing this is to tell him plainly of his offence.

There is one exception, however, to the rule of silence above laid down. The conduct of public men cannot be too closely scrutinised, or their misdeeds too freely condemned. Private individuals we must spare as much as possible; but those who are set on high among the people, its teachers and its leaders, can claim no such leniency. Their acts we are at liberty to criticise and, if necessary, to denounce, provided of course we have

[1] Lev. xix. 17.

honestly endeavoured to arrive at a just judgment of them. To screen the individual in such a case would be to wrong the multitude. A healthy public opinion is the best guarantee of a high standard of public duty, and therefore the surest safeguard of the general well-being. No man has the right to weaken that safeguard by mistaken tenderness towards the servants of the public. To ignore wrong-doing in such cases is to share in it.

And the truth here set forth is far-reaching. The mawkish sentimentality with which the criminal is sometimes regarded in these days demands the most strenuous protest. An entirely misplaced pity is often lavished upon him, whereas it is society, outraged and dishonoured by his crime, which really deserves commiseration.[1] There are "humanitarians" who would attenuate his punishment almost to vanishing point. They forget that punishment, if it is fully to achieve its purpose, must not only be reformatory, but deterrent. It must, moreover, be an adequate satisfaction to the community, whose conscience the criminal has outraged, and whose moral condition he has debased. Justice may seem hard and stern, but it is a sacred thing. In the words of the Pentateuch it is "of God,"[2] and to tamper with it, even from kindly motives, is sacrilege. Not even the pious enthusiasm of the young priests of olden days[3] availed to save them when they trespassed in the holy things. And we cannot claim a greater impunity. Significant is the warning of the Law:[4] "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the

[1] Maimonides takes this view. See *Morë Nebuchim*, iii. 39.
[2] Deut. i. 17. [3] Lev. x. 1, 2. [4] Lev. xix. 15.

person of the poor." Even compassion for the needy suitor must not be made a plea for the perversion of justice. The truth deserves to be remembered even in regard to far smaller matters. It is, for example, a common practice for an employer to give a good character to a bad servant. The excuse is consideration for the servant who, it is alleged, may not get further employment if his faults are truthfully stated. It is an utterly unsound argument. For kindness to the servant in such cases means injustice to society, which is compelled by the employer's false sentimentality to tolerate a needlessly low standard of service. It is, moreover, really unkindness to the servant also, whose morality is sapped by the ease with which he escapes the consequences of his shortcomings. No; we must not be deluded by mere names. Pity is an impressive word, and the thing itself is beautiful. But what passes for pity is sometimes the merest travesty of it. And again and again does it happen that what is called severity is far worthier of the gentler title. "The tender mercies of the wicked," says the Wise Man, "are cruel, but faithful are the wounds of a friend."[1] The Talmud[2] has a story of a man who set his aged father to work in his stead in a mill. Was this cruelty? No; for he set him there to save him from a yet harder service that would have been imposed upon him by the King's men—service under which he might have died.

But what we have said must not be taken to imply that there is no room for such virtues as forbearance and forgiveness. The sinners towards whom we may rightly be tender are those who have sinned against *us*. The

[1] Prov. xxvii. 6. [2] *Jer. Peah*, i. 1.

wrongs of others and of the multitude generally it is a duty to resent; our own private wrongs it is equally a duty to forget, so long as our forbearance does not involve public injury. Unfortunately this forbearance is the rarest of virtues. We refuse it even to imaginary enemies, to those whom we merely suspect of having harmed us. Many a grievance is purely fanciful, without any basis save that which is supplied by our fears or prejudices. But we nurse it in silence, and the longer we nurse it the bigger it grows. Hence it is that the Law, when warning us against hatred, exhorts us, "Thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbour." The sense of wrong is not to be stored up in the heart, there to grow to abnormal dimensions like a fungus in a dark cellar. The light of day must be shed upon it. We are to go and expostulate with the wrong-doer. That will, at any rate, keep our grievance down. In all probability it will get rid of it altogether. Our enemy may explain or apologise. There is no more effective way of turning foes into friends than bringing them face to face. A man, in the familiar apologue, sees a huge figure, dark and fearsome, coming down a mountain high above him. "It is a monster," he says to himself. Soon he can see it clearly, and then the monster proves to be a man. When it is quite near he recognises his own brother! Ben Sira enforces this duty of candid expostulation in his own downright fashion. "Reprove a friend"; he says,[1] "it may be he did it not; and if he did something, that he may do it no more. Reprove thy neighbour; it may be he said it not; and if he hath said it, that he may not say it again. Reprove a friend; for many times

[1] Ecclus. xix. 13-15.

there is slander; and trust not every word." A later teacher[1] puts it on still higher ground. Reprove thy erring brother, he says, and "so lead him gently heavenwards."

It would be idle, however, to pretend that all men show themselves to be brethren. There are sinners in the world, sinners whose evil-doing causes us very real suffering. But even to them we must show forbearance—such forbearance, that is to say, as may haply help to wean them from their sin, not encourage them in it. And, when thus qualified, the duty is sufficiently far-reaching. There are unkind acts which we may overlook without harming any one. To overlook them is not only not contrary to justice, but in strict keeping with it. Harsh and unloving speech, ingratitude, wanton antagonism — these are offences from which most of us have to suffer at one time or another. And they are offences which may well be met, even abated, by forbearance and forgiveness. No one is hurt if we overlook them. And, on the other hand, there is always the possibility of our forbearance converting the wrong-doer. The hard and cruel nature is never so effectually disarmed as when it is confronted by gentleness. The best mirror to hold up to ingratitude is the kindness which ingratitude cannot weary. It is the same as regards those who thwart and oppose us from sheer prejudice or obstinacy; we have only to treat them as friends in order to make them such. But to resent our wrongs is the surest way of confirming the author of them in his injustice and cruelty. Nay, more, it is to supplement the injury he has done us by a still greater injury wrought by ourselves.

[1] Introduction to the *Rokeach*.

For it is all but impossible in such cases to preserve an entirely passive attitude, to detach ourselves in thought from the wrong we are suffering. We cannot be so supremely indifferent to our enemy as not to feel some degree of aversion towards him. Too often even that line is overstepped, and we are betrayed into active transgression. The wrong-doing of which we complain begets wrong-doing on our part. Insult is repaid in kind, ingratitude is lashed with bitter taunts, unreasoning opposition is recompensed with studied hostility. And so we allow our enemy's ill-doing to realise all its capacity for evil by degrading us to his level.

The Scriptural protest against this requital of evil with evil is, then, no superfluous utterance: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear a grudge."[1] "Say not thou, I will recompense evil. Say not, I will do so to my neighbour as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work."[2] Joseph's forgiveness of his brethren, Moses' intercession for his ungrateful people, David's generosity to Saul, and the magnanimity of the Psalmist, who delivers him that is his "enemy without a cause," and who, when his foes are sick, "makes sackcloth his clothing and afflicts his soul with fasting,"[3] are some of the finest spectacles which the Bible presents to us. They offer examples which, even in this far-off age, the best of us may profitably keep steadily in view; for of all the virtues forgiveness is one of the rarest. Even the most kind-hearted seem to find it too hard to exercise. Overflowing with pity for human suffering, they are unable to attain to this higher charity. And yet just because

[1] Lev. xix. 18. [2] Prov. xx. 22; xxiv. 29.
[3] Ps. vii. 4; xxxv. 13.

the duty is so hard we should find our greatest pride in performing it, for in proportion to its difficulty is its nobility. And if Religion does not lift us to these heights, if it fails to give us the self-mastery which forgiveness of our wrongs demands, of what use is it? Nay, how can we stand before God and entreat His pardon for our own shortcomings if our hearts are all the while nourishing enmity and resentment towards our fellow-men? The Sage[1] has well expressed the truth: "Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done thee, and then thy sins shall be pardoned when thou prayest. Man cherisheth anger against man, and shall he seek healing from the Lord? Upon a man like himself he hath no mercy, and shall he make supplication for his own sins?" There is nothing more beautiful and, what is of chief importance, more fruitful than the self-renunciation that forgives and forgets. If there is one virtue that comes nearest to Divine goodness it is this. The most sublime feature in the portrait of the Supreme which Scripture draws for us is that infinite condescension, that utter self-abnegation, with which a long-suffering God overlooks His children's rebellion. He is ever ready to pardon, to blot out the past; He even entreats the sinner to make peace with Him.[2] And in this respect more urgently, perhaps, than any other do we need to seek after that imitation of God which is a characteristic ideal of Jewish ethics. "As He is merciful," say the Rabbins,[3] inspired by Holy Writ, "so be ye merciful"; and never is human mercy more like God's than when it takes the shape of forgiveness.

[1] Ecclus. xxviii. 2-4.

[2] See Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Isa. i. 18; xliv. 22; lvii. 19; Ezek. xviii. 31, 32, etc.

[3] *Siphrë* to Deut. xi. 22.

For by the exercise of this attribute man is lifted to the highest point in the scale of nobility. He evinces a meekness, a patience which, while it reveals the riches of the human heart, helps to redeem by the power of its irresistible example the lower nature that gazes upon it. Elisha, in a memorable passage,[1] rebukes the King of Israel who would smite the Syrian captives. "Set bread and water before them," he says, "that they may eat and drink and go to their master." The King obeys. Is it only a coincidence that in the next verse we are told that "the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel"? Or is not the story designed to teach the redeeming power of forbearance? The Syrians were conquered by mercy. Because their comrades were spared, they harried the land of Israel no more. So potent are the gentler virtues!

The Rabbins never tire of making those virtues the theme of earnest exhortation. "Be thou the oppressed," they say,[2] "rather than the oppressor. They who suffer wrong and requite it not, they who are reviled and retort not, are God's 'lovers,' of whom it is written[3] that they are glorious as the sun in its noonday splendour." "He who hath a forgiving spirit," they further say,[4] "is himself forgiven." And the duty receives the widest interpretation. The later Rabbins discuss the question whether a man ought to forgive another who has not merely spread about an evil report of him, but spread it about knowing it to be false. But even this cruel injury, one of them declares, it is the part of meekness to forgive.[5] Nor are we to be content even with this victory. Our highest

[1] 2 Kings vi. 21-23. [2] *Shabbath*, 88 b. [3] Judges v. 31.
[4] *Yoma*, 23 a. [5] See *Orach Mesharim*, viii. 3 (note).

aim must be to conquer our enemy in the noblest sense, to convert him into a friend. The Talmud[1] has much to say about the duty of being reconciled with our brother when we are the offender. The approach of the Day of Atonement is especially indicated as the occasion for such peacemaking, for how can a man hope to be at one with God when he is estranged from his neighbour? But this consideration is two-sided. It affects not only the wrong-doer, but his victim also. The very thought that there is a barrier between him and his fellow-man, though it is the latter's sin, and not his own, that has raised it, must disturb the aggrieved person in his endeavour after that communion with the Almighty for which the Holy Day offers an unique opportunity. And so even he, though he is the injured one, must seek reconciliation with his neighbour and go out of his way to effect it. The example of more than one Rabbi is adduced in illustration of this duty. For the Talmudic Sages, usually deemed proud and severe, practised meekness as well as preached it. And the Jew only follows their precept and example when thrice every day he closes the recital of some of the most important passages in the liturgy with the prayer, "O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceitfully. And to those that curse me may my soul be silent, yea, humble as the dust to all!"

The good man will be a man of peace. Obeying the Psalmist's admonition,[2] he will seek peace and pursue it. He will be gentle and conciliatory in his dealings with his fellow-men, forgoing, if necessary, his own rights rather than be the cause of strife and dissension; he will do his best to bind others closer together in amity and concord.

[1] *Yoma*, 87 a. [2] Ps. xxxiv. 14.

Peace, say the Rabbins,[1] is one of the pillars of the world; without it the social order could not exist. Therefore let a man do his utmost to promote it. Thus it is that the greatest Sages made a point of being the first to salute passers-by in the street.[2] The last and best of the boons promised in the priestly benediction[3] is peace, and peace is the burthen of the prayer with which every service in the synagogue concludes: "May He who maketh peace in His high heavens grant peace unto us!"

And so a twofold duty is indicated. We are not only to be peaceful ourselves, but to help others to be peaceful also. Judaism has many a blessing for the peacemakers. To banish strife, and to turn enemies into friends, is to show oneself of the disciples of Aaron, the typical peacemaker.[4] And the author of the saying is Hillel, whose gentleness and love were his most characteristic qualities. The altar, too, was the reconciler; it brought the sinner into renewed fellowship with God. Hence the command[5] which forbade the use of an iron tool, the emblem of war and strife, in building it.[6] A Talmudic legend[7] tells how a Rabbi once meets Elijah in the crowded market-place. "Master," he asks, "who among this throng are most sure of eternal life?" The Prophet, in reply, points out two men of homely appearance. The Rabbi accosts them. "What," he asks, "are your special merits?" "We have none," they answer, "unless it be that when people are in trouble we comfort them, and when they quarrel we make them friends again." Theirs seemed to be but a small virtue, but it fitted them for the heavenly peace.

[1] *Aboth*, i. 18. [2] *Berachoth*, 17 a. See also *Aboth*, iv. 15.
[3] Numb. vi. 24-26.
[4] *Aboth*, i. 12; *Mishnah Peah*, i. 1; *Pirkê R. Eliezer*, 17.
[5] Exod. xx. 25. [6] *Mechilta* to the passage. [7] *Taanith*, 22 a.

The duty has wide implications. Peace ought to be not only a personal, but a national ideal. There are, doubtless, occasions when war is defensible as a less evil than a disastrous and dishonourable peace. But they are less numerous than is usually supposed. And it should be the aim of a people to make their number as small as possible. War is so terrible a calamity, so dark a blot upon our civilisation, that the greatest sacrifices should be made to avert it. There are worse things, it is true, than war; but the worst of them is the belief that war is indispensable, that there are international quarrels which cannot be settled without it, that its entire abolition is impossible. Such a belief is fatal to the ultimate establishment of universal peace. Nor should such an idea as glory be any longer associated with war. Only that nation should be deemed glorious which has made the greatest efforts, and submitted to the heaviest sacrifices, in order to preserve peace. Every good man, nay, every good citizen, will earnestly strive to keep this truth before him and to win others for it. He will also uphold the principle of international arbitration, and do his utmost to extend his rulers' recourse to it. This fine expedient must not be kept for minor differences only. It must be recognised as the normal, the only natural and becoming method of settling disputes between civilised nations.

The Jew who is true to himself will labour with especial energy in the cause of peace. Never can he consistently belong to a war party. His religion, his history, his mission, all pledge him to a policy of peace, as a citizen as well as an individual. What Judaism says on this subject we have seen. But the teachings of

Israel's life-story confirm the doctrine. For what is that story but the record of insult and oppression borne with marvellous patience and meekness? The peaceful temper which the Jew has manifested under persecution he cannot consistently refuse to evince under happier conditions. The war-loving Jew is a contradiction in terms. The "man of sorrows" must beware of helping, however remotely, to heap sorrow upon others. His history forbids it; but so, too, does his vocation. His task is to sow not strife, but brotherly love, among men; he has been called in order to bring not a sword, but peace. Only the peace-loving Jew is a true follower of his Prophets, who set universal brotherhood in the forefront of their pictures of coming happiness for mankind, predicting the advent of a Golden Age when nations should not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more.[1]

We may fitly conclude this chapter by quoting the words of a medieval writer,[2] who thus sums up the attributes of the good man: "He is shame-faced, modest, humble. He is gentle and courteous, peaceful and forgiving. He neither envies nor disparages any man, but speaks well of all. He shuns honours. He does not jest or talk overmuch. He can keep a secret. He has a frugal mind and a grateful heart. He knows no malicious joy, consorts with true and faithful men, and strives by friendly teaching to form other men after this pattern."[3]

[1] Isa. ii. 4; Micah iv. 3.

[2] *Sepher Maaloth Hammidoth*, 50 b.

[3] Compare the fine description of the moral man in the *Choboth Halebaboth*, ix. 4.

CHAPTER XI

BENEVOLENCE

It remains to speak of the duty of benevolence in its more familiar sense, the benevolence that aims at the relief of poverty and suffering.

No duty is more characteristically Jewish than this. It is given an equally commanding place in the Bible and the Rabbinical literature. The Pentateuch lays down many minute regulations for the relief of the poor, among whom the stranger, as well as the widow and the orphan, is specifically included.[1] To the poor belonged a tithe of the farmer's produce, the corners and gleanings of his field at harvest-time, the residue of the fruit that was left ungathered from the trees, and an equal right with the owner to the products of the soil in the Sabbatical year.[2] Sabbaths and Festivals were to be hallowed by benevolent thought for the poor,[3] who were to be safeguarded from every kind of oppression and harshness.[4] No one might take the mill or the upper millstone in pledge, for it would be to "take a man's life

[1] See, for example, Lev. xix. 10; Deut. xiv. 29.

[2] Deut. xiv. 28, 29; xxiii. 19; Lev. xix. 9; xxiii. 22; Exod. xxiii. 11.

[3] Exod. xxiii. 12; Deut. xvi. 11.

[4] Exod. xxi. 2; xxii. 21-23; Lev. xxv. 39 *seq.*; Deut. xxiv. 14.

to pledge."[1] A poor man's garment, taken in pledge, was to be restored at sundown, even though the loan which it secured was still unpaid, for that was "his only covering; wherein should he sleep?"[2] The wealthy were enjoined to show the most tender consideration for the feelings of their humbler brethren. The needy servant was to receive his wage by sunset, and a creditor, on going to demand his pledge, might not enter the poor man's dwelling as though he were his master; he was to stand outside.[3]

Every seventh or Sabbatical year was a year of "release"; it cancelled all debts. And lest this ordinance might tempt the rich to refuse loans to their poorer brethren, they were expressly warned against such "base thoughts." "Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because it is for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy work, and in all that thou puttest thy hand to."[4] The Hebrew slave, moreover, who had sold himself into servitude, under stress of poverty, was to be set free after six years. Nor might he be dismissed empty-handed. "Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy wine-press: as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him;" and then follows the significant admonition upon which so much of the merciful practice of the Pentateuch is founded: "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day."[5] The memory of his own former poverty and

[1] Deut. xxiv. 6. [2] Exod. xxii. 26; Deut. xxiv. 12, 13.
[3] Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; 10, 11. [4] Deut. xv. 7-10. [5] Deut. xv. 12 *seq.*

suffering must needs fill the Israelite's heart with pity for the distress of others. For "a fellow-feeling makes one wondrous kind." Again, the Israelite was enjoined to "uphold" his needy brother[1]; in other words, to deal with him generously, so as to lift him out of his poverty. He was to open his hand and "lend him sufficient for his need" without interest, and, as we have seen, he was to help him willingly, not grudgingly.[2]

And this duty of consideration for poverty and wretchedness was enforced by the most powerful sanctions. To the instinctive pity of the human heart aroused by affliction, to the special sympathy which each Israelite necessarily felt for his suffering brother, and to the memory of the slavery in Egypt, with its attendant woe, was added the impressive thought that the poor and the sorrowing were God's clients. The Supreme, so ran the admonition, "doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger." Their cause was, in a special sense, His; and if they cried at all unto Him, He would surely hear their cry, and champion them against their oppressors.[3] The imitation of God was yet another incentive. Mercy was a Divine attribute, and man was never nearer to the Divine than in his compassionate moments.[4] And so the claim of the poor and the afflicted acquired an almost irresistible force. To wrong them was to wrong the Most High, for it was to harm His beloved. On the other hand, to show mercy to them was to show Him honour; to pity them was to lend to Him.[5] Such pity

[1] Lev. xxv. 35. [2] Lev. xxv. 36; Deut. xv. 7-10.
[3] Deut. x. 18; Exod. xxii. 22-24. Compare Ps. x. 14; lxviii. 5; Job xxxvi. 6. [4] Deut. x. 18, 19; Ps. xli. 3; cxlvi. 7-9; cxlvii. 3, 6.
[5] Prov. xiv. 31; xix. 17.

it was that imparted true ethical grace to human life, and clothed the rites of religion with beauty and effectiveness. There is no more eloquent passage in the Book of Job than that[1] in which the Patriarch declares himself innocent of indifference to the woe or the need of humanity; and among the characteristics of the acceptable Fast-day described by the great Prophet of the Captivity, sympathy for suffering holds a prominent place.[2]

The teaching of the Rabbins on this great ethical duty faithfully reflects the doctrine of the Bible.

The destruction of the Jewish State and the fall of the national Sanctuary necessarily left their impress upon the methods adopted for the relief of poverty. The ordinances of the Pentateuch could, under the new conditions, be carried out but imperfectly. New expedients had accordingly to be devised for safeguarding the interests of the poor. The Talmud[3] specially mentions two—the "dish" (*tamchui*) and the "box" or "chest" (*kuppah*), the respective names for a daily distribution of food among the indigent poor, and a weekly gift of money to necessitous persons belonging to a better class. Every member of the community who had the means was expected, and even compelled, to contribute both to the *tamchui* and the *kuppah*, the administration of which was entrusted only to men of unquestionable probity. They, in their turn, were enjoined to carry out their task with all possible tenderness for the susceptibilities of the recipients.[4] Imposture, on

[1] Job xxxi. 13 *seq.*

[2] Isa. lviii. 6 *seq.*

[3] *Mishnah Peah*, viii. 7; *Jer. Peah*, viii. 7; see also Maim. *Hilc. Matnoth Aniyim*, ix. 1 *seq.*

[4] *B. Bathra*, 10 b; *Kethuboth*, 67 b.

the other hand, was not to be encouraged, though the good faith of the applicant might not be excessively scrutinised, lest suspicion killed all the graciousness of charity. Especially was this generous confidence to be shown when the common necessaries of life were asked for.[1]

To benevolent duty the Rabbins assign one of the highest places in the ethical scale. It is better far than sacrifices; nay, it outweighs all other duties.[2] All the merit of fasting lies in the almsgiving that goes with it.[3] By the side of the poor stands God Himself, pleading for His stricken children,[4] and he that feeds the hungry feeds God also.[5] Nay, he feeds himself too, for charity blesses him that gives even more than him that takes.[6] Charity knows neither creed nor race.[7] It is the saving salt of wealth.[8] But the whole virtue of it is its pity.[9] A man may give liberally, and yet because he gives unlovingly and wounds the heart of the poor, his gift is vain, for it has lost the attribute of charity; a man may give little, but because his heart goes with it, his deed and himself are blessed.[10] For "is not a word better than a gift? And both are with a gracious man."[11] Nay, if one gives only the kind word, and speaks comfortably to the poor,

[1] *Kethuboth*, 67 b; *B. Bathra*, 9 a. For an account of Jewish charitable methods in the post-Talmudic age see Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, chaps. xvii., xviii.

[2] *Succah*, 49 b; *B. Bathra*, 9 a.

[3] *Berachoth*, 6 b.

[4] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. xxxiv., to Lev. xxv. 25.

[5] *Agadath Shir Hashirim*, edited by S. Schechter in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vi. 696.

[6] *Midrash Rabbah* to Ruth ii. 19.

[7] *Gittin*, 61 a.

[8] *Kethuboth*, 60 b.

[9] *Succah*, 49 b.

[10] Maim., *Hilc. Matnoth Aniyim*, x. 4; *B Bathra*, 9 b. Compare *Aboth d' R. Nathan*, p. 24 b.

[11] Ecclus. xviii. 17.

he has done true charity, for doth not Holy Writ say,[1] "Because of this *word* will God bless thee?"[2] And therefore if thou hast nought to bestow, give thy sympathy; say, "I am grieved in my soul on thy account, seeing that I can give thee nothing;" for so wilt thou obey the command,[3] "Draw out thy soul to the hungry."[4] The best charity is that which is done secretly, to one unknown to thee and to whom thou art unknown.[5] And we are told that in the days of the Temple there was an apartment called "the Chamber of the Silent," where the rich deposited their alms, and the poor received them, in ignorance of each other's identity.[6] True charity, too, will be considerate, adapting its methods to the position and needs of the recipient. It will save, as has been said, his self-respect, but it will also make its benefactions proportionate to his former estate. For does not the Psalmist say,[7] "Blessed is he that considereth the poor"—ponders, that is, how he may help them best and most fitly?[8] True charity, too, will be gentle. It will help a woman before a man, age before youth, the weak before the strong.[9]

The Rabbins, indeed, recognise a larger charity than that which is limited to money-gifts. Money, they saw, could do much for human distress, but pity could do still more. Nay, since the essence of charity is the kindly feeling that prompts and accompanies it, a whole range of benevolent acts was indicated in which money had no place. This wider benevolence the Rabbins

[1] Deut. xv. 10. [2] *Siphrë* on the verse. [3] Isa. lviii. 10.
[4] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. xxxiv., to Lev. xxv. 25.
[5] *B. Bathra*, 10 b. [6] *Mishnah Shekalim*, v. 6.
[7] Ps. xli. 1. [8] *Kethuboth*, 67 b; *Jer. Peah*, viii. 9.
[9] *Menorath Hamaor*, iii. 7. 2. 8.

styled *gemiluth chasadim*, "the bestowal of loving-kindnesses," a term which might be applied to almsgiving, provided it sprang from true pity, but which also and more especially denoted such acts as visiting and nursing the sick and the dying, hospitality to wayfarers, dowering the bride, comforting the mourners, and reverently tending the dead.[1] Thus the Rabbins say[2] that it is the sign of *gemiluth chasadim* to "run after the poor." In three things, they add,[3] *gemiluth chasadim* excels mere almsgiving: No gift is needed for it but the giving of oneself; it may be done to the rich as well as to the poor; it may be done not only to the living, but to the dead. If there is a saving virtue, it is this loving service of men. It saves society, for it is one of the pillars of the world.[4] It saves the individual, for it is his one means of reconciliation with God, who has declared[5] that He desires mercy, not sacrifice.[6] Nay, it saves even the pious life, for he that studies the Law, but does no works of love, lives without God.[7]

But unstinted as is the praise that the Rabbins lavish on charity, they view it always from the practical side. Let a man, they say,[8] be generous in his charities, but let him beware of giving away all that he has. The Talmud even prescribes the limit beyond which a man's charitable benefactions should not go; it is a fifth of his property.[9] Let him also beware of giving indiscriminately, without inquiry into the worth of the applicant.[10] There are degrees, moreover, in the claims of poverty. Those who stand nearest to thee, the Talmud reminds us, deserve

[1] Compare Ecclus vii. 34, 35. [2] *Shabbath*, 104 a.
[3] *Succah*, 49 b. [4] *Aboth*, i. 2. [5] Hosea vi. 6.
[6] *Aboth d'R. Nathan*, p. 21. [7] *Abodah Zarah*, 17 b.
[8] *Erachin*, 28 a. [9] *Kethuboth*, 50 a. [10] *B. Bathra*, 9 a.

thy help first—thy parents before thy brothers and sisters, and these before thy neighbour; those of thine own city before those living in other places. Charity begins at home.[1] Nay, we must be just before we are generous. There are people who are brimful of pity for the poor, but strangely forgetful of the needs of their creditors. The Rabbins give them no countenance. "Pay thy debts," says an old Jewish writer,[2] "before thou givest alms."

Charity, again, must not be practised merely for its own sake, without reference to its effects. It must not be thrown away. The improvident man who refuses to live within his means, and seeks to be supported by charity, must not be helped.[3] On the other hand, the wholesome objection of a poor man to gifts of money deserves the greatest consideration. For such persons loans are recommended, in order to preserve their self-respect.[4] "Greater," a Rabbi declares,[5] "is he that lends than he that gives, and greater still is he that lends, and, with the loan, helps the poor man to help himself."[6] It is with this maxim in his mind that Maimonides[7] assigns the eighth and highest place in his scale of benevolent deeds to assistance, such as gifts and loans of money or the procuring of employment, which will render the poor self-helpful and independent.

In this, however, Maimonides, as we have seen, is only fulfilling the spirit of the old Mosaic law. The Pentateuch commends not charity merely, but well-considered

[1] *B. Mezia*, 71 a; *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, chap. xxvii. p. 539.
[2] *Sepher Chassidim*, 454.
[3] *Kethuboth*, 67 b.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Shabbath*, 63 a.
[6] Compare Ecclus. xxix. 1.
[7] *Hilc. Ma'noth Aniyim*, x. 6 *seq.*

charity, not almsgiving, which fosters pauperism and encourages idleness and deception, but the generous and thoughtful benevolence which "upholds" the poor man when his hand begins to "fail," and saves him from penury and demoralisation.[1] All charitable effort must be directed towards these ends. It must, as far as possible, be curative, redemptive. Too many forget this truth. The distress they are chiefly concerned to relieve is their own. The thought of human misery causes them a certain discomfort, of which they cheaply rid themselves by petty and more or less indiscriminate almsgiving. The glow of self-satisfaction which rewards their so-called charity suffices them; and they are not at the pains to consider whether their act has really benefited the person towards whom it has been performed. And yet it is in this blessed effect that the real worth of benevolence resides.

For much charitable effort, indeed, no money whatever is needed. Many a falling man has been saved by wise advice or kindly interest. Some true friend has intervened in time and shown him a means of self-help which he had overlooked. Or work has been found for him when he was unable to get it for himself. Nay, many a man has been saved merely by an encouraging word which, because it told him that he was not alone, but that another heart was beating in sympathy with his, has nerved him to make another and a more effective bid for success. Such fruitful deeds of mercy are done every day, and done without money. Perhaps that is why the Rabbins urge the duty of charity even upon the poorest; for even the poorest can do such deeds.[2]

[1] Lev. v. 35.

[2] *Gittin*, 7 b.

But it would be foolish to affirm that the entire work of charity can be accomplished without money. Once, no doubt, the statement was strictly true. But the more complex the social organism, the greater becomes the need of money as the instrument of philanthropy. In great cities like London or New York, where the struggle for life is especially keen and absorbing, and where the population is broken up into many sections, it is idle to look for that close and almost brotherly intercourse between rich and poor which was one of the beautiful features of social life in former times, and which is to some extent possible even to-day in small communities. Once the stranger was not merely relieved with a dole at the door, but was invited into the house and lodged in the guest-chamber, or if he decided not to continue his journey, he might be taken into the service of his host. Among Jews, at any rate, the Rabbinic command,[1] "Let the poor be members of thy household," found many an obedient listener.[2] And if a dole were given, the giver would bestow it with his own hands, and with the gift draw the recipient nearer to him. The gap that separated the wealthy from the needy was bridged by countless personal kindnesses done every day.

Our modern social organisation affords little opportunity for such intercourse, full of blessing, as it is, no less for the rich than for the poor. Personal service has frequently to be commuted nowadays for money payments. Instead of housing the wayfarer, or feeding the hungry, or nursing the sick, we perform these duties by proxy. We pay poor-rates, and we subscribe to benevolent societies. The change is the inevitable consequence

[1] *Aboth*, i. 5. [2] Maim., *Matnoth Aniyim*, x. 17.

of the altered conditions of modern social life. Still the old-fashioned system had advantages over and above the charity it dispensed. It assuaged the sufferings of the poor, but it also kept the stream of sympathy flowing in the hearts of the rich. It is one thing to relieve poverty vicariously through a society or through the machinery of the poor-law; it is quite another thing to relieve it with one's own hands. To hear of human misery is a far less powerful stimulus to compassion than to see it. And in these days of almost enforced egoism such emotional exercises are more than ever valuable as elements of moral hygiene.

Moreover, the ever widening chasm that divides the classes is a serious social danger. And though we must go on paying our poor-rates and supporting our Charities, it behoves us also to keep steadily in view the urgent necessity of arresting this mutual alienation of rich and poor. The rich man must recognise once more that the poor are his brothers, with a right to something more than the crusts heedlessly thrown to him from his over-loaded table, and the poor must be able to feel once more that the rich man is no strange creature, to be regarded with suspicion and distrust, but "bone of their bones and flesh of their flesh." And so the rich and the poor must "meet together" in some such way as they did in olden days. More generosity must mark their mutual relations. On the one side there must be more lavish bestowal of personal aid, more thoughtfulness, a greater disposition to "take trouble" for the necessitous. On the other side there must be more responsiveness, more confidence, more goodwill. For the obligation is mutual. If the wealthy have to learn how to give, the poor have

to learn how to receive.[1] Both have to open their hearts a little wider. Both have to remember that though they are superficially divided by worldly circumstances, the transcendent tie of their common humanity fundamentally unites them—that in the Prophetic words,[2] they have "all one Father, and one God hath created them."

Money, as we have said, plays an important part in the relief of poverty, and it must be used for that end under a profound sense of responsibility. The ethics of money-giving needs careful study. The duty of making our charity a stimulus to the industry and self-reliance of the poor instead of a substitute for them has already been emphasised. But this duty does not devolve only upon those who dispense their benefactions personally. It is shared by every subscriber to a benevolent organisation. Only those societies or institutions should be assisted which do their work on sound principles, which make an honest attempt to discriminate between the deserving and the worthless, and which do not manufacture pauperism under the pretence of relieving poverty. The multiplication of Charities is a characteristic feature of modern social life. To assist them may exempt us from the trouble of investigating the claims of the poor, but it cannot absolve us from the duty of inquiring into the merits of the Charities themselves. If it is wrong to give to a worthless person, or even to one of whose respectability we know nothing, it is equally wrong to help a benevolent institution without satisfying ourselves as to the soundness of its methods.

[1] That poverty owes a duty to wealth is indicated in Deut. xxiii. 24, 25. See also *Berachoth*, 58 a, where the wayfarer is exhorted to think appreciatively of his host.

[2] Mal. ii. 10.

Another obligation incumbent upon the rich is that of adequate giving. A man's benefactions should be in generously calculated proportion to his resources. If, as we have seen, no one ought to give more than he can afford, it is also true that no one ought to give less. And the question what one can afford ought to be determined in a liberal spirit. The old Mosaic precept, "Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother,"[1] has yet to be generally taken to heart. In every community the generous givers are in the minority; the rank and file are content to look on and applaud the munificence of their kind-hearted neighbours. The fulfilment of benevolent duty is left to a few, instead of being fairly distributed among all. To make the keener conscientiousness of others an opportunity for evading our own share of charitable tasks is a sin against ethics which is as discreditable as it is common. Under the Mosaic system every man was bound to devote a tenth of his income to the relief of distress. And this wonderful precept retains some, at least, of its binding force. The duty of setting aside a fixed and substantial proportion of one's resources for charitable purposes has lost none of its imperiousness. Even the exact proportion indicated by the Pentateuch might still be adopted if account be taken of compulsory contributions like the payment of poor-rates. But even when allowance is made for such payments, it will be found that the law of the Tithe is obeyed only by the minority. The number of persons who give away regularly a tenth of their income in charitable contributions of all kinds, poor-rates included, is very small.

A man's benefactions, then, should be proportionate

[1] Deut. xv. 11.

to his means. But it is clear that no ratio is adequate which does not provide for some self-sacrifice. "It is not what we give, but what we share." To give only what we do not miss is to refuse to our act not merely the grace, but the very quality of benevolence. Too many ignore this familiar truth. They give only so long as their gifts take nothing from them—deprive them of no enjoyment, no luxury, however superfluous. And how common it is for a man who has spent on a single entertainment enough to keep many a poor family for a whole year, to reject a charitable appeal on the plea, "I cannot afford it"! No; there can be no real charity without self-denial, without the sacrifice of something we should like to have kept for ourselves. There is a limit, of course, to this altruism; the Rabbins tell us so, as we have seen. The ordinary necessaries of life—and here, again, the terms may be generously interpreted—we are entitled, nay, we are bound, to provide for ourselves and for those who are dependent upon us, before considering the claims of charity. But our right to further self-gratification we can establish only when we have made just provision for the needs of the poor—provision which is just in that it is self-denying.

Nor is this a duty which we owe to poverty only. We owe it to society. To shrink from performing our rightful share of philanthropic obligation is treachery to the general body, whose interest it is that poverty and its attendant ills should be reduced to their lowest proportions. The niggardly man is a bad citizen; he declines fully to co-operate in the tasks that make for the general well-being. He is, moreover, as we have said, an unjust man, for he shifts to the shoulders of the generous a load that

is not rightly theirs. The Prophet[1] speaks of the people of his day who withhold the tithe, as "robbing God." Their modern counterparts rob man as well—the rich as well as the poor.

The good man, then, will be generous, that is he will be just—just to the poor, to society, and to himself. To himself because generous giving, or rather sharing, is a fine self-discipline, a healthy exercise of the noblest emotions. It is the wholesome drug that prevents human pity from congealing. Therefore the good man will give his money when he values it most. He will not wait till it has lost all or part of its uses for him; he will not, in Ben Sira's phrase, "let it rust under a stone."[2] Charity, says an old moralist,[3] given in health, is gold, in illness, silver, left by will, copper. Would that the maxim were more generally taken to heart, and that fewer waited to distribute their wealth until they themselves had passed beyond the need of it!

Kindness is a debt due not only to human beings, but to the lower animals. It is the glory of the Hebrew Bible that, almost alone among the great religious books of antiquity, it insists upon this great obligation. And significant it is that the precepts which enforce it exhort only to tender consideration. Against positive cruelty to the brute the Bible contains no warnings, for in the eyes of the old Hebrew teachers cruelty even to animals stood self-condemned. The Israelite is warned[4] against yoking together animals of unequal strength, lest the strain be too great for the weaker one. He is not to muzzle the ox

[1] Mal. iii. 8. [2] Ecclus. xxix. 10.
[3] *The Pentateuchal Tosaphoth* to Exod. xxv. 3, quoted by Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, p. 145. [4] Deut. xxii. 10.

when it threshes out the corn,[1] for it is a refinement of cruelty to excite an animal's desire for food and to prevent him from satisfying it. The beast of burden, too, is not to be overworked. The rest of the Sabbath day is instituted for its benefit as well as for its master's.[2]

All such precepts are designed not only to save the dumb beast from suffering, but human beings from moral debasement. Hence the enactment against the slaying of the dam and the young on the same day,[3] and against the taking of the mother-bird with her young.[4] Acts of this sort cause less pain to the animals than moral injury to the persons who commit them. They foster an indifference to suffering which is fatal to the finest character.[5] Especially striking is the witness to the old Hebrew conception of this duty that is furnished by the story of Rebekah. Among the characteristics of the woman Divinely chosen to be his young master's wife, which the trusty servant enumerates, is a quick consideration not only for his own needs but for those of his weary animals: "Let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink; and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that Thou hast appointed."[6] And the same virtue is suggested as the touchstone of character by a writer of a different stamp. "A righteous man," declares the Sage,[7] "regardeth the soul of his beast"—has consideration, that is, for its nature and its feelings.

[1] Deut. xxv. 4.
[2] Exod. xx. 10; xxiii. 12.
[3] Lev. xxii. 28.
[4] Deut. xxii. 6.
[5] This is the view taken by Philo. See his essay *On Humanity*, Bohn's ed., secs. 17 and 18.
[6] Gen. xxiv. 14.
[7] Prov. xii. 10.

And once more we find this duty, though it is only "our poor relations" that claim it, enforced by the same high sanction that is used to commend other and more imposing obligations. Like humanity itself, and more especially suffering humanity, the whole animal world enjoys God's loving care.[1] Even the wild beasts and birds share it. For them the Divine hand has built a home in the rocks and the trees; the sea, great and wide, shelters things creeping innumerable; the young lions seek their meat from God; He sendeth the springs into the valley, at which the wild asses quench their thirst; to the cattle He giveth its food, but also to the young ravens which cry; He openeth His hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing; for the Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.[2] Nay, God's solicitude for the beast is rooted in the very foundations of His rule, for it goes back to the Beginning. Before man entered the world the animals inhabited it; and the Divine blessing was theirs before it was his.[3] No one, then, could wrong the beast without offending God. And no one could hope to be like God who failed to show mercy to the lowliest of His creatures. Thus the idea which, as we have seen, explicitly enforced the duty of compassion to the stranger, the widow, and the orphan, became an implied exhortation to its performance towards the dumb animals also.

As to the Rabbins, they expand the Biblical enactments on this subject almost into a code. To cause the slightest pain to any living thing, however low it may be in the scale of creation, is, in the eyes of the

[1] Ps. xxxvi. 6.

[2] Ps. civ. 10-25; cxlvii. 9; cxlv. 9, 16.

[3] Gen. i. 22.

Talmud, a sin which it is worth many minute laws to prevent.[1]

Some of the regulations of the *Shechitah*, the Jewish mode of slaughtering animals for food, are obviously framed with the object of sparing the animal avoidable pain.[2] And if it be really true that there are details of that method which conflict with modern ideas of humanity, they are antagonistic to the spirit in which the *Shechitah* was instituted. The Rabbins would have been the first to denounce them, and it is for the successors of the Rabbins in these days to see that such evils are quickly rectified.

Both the letter and the spirit of the Talmudic legislation inculcate the widest humanity, exhort us—

> Never to mix our pleasures or our pride
> With anguish of the meanest thing that feels.

The Rabbins denounced the gladiatorial shows of their age as they would have condemned such "amusements" as bull-fighting in these times. They forbade the chase, and would have prohibited much of what nowadays passes for "sport," had they known of it.[3] They would equally have censured the cruelties licensed by fashionable ladies who deck themselves with furs and feathers obtained by the infliction of pain upon their original wearers. And such was the importance which they assigned to the rights of the brute that they explicitly allowed their own enactments to be disregarded in order to protect animals from suffering.[4] Nor do they hesitate to condemn even one of

[1] See *B. Mezia*, 31 a *seq*.

[2] See *Bereshith Rabbah*, chap. xliv., to Gen. xv. 1; *Moré Nebuchim*, iii. 26; 48.

[3] *Abodah Zarah*, 18 b.

[4] *Shabbath*, 128 b.

the greatest of their order for his lack of gentleness towards God's humbler creatures. R. Judah, the Prince, we read, has for many years to suffer physical pain as a punishment for this failing. Once when a calf, which was about to be slaughtered, ran to him in terror and hid its head under his cloak, he thrust it away with the words, "Go and be killed, for such is thy destiny."[1] On the other hand, it is set down to the same Master's credit that he rescued a mouse from a servant who was about to kill it, saying, "Let the creature live; for is it not written, 'God's tender mercies are over all His works'?"[2] The occupants of the Ark, so runs the legend,[3] were saved because of their compassion. To whom could they show compassion? There were no poor people in the Ark. But it was to the animals shut up with them that they were kind. Often would they deny themselves sleep at night so that they might feed their humble companions!

And this consideration for the brute, it will already have been seen, is dictated by no merely utilitarian motives. To let a domestic animal starve or die means of course loss to the owner. But the Rabbins are actuated by generous compassion for the animal itself. It is a duty, they tell us, to feed a strange dog if it be hungry, and to tend it if it be sick. Nor have we, they add explicitly, to think in such cases merely of the owner's interests. We must do such kindly acts even to an animal that has no master, out of pity for the creature itself. "For the children of Abraham are merciful to all."[4] The medieval moralists, inspired by their fore-

[1] *B. Mezia*, 85 a. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. xxxvii. 1.
[4] See on all the foregoing the note to the *Orach Mesharim*, xv. 1.

runners in the Bible and the Talmud, also take the animals under their protection. Thus one of them writes in his quaint fashion: "The greatest sin is ingratitude; it must not be shown even to the brute. That man deserves punishment who overloads his beast, or beats or torments it, who drags a cat by the ears, or uses his spurs to his horse. An ailing animal must be tenderly treated. If a harmless dog runs into the house, you may drive him out with a small whip but not with a heavy stick; do not jam him in the door."[1]

Again, like the Bible, the Rabbins warn us against a heedlessness which is almost as culpable as cruelty itself. Buy the food first, they pithily say,[2] the beast or the bird afterwards. A man may not sit down to his own meal before he has fed his animals; for it is written:[3] "I will give grass in thy field for thy cattle," and *then* "thou shalt eat and be satisfied."[4] And in a beautiful and familiar passage the Midrash declares that Moses proved himself worthy of being Israel's ruler by his compassion when a shepherd. Once he seeks a stray lamb and comes upon it at last; it is weary and spent. He speaks tender words to the fugitive, and taking it in his arms carries it back to the fold. Then a voice calls from heaven: "Moses, man of merciful heart, thou shalt feed My flock."[5]

A practical question that is much discussed in these days here suggests itself for brief consideration. It is the question of what is called vivisection. Are experi-

[1] *Sepher Chassidim*, 665-670. [2] *Jer. Kethuboth*, iv. 8.
[3] Deut. xi. 15.
[4] *Berachoth*, 40 a. The language of the parallel passage in *Gittin* 62 a is stronger still: "A man may not *taste* food before he has fed his animals."
[5] *Shemoth Rabbah*, chap. ii., to Exod. iii. 1.

ments on living animals, performed in the interests of medical science, justifiable? And if they are, under what conditions are they to be carried out? Judaism has no hesitation in answering this question. Evincing a tender compassion for the lower animals, it has a still deeper pity for mankind. It would save the one from unnecessary suffering, but it is even more greatly concerned to save the other from it. And when the two aims come into conflict it prefers what it firmly holds to be the higher. If it can be established that experiments on living animals are an indispensable means of understanding and mastering disease, and so of saving human beings from needless pain and death, then the right to make such experiments is by that fact vindicated. They can no more be condemned than the slaughter of animals for food can be condemned.

But, on the other hand, a clear distinction must be drawn between necessary and superfluous experiments. The infliction of suffering in these cases may at times be unavoidable; it may even be necessary in certain instances to take the animal's life. But all such acts must be performed under a profound, a solemn sense of responsibility. There must be no needless taking of life, no wanton cruelty, no painful experimenting for experiment's sake. If the scientific investigator owes it to mankind to carry on some of his researches at the expense of the brute, he owes it to the whole world of sentient things to carry them on mercifully. This is at once Jewish doctrine and the teaching of common sense.[1]

Judaism is not content to bespeak consideration for

[1] See the note to the *Orach Mesharim*, xv. 2.

that which has life. It extends its sheltering care even to inanimate things. And here we are carried far into a department of morals which other ethical systems dismiss with but scant attention. The Jew is taught that a certain sanctity attaches to such things as food and raiment, which help to sustain and preserve human life; and he is accordingly admonished to treat them with respect.

The starting-point of this almost unique doctrine is furnished by the Biblical precept[1] which forbade the Israelites of old, when they were besieging a city, to destroy the fruit trees for the purpose of making implements of war. Yielding food for man, they might not be put to lower uses. Still less might they be destroyed in sheer wantonness. Upon this foundation the Rabbins build up a whole edifice of moral duties. The Biblical prohibition is extended to food generally. It must neither be basely used nor wasted. To touch bread, for example, with soiled hands is to defile it,[2] to defile it not merely in the levitical, but in the ethical sense. So to treat the staff of life is to degrade it, to insult what deserves to be respected. Thus the Jew is further warned not to put bread on the ground where it may be trodden underfoot,[3] or contemptuously to throw about any article of food.[4] Since life is sacred, the things that go to sustain it acquire a measure of sanctity too. Therefore they must be tenderly used.

Such is the thought that supplies the motive for these injunctions. But with this idea another is closely associated. When the Rabbins emphasise the Scriptural precept, "Thou shalt not destroy,"[5] it is often for the

[1] Deut. xx. 19-20. [2] *Sotah*, 4 b.
[3] *Erubin*, 64 b. [4] *Berachoth*, 50 b. [5] Deut. xx. 19.

further purpose of preventing wastefulness. They cite the precept in order to enforce careful usage of all objects that may minister to human well-being. Thus they warn us against acts of wilful damage to property; and they especially condemn as a sinner the man who tears his clothes, or smashes his household goods, or squanders his money, in a fit of ill-temper.[1] Nor, in such cases, does the offence consist solely in the yielding to evil passions. The destruction of precious things is part of it too. The Rabbins exalt economy into a virtue. Not only wanton destruction, but even wastefulness, they declare to be a violation of the command, "Thou shalt not destroy."[2] Thus the savage and senseless demolition of property in which angry strikers and infuriated revolutionaries, loudly prating of equity and justice, occasionally indulge, and the reckless extravagance of the prodigal, are alike denounced by the moral law as Judaism interprets it. The goods with which God has endowed mankind are to be used for well-considered, fruitful purposes, not flung away without plan or aim. They are to be considerately treated, not destroyed or neglected. The man who argues that he is free to do what he likes with his own, and that therefore he is not to be blamed if he chooses to spend his substance in riotous living, reasons badly. The liberty he claims for himself does not exist. Not one of us is free to do what he likes even with his own. All our possessions have been given to us in trust, and one of the implied conditions is a wise and sober use of them. Frugality, then, is a duty. We have no right to squander wealth which might be made the means of blessing ourselves and others. Nor is senseless profusion the only

[1] *Shabbath*, 105 b. [2] See *Shabbath*, 67 b.

error against which we are warned. There is an indirect wastefulness which allows one's property or fortune to go to ruin through sheer indolence. This the Rabbins also condemn. Vigorously affirming the need and the beauty of the spiritual life, they can still counsel the religious man to take stock of his worldly position every day, so as to safeguard himself against avoidable loss.[1]

But, as we have seen, all things that help to sustain or to gladden human life possess a dignity which gives them an inalienable claim upon our consideration and respect. That claim we shall recognise in generous measure. Regard for it will make us careful of our own property and of the property of our neighbour. It will secure our respect not only for articles of utility, but for the products both of nature and of art which lend grace and joy to existence. If it is an outrage wilfully to destroy a piece of machinery, which contains the promise of much useful service of man, it is a no less dastardly act to rob man of a potential delight by trampling upon a flower-bed, or defacing a picture or a statue. Nay, duty takes us beyond this negative attitude. All beautiful things deserve to be lovingly cherished, the æsthetic sense, which enables us to cherish them, to be diligently cultivated. We owe this duty to ourselves, for have we not to cultivate every good side of our manifold nature? But we owe it to these inanimate things also, seeing that, humble in a sense though they are, they yet possess the worth and the dignity inherent in every object that ministers to human happiness. And all this is apart from the yet higher claim that such objects put forth. For every product of nature or of art is a manifestation of creative energy, of

[1] *Chulin*, 105 a.

a noble skill. God has put His omnipotence into the making of a flower no less than into the fashioning of a planet. And in a statue or a picture the artist's industry and his gifts of mind and soul are incarnate. He, too, is a creator, a faint image of the great Maker of all—a truth which the Rabbins seem to have felt when they said[1] of Bezalel, the artificer of the Tabernacle, that he knew the secret lore by means of which heaven and earth were fashioned. For these reasons, then, we must needs respect the products of the artist as well as the handiwork of his Divine Prototype. Every species of ill-usage of them—may we not add every kind of contempt for them?—is implicitly forbidden by the ancient warning, "Thou shalt not destroy."

[1] *Berachoth*, 55 a.

CHAPTER XII

DUTIES TO THE STATE

* EVERY association of men has for its object the promotion of common aims. But the association having been formed, the idea of obligation at once arises. Common interests have common duties as their correlative. The general well-being can be secured only by individual service, individual self-sacrifice. What is called society or the social order has this idea of obligation for its basis. Honesty, truthfulness, justice — without the exercise of such virtues by the persons comprising it society could not exist.

The State is society in its most organised form. As soon as an association of men agrees to have its aims and its duties defined for it by a specially constituted authority, and to substitute personal rule for the rule of ideas,—as soon, in other words, as it possesses laws and a government, however primitive and crude,—it creates what is known as the State. But in taking this step it does not part with its ethical character. The fundamental conception which lies at the very root of society is necessarily unimpaired. All that is done is to enlarge that conception, and to give it greater definiteness. A common

life implies, as we have said, common duties; and therefore every man is bound by special obligations to the State, which is the expression of the common life in its most organised form. He must be not only a good man, but a good citizen.

That the obligation is mutual, that the State itself has an ethical character, that its aim, properly conceived and accomplished, must necessarily be moral, is a truth upon which it would be beyond our scope to enlarge. We are concerned here only with the duty of the individual.

This duty is explicitly set forth in the Bible, and all the more impressively seeing that the State towards which it has to be performed is an alien and a hostile State. "Seek," says Jeremiah [1] to his exiled brethren in the Divine name, "seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." In like manner Gedaliah tells his brethren,[2] "Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: serve the King of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."

The duty was clearly recognised by the Rabbins also, and again at a time when the Jew was living under the iron yoke of the foreigner. "Be sure," they taught,[3] "that thou prayest for the well-being of the government, for it is respect for authority that saves men from swallowing up each other alive." In other words, the State is the alternative to anarchy. "He who rebels against his Sovereign," the Talmud declares,[4] "deserves to die." Nay, the sovereign power derives from God Himself. "The rule

[1] Jer. xxix. 7.
[2] Jer. xl. 9.
[3] *Aboth*, iii. 2.
[4] *Synhed.* 49 a.

of kings is a semblance of heaven's rule."[1] Nor is good citizenship a merely sentimental sympathy with law and order. Active self-identification with civic life, active labour for the general welfare, is of its essence. The Rabbins[2] commend all acts done for the public good, and among such acts they include the lighting of dark courts and the keeping of roads in good repair. The man who does such useful acts will "see the Divine salvation." *

Our first duty as citizens is to be law-abiding. "The law of the land," pithily say the Rabbins,[3] "is law." We must give it a ready and cheerful obedience, however harsh it may seem, however hardly it may press upon us. And not only must we respect it publicly and outwardly—we must neither violate it in secret nor evade it. If there are laws which we honestly believe to be unduly severe or unrighteous, we must try to secure their repeal by calling public attention to their iniquitous character. One way of doing this is to appeal to the public conscience through the Press; another is to break the obnoxious law and willingly to pay the penalty. The latter method was often adopted when vaccination was still compulsory in England. Many persons who conscientiously objected to vaccination on the ground of its alleged unhealthiness refused to submit to the law, and deliberately courted the fine or the imprisonment with which their refusal was punishable. Protests of this kind are often effective. They were effective in this particular case. But they are not to be recommended as a general mode of procedure. The individual conscience is seldom the best criterion of the justness of a law enacted by the

[1] *Berachoth*, 58 a.

[2] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. ix., to Lev. vii. 11.

[3] *B. Kama*, 113 a.

chosen representatives of the national will. And however strong, therefore, may be our conviction of its injustice, it is far better to obey it, and to take safer and less sensational means of securing its repeal.

Obedience to the law may be held to include scrupulous payment of the imposts laid upon the individual by the State.[1] Our duty in this respect is not less obligatory because the State is an abstraction, not a person. There are people who, scorning to cheat their fellow-man, see no harm in evading the payment of income tax or of Custom-house dues. They do not perceive that the fact of the State's being impersonal does not make their act less wrongful in the slightest degree. Taxation is imposed in the general interests, and to bear one's fair share of it is an ethical obligation no less solemn or binding than are the duties which we owe to individuals. It is as shameful to evade the payment of taxes as it is to evade paying one's private debts. In no respect does the civic conscience stand in greater need of education than in this.

There is another duty imposed by citizenship, upon which a word may appropriately be added here. It is that of ready conformity to general social usage. We Jews particularly need to lay this truth to heart. Mere narrowness of view should not be allowed to set any of us in antagonism to the customs of our neighbours. Our religious observances we do right strenuously to uphold, even though they have the effect of singling us out from the population in whose midst we live. But outlandish practices which rest upon nothing better than prejudice or superstition must be rigidly eschewed. Obstinately to insist upon wearing the hair long when the prevailing

[1] See *B. Kama*, 113 a.

habit is to wear it short, or upon wearing an abnormally long coat when short coats are the fashion, is to commit a social offence. It is, moreover, to sin against Judaism, which such violation of good taste inevitably brings into contempt. The susceptibilities of the man next door deserve tender consideration at our hands; we must not needlessly hurt them. And among them the religious sentiment naturally occupies a prominent place. There are many things which a Jew may consider permissible from his own standpoint, but which he will avoid out of regard for the religious feelings of his Christian fellow-citizens. Thus, while he may see no intrinsic harm in having a party on a Sunday, good fellowship and good citizenship will effectually deter him from an act which may intelligibly cause annoyance and discomfort to his neighbours. We have, then, to conform to general social usage whenever we can do so without betraying the interests confided to us as Jews, without doing violence to our most cherished convictions. The Rabbins do not fail to urge this conformity upon us. "When Moses," they say,[1] "went up to Heaven and lived among the angels, he tasted naught for forty days and forty nights; the angels, when they came down from Heaven and moved among men, followed the fashion of mortals and ate and drank!" "One should not rejoice," they say elsewhere,[2] "when others are weeping, nor weep when they rejoice, nor be awake when they sleep, nor sleep when they are awake, nor stand when they sit, nor sit when they stand. In short, let not a man separate himself in manners and habits from those around him."

And here a word may be interposed respecting the

[1] *B. Mezia*, 86 b. [2] *Derech Eretz*, 7.

right attitude of the Jew towards other religions. While clinging fast to Judaism and to the conviction that it teaches the highest conception of God and duty, he will recognise that other creeds also contain a large measure of religious and moral truth. Nor will this be a novel attitude. Some of the most eminent teachers in Israel long ago recognised in the great world-religions, such as Christianity and Islam, God's agents for the higher education of the human race.[1] Those professing such religions were expressly excluded from the category of idolaters, who are visited with such stern reprobation in the Hebrew Scriptures.[2] Nor has this respect for other religions been merely theoretical. In the Biblical age, in the Talmudic period, in medieval times, alike, the Israelite has known how to cultivate friendly relations with his Gentile brethren. If hostility has too often marked their mutual attitude, the fact cannot justly be laid at his door. He is not answerable for the atrocities perpetrated upon him by the Crusaders, nor was it his hand that lighted the fires of the Inquisition. And if at times he has been anti-social, it was the consequence, not the cause of the hard measure meted out to him by a relentless world. The proof is to be found in those brighter pages of his annals which occur, like welcome oases, at all too rare intervals in the dreary stretches of his life-story. Wherever, as sometimes in imperial Rome, in Mohammedan Spain, in medieval Italy, he was treated as a brother, nay, as a human being, he welcomed the overtures with joy, readily grasping the hand that was held out to him, and

[1] See Maimonides, *Hilc. Melachim*, xi. 4; *Cuzari*, iv. 23.

[2] *Chulin*, 13 b. For later authorities see Grünebaum, *Sittenlehre des Judenthums;* Hamburger, *Real-Encyclopädie*, Supplement II., Art. "Christen."

even loading it with blessings. For the Jew is enjoined[1] to do deeds of mercy to those who are not of his brotherhood. He is to tend their sick, to bury their dead, to comfort their mourners, and to support their poor, equally with his own. So far is he to carry his ideas of equality, that he is recommended to resort to the aid of Gentiles in administering the affairs of his community.[2]

The modern Jew, then, who respects his neighbour's religion, and earnestly seeks after brotherly intercourse with him, is merely discharging a duty consecrated by the teaching and the usage of centuries. Never will he suffer difference of religious creed to influence his attitude or his conduct towards his fellow-men. As regards religion, he will agree to differ from them, while honouring them for the loyalty with which they cling to their own convictions. In other respects he will endeavour to be at one with them. He will be a good neighbour, seeking after those "ways of peace" which the Talmud[3] so emphatically commends. He will hold out to all the right hand of fellowship, forgetting entirely the theological differences that sunder him from them, even as those differences are ignored, as he firmly believes, by the Almighty Himself. In his relations with his fellow-men he will have but one standard of rectitude, one standard of love—the highest he knows, and to that standard he will uniformly adhere, whoever the person may be with whom he may have to deal. "Deceive no man; quarrel with no man, wrong no man, whether Jew or Gentile. Honour a virtuous Gentile, not a worthless Jew."[4]

[1] *Gittin*, 61 a; *Jer. Gittin*, v. 9; Maim., *Hilc. Melachim*, x. 12.

[2] *Jer. Gittin*, v. 9.

[3] *Gittin*, 61 a, and elsewhere. See on the expression "ways of peace," Lazarus, *Ethics of Judaism*, sec. 174.

[4] *Sepher Chassidim*, 7, 51, 74, 311, 358, 377, 426, 661.

If such maxims could be inculcated in the Middle Ages, when the Jew was smarting more keenly than ever under a sense of intolerable wrong, how imperious is their mandate in these happier days!

But while being thus just to all men, the Jew will be true to himself. Benevolence towards other religions will not coexist with lukewarmness towards his own creed. That is a poor tolerance which springs from indifference to Religion of every kind. It does no honour either to the mind that feels it or to the religion it patronises. Indeed, it were well if we could erase the word toleration altogether from our vocabulary. What men require is not a half-contemptuous sufferance, but sympathetic recognition —not toleration, but justice. We Jews know the need from our own experience. And what we feel to be our right let us freely give to others.

We have, further, to be true to the ruling power, in other words, loyal. "My son," says the Sage,[1] "fear the Lord and the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change." He, says the Talmud,[2] who sees the ruler of a State must utter the benediction: "Blessed be God who hath imparted some of His majesty to mortals." If we live, as we do in England, under a Monarchy, we must be faithful to the Sovereign; if we live under a Republic, we must be faithful to the Republic. If the existing form of government seem to us incompatible with the true well-being of the nation, we have the right as citizens to labour for its removal, but only by peaceful and constitutional means. Conspiracy and revolution may possibly be justifiable methods of overthrowing a tyrannical

[1] Prov. xxiv. 21.

[2] *Berachoth*, 58 a.

and brutal despotism. But in countries like England and the United States such a form of government is now all but impossible. And even in the case of a tyrannical despotism it is very doubtful whether violent or seditious methods are ever defensible. There is always the danger of failure, and failure often means an aggravation of the evils which revolution aims at remedying. Revolution, too, is inevitably attended by mischief of its own, which entails misery upon the innocent. Moreover, conspirators are frequently seized with a blind fury which drives them against their will into unreasoning and ferocious crime. They strike indiscriminately at the good and the bad ruler alike. Their hatred of despotism quickly degenerates into hatred of government, and posing as friends of liberty, they prove themselves mere assassins. The Nihilists in Russia and the Anarchists elsewhere are conspicuous and melancholy examples.

The attitude of the Talmudic Rabbins, who, as a rule, declined to mix themselves up with revolutionary politics, though they and their people had to suffer heavily from the cruel and tyrannical methods of their foreign rulers, is that which commends itself both to common sense and to the moral sense. The Rabbinic legend [1] represents the Almighty as making the Israelites swear, when He took them to be His people, that they would never be disloyal to the sovereign power. "I adjure you," He cries, "that ye rebel not against the government, however cruelly it oppress you. 'I counsel you, keep the king's command.' [2] Only if you are enjoined to make null the Torah, then refuse to obey." After all, while it may be a fine thing to

[1] *Tanchuma* to *Noach*, p. 15; compare *Kethuboth*, 111 a; *Midrash Rabbah* to Canticles iii. 5.

[2] Eccles. viii. 2.

strike at tyranny, it is a foolish thing so to strike at it as to enthrone some other and perhaps worse tyranny in its place. The Nihilists assassinated the Czar Alexander II., a benevolent monarch, with the result that the cause of liberty in Russia was thrown back by at least a generation. Had they reflected they must have seen that this result was inevitable. Their efforts were bound to fail, and to beget the worst consequences of failure. The Jews of the Middle Ages, like the Rabbins of earlier times, were wiser. The story of their wrongs is an indelible blot on the history of mankind, but never did they attempt to redress those wrongs by seditious methods. To have done so would have been to meet one crime with another.

No; it is the duty of every citizen patiently to endure much personal suffering for the sake of the general peace and well-being. "Human society," it has been well said,[1] "is governed by the great law of sacrifice. The most sacred of individual rights must give way, in extreme necessity, to the rights of the community, the individual good to the common good." The Jew has always felt the force of this truth, and he must continue to be foremost in paying homage to it.

Further, it is the duty of the citizen to labour for the common weal. His country calls for his service; his town calls for it; the district in which he lives calls for it. A direct means of discharging this duty is given him with the vote. The suffrage is a sacred trust, and the good citizen will so regard it. He will give his vote conscientiously, after patiently endeavouring, as far as his intelligence and his opportunities permit, to understand

[1] *First Principles in Politics*, by W. S. Lilly, p. 51.

and weigh the issues involved. The franchise may be his right, but every right carries with it a corresponding responsibility. To have a vote and to be too indolent to use it, is to show oneself unworthy of its possession. Nor may we discriminate and say, "I will vote at Parliamentary elections, which involve national issues, but it is not worth while troubling to vote for the County or the Parish Council." It is this attitude which is answerable for the many shortcomings that disfigure the work of such public bodies, and for the difficulty that is experienced in remedying them. It has only to become general in order to put an end altogether to representative institutions.

The vote, moreover, must be used for the promotion of the general good, as we conceive it, and not for our own personal ends. To give our vote, for example, to a candidate for Parliament merely because he has promised to support a Bill for the making of a new street which will increase the value of our property, is to abuse the trust confided to us. In politics we must be guided by political considerations only—by principles which, in our judgment, make for the welfare of the State. All thought of self must be discarded. But our political principles must be ethically sound. The good of the State, like the good of the individual, can never grow out of moral evil. Patriotism is the supreme duty of the citizen, but our conception of patriotism must be based upon a reverence for righteousness. "My country, right or wrong!" is the utterance not of the patriot, but of the fanatic. Ages ago the great teachers of Israel proclaimed this truth. The Prophets' repeated denunciations of national iniquity clearly show that, in their judgment, even public policy must bow to the moral law; and the Sage in Proverbs

enunciated the same principle when he declared[1] that "righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."

We Jews have a special interest in this question. In the heat of Parliamentary elections people sometimes talk of such a thing as the Jewish vote, the idea being that Jews sometimes vote on such occasions in a body and to order, from politic rather than political motives. The idea is utterly erroneous. Jews, as a whole, never vote as Jews, but always as citizens, as conservatives or progressists as the case may be. If they did the opposite, they would be untrue to their citizenship, nay, disloyal to their Judaism. In weighing the respective merits of two candidates for Parliament we have only one question to ask ourselves: Which man is the more likely to promote the welfare of the State? There is such a thing, no doubt, as Jewish interests. Nor may they be entirely ignored in such cases. The prevention of the passage of an Alien Bill, which would close this country against Jews fleeing from persecution, is one of them; Jewish equality before the law is another. But true Jewish interests can never really conflict with the interests of the State. If there seems to be an antagonism between them, it can only be because a wrong conception has been formed either of national or of Jewish well-being. Thus to vote for a Parliamentary candidate who is against the introduction of an Alien Bill is not to set Jewish above national interests; it is to safeguard both. For, apart from the question whether the free admission of industrious and law-abiding immigrants is not a source of strength to the State, the curtailment of that right of asylum, which is

[1] Prov. xiv. 34.

one of the noblest of our national traditions, would be a reactionary step from the moral point of view. And in the case of fugitives from persecution, it would make this country an accomplice in their ill-treatment.

The same may be said of the Jewish struggle for civil and religious liberty. In using their votes for the purpose of securing such rights Jews are in reality only playing the part of good citizens, for they are helping to vindicate the cause of justice, which cannot be set at nought without detriment to the national well-being. That they happen to be fighting for their own personal interests also, is an accident. If any other sect of Englishmen — Catholics, Quakers, members of the Theistic Church—were engaged in a similar struggle, it would be the duty of their Jewish fellow-citizens to fight as strenuously on their behalf. In like manner, in countries infected with the poison of anti-Semitism, the Jews are fully justified, even from a national point of view, in adopting every constitutional means of eradicating it. They have a perfect right to prevent the election of an anti-Semitic member of the legislature, and to work for the overthrow of an anti-Semitic ministry. They have this right not merely as Jews, but as citizens. To exercise it is true patriotism. For every true patriot must sincerely desire to see his country rid of a pest which is a disgrace to its good name, and which contains the germ of moral and political disruption.

Again, it is the duty of the citizen to form an intelligent judgment on all questions vitally affecting the public weal. For only by arriving at such a judgment, and by giving effect to it in the exercise of his vote, can he acquit himself of his share of responsibility for the adminis-

tration of public affairs. Thus he will carefully follow the policy that is pursued by the Government for the time being towards foreign countries. Great social problems which touch the domestic interests of the nation will likewise have his attentive consideration. The question, for example, which has the greatest significance for national well-being in these days, is that of the relations of capital and labour. The rise of Socialism has brought to the front some of the most important problems of modern times. The good citizen will recognise their gravity. He will not hold himself aloof from them in a species of contempt, nor will he allow a feeling of indolence to stand between him and a patient study of them. He will be mindful of the attitude of the great Prophets of the Bible. They laboured to establish better relations between the rich and the poor; and, at however great a distance, we ought to follow in their footsteps. It is true that they were of the elect—leaders of men as well as the depositaries of the Word. But it behoves each individual, however obscure he may be, to imitate, if not their degree of public activity, at any rate their appreciation of the wide and dangerous chasm that severs the extremes of the social organism, and their strenuous endeavours to secure the triumph of right and justice.

Finally, it is the citizen's duty to give himself to the service of the State—to take part, for example, in the administration of justice by serving on juries, or to co-operate in the defence of the national safety and honour by joining the army or the navy or the volunteers. Each man must help the State according to his powers and opportunities.

This is a supreme duty, in the discharge of which the observances of religion, as distinguished from its great principles, may legitimately be set aside. No Jew, for instance, ought to feel himself deterred from being a soldier or a sailor by the fact that military or naval service involves certain breaches of the ritual law. This is a case in which the higher duty supersedes the lower. The example of the pious Jews of old fortifies us in this conclusion. The Maccabees, religiously staunch though they were, defended themselves against attack on the Sabbath.[1] And the rule here laid down applies to other public obligations also. No Jew has the right to excuse himself on religious grounds from serving on a jury or from voting at an election on the Sabbath. The Rabbins, cutting short any doubts as to the lawfulness of violating the day of rest for the sake of a sick person, exclaim:[2] "Break one Sabbath so that this man may keep many;" and the words are not permissive merely—they are a command.[3] In like manner we may say: Let the Jewish citizen break the Sabbatical law so that he may keep inviolate the greater duty—that which he owes to the State. For, after all, what he violates is the letter of that law, not its spirit. The Sabbath is a day for fulfilling our most sacred responsibilities; and surely the obligations of citizenship are among them. Weighed against such obligations, infractions of a merely ritual prescription, like that which forbids writing or driving on the day of rest, are of comparatively small moment.

No less laudable than this obedience to the higher law is the desire to devote our leisure and our abilities to the general good by service in Parliament or on some local

[1] 1 Maccabees ii. 39-41. [2] *Yoma*, 85 b. [3] See *ibid.* 84 b.

body like the Parish Council. To live a narrow, selfish life when we have the opportunity of labouring for the public welfare is to set at naught a great moral obligation. But our aim in thus giving ourselves to public affairs must be the public well-being only—in Rabbinic phrase,[1] "the glory of God." To stand for Parliament because we have our own axe to grind—from mere petty ambition or vanity, from a weak love of social distinction, or with the desire of putting money in our purse—is to do the right thing in an utterly wrong spirit. And the position we covet, once gained, must be used with due regard to the just wishes and expectations of those who have assigned it to us. The lofty principles with which we enter public life we must uphold in practice. Not our own personal interests, but the general good, must be our supreme consideration in dealing with the questions which we are called upon to consider. Even loyalty to party must be disregarded when it cannot be reconciled with devotion to the general weal.[2]

[1] *Aboth*, ii. 2.

[2] Good citizenship has been formally set forth as an integral part of the Israelite's duty by many Jewish synods and assemblies, notably by the famous Paris Synhedrion convoked by the first Napoleon, by the Leipzig Synod in 1869, by the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund in its *Principles of Jewish Ethics*, published in 1885, and by the German Rabbinical Association in 1897. See Lazarus, *Ethics of Judaism*, sec. 168, and the note thereon. Identical declarations have been made from time to time by Jewish synods in the United States.

CHAPTER XIII

DUTIES TO THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

EVERY association of men is, as we have said, necessarily based upon the idea of obligation. Each of the individuals composing it owes it certain duties directly springing out of his membership. One such association is the religious community. Every member of a religious community is bound to it by the ties of interest and sympathy, but also, nay, consequently, by the bond of duty. He has to do all that lies in his power to promote its cause and to safeguard its welfare. In the case of the Jew those obligations are especially weighty, for the following reasons :—

1. Since the religious ordinances of Jews differ sharply from those of the majority, a specially vigorous effort is needed to uphold the community in the struggle for existence.

2. The religious ordinances of Jews are such as to entail a specially heavy expenditure for communal purposes.

3. The position of the Jews in relation to the general population necessitates their providing for the wants of the great bulk of their indigent poor, a circumstance which involves a further special outlay.

The conscientious Jew will bear these considerations steadily in mind, and cheerfully submit to the sacrifice of money and energy which they demand from him.

The fundamental obligation with which we are here dealing is set forth in the Rabbinical maxim,[1] "Separate not thyself from the community." The good Jew will identify himself to the full with the communal life. He will bear his due share of the communal burdens and difficulties, refusing, in Biblical phrase,[2] to let his brethren go to the war while he tarries behind.

He will loyally help to maintain the institutions of the community — the Synagogue, the School, the public Charities—and he will help to maintain them by effectual measures: by adequate pecuniary contributions, and by such personal service as his powers and opportunities enable him to render. In the case of the Synagogue he will consider it a sacred duty to assist in making and maintaining due provision for public worship. The "Jew-in-my-heart" theory will not commend itself to him. He will not be satisfied with being what is called a racial Jew, with resting in a vague sense of fellowship with historic Israel, whilst steadily holding himself aloof from the Synagogue. He will support public worship, indeed, as the one organic bond that unites all Israel together; but he will support it too as the expression of the Jew's religious life, and as a mighty impulse to its development.

Nor will he be content to give only his money to the Synagogue. He will support it most effectually by his presence at its Services. He will not be satisfied to rent a seat in the House of Prayer, and never to occupy it.

[1] *Aboth*, ii. 4. [2] Numb. xxxii. 6.

Regular attendance at public worship is a debt which the Jew owes no less to the community than to his own religious life and to that of his children. If there are obstacles in the way of such attendance, they must be removed. Indolently or feebly to be thwarted by them is to contemn a solemn responsibility. That the Service is held at an hour which makes it practically impossible for us to attend it, or that its character is such as to rob it of its appeal to our religious feelings, is no valid excuse for systematic abstention from public worship. We must seek for a Service that satisfies our needs in both respects, and if it does not exist, we must strive to establish it. But, on the other hand, we must not deal with this question in any narrow spirit. It is possible to be selfish even in insisting upon one's religious rights. Some sacrifice is indispensable. The obligation of attending public worship is so sacred that we may well submit to much personal inconvenience in order to fulfil it. Nor, further, ought we too sharply to scrutinise the details of a religious Service. Public worship is for the many, not for the individual, and the individual therefore must be prepared for points here and there in which its form conflicts with his personal ideas or feelings. It must be enough for him that he is in sympathy with its general tenour, its historic significance, and its great unifying purpose.

In contributing to the support of the communal Schools the Jew will remember that he is promoting the holy and the time-honoured cause of Religious Education, with all its historic traditions and all its significance for character and conduct. From time immemorial the Synagogue has had the School as its adjunct, nay, as its

necessary complement. For the Jew Religious Education has been the bulwark of moral and social stability. "The world itself," the Rabbins declare,[1] "rests upon the breath of the children in the schoolhouse." And this wholesome conviction still survives. The good Jew does not regard the fact that he already contributes towards the cost of secular teaching by the payment of rates and taxes as absolving him from the duty of providing for the religious training of the children of his own community. The bond that binds him to Judaism will, at the same time, make him a firm friend of Jewish education. He will befriend it, moreover, from motives of enlightened self-interest, because he sees that religious teaching is a species of communal insurance. It is a safeguard against the dangers that would threaten not only the public welfare, but in a special degree Jewish well-being, if the children of the poor were to grow up without adequate religious instruction, and therefore without an adequate conception of civic duty and moral obligation generally.

The Jew will be equally just to the communal Charities. As a citizen he helps to defray, by the payment of poor rates, the cost of maintaining the general poor. But as a Jew he will recognise that an additional duty is laid upon him in this respect. He will perceive the obligation of aiding the community in its task of making special provision for the relief of the Jewish poor. Their special requirements,—requirements growing out of their religious obligations and, in many cases, out of their position as strangers in a strange land,—apart from the necessity, in the interests of the community itself, of pre-

[1] *Shabbath*, 119 b.

venting them from "coming upon the rates," amply justify this special duty, and every good Jew will share equitably in its performance. Nor will he permit this duty to interfere with the wider obligation of extending his benefactions to all, without distinction of race or creed. He will support the Charities of his community, but he will also take care, in a spirit of loyalty to the principles of his religion,[1] to join the general body of his fellow-citizens in works of philanthropy. But, on the other hand, he will disdain to make the larger duty a plea for neglecting the smaller. Such neglect betokens not breadth of view, as some persons are apt to imagine, but, on the contrary, a certain narrowness of sympathy. After all, the homely adage about charity beginning at home is true enough. It ought not, certainly, to stop there; but unless it does begin at home, it is not likely to make much progress abroad. That those who are quickest to recognise the communal claim usually make the most liberal response to the demands of citizenship is a truth which is brought home to us by everyday experience.

The Community, moreover, like the State, asks us to devote our powers to its service. Besides helping to maintain the communal institutions with our money we are bound to aid them with more personal effort. We may do this by stimulating the interest of others in their welfare, and further, by taking part in their management. Nor shall we consider this latter task, to refer to it more especially, as unworthy of our efforts. To serve on the Committee of a Jewish School or Charity, or to be the warden of a Synagogue, may seem a small thing, a poor way of employing one's spare time and energies. But

[1] *Gittin*, 61 a.

the principles which those institutions represent are by no means trivial, unless we regard the cause of Israel as a trifle. To help in administering the affairs of one or other of the communal institutions is to help in the great task of preserving the continuity of Israel's corporate life, the roots of which stretch back to the distant, the storied past. Is it possible to think of this as a petty task, one that is beneath our consideration? If a Board or a Council or a Committee is fairly chargeable with being parochial, it is not because it has little things to do, but because it does big things in a small spirit. The remedy lies not in narrow-minded aloofness, but in large-minded co-operation. Those who long to do big things should give their services to the communal institutions, and see to it that the affairs of those institutions are managed in a broad spirit. Let the capable men persist in their policy of abstention, and they themselves help to doom communal administration to narrowness and incapacity.

Finally, it is the duty of the Jew to help in maintaining the good name of his community. "All Israelites," so runs the familiar Rabbinic maxim,[1] "are mutually accountable for each other." Theirs is a special solidarity. Individual offences bring shame not only upon the persons who commit them, but upon the entire race, which, says an old writer,[2] like a harp-string, has but to be struck at one end and it vibrates throughout. This has been the fate of Israel in every age. And if it seem a hard fate, let us remember that the converse process is always going on, and that the virtues of the individual Israelite are in like manner set down to the communal credit. Thus the

[1] *Shebuoth*, 39 a. [2] *R. Chochmah*, i. 14.

liberal charities of a Rothschild or the ardent philanthropy of a Moses Montefiore add as much to the Jewish good name as the misdeeds of a Shylock or a Fagin detract from it. Be this as it may, the world's habit of identifying the race with the shortcomings of the individual seems to be ineradicable. It arises, no doubt, from that condition of separateness which our religious practices, combined with long-continued persecution, have forced upon us. It is something to be calmly accepted and courageously faced, not ignored or angrily deprecated. We have to make the best of the situation. And seeing that our personal life exerts a powerful influence upon our neighbours' opinion not only of us but of our people, we must pitch our aims high—keep steadily before us the best ideals of conduct that we know. The Rabbins, in a striking apologue,[1] picture a boat at sea, full of men. One of them begins to bore a hole in the bottom of the boat, and on being remonstrated with urges that he is only boring under his own seat. "Yes," say his comrades, "but when the sea rushes in we shall be drowned with you." So it is with Israel. Its weal or its woe is in the hands of every one of the individuals composing it.

Thus each of us has a twofold incentive to noble conduct. On the one hand, there is the duty of striving after the best, which we share with all human beings; on the other hand, there is the special Jewish obligation of jealously shielding from all spot and slur the fair fame of our race. Nor is it a question of the good name of Israel only. The honour of Judaism, nay, of the Supreme Himself, is involved. The Prophets of the Bible often denounce their people's misdeeds as a profanation of the

[1] *Vayikrah Rabbah*, chap. iv., to Lev. iv. 2.

Divine Name. The expression is used of sin viewed absolutely. Thus the Israelite is warned,[1] "Ye shall not swear by My name falsely, and profane the name of thy God." But in Ezekiel, particularly in his 36th chapter, the expression has a specific and characteristic significance. Israel's faithlessness to the lofty ideals set before him by his religion, with the adversity it entails as its penalty, brings, so to speak, the Divine Author of that religion into discredit. It is an impeachment of His power; it impugns His trustworthiness. How can this God be Deity, seeing that He has not saved His people from humiliation? How can His law be true, seeing that it has not saved His followers from sin? And the Rabbins press home the lesson. Every sin, even one committed in secret, profanes the Divine Name, and the secret sinner will have to make public expiation.[2] For to do right is to glorify God, to justify Him, to sanctify Him. But public transgression—transgression which involves the whole House of Israel—is in a special sense branded as a *Chillul Hashem*, as "a profanation of the Name," just as good deeds, done publicly, which reflect lustre on all Israel, is praised as a *Kiddush Hashem*, "a sanctification of the Name." For God's own reputation is bound up with the fair fame of His people. Let them be known as transgressors, and He is dishonoured. But let their virtues shine before men, and He is glorified. The religion He gave is vindicated, and Israel remains true to His time-honoured mission.[3] Therefore, while sin is always sin, always intrinsically shameful, it acquires an

[1] Lev. xix. 12. Compare Jer. xxxiv. 16; Amos ii. 7.

[2] *Aboth*, iv. 4.

[3] See *Tana d' be Eliyahu*, chap. xxviii. p. 558.

added turpitude when it is done in public, seeing that it drags down the community with the individual, and offers insult to Israel's God.

And it need hardly be said that to take this view is not to condone private sin, or to detract aught from its heinousness. The Jew, as we have seen, is admonished to be pure in his inmost chamber, nay, in the most secret recesses of his heart. This idea of *Chillul Hashem* merely provides moral obligation with an additional sanction. Nay, it gives a specifically Jewish character to an universally recognised principle. Public transgression is regarded by all right-minded persons with particular reprobation. It betokens a callous, a shameless nature; it offers an evil example which may easily corrupt others; it shocks the public conscience. "Sin not," says Ben Sira,[1] "sin not against the public, and bring not thyself into discredit with the people." The idea of *Chillul Hashem* is rooted in similar considerations. The Jew who flaunts his sin in the face of the world is necessarily more culpable than he who has the grace to hide his offence. Not only does he set public opinion at defiance, not only does he help to "debase the moral currency," but he brings his religion and his people into contempt. He is unfaithful to his primary obligation as a Jew. In short, he increases the number of his offences. To his crime against the universal moral law he adds treachery to Israel's cause, to Israel's God. And so the Rabbins[2] can characterise his offence as the one inexpiable sin. Better, they declare,[3] that a letter of the sacred Torah itself be blotted out than that the Divine Name be profaned.

[1] Ecclus. vii. 7, according to Kautsch's translation.
[2] *Yoma*, 86 a. [3] *Yebamoth*, 79 a.

The warning thus implied is addressed to every Israelite. For however obscure he may be personally, however lowly his station, he necessarily represents Judaism to his neighbours. His life helps to fashion their estimate of his religion and his people. On that account, at any rate, must he give diligent heed to his conduct. Even if he be reckless as to his own character, he must not be indifferent to the reputation of Israel. The Jewish martyrs of olden days, who bore witness to their God at the stake, are described as having "yielded up their lives for the sanctification of the Divine Name." Such testimony is within the power, and constitutes the duty of the Jew in these times also. If he is not called upon to die for the sanctification of the Name, he has at least to live for it. His life must give glory to God, vindicate his God-given religion. Thus every Jew without exception has the honour of the race in his keeping.

But if this applies to every Jew, it is especially true of those Jews whose vocation or position in life brings them prominently before the public eye. Their acts challenge the widest notice, and therefore exert a marked effect, either for good or for evil, upon the popular conception of the Jewish character. The Rabbins clearly perceived this truth. And therefore they address[1] a special exhortation to all Jews of light and leading to be careful of their conduct in small things as well as in great. They are to beware of equivocal acts, of conduct which, though innocent in itself, may be interpreted as sinful, and so involve a profanation of the Name. The example of Moses is adduced to emphasise the warning.

[1] *Yoma*, 86 a.

The Lawgiver's disobedience was in itself venial; but because he, the Prophet and Leader, failed to sanctify God in the sight of Israel,[1] it acquired an additional gravity and demanded the severe penalty with which it was visited.[2] And so upon every Jew who, because he enjoys high station, or fills a public position, or because he has formed many friendships outside the pale of his community, or because he lives in a small town and necessarily draws to himself the gaze of his neighbours, has, therefore, to represent Israel, there rests with increased weight the obligation of protecting his people by scrupulous regard for his own personal life. Never must he palter with wrong-doing in any shape. Never must he seem to palter with it. For to regard for his own personal reputation there is joined the silent appeal of all Israel, the success of whose cause is bound up with the world's judgment of it.[3]

[1] Numb. xx. 12.

[2] *Bemidbar Rabbah*, chap. xix., on the passage.

[3] The theory of *Chillul Hashem* is set forth in its various aspects by Bachya, *Kad Hakemach*, s.v. *Chillul Hashem*.

CONCLUSION

We have now finished our task and have set forth our conception of Judaism in its three divisions of Theology, Ceremonial, and Ethics. That task, we trust, has not been fruitless. The exposition attempted in the foregoing pages will, it is hoped, have found sympathetic readers and won increased respect and love for Israel's religion. Judaism, unless this book has been written in vain, has been shown worthy of the Jew's allegiance and chivalrous solicitude even in these latter days, fit still to be the inspirer of his thoughts and the guide of his life.

But while Judaism in its entirety is for the Jew, its creed and its ethics are for mankind. The conviction that his religion contained the elements of a world-religion, that time would justify his conception of the truth, has been the one sustaining force that has nerved the Israelite to face his age-long martyrdom. That conviction he may cherish no less firmly to-day. The idea of a missionary Israel is no anachronism. The Jew has still a message for men which it will profit them to hear and to heed. Still may they sit down at his feet

and receive of his words. Despite its wonderful progress, the world has yet many vital truths to learn—truths which deeply affect its life and its happiness, and some of them Israel may help to teach it.

In the domain of theology there are certain great conceptions which have yet fully to enter into the consciousness of mankind. The God-idea itself is the first of them. Men have to strengthen their enfeebled grasp upon the primal verities of Religion, and to confess with all their hearts that there is indeed a God judging in the earth. To help them to this conviction is peculiarly the rightful task of Israel, seeing that he has consistently witnessed to the religious idea and sacrificed himself for it throughout the centuries. Right conceptions of the Divine nature, moreover, have yet to prevail. The Supreme has yet to be recognised as the Absolute, the Unique Being, truly one and perfect, immeasurably exalted above human comprehension and human defects alike, whom Judaism proclaims.

Closely related to the majesty of the Supreme is the dignity of man. The child of God, he has the right to go with his sin and his sorrow straight to the Father, without aid from any mediator, confident that his penitence and his pain are the all-sufficient title to the pity and the love he claims. This innate might of the human soul is part of its divinity, the heritage it has brought with it from Heaven; but the world as yet only imperfectly recognises it. Man has still to know his own greatness. He has to learn, too, that "salvation" is at

once harder and easier to win than he has hitherto thought; that it is to be reached not by way of theology, with its short-cuts and pitfalls, but by the King's highway of conduct, toilsome, yet accessible to all; that the Divine criterion is not creed, but righteousness; and that every one is saved who earnestly strives to realise his best ideal of goodness, whatever that ideal may be. These are truths to which the Jew has ever jealously clung, and the world may well agree to learn them from him.

It may further learn from him certain much-needed lessons in the sphere of conduct. Foremost among them is the sovereignty of the moral law. Men have still to discern in that law the expression of the Divine will, to understand that it is part of the very constitution of things, that it is as fixed and inexorable as the ordinance that keeps this earth travelling in its everlasting and unalterable orbit. Just as human life is planned in righteousness, so righteousness is God's demand from man, and that demand will be exacted in fullest measure. The way men live now seems to show that they doubt this fundamental truth. They must regain their faith in it through the benign offices of Religion, if they are not to have it forced upon them by the stern teachings of painful experience.

For certain precepts, too, of the moral law they have to gain a deeper respect. The Family as the bulwark of the State, personal purity as the guarantee of social well-being, the need and the duty and the glory of self-

restraint—these ideas are being assailed with growing frequency to-day. Judaism may help to reaffirm their sanctity. Equally needed is its protest against other prevalent evils—the undue laudation of war, love of wealth for its own sake, unrighteousness in business, and especially the oppression of the poor and the weak by financial rings and combinations. All such iniquity finds a condemnatory voice in Israel's religion, which stands for peace and goodwill, for justice and loving-kindness, for the sanctity of the home, for purity and simplicity of life.

Other religions teach some of the truths above set forth, but Judaism upholds them all; and Israel, chosen by Divine Providence to uphold them, may commend them to the general conscience with unique power and effectiveness.

But to the Jew himself, first of all, these truths are uttered. He is to help to win the world for the highest ideals. But if he is to succeed, he must himself be conspicuously faithful to them. He is the chosen, but his very election binds him to vigorous service of truth and righteousness. "Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord." Only when Israel proves by the nobility of his life that he deserves his holy vocation will the accomplishment of his mission be at hand. When all the peoples of the earth shall see that he is worthily called by the name of the Lord, the Divine name and law will be near to the attainment of their destined empire over the hearts of men.

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