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"Four Portraits of Jewish Genius." 1949.

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Temple Emanuel

Presents

FOUR PORTRAITS OF JEWISH GENIUS

- JUDAH HALEVI
- MAIMONIDES
- SABBATAI ZEVI
- BAAL SHEM TOV

Four Consecutive Lectures

By

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

Friday Evenings at 8:15 o'Clock

Temple Emanuel
Denver



SERIES BEGINS FRIDAY EVENING
JANUARY 28, 1949



*Members, Their Families and Friends
Are Cordially Invited*

Friday, January 28th:

JUDAH HALEVI, Poet

(1080- ?)

Sweet Singer—immortal bard of his people. Purest poet in 1,000 years.

Defender of his faith. World traveller.

Lived in Spain, died mysteriously on trip to Holy Land.

Friday, February 4th:

**MOSES MAIMONIDES,
Philosopher**

(1135-1204)

Versatile genius—great doctor, mathematician.

Expounder of logic—guide to the perplexed. Codifier of the law.

Philosopher, author, teacher and commentator.

Definer of God.

Friday, February 11th:

SABBATAI ZEVI, False Messiah

(1626-1676)

Charlatan-adventurer. Inspirer of scores of thousands. Mystic-faker.

Fantastic career of dream and intrigue.

Sensational conversion. Jailbird.

Friday, February 18th:

**ISRAEL, BAAL SHEM TOV,
Ecstatic**

(1700-1760)

Founder of Chasidism, a piety for the untutored.

Miracle worker—exponent of song and dance—teacher of religion of joy.

Creator of hope for the masses.

Producer of a dynasty.

JEWISH HISTORY IS REPLETE

with figures of genius, God-intoxicated poets, philosophers, adventurers, doctors of the body and the soul, all sorts of men who flourished in many ages and in many climes.

THESE MEN ARE THE DRAMATIC

beloved bearers of the entire people's creative spirit. In knowing them, you come to sense the strength which has sustained us in centuries of trial. It has always been a strength of intellect, of soul, of faith. Our geniuses and heroes have not been generals, diplomats, princes or kings — but rather, scholars, scientists, saints and savants.

THIS SERIES IS DESIGNED

to tell the stories of four such men and also to motivate a curiosity about the 40 or 400 others who could have been selected. More inspiration is to be derived from a warm and friendly familiarity with human personality than from all the tomes ever written.

IF YOU KNOW GREAT JEWISH CHARACTERS,

in the flesh and blood, you come to appreciate the history of your people.

I.
LIFE

born 1700 - Bukovina - to
old parents - sort of miraculous
birth. Orphaned shortly after
birth. Community took care of him,
out of respect for his father Eliezer.

Young boy used to play
hockey from Chelva, sit in woods
alone & dream. Finally, the teachers
despaired of his learning any thing,
and made him assistant, who
inducted other children to & from
school. He taught them hymns
while they walked.

At age 14, he was made
Shames in Shul. He studied at

night and slept by day,
so everyone thought he was
lazy & ignorant.

Manned & went with
bride to isolated hut in Car-
pathian mountains - no other Jews.
Israel dug lime in ravines, and
wife sold it in nearby town. They
lived thus in poverty for 7 years.

"The harder Israel's outward lot,
The more he increased in spiritual
greatness. In his solitude he gave
himself up entirely to devotion and
religious contemplation. His habit was

to climb to the summit of the mountains and wander about
rapt in spiritual ecstasies. Schechter

After 7 years, went
back to Brody with wife, where
he ~~served~~ served as coachman to
brother-in-law - and later as
min-keeper, with wife doing most of work.
Here, aged 42, he revealed his true
character & mission as a man of God
to a few friends, who became disciples.

He travelled, preached,
spread message. Once decided to
make pilgrimage to Palestine, but in
Constantinople decided to return & continue

well at home. Died in
1760, and succeeded by Dr
Baer of Meining.

His method of teaching
was also Greek peripatetic —
nothing written down — only speaking
to disciples. (Story in 66 in Baber)

Many miracles told
about him — when he desired
to cross a stream, he spread his
mantle on the waters, and passed
safely over; ghosts vacated haunted
houses at the mere mention of his
name;

alone in forest on winter
night, he touched a tree with
finger tips and flames burst forth;
when his spirit wandered
through heaven which was often,
he obtained access to Heaven for
millions of souls who had been
waiting thousands of years.

All these miracle
stories are ^{no} attestation of faith
which the common people had in
him.

II

HOW MOVEMENT GROW

1) BACKGROUND OF TALMUDIC
PILPUL

* religion consisted only of study of
Talmud, complicated cases and
innumerable ordinances, legalism to
be fought over with sophistry and
casuistry. The emotional part
was neglected.

2) LARGE RURAL UNEDUCATED
POPULATION

"Hasidism is, most of all, the
rebellion of the half-illiterate rural
Jew against the supremacy of the
learned urban Jew." Baron

- 3) STILL⁴ DESIRE FOR
MESSIAH, UNFULFILLED
IN SABBATH ZEVI

III.
TEACHINGS

1. Immanence / God
Faith + belief more efficacious
than learning.

2. Prayer - by which we establish
contact & intercourse with
God. Prayer not perfunctory

(Hislahavus)

(insert page on prayer)

method of prayer: -

"prayed in sory-sory tune,
clapping hands, bowing, gumping,
gesticulating, and uttering cries.

"At almost ^{the} same time there
arose, in Wales, a Christian sect
called 'The Jumpers' who resorted to
similar movements during prayer, and
induced trances and mesmeric dreams.

At the same time there was
established, in North America, the sect
of the Shakers, by an Irish girl, Johanna
Lee, who likewise in the delirium of prayer
perceived mystic mesmeric phantoms.

Gratz

3. Sin - There is potential
good in all people -
no ~~irredeemable~~ irredeemable sinners.

4. Shiflus - (humility) pride
compared to idolatry -
most human failing. Hated
scholars for their pride.

5. Simcha - (cheerfulness) life is
to be loved & lived.

IV. Zaddi Kim

This was offspring &
degeneration of Hasidism.

ZaddiK ruled over flock
because he had closest contact
with God. He had largest
number of disciples - divine sparks.

He stands on same level
with Moses and not only
speaks with authority of Torah,
but may even abrogate it.

(Time of prayer - Sephardic nusach -
different method of Shachitah, etc.)

Ben of Anisitz - Mesentz

"A Zaddik is not alone
The most perfect and sinless
human being, he is not alone
Moses, but the representative
of God and His image"

This is degeneration
because Zaddik actually came to
be almost worshipped. The Chasidim
must live in submissiveness to Zaddik,
surround him with their love
and confidence, bring him gifts,
cede to his every whim, etc.

Zaddikism grew corrupt -
men bid for the office
because of the power & wealth
it brought. Separate
communities founded to protect
sovereignty.

Zaddikism became worship
of man, not of God.



V. Conflict with Rabbanism

Vilna Gaon - Cheren -
Mishnagdim - etc.

SUMMATION

"Hasidism, in its old form, with its customs + rituals, with its outward show + gilded glamour, belongs to a world that has passed away, never to return --"

It has, however, suggested possibilities "for creative artistic expression and for bringing the idea of joyousness into modern religious life and practice."

Jacob S. Minkin

This evening we have the third in the series of personalities of Jewish life in the Middle Age period. This evening we deal with perhaps the most interesting of all four. A man who was at the same time a gifted genius and a terrible charlatan. A man who had personal magnetism capable of attracting hundreds of thousands of people who, at the same time, was absolutely hollow inside. When he came to the personal crisis of his own life, he had no strength of spirit with which to meet it. And so with this queer paradox of external attractiveness and internal ~~we meet Shabbath Zevi, the false~~ Messiah of the 17th century. A man who lived only some 300 years ago and yet who seems incredibly remote from us in our world today.

He was born in 1626 and he died in 1676. He lived only 50 years, and yet in the course of those 50 years he succeeded in putting all of Europe into a tremendous turmoil, because what happened to the Jews whom he most immediately affected was bound to influence the non-Jewish environment in which they percolated and steamed as the result of his agitation. To know what brought Shabbath Zevi to the forefront of Jewish history, we must realize that something quite horrible occurred

in the year 1648 when he was a young man.

In 1648 the Jewish world was afflicted by the worst program which it had had since Rome and which has not been duplicated since until Hitler's very day. In the year 1648, there was a catastrophic destruction of a half million Jews in Central Europe with a complete leveling and laying waste of 700 Jewish communities. This thing occurred as the result of the Russian-Greek Orthodox Cossacks living the Ukraine, rising up against their Polish, Catholic masters and catching the Jews in the middle, as we have always been caught, when ~~xxx~~ great forces clash with one another in the world. The Ukrainian Cossacks under the leadership of Bogdon Smelnitsky, attempted to overthrow the lordship of the Polish and at the same time to overthrow and break the power of the Catholic church. In the course of that fight, between the Greek-Orthodox Russians and the Catholic Poles, the Jews were tortured, massacred, burned, put to the fire, shot and hacked to the number of half a million, to the extent that the total community was destroyed and those who were ~~left~~ left in September 1648, when the riots had ceased, found themselves wandering amid burned ruins in a ~~xxxx~~ sort of stupefaction. Some of them scared, frightened had run westward and had gotten as far as Holland or France. Most of them,

however, with no way out, remained in the trap of Central Europe and became confused with the whole mass of psychoses and imaginative phenomena which were the breeding conditions for the projection upon the scene of history of this man, Sabbath Zevi.

The Jews met that natural misfortune as they have met many others. Namely, with a fervor of religious spirit which caused them to attempt to rebound and bring to their aid their ancient historical sense which had always taught them that when they reached the very bottom pit of despair, finally the pains of giving birth to the Messiah would occur and he would come to rescue them when life no longer seemed bearable. In September 1648, life on the continent of Europe for the Jews was as bad as it had ever been in 1600 years. They firmly believed that the Messiah would come to help them and as the result of various calculations on the part of the Cavalists. And I ask you to realize that the theme of Cavalism and mysticism will run all through the life of Sabbath Zevi. As a result of the calculations of the Cavalists, by magical figuring of certain combinations of letters and words in the great book, the Zohar, it was figured that the very year, 1648 itself would be the year which would give birth to the Messiah! It was in that

era of neurotic excitement, feverish waiting and hoping and expectation that this young boy grew up. We are told that he was tall, dark, had a full beautiful ~~dark beard~~ dark beard, very lovely voice that was given more to song than speech making. That he received an early training in Zohar quite different from the training of the usual Chader or ~~Mxxxxx~~ Yeshiva bocher who studied only the legalism of the Talmud and did not wander off into the forbidden field of mystery and magic. ~~Shabbah~~ Zevi did receive instruction in those fields. And the fact that he had this esoteric wisdom, plus the handsome demeanor of his bearing, plus the fact that there was something strange about him, because he seemed quite different from all the other boys of his age, he shied away from women, and although he was married to one very young in his life, as was the custom in those days, he did not go near her nor did he go near a second woman to whom he was betrothed, and this apparent difference between him and other men caused him to become the center of some sort of mysterious attention and attraction and a circle of young men began to accumulate itself around him. His father was an agent in the city of Smerna in Turkey where he was born, for an English mercantile house. His father traveled between London and Smerna and listened to the calculations of the Christians in regard to the same kind of speculation.

Namely, the coming of the Messiah. The Christians, however, in their calculations had arrived at a different date, not 1648, but 1666. The magic number either 1666 or 1999, and so since the Messiah did not come then you may be privileged to witness the coming in another few years.

When his father brought home these stories of the what the Christian speculation was, and the young boy heard all the stories of the Jewish speculation, born out of his desperate desire on the part of the Jews for a savior, both of these things worked upon his mind to the extent that he gradually began to conceive of himself, not as the Messiah at ~~first~~ first, but as the forerunner of the Messiah. Finally with a boldness and a rashness which was quite uncommon which again served to set him apart as an unusual individual, he had the ^{step} affrontery to ~~xxx~~ up on the pulpit before the whole congregation of his city of Smerna and pronounce the name of the Lord God Jehovah as it has been forbidden the Jews to pronounce it. You know the story or the legend that the correct and secret pronounciation of the name of God was forbidden to be used by any other than the High Priest~~s~~, the Cohen Godol, and he only on one day of the year, namely the day of Yom Kippur. And so Jews have always found ~~xxxxxx~~ circumlocutions and they speak of Adenoi,

Adonishem and Elochunu and all sorts of circumventions in order to avoid pronouncing the true and real name ~~ixm~~ itself which no one dare utter except on pain or death. And Young ~~Shmash~~ Sabbath Zevi when he was 24 years old stood up in front of the congregation and spoke the name with great brashness and said to the congregation "I have no fear of uttering this because I am about to usher in the days of the Messiah. Of course, he was very promptly ~~excommunicated~~ excommunicated, and equally promptly ship out of the city.

He left Smerna and started out on a course of wandering and was not to reappear in his native town for 18 years. During the course of these wandersings, he became convinced not that he was the forerunner but that he was actually the Messiah. And he became convinced, most of the historians think, not only ~~perhaps~~ because he himself perhaps suffered delusions, but because everywhere he went people were willing to accept him in their desperate urge to find someone who would help them out of the travail. They gave credence to his eccentricities, to his unusual actions and when he appeared in the streets of Constantinople carrying a basket in his arms in which he had a fish laid out as a baby lies in a basket, speaking that the Jews would be saved, that the Messiah

would come under the sign of Pisces and he wandered through the streets of Salineca, carrying a Torah in his arms urging the Rabbis to marry him to the Torah, in the same symbolic fashion, for instances, in the Catholic church where nuns are married to Christ. When word of this type of action spread to the Eastern Oriental world, people were quite willing to give credibility to his story that he was someone different, that he was the Messiah. What clinched his own conception of his role was a series of followers whom he picked up, four of them. The first one he picked up was a man by the name Abraham Yakenhi and Abraham Yakenhi, whom he attracted in Constantinople, produced the document spurious forgery, but a document which he said he had found as being very ancient, a document which foretold the coming of Shabbath~~i~~. I, Abraham, was shut up for 40 years in a cave and I wondered ^{that} ~~at~~ the time of miracles did not make its appearance. And a voice replied to me, a son shall be born in the year of the world 5386, which was 1626, and he shall be called Shabbath~~i~~. He shall ^{quell} ~~smite~~ the great dragon, he is the true Messiah and he shall wage war without weapons. This document which it is felt Abraham Yakenhi wrote himself, on very ancient parchment, in very ancient ~~script~~ script became the so-called legal basis of revelation on which Shabbath~~i~~ said he had been appointed by God to be

the Messiah. He picked up a second follower, this time in Alexandria in Egypt, Raphael Joseph Halevi. His ^{only} importance was the fact that he was a multi-millionaire who provided Shabbath~~i~~ with unlimited means so that this faker went through the streets of city after city with a huge retinue and impressive garb, great numbers of servants and carriages and chariots, throwing out largess to all of the people who came to see him. In Palestine he ~~pkx~~ picked up Nathan Gazahti. Nathan Gazahti was an unhappy, ~~He was a~~ brilliant, young rabbinical student. He had been married to the daughter of a very rich person, the only trouble being that the daughter had only one eye and Nathan, therefore, was unhappy in this marriage and looking for an exotic out, something on which he could pin his attention, he picked up this colorful character of Shabbath~~i~~ and Nathan Gazahti became his publicity agent as it were, traveling from city to city and proclaiming the miracles which Shabbath~~i~~ was doing. The fourth person was perhaps the cleverest and the most unscrupulous of all of ~~themx~~ the four because Yakenhi was a madman, Nathan Gazahti was unhappy, Halevi was a ~~stupid~~ poor dumb millionaire, but the fourth one was the clever and unscrupulous one, Samuel Primo, a

shrewd person who attached himself to Sabbath~~A~~ Zevi for a motive of his own. He was a person who would have made an interesting psychological case. He was interested, for some reason, due to his ~~delv~~ delving into the mysteries of the Zohar, perhaps. He was interested in destroying legal or Talmudic Judaism. He said in Sabbath~~A~~ Zevi a vehicle by which he could accomplish that end. It later on turned out to be true because Sabbath~~A~~ Zevi at the zenith of his power issued ~~xxx~~ a whole series of declarations declaring null and void a lot of Jewish holidays, a lot of Jewish laws. He said that Tishabov sholdn't be celebrated as a fast but let's make it a happy holiday and all the Jews did. The world turned up-side-down when he spoke. Samuel Prima was using Sabbath~~A~~ Zevi for his own purposes. But I think all four of these followers each one of whom blew up and inflated this charlatan - I think all four of them pale into ~~xxxxxxx~~ insignificance in the face of the woman Sarah who perhaps did more for him in those years to build him up than anybody else. She hereself is a fantastic character. Sarah was an orphan girl whose whole family apparently had been destroyed during the riots, and she wandering around had been picked up by the nuns and put into a christian

convent. When she was about 15 or 16, the Jewish upbringing which she had had apparently reasserted itself and she rebelled against the training she had been receiving in the convent. She actually escaped from it and was found wandering in a cemetery clad almost in nothing by a group of Jewish men to whom she told her story. They took her in. She then left ~~them~~ them, fled to Amsterdam to look for a brother of ~~hers~~ hers, who she hoped might still be alive. ~~Didn't~~ Didn't find him there and then began a series of migrations back eastward to Amsterdam in the most immoral fashion conceivable. Whether we would say that there was some glandular disturbance or whether we would say that she was simply a lady adventuress, However you would analyze her she led a gay and merry life, going from one rabbinical college to another and ^{up} setting the poor old rabbis, working her way eastward and proclaiming all the time that she had had a dream whereby she was destined to become the wife of the Messiah.

Sabbath/Zevi sitting in Cairo, hearing the stories about this woman ~~said~~ said fine, bring her to me I'll marry her. His previous experience having been such that he never had anything to do with women and so she became part of his ~~tetinue~~ tetinue, but not living with him being free to do what she wished. She attracted a whole group of young men

to his court and Sabbath^{ai} Zevi was helped more by Sarah, the country girls, also man in her own way, no question about it, was helped more by her than by anybody else. All of this meanwhile is permeating through the public relations of Nathan Gez^hhati, through the careful interviews which Samuel Primo made, heads of state and governmental officials, Jew and non-Jews alike, through the manipulations of his little staff with Sarah operating as the chief of Staff, his reputation grew and grew and grew.

Finally he reappeared in the City of Smerna in 1665. The opportunity of 1648 had passed by. So he decided to latch on as it were to the Christian Messianic date and time was running out, 1666, he had to do something miraculous so in 1665 he reappears in Smerna and the whole city went wild. He went into the synagogue on Rosh Hashana day in 1665, blew the Shofar and the people ~~shouted~~ shouted, "Long live our king, long live the Messiah." Out in the streets they danced. All over Europe stories began to circulate. The excitement of the people is impossible of expression. Gifts were showered upon him. People tried to snatch his clothing from him. People began to sell their businesses and liquidate their property to follow him to the Holy Land. There was a fantasia of hysteria and excitement. In England Jews were wagering 10 to 1 in their counting houses that in 1666 Sabbath^{ai} Zevi would

perform the great miracle of bringing everyone of the dead back to life which is supposed to happen when the Messiah comes, the dead will be resurrected.

In Amsterdam, the Jews in the symagogues were having trouble printing enough prayer books which contained a special prayer for his safety and his life. Off the coast of Scotland, a rumor started that a ship was seen maned by sailors who spoke Hebrew and on the sails was written the inscription, "Long live Shabbath Zevi, the Messiah, the rebuilder of the Jewish state." Scotland, London, Amsterdam/^{Turkey}all ~~then~~ over the world the thing rose to fever pitch. Meanwhile, this man who really had nothing but who was really convinced because everyone had told him he was the Messiah that he must be was then goaded into making the next step. And the next step was, as the document says which Yakenhi purportedly in great antiquity, the next step was to conquer the great dragon. The great dragon was the sultan of the whole Ottoman empire, the leader of the Turks and the Mohhamedims. So on the 30th of December in 1665, Shabbath Zevi sets sail from Smerna to go to Constantinople. There to appear on the 1st of January ~~1666~~ 1666, blow the Shofar immediately to

convert the sultan to Judaism, to usher in the reign of the Messiah. He stepped off the ship and was promptly clapped into handcuffs and all of his followers were no wit crestfallen whatsoever because they said, "oh well, this is nothing, after all look at the humility of the Messiah. We know that he should be humble." And when one of the jailers slapped him on the cheek, Sabbatai Zevi turned the other cheek and a loud "hurrah" goes up from all of the people gathered around for that's further proof that he is a man of true spiritual quality.

Having arrested him, the sultan ~~didn't~~ didn't know what to do with him because you don't execute him and therefore make a martyr out him, nor on the other hand can you let him run around loose upsetting your empire any longer. So he was put in jail. The jail was on the Island of right in the Dardenells Straits, easily accessible by ferry boat on either side. A very comfortable channel which soon became the seat of the court. For four months ~~Shabbatai~~ Sabbatai Zevi with all the funds in the world at his disposal because his followers kept shipping him money, food, ~~many~~ jewels, precious things he held forth. Sarah was entertaining men, Sabbatai Zevi was talking to his disciples. The whole thing had the unreal atmosphere of a Hollywood

movie set, with the Turkish jailers raking in tremendous amounts of money since they were charging admission for people to come into jail to see Sabbatai. The ferry boat owners, raising the wages until it got to ~~hex~~ cost a pretty penny for one of the faithfuls to come from the mainland to see the master. The sultan apparently decided to put an end to this, after four or five months. It was in the fall of 1666 that Sabbatai Zevi brought back into the city and given the very simple ultimatum, that if he were the Messiah, he wouldn't mind dying for his faith. That if he weren't the Messiah he might like the way ~~wake~~ out of converting to Mohhamedinism in closing shop on the whole issue, which was a very clever for the sultan to offer to offer him. And Sabbatai Zevi knowing full well that he wasn't the Messiah, knowing that those who were standing behind him, Samuel Primo and Nathan Gazahati were urging him to accept the choice of death because they kept whispering in his ear, "you can't die, you're the Messiah". Sabbatai Zevi, in his heart, must have known better because he decided to put on in a great symbolic act the turban of the Mohammedan people

Of course Samuel Primo, the diabolical genius, within six months had turned the defeat into a victory by

issuing the statement which immediately flew like wild fire all over the European continent that the Messiah had done it deliberately because it was his intention, having converted to Mohammedanism to begin boring from within and get all the Mohammedans also convinced. If you think that that sounds impossible I assure you that many scores of thousands of Sabbatai's followers believed that story. Because many, many thousands also followed the lead of the Messiah and they too converted to Mohammedanism and there is to this day a sect of ~~Jewish~~ Turkish Jews called the Donmeh who are in Islam what the Moorano Jews were in . The Mooranos were Jews who became Catholics on the surface but practiced their Judaism. The Donmen's became Mohammedans on the surface and also practiced their Judaism secretly, following in the lead of the feuhrer and they are to be found to this day in Turkey.

This is the whole store, there is no more to it. Sabbatai Zevi was taken away shortly thereafter to a very isolated village in Albania, the one spot on the European continent where there were no Jews, put there ~~deliberately~~ deliberately and allowed to die in isolation, and the news of his death came out in 1676. is not Sabbatai Zevi. The moral of the story is simply this. That out of the

compulsive pressure of Jewish history, he popped as a piece of pop corn does under the pressure of heat. Had it not been he, it would have been someone else because the Jews felt this need, this yearning the incredible desire to have someone whom they could follow. I think this is a lesson in history which we in this generation should understand. The urge and the yearning in its most modern form for life in Israel and Palestine is that which the Jews of the 20th century catastrophe have set up before themselves as their Messiah. Those Jews who went through the hell of ~~life in Europe~~ life in Europe between two wars and then the indescribable events since 1933 were exactly, the survivors were in exactly the same position that the Jews were in 1648. Beaten, broken, demoralized, hopeless, whereas 300 years ago the feelings of the people were not so refined, were not so sophisticated, but they knew how to choose between the right kind of a leader and the wrong kind of a leader and they propelled out in front of them this great faker and jailbird, whereas that was the way their despair expressed itself then. In the 20th century the despair of the Jews expressed itself not on the reliance of one individual who again for them might prove to be a false Messiah, who would let them down back again into the same pit of despair out of which he picked them 30

~~thx~~ years earlier. No, the Jews of the 20th century were much smarter and pinned their faith not on an individual but on a timeless ideal of their people, and Palestine and Israel became for them the savior - the Messiah, the solution. And so just to close, when Sabbatai Zevi let ~~left~~ them down and they dropped back into the pit of despair, something had to fill that vacuum and a new movement was created then, the movement of Chasidism which we shall describe next week. That, too, went through a cycle and ~~ended~~ ended in degeneration and superstition and . And I think we are much better situated now because it does not seem to me the ideal of Palestine or Israel will let the 20th century sufferers down the same way that Sabbatai Zevi left the 17th century sufferers down. And if we learn anything from history, we learn how not to repeat errors. Therefore, it seems to me that the future of Jewish life in the 21st and the 22nd centuries will not be to go through some kind of weird, peculiar movement such as the Chasidic movement was. The future of Judaism in the 20th, and the 21st and the 22nd centuries it seems to me will strong and healthy and normative and that will be because the Jews have placed their reliance on something substantive instead of upon something . It is

our hope and prayer that that will come to past.

Amen



Kastein:

"In the beginning Sabbatai's idea that he was the Messiah was certainly no more than a wish-thought, but this fancy... gradually developed into a real belief in his mission..... The eye was so overflowing with eagerness to receive what he had to offer it, that he inevitably came in contact with people whose response to him and his mission was sufficiently strong to give him every encouragement ~~in leading him of all~~ until at last the difference between fact and fiction was so far obliterated in his mind that the time at last arrived when he became firmly convinced that he really was the Messiah."

Background of Chmielnitski riots ^①

Russian Orthodox Cossacks vs.
Catholic Polish Poles

Jews caught in middle

between April - September 1648 - 200,000 Killed
total of 1/2 million -

Kestner says: (History - Destiny of the Jews)

"The Jews met this national misfortune with the full force of their religious spirit and deep historical sense. They accounted for their suffering as they had always done before; it had been sent to justify the individual and make him worthy of salvation. Helel Mashich, the pains heralding the birth of the Messiah, constituted the essence of the idea.... As the result of various calculations on the part

①
Of The Kabbalists, The rumor had been spread that the Messianic epoch was to begin precisely in the year 1648, and it was readily believed... The Polish massacre of this year, terrible as it had been, was a confirmation, almost a ground for hope..... Communities in whom expectation and desire reach such a pitch of intensity are bound to produce from their midst a man who is the creation of this collective longing, and whom they accept as the redeemer and fulfiller of their hopes, as the leader. And Jewish history presents us with such a man in the person of Sabbatai Zvi of Smyrna."

And his teachers would find him sitting out in the woods, under the trees, looking at a blade of grass, or dreaming about the sky, communing in some way with nature far removed from the academic atmosphere of the closed schoolroom. So they had nothing to do with him, since he wouldn't be a good pupil, but to make him an assistant school teacher. And what they did was put him in charge of all of the other pupils and he was to see to it that they were to come to school every day on time. So he conducted them through theChader, rounding them up from all their homes, and on their way, as they would pass through the woods, and through the ravine because Buchovina was a very primitive place with much wild nature, he would teach them to sing songs, Shabbos ~~hymns~~ hymns or other kinds of songs, and at the hand of his little company of children, he would sometimes be moved by the ~~ecstasy~~ ecstasy of his own and he would skip and jump and dance and they would follow him like the Pied Piper of ~~Hamelin~~ Hamlin.

When he was 14 years of age, he became the Shammos. He

became the caretaker of the synagogue. There he spent all day ~~sleepin~~ sleeping and all evening studying. Some records tell us that he didn't want the people to know how much he was learning of the Zohar and the Caballa, those mystical books which you also remember motivated, Sabbatai Zevi and gave him his Messianic concepts. So the records go that in order to avoid revealing how much he was studying, he put on the appearance of being sluggish, lazy and ignorant and spent the days sleeping but the evenings working ~~assiduously~~ assiduously. At any rate, he got married shortly thereafter and took his young bride away from the little village deep into the Carpathean mountains, quite isolated from the rest of the community. As a matter of fact they lived in a lonely hut far away from anybody and certainly with no Jews in the vicinity. He dug lime out of the mountain ravines and she, his wife, carried it on her back in sacks to the nearest town and sold it, and that's how they supported themselves. They went through apparently a period of seven years of poverty and the great scholar, Solomon Schechter, says - "that the harder Israel's outward lot, the more he increased inwardly in spiritual greatness. In his solitude, living alone in the

mountains, he gave himself up entirely to devotion and religious contemplation. His habit was to climb to the summit of the mountain and wander about lost enrapt in spiritual ecstasies.

After seven years of this, he came back to the village, the name of which was Brodie, with his wife and became dependent upon her brother, Rabbi Gershon. Rabbi Gershon first took in Israel as his valagollah, as his wagon driver. But the man was obviously inept and incompetent to perform any such task as that so the brother-in-law put him in charge of an inn. And the story goes that it was during that period of his life that the Baal Shem acquired his taste for spirits. Because in the inn where ~~wayfarers~~ ^{wayfarers} would pass and a schnaptz and brandy was kept for those who came off the road, cold and wet, the innkeeper, of course, had to sample his own wares and it seems that this is where Baal Shem learned to like brandy. At any rate, that venture too soon evaporated in failure and bankruptcy. And so giving up the effort to keep a wife or a family or run a permanent stable household, Israel Baal Shem Tov simply went out and started traveling all through Movähia, Carpathia Buchavania, and Bessarabia preaching to his followers. He even got the idea that he wanted to go to Palestine and he started. He

got as far as Constantinople when something told him that he better go back because his message was so important that he must bring it to everyone and he really shouldn't waste time make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land simply to gratify his own sense of piety and devotion.

He came home. He continued to walk and teach his disciples in the peripatetic manner of the Greeks. Israel, Ball Shem Tov, ~~xxxx~~ incidentally, wrote nothing. It's only 200 ~~xxxxxx~~ years and yet we have no written, residue or legacy from this great ruler and leader. All of his teaching was done in the method of walking and talking with his disciples. And even they were forbidden to write anything down. Because he wanted it to be an tradition much in the tradition of the very ancient rabbis in old Palestine where the oral? law was transmitted from master to student. Many miracles were told about him. They grew up around him. It is very interesting to notice that ~~theyx~~ these are similar around the figure of anyone who is extraordinary. They attributed to him some sort of miraculous birth. The old age of his parents being cause

for speculation. Some even went so far as to say his birth was divinely induced.

certainly were colorful enough to attract attention and imagination. But there must have been other reasons beyond his mere personality or magnetism. And the other reasons are to be found in the composition of the life of the people of that time.

The aristocracy in Judaism always has been the aristocracy of the learned and that is quite good. It ~~is~~ ^{has been} responsible for our existence as a people of the spirit, as a people of the intellect, as a people of moral standards, as a people who shun the hypocrisy and the false values which become the criteria and standards of others. Our intellectual achievements and our love of the intellectuals among us is quite commendable. But by this period of the 18th century, intellectualism among the Jewish doctors of the law, the Talmudists, the Pupilists those who argued over every fine point of legal casuistry, those who lost themselves in a jungle quite removed from the reality of human life, ~~xxx~~ a jungle of words and terms and logic and twisted dialect. The intellectualism of such had already become a generation by the 18th century. Because the learned doctors of the law were

completely isolated from what was happening out in the mainstreets of life and they provided no leadership to which the people, the masses, cling with emotional love and ~~devotion~~ and affection and attachment. They were too cold. They were stone and ice in the sheer achievement of their studies. The ordinary people had nothing in common with them. So that Professor Barron, the great scholar who wrote the religious and social history of the Jewish people analyzes Chasidism in one sentence. He says: "Chasidism is most of all the ~~xxx~~ rebellion of the half illiterate, rural Jew against the supremacy of the learned, urban Jew." His is quite true. The Baal Shem Tov, not learned in Talmudic matters, instructed in the Baballa, the secrets, the mystery, the magic had the appeal, the warmth, the magnetism which attracted the masses of the people to him. They followed him as if he were the ~~Shemaria~~ Shockenia, the presence of God upon earth himself. He supplanted in their affection and in their estimation the abstracted, the removed, the unrealistic Talmudic students and rabbis. And out of their lack of education, out of their rural, rock simple existence, they came to him in masses and masses so that by ~~17xx~~ 1750, shall we say, half of European Judaism was at his feet. The third reason, not only the Talmudic sterility

and the
rural conditions under which the illiterate Jews lived

Remember how last week we described ~~xxxx~~ how Sabbatai Zevi
~~xxxx~~ let them down mercilessly. That they were frustrated, bitter, hungry
for this Messianic leader who had not appeared, in the form of Sabbati Zevi,
but who they hoped might still come. And so that was the third cause of
their flocking to the Baal Shem because it looked as if he really was going
to represent the fruition of their hopes in that connection. Well, the teachings
of this Chasidic movement were very simple. They can be summed up and ticked
off our fingers in a very few minutes. They taught, first of all, the
doctrine of the imminence of God. Not the ~~transcendence~~ transcendence of
God. The imminence of God meant that God was imminent in every object and
aspect of human life. The chair in which you sat was created by God himself
and possessed God in its ~~own~~ molecules. The air you breathed, the food you
took into your system, the tree you looked upon, everything in life was a
function and an attribute of God who pulsed and vibrated through your whole
system, every waking and sleeping ~~moment~~ moment of your ~~life~~ life. God was
close to you, in you, of you, by you and by everything around you. This was

much better and much more satisfactory to the people as a whole than some discussion of God conducted in a remote manner through the observance of ~~many~~ laws and rituals and commandments. The , the 613 commandments which people were supposed to observe to bring them close to God was not satisfactory to the masses, whereas this ~~fi~~ vibrant doctrine of the Baal Shem brought God to their very fingers.

The second teaching of this movement, Chasidism, was the teaching that we establish contact and intercourse with God through prayer. But, not ordinary prayer, not prayer where you pick up a Prayer Book in English or Hebrew, or German or Russian, what ever the language and recite the prayers, whether with a hat or without whether you put on Tfillan or you don't. Such mechanical recitation of prayer, according to the Baal Shem and his followers, was nothing. That left you dry and empty and sterile. Prayer was to be conducted according to the method implied in a certain word Hislockavoos which means enthusiasm and the prayer took the form of enthusiasm, but I mean dancing and jumping and singing in the synagogue or wherever you were. You didn't sit still when you prayed. You didn't even stand still when you prayed. You prayed with your body moving and your voice shouting and your feet dancing and you drank liquor when you prayed ~~xxx~~ if you wanted to if

God helped you. You prayed. This is the way you came close to the God who was so accessible, so imminent.

And the third doctrine was the doctrine of sin, also notice designed to catch the loyalty of the untutored masses. The Baal Shem taught that there is no person upon earth so bad that he can't be redeemed. Wonderful, commit sins, the Talmudic doctors of the law would consign you to purgatory Baal Shem said, ah, it's nothing. Any sin can be forgiven. Life is life, people are people. Have a good heart and if you do something wrong God will forgive you if you pray to him with enthusiasm. And this was a wonderful, popular doctrine which appealed to people and provided them with a necessary emotional outlet.

The fourth point of his teaching was the doctrine call Schiffflues which means humility. He thought that pride was the worse sin which human beings could commit. He compared pride to idolatry. Idolatry was the worse sin on the Jewish calendar. Pride means worshipping your self is idolatry - tho of the worse variety. And he worked all his life to guard against it in his own person and warned his people against it. One of the reasons that Martin Buber, who is the great modern authority of Chasidism, a lovely learned old gentleman now in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, gives

for the Baal Shems very deep antipathy and hatred of the Talmudic was that he ~~gh~~ought these Talmudic rabbis were too arrogant in their conquest of knowledge. And they were.

At the very end of his life, on his death bed, this is the one thing that Baal Shem was afraid of, that he would become arrogant or prideful. And he was heard, saying to himself, this is recorded by his follower, who picked up the crown after he died. These words are recorded that the Baal Shem was talking to himself saying: "Pride, pride, vanity don't you tempt me even now at the end of my life, because a thought has gone ~~xxxxxx~~ through my mind of what a grand funeral I am going to have." He knew his value, he knew his position in the community. Right before he died he must ~~xxx~~ have thought of what a funeral he was going to have, and he did have one. But he revolted against it and he kept saying to himself: "Let not pride overtake me now at the very end of my life on my deathbed, let me now think of that." And was this good for the common people too, wasn't this attractive to the masses when he lashed out, when he slashed at the people who were arrogant. Humility that was to the rustic Jew living in the rural farm.

And the last point of his doctrine flows quite naturally.

It's called which means translated as you will, cheerfulness or joy. He urged his people that religion was a matter of singing and dancing and drinking and joyful, ~~max~~ happy experiences. And that is how they ~~xx~~ must celebrate their religion. That religion was not a thing of sour, dry, depressing - not at all.

So these were his five points about the imminence of God, the intercourse with God through enthusiastic prayer, the lack of worry about sin, the doctrine about humility, and the doctrine of cheerfulness or shimka. It was a wonderful, wonderful movement, no question about it. It brought to millions and millions of de classe Jews who had no prestige, no status, no wealth, no learning, no nothing, it brought to them the abrogation of a mass movement so that they ^{no} longer felt inferior, but they were part of a general trend. However, the unfortunate epilogue must be told. Chasidism degenerated very quickly within two generations after the Baal Shem died. By the early 1800's, Chasidism had degenerated to a movement of superstition, of ignorance. It had degenerated into what is called and that means simply this. There developed after the death of the Baal Shem the

institution of the Zaddik, the righteous one. The Zaddik ruled over the flock of people. He arrogated to himself this authority ~~to rule~~ because he said that he possessed which meant sparks coming from God. He, therefore, was God endowed and God inspired to become the leader of the flock. Not only did he consider himself on the same par with Moses but even on the same par with God, and the Baal Shem successor said these words which have come down to us: "A Zaddik, a Chasidic leader, with a flock around him. A Zaddik is not alone the most perfect and sinless human being. He is not alone equal to Moses, but he is actually the representative of God in his image." Well, somebody said power corrupts and the Zaddik immediately became a corrupted figure. Since he was worshipped by his people, and since they, the Chasidim, were commanded by him to wait upon his every whim, to bring to him gifts of very great value, to leave their families, their businesses and ~~their families~~ to travel with him and to seat at his feet and listen to his ^{magical} ~~majestical~~, mystical proclamations. Since this occurred, the figure of the Zaddik grew more and more corrupt. Men started buying because it was financially profitable. They paid heavy sums for it but they took in much income from it. Men started arguing

among themselves about the ~~severality~~ sovereignty of and the movement split into more, and more and more and more segments. Each Zaddik claiming to be the true successor of Baal Shem.

Chasidism still exists in the world today, at least in the form of this Zaddik worship, until today it has collapsed into a movement which not only hasn't fulfilled its original potential, but a movement which is ~~actually unachromistic~~ actually unachromistic, because it keeps within Judaism some mediaeval forms and ideas and superstitions. Another reason for the degeneration of the movement was not merely the corruption of the individual Zaddikium, but the fact that the movement also had a terrific ~~opposition~~ opposition from, as to be expected, the Talmudic legalists. And the one who lead the fight against the Baal Shem Tov even during the latter's lifetime was the great, most learned rabbi of the northern part of Poland in the city of Vilna, the ^{Elijah} rabbi/who was called the of Vilna, the Talmudic leader. Elijah the of Vilna actually excommunicated the Baal Shem and actually issued written instructions to every congregation in Poland and Russia that the Chasidism were to be driven out of the synagogue and noone was to have any contact with them. These two things caused the downfall

of Chasidism into what we have today.

And one of our current authorities on the subject, Professor Jacob Minkin, sums it up it seems to me. He says: "Chasidism in its old form, with its ~~xxxxxx~~ saints and its rituals with its outward show and its ~~gilded glamour~~ gilded glamour - the glamour coming from the way every Zaddik lived in a palace, compared to the way the other people lived - Chasidism of that sort belongs to a world that has passed away never to return." "It has, however, suggested possibilities for creative, artistic expression and for bringing the idea of joyousness into modern religious life and practice." And if we leave it now after this very superficial glimpse, we can say one thing. That Chasidism did fulfill a very definite and genuine need in the life of the Jew of Poland in the 18th century. It gave him warmth, happiness, glamour, color, richness, all the things which he never had before. Chasidism did introduce the notion that religion doesn't have to be practiced only by blue-nosed people; only by dower, suppressed people, but that religion can be practiced in a joyful, light, airy, cheerful, happy way. And this, I'll say is such an important contribution that it has permeated the thinking it seems to me, of all of the modern rabbis of the Reform movement which grew up shortly after Chasidism degenerated. Because we in our liberal

approach to Judaism teach almost the same psychological foundation to our children. That religion is to be enjoyed and tasted and savored and you are to be happy with it you are not to be sad or oppressed with it. So that the truth of the matter is that this queer old man with his funny ideas who left behind an inheritance of the fur hat and the long coat ~~xxxxxxxtheextrem~~
~~xxxxxxxtheextrem~~ who left behind the inheritance of many good stories but much magic and superstition. This old man who somehow or another pierced the hearts of the people who loved him. This old man, the Baal Shem Tov, did bring something into Judaism which we apparently needed very badly. And while we today in our modern sophisticated way scoff at the ~~jumping~~ jumping and the dancing and the singing still we are the ~~inheritors~~ inheritors of it, I think in a more subdued fashion. Because if we love our religion and are joyful and happy in it, we cannot fail to acknowledge the influence which Baal Shem Tov had in helping to shape, to form that attitude. I only hope and pray that our children, from generation to generation will always feel that this is something to be enjoyed and loved, not something to be borne as a burden. and may that truly come to pass. Amen

11
Maimonides

21.5.20
Personal Life

As Philosopher

a) Creation
b) Definition of God
c) 13 Principles

As Codifier Mishneh Torah
Sefer Hemitzvos

As Physician

13 Articles of Faith
8 Steps of Charity

Personal Life

born in Cordova 1135.

Forced to emigrate when 13,
under fanatical persecution of
Almohades. Arrived in Fez,
Morocco. Here, too, Jews forced
to accept Mohammedanism. Here
at age of 26 - 27 he wrote
"Iggereth Haschemel" (Epistle on
apostasy) wherein he defended
Jews who professed Islam with their
lips, under pain of death, but he
advised those who were able to do so
to emigrate.

His own family moved on
to Palestine, but didn't stay long, and
settled finally in Egypt, where father

died. Younger brother David,
a merchant in jewels, with whom
he was very close, and who
supported family, ~~died~~ perished in
Indian Ocean on sea voyage.

M. Thus had to earn a living and
turned to medicine.

Egypt became refuge for
persecuted Jews under favorable rule
of a friendly sultan, and the Jewish
community of Cairo grew large. M.,
because he had already written a
commentary on the Mishna, was a
recognized rabbinical authority, and
questions of religious law were referred
to him from all over the world.

When about 50 years of age, having spent 10 years writing the Mishnah Torah, a gigantic religious code, which summarized the entire content of the Talmud into an organized whole (~~the~~), M. became personal physician to the sultan & vizier, and also became head of all Jewish communities of Egypt. He utilized his influence at court on behalf of persecuted Jews of the Orient.

When about 55 he finished his main work Morah

Hebuchim which was the
major philosophical volume was
produced by Judaism. This
was an attempt to establish
harmony between teachings of
Judaism and teachings of Aristotle,
"the prince of reason".

Rest of life largely taken
up with medicine. Incredible
worker - 20 hours daily - only one
meal. A great scholar Samuel ibn
Tibbon, who was translating Morah
into Hebrew, ^{from Arabic} wanted to consult with
M. on meaning of difficult words &
passages. M. wrote him not to come
because he almost wouldn't have time

to talk to him. Famous letter
giving account of daily routine:

"I dwell in Fostat and the
Sultan resides at Cairo and the
distance between the two places
is a double Sabbath-day's journey
(ca. $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles). My duties to the
Sultan are heavy. I must visit
him early every morning; if he
feels weak or any of his children
or the inmates of his harem are ill,
I do not leave Cairo but spend the
greater part of the day in the palace.
Also if one or two of the officials fall
ill, I have to attend to them, and
thus spend the whole day there.

In brief, I refrain to Cairo
every day in the early morning, and
even if nothing unusual happens, I do
not return to Fostat till after the
noon hour. Then I am fatigued
and hungry and I find the courts
of my house full of people, prominent
& common, gentiles, Moslems, judges,
waiting for the time of my return.

I dismount from my animal,
wash my hands, and go forth to
them and entreat them to wait for me
while I take a slight refreshment, my
only meal in 24 hours. After that
I attend to the patients and prescribe for
them. Patients go in and out until
nightfall or sometimes, I assure you, until
two hours in the night. I talk to them

lying on my back because of
weakness. When the night falls I
feel so weak, I cannot speak
any more.

Thus no Israelite can have a
private discussion with me except
on the Sabbath. Then they all come
to me after the services and I advise
them what to do during the week;
afterwards they study a little till noon
and depart. Some of them come back
and study again until the evening prayers.

This is my regular daily
routine. I have here related to you
only part of what you will see, please God.

He died in 1204, Three
months after his 70th birthday,
mourned far & wide by the Jewish
people in whose service he had
been active all his life and to
whom he left an incomparably rich
inheritance. He was buried, according
to his last wishes, in Tiberias, in
Palestine.

As Physician

Greatest physician in several
hundred years - not merely
follower of Galen, Hippocrates, and
Arabic physicians - but originator of
many new ideas. Wrote many
medical books, ten of which are
extant. Perhaps others will turn up.

He wrote on asthma,
hemorrhoids, poisons, antidotes, dietetic,
epilepsy, drugs - and other things.

His work was almost "modern".

He gave especial care to public
health & sanitation. He anticipated
modern discoveries on how psychic
factors affect bodily health (what we
call psycho-somatic medicine) and

advanced a Theory That asthma
is often caused by allergies.

Imagine That - 800 years ago!

He analyzed the nervous system -
and explained epilepsy as being due
to pressure on the brain (ventricles).

He laid unusual stress, for his
time, upon proper regimen of health -
diet, rest, fresh air, etc. - and his
efforts were concerned as much with
the prevention of disease through
rational living & proper diet as with
the cure of the sick.

His fame & reputation as
physician are summed up in words

of Arab contemporary:

"His knowledge made him
The healer of his generation.

Verily, if the moon would
submit to his art, he would
heal her of her spots."

As Codifier *

14 vols.

He wrote Mishnah Torah -
to put some order into the
legal jungle of the Talmud.
His purpose was to summarize
15 centuries of legal development
and to present a fixed structure
of the teachings of Judaism.

The work is systematically
divided into the 14 most important
spheres of human life, each of which
receives a separate book, as follows:

1. Book of Knowledge (unity of God,
prohibition of idolatry)

2. Book of Love (love of God, prayers, phylacteries, blessings, circumcision)
3. Book of Festivals (Sabbath & holidays)
4. Book of Women (marriage, divorce)
5. Book of Consecration (sex, ~~for~~ Kashruth)
6. Book of Separation (vows, vows)
7. Book of Seeds (Sabbatical year, jubilee, tithes, offerings)
8. Book of Temple worship (building of Temple, communal offerings)
9. Book of Sacrifices (individual offerings)
10. Book of Cleanliness (ritual purity & impurity)
11. Book of Damages (damage to property & life)
12. Book of Acquisition (sales & purchases)
13. Book of Legal Disputes (guardians, debtors, objections, denials)
14. Book of Judges (Sanhedrin, capital punishment, taking of testimony, King, war, messiah)

Great objections by more
orthodox to The Mishna Torah;

1. Rabbin felt that study of
this book would supplant
study of Talmud itself.
2. Judges felt that this book
would make readily accessible
to all readers the legal
decisions of the past and thus
remove the aura of special
secret knowledge from legal
profession.

Big controversy after Maimonides'
death about whether study of this
code should be freely banned.

Introduction to Mishna
Torah is called Sefer
Hamitzvot (Book of Commandments)
in which M. lists the 613
commandments & prohibitions of the
Torah. 365 negative command and
246 positive ones. He gives
reasons for each particular law;
punishment for violation; who is obligated
to observe each law; additional explana-
tions, etc.

Very valuable codification.

As Philosopher

"Moreh hebrehim" - "Guide to the Perplexed" - written in 1190, when M. was 55 years old. It is an effort to reconcile the teachings of philosophy with those of the Bible, and is intended primarily for scholars.

For example, on the matter of God. The Bible gives Him positive human attributes - "merciful + gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy -- forgiving iniquity..." Or it speaks of Him as seeing, hearing, speaking, etc.

M. believes that we cannot attribute positive characteristics to God.

but only negative ones. We cannot say what God is, only what He is not.

HA. says that the ^{anthropomorphic} passages in which God is ~~dep~~ represented pictorially are to be taken only in a metaphorical, not literal, sense — or in a spiritual, not physical, sense. The anthropomorphic words are used to help us poor mortals comprehend the ^{majesty} & sublimity of God.

Thus, the only attributes can be negative. By narrowing down what God is not, perhaps we can come to perceive a little more of what he is. The very words we usually use to describe God are negative:

incorporeal
eternal
immutable
infinite
incomprehensible

These all have
negative prefixes.

Another problem was that
of creation. Aristotle had taught
that world was eternal, mechanistic,
always in operation - no creation.

(p. 10, " - Husik pamphlet)

M. believed that God created
the world out of nothing - (not because
any verse of Genesis said so) -
but because otherwise the world would be
cold and life insanity.

If there is an eternal
universe, with everything the result of
mechanical necessity, then God has no
choice and the human being has no
free will. This is impossible!

His reason told him that
belief in creation is a necessity
for faith & hope in life. His
reason was always the determining
factor.

Isaac Husik, modern philosopher,
says "M's importance lies in
the fact that he insisted on
giving reason its due in forming
convictions."

This evoked great objection
from the orthodox, who accused him
of heresy and breaking down all old
+ cherished notions.

Achad Ha'am in essay on M.
entitled "Supremacy of Reason" said that
this was the gist of M. belief.

"Follow reason and reason
only" he tells the "perplexed," and
explain religion in conformity with

reason : for reason is the
goal of mankind, and religion
is only a means to the end."



13 Articles of Faith

I believe with perfect faith that:

1. There is a Creator
2. ~~He~~ is One
3. He has no body
4. He is eternal
5. All worship & adoration are due to Him alone.
6. The prophets are the true interpreters of His thought.
7. Moses is the greatest of His prophets.
8. The Bible is the divine word of God.
9. Nothing must be added to, or subtracted from, The Bible.
10. God knows our thoughts and our actions.
11. There is reward and punishment in the world to come.
12. The Messiah will someday arise.
13. The dead will then come to life again.

8 degrees of charity

1. The first and lowest degree is to give, but with reluctance or regret. This is the gift of the hand, but not of the heart.
2. The second is, to give cheerfully but not proportionately to the distress of the sufferer.
3. The third is, to give cheerfully and proportionately, but not until solicited.
4. The fourth is, to give cheerfully, proportionately and even unsolicited, but to put it in the poor man's hand, thereby exciting in him the painful emotion of shame.

5. The fifth is, to give charity in such a way that the distressed may receive the bounty, and know their benefactor without their being known to him. Such was the conduct of some of our ancestors, who used to tie up money in the corners of their cloaks, so that the poor might take it unperceived.

6. The sixth, which rises still higher, is to know the objects of our bounty, but remain unknown to them. Such was the conduct of those of our ancestors who used to convey their charitable gifts into poor people's dwellings, taking care that

Their own persons and names
should remain unknown.

7. The seventh is still more
meritorious, namely, to bestow
charity in such a way that the
benefactor may not know the
relieved persons, nor they the names
of their benefactors, as was done by
our charitable forefathers during
the existence of the Temple. For
there was in that holy building
a place called the Chamber of the
Silent, wherein the good deposited
secretly whatever their generous hearts
suggested, and from which the poor
were maintained with equal secrecy.

8. Lastly, the eighth, and most meritorious of all, is to anticipate charity by preventing poverty. This is the highest step and summit of charity's golden ladder.

~~XX~~ As you can see from the pamphlet which was distributed, we deal tonight with one of the most versatile figures ever to have flashed across the scene of Jewish history. This man is so amazing in the number and variety of ^{the} things he was able to accomplish in his lifetime, it is almost shameful and sacriligious to give a condensed and short survey of what he did. This doesn't do him justice. He is one of these people who, if he lived today, would be the center of a tremendous amount of world attention, because he was a master of many sciences and many skills. He was a man who grew old and ripe in his wisdom. He was a man who exemplified the finest kind of intellectual achievement. We can only hope to go quickly over the surface of what he did.

Moses Maimonides was born in Spain in the city of Cordova in 1135. So just a few years ago, in 1935, there was a large celebration in New York upon the occasion of the 800th anniversary of his birth. Many pamphlets were written about him and much was accumulated out of the reserves of the libraries. Much material which had never been translated before was made available to the public on the 800th anniversary of his birth. And yet while he lived 800 years ago, he was not a figure who is completely removed from us because I would say that he has extreme relevance in terms of our effort today to find some sort of a harmony and in this one sentence I can epitomize very ~~pithily~~ pithily the meaning of his whole career. He represents the same effort that we are making today to harmonize the conquests which we make in our minds by our reason and by the advance of science. The other goals which we seek to achieve - the goals of the spirit; the goals of the intangible; the goals of the ethical and the emotional. He spent his whole life trying to harmonize science and reason, ^{and} intellect with religion and faith and hope. And he

succeeded quite well, as far as we are concerned because as his life story unfolds you will see that we could call him the father of Reform Judaism in a sense because he made religion subject itself to certain changes. On the other hand, we could call him the father of the new school of scientists epitomized in Galileo and Eddington and Arthur Compton who, while they are very scientific men, are also men who place a great deal of the basis of their thinking upon religion and faith.

Born in Cordova in 1135, he was forced to leave Spain very early, when he was 13, shortly after his Bar Mitzvah. Because even though we generalized last week in telling the story of Judah Halevi by saying that the life of the Jews under the Moslems was better than it was under the Christians, which was true as a general rule, still in his city of Cordova, a very fanatical Moslem persecution drove out all the Jews and forced many of them to convert to Mohammedans. He and his family left Spain and went down to North Africa, to the City of Fez, and there they found the same kind of fanatical Moslem pressure. Most of the Jews of Fez apparently converted and there is even some talk that Maimonides and his father and his brother also became apostates. We don't know whether that story is true or not, but at any rate we do have the first recorded pamphlet of his which is a letter defending the course of those people who did convert under pressure, although urging them ^{that} if possible when pressure was applied they should leave the territory and go somewhere where they could flourish with their own religion under freedom. If that were not possible, they were to save their lives by proselytizing. Apparently from the tone of his letter, he placed no most particularly if the ~~proselytizing~~ apostates practiced their Judaism within the sanctity of their own homes which was possible because the Moslems did not have what the Christians later on set up. They made inquisitions to probe into your private life. If, on the surface, you accepted Mohammedanism that was apparently satisfactory to the Moslem kings.

And yet, while Maimonides gave the advice, that apostasy under pressure was permissible, still he found it personally impossible to live in that circumstance, so we read that he and his father and his brother, David, left Phez, left North Africa for Palestine. Apparently didn't find it very compatible there and went from Palestine to Egypt where he set up his residency for the rest of his life.

His father died. He, because he had already written some matters referring to the missionah and Jewish law, became well known and became influential in Jewish circles and later became head of the Jewish community in Cairo. However, a great personal tragedy occurred which altered the shape and the course of his life. That tragedy was the death of his brother, David, who apparently was the provided of the family - a dealer in jewels and precious stones, who lost his life in a ship wreck in the Indian Ocean on the way toward some business dealings in the Far Orient. David was close to Moses, his older brother, and the shock of the young brother's death apparently set Moses back in health and in morale a long time, because for several years he wrote nothing. Also, apparently the loss of the brother from a financial point of view caused Moses Maimonides to take up the profession of medicine as a means of making a livelihood. Much the case as we saw with Judah Halevi last week; although the difference here was that Maimonides apparently liked medicine very much and took to it with a great deal of aptitude because it became one of the most important fields in which he was later to make genuine contributions and discoveries. Because he was a leader in the Jewish community and because he grew to be one of the most important physicians in the land, he soon found himself as the physician to the Sultan in Cairo.

We have one way of knowing what that meant in terms of taking up the time of his life. Because we have a letter left behind which is a very, very human and revealing document. It is a letter which he wrote to a man named, Samuel Ibn Tiben, who was going to translate his

philosophical work, "A Guide to the Perplexed" from Arabic into Hebrew. We will discuss the work in a moment. Suffice it to say now that the Book was written in Arabic. Ibn Tiben wanted to put it into Hebrew. It was a very difficult and abstruse book. The translator kept writing letters to Maimonides asking if he could have a personal interview with him to clear up many points of difficult translation. Maimonides writes to Ibn Tiben and says in effect, "there is not point in your coming to see me until you have the complete book translated. Don't waste a visit because I have no time to give you much as I regret it." And he describes his daily routine, and it is the kind of a diary which we very rarely find ? after some many hundreds of years. If you will stop to think of this man who was about 55 or 58 when he wrote this letter, a man who had been through the experiences of traveling through one land to another, a man who had many personal family shocks and deaths in his immediate circle, a man who by now was tired, think of this in the background as you listen to the words of the letter he wrote describing his daily routine. "I dwell in _____ and the Sultan resides at Cairo, and the distance between the two places is a double Sabbath Day's journey (which makes it about a mile and a half). My duties to the Sultan are heavy. I must visit him early every morning. If he feels weak or any of his children, or the inmates of his harem are ill, I do not leave Cairo but spend the whole day in his palace. Also, if one or two of the officials fall ill, I have to attend to them and thus waste the whole day. In brief, I repair to Cairo each day, in the early morning, and even if nothing unusual happens, I do not return to my home in _____ until after the noon hour. Then I am fatigued, hungry and I find the courtyards of my house full of people, prominent and common, gentiles and Jews, theologians, judges all of them waiting for the time of my return. I dismount from my animal, ~~to~~ wash my hands and go forth to them and entreat them to wait for me while I take a slight refreshment, my only meal in 24 hours. After that I attend to the patients

and prescribe for them. The patients go in and out until night fall, or sometimes, I assure you ~~until~~ two hours into the night. I talk to them lying on my back, because of weakness. When the night falls, I feel so weak that I cannot speak anymore. Thus, no Israelite can have a private discussion with me except on the Sabbath. Then they all come to me after the services and I advise them what to do during the week. Afterwards ^{they} I study a little until noon and they depart. Some of them come back again and study until the evening prayers. This is my regular daily routine. I have here related to you only part of what you will see when you finally come to visit me please God." Now it is almost like a modern rabbi. The document left behind is a very precious one in terms of giving us an insight into the fact that he drove his own house had people coming into his house and therefore ^{apparently} he had a clinic at home. And the whole host of sociological data which we deduce from this document.

According to his last wish that he be buried in the Holy Land, he was transported after death from Cairo to the City of Tiberias and there buried. And there ~~today~~ his grave serves today as a shrine to which people come. Well, there were three aspects of the career of this man in the 70 years on earth. There was his life as a physician. There was his work as a ~~codifier~~ codifier of Jewish law and there was thirdly, and lastly, his genius as a philosopher. Very briefly we will look at these three things. As a physician, first of all, we have today ten volumes (only recently have some of them been translated into English). All the manuscripts are available and for all we know there are still more to be translated because many of these were discovered in the Genessa in Cairo by Dr. Solomon Schechter who later brought them over to America and they are in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary - the Conservative Seminary - where there is work for 100 years yet for scholars

to do. He was a physician, we are told, not merely a follower of Galen and ~~Hippocrates~~ Hippocrates, the figures whom the Arabic physicians worshipped, but he himself was the originator of many new ideas, not merely the passer on of what the previous medical men had discovered. He wrote, among other things, on asthma, on ^{hemorrhoids} ~~hemorrhoids~~, on poisons and antedotes for them on dietetics on epilepsy and on drugs. These constitute the major fields, as far as ~~medically~~ we can tell, from the medical books which are left behind. His work was almost modern if we can use the word modern in ~~referring~~ medicine referring to discoveries which have been made recently. He gave special care to that type of medicine which our doctors today are concerned with. Namely, public health and prevention of disease which, for his day and his time, was quite an unknown concept. ~~Many modern~~ He anticipated many modern discoveries on how psychic factors affect bodily health. We today call it psychosomatic medicine. He wrote a pamphlet on how the state of mind can affect the state of the body, 800 years ago. I understand from some medical sources that the ~~medical~~ theory that asthma may be caused by allergy as some factor is a fairly recent theory. I have no way of knowing whether that is true or not, but so I am told. Maimonides wrote a pamphlet in which he said that as far as he could see in the study of asthma, it was caused by the body being irritated by some factor outside of it. He anticipated by 800 years the modern theory of the cause of asthma. He analyzed the nervous system and he explained epilepsy for ~~the~~ first time. No medical book had ever done it before as being caused by pressure on the ventricles of the brain which, it seems, is a valid theory today. His whole medical career ~~is~~ in the core was to attempt to get this oriental potentate to wash his hands before he ate, to watch the kind of food he put into his stomach and as you look at the advice and the instructions which he gave his royal charges, what flashes across the mind of a layman in medical

matters is the picture of Pastuer and the picture of Lister and the picture of men who created the concept of modern diet and the balance of proteins and carbohydrates, because without knowing those terms, he spoke along those lines.

His fame and reputation as a physician were summed up in the words of a Arab physician, the leading Arabic physician of the day, who said about Moses Maammonides. "His knowledge makes him the healer of our generation", and then a rather cute sentence. "Verily if the moon would submit to his art, he would heal her of her spots." And this was great praise coming from a non-Jewish colleague, and I think sums up the importance which he held as a physician in his day and ever since.

Secondly, as codifier of the law he did probably the most ^{voluminous} ~~illuminous~~ part of his work. He spent 10 years writing one book. True, the book ended up with 14 volumes and the 15th as the introductory one. But 10 years was poured into this project which had as its goal, the simple objective of regulating and systematizing the jungle of the Talmud. And praise was his the jungle of the Talmud, not used despairingly but used simply to indicate that the Talmud which had consisted of 24 volumes which had no table of contents, no index, no guide to help you find your ways through its labyrinth and paths. The Talmud was a jungle which had to be systematized and put in outline form. At first he set out to do this task for his personal satisfaction, and then when he realized that ^{it} ~~ix~~ he could become an epochal thing and a great contribution, he expanded it so that it took him all that time. But once it was done, it was a creation which has never been paralleled. He took all of the legal decisions of the Talmud. He cut away all of the verbiage, all of the complicated mental juggling which went into the making of these decisions. For as you know the Talmud is a record almost of the minutes of the court and everything which anybody said is included whether you went off on a tangent

or you didn't. What he did was to cut out all of that ~~shrubbery~~^{shrubby}, the undergrowth, and go right to what a particular legal decision was on a particular point and stated it that way, clearly and succinctly. He gave a brief summary of the reasoning which went into it stating what ordinary which went into ~~it~~ it, and helped the ordinary reader to follow the complicated processes of Jewish law. You would say and I would say that that was a very desirable objective. However, he was faced with a tremendous amount of condemnation and criticism which raged even more hotly after his death than during his lifetime because he had done that task. The criticism came from two quarters. First of all, from the rabbinical quarter. The rabbis asserting that the Mission-a-Torah, the codification was so good that people would study it instead of the original Talmud and that was very bad and so they were angry with him for having written it. Not only were the Rabbis annoyed with him for having possibly interfered with the sacrossanctness of the Talmud, but from another quarter, the lawyers and the judges in Jewish life were very annoyed with him, because by codifying the law putting the cases and the decisions down in neat order, making them easily accessible, he was depriving the lawyers of that esoteric secrecy which surrounds their proceedings and ~~laying~~ laying them open to everybody's public gaze and therefore not enabling them to fool people any longer with their legal language and their complicated businesses. Anybody could now go to the Mission-a-Torah and see what the decision was on any case. And the lawyers didn't like that. The Babbis didn't like it. From those two groups/^{there} came the greatest amount of dondemnation. ~~XXXXXX~~ Withal the Mission-a-Torah became the important Jewish law book for another 600 years. It was not until the Schonorah was written, in the 17th century, was the influence of Maimonide's code tampered with. This, if I may make a parenthetical remark, was quite an interesting procedure

The Talmud was 24 volumes. Moses Maimonides tightens it up, cuts out a lot under-growth and brings it down to 14. Joseph Karo brings it down from 14 to 4 in the which became the normative book for Jewish laws in the 17th century. It may again be cut down if some other great scholar emerges from 4 to 1. And we may some day have a codification of Jewish law which will be comprehensible and able to be observed by most people. Moses Maimonides had a definite part in that change.

The third and last aspect of his career is the aspect of his philosophy. The great book that he wrote, he started when he was 15 and finished it when he was 55 is called "The Guide to the Perplexed." I don't know how much of it I can get across to you without perplexing you instead of clarifying you because it's a perplexing book. We studied it in Hebrew. I have read it in English. I have read commentaries upon it and yet it is a very, very difficult philosophical work. It's heavy. I think instead of trying to tell you what the whole theme and thesis of the book is, let me simply point out two areas in which Maimonides worked the philosophical areas and if you understand those two you can see how he tackled many, many others. All philosophy, all thought on abstract matters, on theological matters, on moral and ethical matters - all thought which was prevalent and extant in the 12th century when Maimonides lived was the thought of Aristotle written hundreds and hundreds of years before dead when Greece and Rome collapsed and revived by the great Arabic Mutschumseh in the great Arabic philosophers. ^{He} Translated Aristotle from Greek into Arabic. Made it available to the cultured intelligentsia and all philosophy was ~~Aristotelian~~. Moses Maimonides tried to perform that Herculean task of reconciling Aristotelian philosophy and the "The Guide to the Perplexed" is an account of how he tried to do that. The two areas that I said I would try to illustrate for you are indicative of his efforts. In the area of the definition of

God, Aristotle continued to do what the Bible had done, to find God in very anthropomorphic terms. Namely, assign to God certain attributes and qualities. In the Bible we read "God full of ~~mercy~~ mercy, long suffering abundant forgiving the sins, being gracious, being kind." Or you read an account "God saw, or God spoke, or God walked." These are anthropomorphic qualities. To Moses Maimonides, such a description of God was an impossibility. He devotes many, many chapters of "The Guide to the Perplexed" to defining God and he comes to the conclusion that you cannot define God. Certainly that you cannot assign any positive attributes to God. That the most you can do is say "What God is not" and by saying what He is not, you may then help yourself build up a picture of what he is. And if you take a look at the words which are commonly used, descriptive words for God, you find that that line of reasoning is perfectly valid. I made a list of some of them in English. Maimonides conducts his analysis in Hebrew and Arabic. Even in English it holds true. Because of these four or five words which I am about to quote you will realize that everyone of them has a negative prefix confined to space. We say that God is infinite - again He is not finite. He is not subject to the infirmities which finite ~~beings~~ beings are subject to. God is immutable. The same negative prefix - not changeable in form or substance or essence. God is eternal. That is He is not subject to time. And so you could go down the long list of most of the words that you would take to ~~define~~ define God. Incomprehensible, to to be understood. Maimonides hammers the point and hammers it until we come to the conclusion that the only thing he can ever say about God is that God exists in a form which we do not know but in a form which we know the negative aspects. God is not in time, not in space, not in body, not changeable, not finite. And

I don't know if it affects you as it affects me as I read and follow this analysis, I begin to have a conception of what God is although I cannot put it into words. So Maimonides attempted to do with his readings. Well, take the other area, and this is the concluding one which I shall offer. Aristotle says. "The world was never created. The world existed from eternity. It always was. It always will be. It had neither a beginning, nor will it ever have an end." Maimonides says, "There must have been *creatio ex nihilo*, there must have been creation out of nothing" and he makes it perfectly clear that he holds that belief, not because the Bible says so, in the First Verse of Genesis, God created the heaven and the earth. Oh, no, Maimonides says "if my reason told me that there never was a definite beginning of creation, I would say the Bible is wrong." This, incidentally, is the reason he got into all of the trouble with following orthodox generations because his philosophical work was condemned by them as heresing. He took all of the things ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ the Bible which could not subject themselves to the analysis of reason and logic and he discarded them as being invalid. So that in this manner of creation he says: "I believe that the world was created from nothing into something". "Why do I believe it?" "Not because the First Verse of the Bible says so, but I believe it because to believe anything ~~else~~ is for me an impossible option. If I take Aristotle's notion that there never was ~~any~~ a beginning - the world always was then I must also accept the corollary that God had nothing to do with it. And if God had nothing to do with it, and has no purposive control, if there is no teleology, if there is no progress toward an end, then the whole thing is foolish and silly, then it is simply a mechanical business going mechanically from one phenomenon to the other. No free will involved, no direction involved, God as much ^{of} a bystander in the whole business as human beings are. And that Aristotelean definition says Maimonides is for me an impossibility, I can't live with it. I must believe that the world was created by somebody who created it for a purpose

that I have a share in it, that it is not just mechanistic but my will can dominate some areas of my life and that I can have a purpose and sense and logic. And so here was a second type of area in which Maimonides fought with Aristotle and upset the Aristotelian hegemony over the Medieval intellect.

Without going into all of the rest of the complicated parts of the Book about prophecy, about the rule of Moses and many other things, we can sum up the whole effort by using two quotations, one from a great commentator on Jewish Philosophy, Professor Isaac Hussick, who says: Maimonides' importance lies in the fact that he insisted upon giving reason its due in the formation of his conclusions. Aachar Achaum, greatest Jewish philosopher of the 20th century who was one of the men who wrote an essay on Maimonides which was reprinted in the 1935 anniversary celebration, says: "That the supremacy of reason", which is what he entitled his pamphlet - his essay, "was the gist of Maimonides' philosophy." He quotes Maimonides in effect, he puts words in his mouth. He says: "Maimonides would have told you, had he been living today, follow reason and reason only," and here is the heresy as far as the orthodox rabbinate of the 12th century is concerned, "and explain religion in conformity with reason, for reason is the goal of ~~manxinx~~ mankind and religion is only a means to that end." Of course this was a shock. We today can understand how it is extremely valid as a guide post for us, at least in our conception of Liberal Judaism, to use our reason not to destroy and wipe out religion, but to use our reason in order to find that in religion which can conform to our conception of our goals in life and all the goals of society.

Maimonides, I feel, and of course it's presumptuous for me to make this judgment because Jewish history has passed judgment on it. Maimonides is one of the greatest figures we have ever had. His influence

is immeasurable and I am sure that many of you who perhaps never read a line of Maimonides in your life would find that much of your thinking is consonant and harmonious with what he thought and if that is true then that means that he had influenced future generations of Jewish thinking so that his thoughts permeated down all of us through the 800 years which separate us in time and space.

I urge you and suggest to you if you are interested in this kind of intellectual treat to find some English translations of Maimonides and indulge yourself in a paragraph or two and you will find that he is a source of sheer joy to the mind, that he has dry wit in many places. That he is a hopeless cynic, in many instances. A fearless tricker of many balloons. And if your constitution is such ^{as} to enjoy that kind of person, you will receive from Maimonides the same pleasure and stimulation which Jewish intellectuals have received all through the years since he flourished. I commend him to you as one of the greatest personalities we have ever produced.

Amen

Judah Halevi, was one of the greatest, sweetest poets the Jewish people ever produced. His verses written in Hebrew, in contrast to his philosophical works which were written in Arabic, were like beautiful pearls in their metrical quality, in the intense emotional content of the thought which they expressed, and in the sweet love which was the predominant mood of his work. He wrote with love for the land of Zion, love for the God of the people of Israel, love for his fellow poets to whom he dedicated many verses and love for love itself which he portrayed in some poetry of unparalleled beauty.

In order to understand the life of Judah Halevi, the poet, we must know the times in which he lived. He was born in the year 1080 in Spain, against a background of conflict between Christianity and Mohammedanism. The Moslem religion had been established 400 years earlier. It had run across North Africa with fire and with sword in a zestful, lustful proselytizing battle. Its devoted adherents believed that they would reach the seventh of heavens if they slew a sufficiency of infidels. So they carried the religion with the torch and with the sword, and in the course of one short century Mohammedanism expanded westward across North Africa and then

having reached the natural barrier of the Atlantic ocean, jumped northward across the Strait of Gibralter and into Spain. Advancing north through Spain in a wild fire of enthusiastic looting and burning, it leaped the Pyrenees into France and threatened to strike deep into the heartland of Europe. It was stopped there, at the battle of Tour, under the great French king, Charles Martel. All this occurred within the first 150 years after the religion was founded. And for the next 400 years, the constant effort of the Christian Kings of Europe, was to push the Mohammedans back out of Europe across Gibralter, and into North Africa, from whence they had emerged. At the time of Judah Halevi's birth, the Christian Kings had succeeded in pushing the Moslems about half way down the Iberian peninsula.

As a general rule it may fairly be stated that when the Jews lived under Moslem control their lot was a comparatively good one. They had many things in common with the Mohammedans. They had a language which was similar - Arabic and Hebrew stemming from common roots. They had a past cultural heritage in which there were many denominators such as dietary laws, and they had a mutual group of respected ancestors, Abraham, for example, being revered as one of

the saints of the Mohammend religion. Under Christianity, on the contrary, they always lived in fear, in torment and in turmoil. In 1080, perhaps the very year in which Judah Halevi was born, the City of Toledo in which he lived fell to Alphonso the Sixth of Castile and the persecution of the Jews began just a very few years after the Christians took control. As this bloody, relentless process took place, wherein the Moslems were steadily pushed out of Spain by the advancing Christian Kings, the Jews found that their lot was more comfortable if they also retreated southward with their Moslem protectors. The whole Spanish period was to come to an end several hundred years later, namely, in 1492 when the last Moslem stronghold of Granada was captured by Ferdinand, the Christian King, and the Moslems were pushed back into Africa. That same year the Jews also were definitively expelled from Spain.

We know nothing of the background of young Judah, except that his father's name was Samuel. We have no notion of his father's lineage or occupation and so we assume that there was nothing exceptional or outstanding about it. Thus it has been deduced that the boy did not come from the luxurious or wealthy classes, but

that probably his station was middle or average. He must have had an opportunity for an exceptionally good schooling, however, for he was skilled in Arabic poetry and studied Greek philosophy. He knew and learned medicine which was to serve him later as his means of a livelihood. Of course he also received a thorough training in Hebrew language and literature.

When he was a young boy of 15 or 18, apparently the progroms were going on in earnest in Toledo, the city of his birth, and he left and went south to that section of Spain called Andalusia. There he was noticed by the primary Hebrew poet of Spain of the day, Moses Ibn Ezra, who saw some of the verses which the young boy wrote and was apparently impressed by them. Halevi was introduced into the intellectual circles under the aegis of the older poet.

As his career of medicine played very little part in his life, so apparently his personal family played very little part in his life because all we have in his written works are references to the tragic plight of his people, caught, as he described it in one very apt phrase, between the Cross and the Crescent - the sign of Christianity and the sign of Mohammedanism. People who bore the

Star of David, were trapped between the Cross and the Crescent and he had for them such an outpouring of emotional pity that it can be seen coming through the lines of his poetry.

This sense of tragedy concerning the future of his people turned him into an intense lover of Zion. In these poignant words he said:

"Is there for us in the East or the West

A place of life, a place of hope in which we may trust?"

Life in his native Spain was unsatisfactory and he called his people to leave the West and go to Zion. In beautiful poetic language he spoke to the Israelities as if they were his tender pigeons. He called them doves.

"Doves abandoned in lands of deserts and pits,

Arise! This is not your dwelling place!

Your habitation is abandoned!

Return to your delight."

The delight of his doves was Palestine - the only land in which he felt they could be secure.

Having come himself to the crucial and primary decision that

Jews should return to Zion and being motivated by this thinking in all of his writing, it was only logical that Judah Halevi should be consistent in his personal life and do what he urged others to do. And so he decided, at a rather advanced age, to make the long and perilous journey to the Holy Land. Travel in the year 1138 or 1140, when he went, was very rude and primitive. It took many, many weeks on the ocean, and many, many weeks traveling over land by the most uncomfortable methods of conveyance possible. It was also extremely dangerous, because the ships which traveled over the Mediterranean Ocean were a constant source of prey to brigands and pirates, and on land the traveler was immediately vulnerable to the many armed bands of robbers which frequented the highways. All the great literary lights and philosophers of Spain, when they heard that he was going to make this trip, attempted to dissuade him. In addition to citing the physical difficulties, they advanced theological arguments telling him that God no longer dwelt in the Holy Land - that when the people of Israel were cast into dispersion, God was cast into dispersion too. All these arguments were of no avail and in spite of all objections, he left Spain shortly after

writing a gorgeous little poem to his old friend and mentor, Moses Ibn Ezra, who died in 1138. And so it was approximately 1140 that Judah Halevi left Spain and went to Egypt.

He set forth with a retinue of companions, but many of them dropped on the way. In Alexandria, before even reaching Cairo, he fell sick with an eye disease which threatened to deprive him of his sight. Fortunately he recovered, and continued his voyage to Cairo, which was interrupted again at another intermediary stop called Damietta, where we assume that he went into financial difficulty because he paused in that place for two years. The only explanation we have is that he must have been attempting to earn some money. Finally he made his way to Cairo and there encountered a great deal of difficulty in obtaining permission to enter the Holy Land because the tremendous world-wide struggle between Christianity and Islam had exploded into that ugly, ignoble, series of butcheries and slughters, which we call the Crusades. The Crusaders had conquered the Holy Land so that entry into Palestine through any one of the Moslem countries such as Egypt was very, very difficult. We don't know whether Judah Halevi actually

got permission to go into the Holy Land or not. At this point his story fades out. We don't know whether he died poor and forgotten/ⁱⁿCairo, or if he got started and then fell subject to one of the common accidents of his day. All that we have to go upon is a legend. The legend says that he got to the gates of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was in a shambles, both from its natural state of decay, and as a result of the recent fighting there in the Crusades. But as he approached the gates of the city filled with his imperishable love for the very dust of the land, he got off his animal and started walking barefoot into Jerusalem, singing his most famous "Ode to Zion" - the poem which has been incorporated into the Prayer Book and is recited in every orthodox synagogue on Tisha B'av. Legend has it that Judah Halevi, the sweet singer of his people, entering the gates barefoot, reciting the "Ode to Zion," was run down by an irate Arab tribesman and died with a spear through the back. We have no way of knowing whether this was the factual end or the legendery end of his life.

It is impossible for us to recite and analyze all of the poetry which he wrote. I have selected two or three verses which,

to me, are typical of the different kinds of things he composed. His poetry is all love poetry - love for Zion, love for God, love for his friends and people. There is a very fine volume which has been published by the Jewish Publication Society, and has a complete selection of the best things he did. I would like to read to you one of the poems which indicate his love for the land of Zion. The renowned "Ode to Zion" is the most famous on this subject, but all are similar in theme. The meter and the rhythm of the Hebrew are stirring.

MY HEART IS IN THE EAST

My heart is in the east, and I in the utter-
most west --
How can I find savour in food? How shall it
be sweet to me?
How shall I render my vows and my bonds,
while yet
Zion lieth beneath the fetter of Edom, and I
in Arab chains?
A light thing would it seem to me to leave all
the good things of Spain --
Seeing how precious in mine eyes it is to behold
the dust of the desolate sanctuary.

He wrote many devotional poems, since equal with his love for Zion was his love for God. The very title of one such is descriptive of his intoxication with the Lord who, to him, was very personal and very real.

BEFORE THEE IS MY WHOLE DESIRE

O Lord, before Thee is my whole desire -
Yea, though I cannot bring it to my lips.

Thy favour I would ask a moment and then
die -
Ah, would that mine entreaty might be granted!

That I might render up the remnant of my
spirit to Thine hand,
Then should I sleep, and sweet my sleep
would be.

When far from Thee, I die while yet in life;
But if I cling to Thee I live, though I should
die.

Then there is a very, very beautiful little one - an

example of his love poetry which was written for a maiden. With five or six lines, he captured the picture of a beautiful maiden and compared it with the dawn.

THE FAIR MAIDEN

The night when the fair maiden revealed the
likeness of her form to me,
The warmth of her cheeks, the veil of her hair,
Golden like a topaz, covering
A brow of smoothest crystal -
She was like the sun making red in her rising
The clouds of dawn with the flame of her light

His poetry was lush - full of love - love for life, love for God, love for Zion. These were his three great loves. But in addition to being a poet, Judah Halevi was perhaps one of the greatest philosophers of his time, surpassed perhaps only by Maimonides, a century later. His philosophy of Judaism was expressed in a little volume entitled "The Kuzari." Within the

framework of a dramatic legend, he developed his major ideas. The legend itself provides an interesting background. It was told that in the Ninth century Bulan, King of the Kazars, a people living in the territory north of the Black Sea, was dissatisfied with his own religion of heathenism and desired to select the best religion upon earth to which he would then convert. So Bulan called in first representatives of Christianity, of Mohammedanism, and a philosopher - representing no specific religion but that of the mind and intellect. Later, a representative of Judaism was invited. The king hearkened to them all, and still being undecided, he took them one at a time and asked each one this question: "Aside from your own faith, which do you think is the best? " And each one, the Christian, the Mohammedan and the philosopher said: "Aside from my own, I think the best is Judaism from which we all come."

Having accumulated that evidence independently and separately, Bulan then decided that Judaism was the best religion and ordered his whole kingdom to be converted to it. He and 4000 men of his men were circumcised as an official act of entrance into the Jewish community. Parenthetically, it may be said that this legend serves

to explain the growth of the large Jewish community around the Black Sea region.

Judah Halevi, some 300 years later, had heard of that story, and knew that one of his predecessors, Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, had been in contact with the Kazars by mail and carrier. So Judah Halevi decided that he would write a philosophical dialogue based upon that incident, in order to show that the precepts of Judaism were valid enough to have caused a whole kingdom of people to convert to them free-willingly. "The Kusarri" the story of the Caczars or Cuczars. His philosophy of Judaism is a very strongly nationalistic one. Judah Halevi believed, first of all, in the ineradicable union between Judaism and the Jewish people. He expounded the point of view that without the Jewish people there was no Judaism. "If there were no Israelites, there would be no Torah. They did not derive their high position from Moses, but Moses received his authority from them." He went on to point out that this was in contra-distinction to Christianity where the focus of religion is one person; or Mohammedanism where the prophet is

the central figure. In Judaism, Moses is not the creator of the Jewish people nor the exclusively central figure. If we assimilate or inter-marry or convert then we destroy the very bearer of what we believe.

Halevi's second point was that Judaism is a religion of history, not a religion of nature as many other religions are. He elaborated this by analyzing our holidays. Rosh Hashanah, for example, was originally a festival of agricultural significance at the time of the fall harvest or Succoth. Gradually the fall holiday period became invested with a historical significance in contrast to a merely natural significance. Thus, Succoth grew to be the occasion to celebrate the 40 year wandering in the desert when the Israelites lived in booths. A similar analysis was made in regard to circumcision which was practiced by many peoples as an act connected with puberty and the growth of young men into adolescence. Judaism removed it from that purely natural frame work and made of it the sign of a covenant between the people and its God, which was performed, not at the natural time of the 13th year or the 12th year, but at the age of eight days . Not only were the holidays

and rituals invested with religious significance, but even God was so described. When asked by the the King of the Kazars: "What God do you believe in?" The Mohammeden had answered, "I believe in the God of Allah, who sent Mohammad as his prophet." And the Christian had answered, "I believe in Jesus the son of God." And the Jew said, "I believe in the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob. The God of Moses who lead the people out of Egypt. The God who gave them the Ten Commandments and brought them into the Holy Land. I believe in a God of history."

The last point which Judah Halevi made perhaps shocks many of us today, and is perhaps difficult for us to understand, but the philosopher stated it in unequivocal terms. He asserted it down as a dictum, very simply: That of all the peoples on earth, the Jews are the chosen ones of God; they are the best ones, they are above any other people, in the same degree that the human being is above any other animal. To Halevi it was a perfectly natural thing to state that Israel amidst the nations is like the heart amidst the organs of the body. It is at one and the same time the sickest of them and the most healthy of them. And when the King went on to ask him what

he meant by those words, Judah Halevi said, in effect: "The heart is the most important organ of the body - without it the body would cease and die. Without Judaism in the world, the world would collapse. There would be no morality, no civilization, no decency. That is why it is the strongest, the most healthy organ, but at the same time it is the weakest, the sickest." The heart becomes sick because the body in which it lives is constantly whipped and tortured. As this heart-nation goes down the centuries, whipped and beaten and hurt, it is constantly sick, but at the same time the strongest and the most healthy of all of the nations, because of its peculiar selection as the agent and teacher of God's morality.

Such strong and powerful faith in the separateness and distinctiveness of Judaism is not for those of us who would say that Jews are the same as everybody else, that there is no difference. This is not for some of our anti-defamation league philosophy or our 20th century which Judaism/would preach an equalitarianism and remove the distinctiveness which enabled this Judah Halevi to stand up in the face of the world and call his people the heart-nation of all the world. This takes a certain kind of bravado. A certain kind of grandeur is attached

to it and when we say that we would like to be no better or no different from any body else. And, incidentally, if the Jews in modern Israel say the same thing,- i.e. we would like to be a national like all other nations, they will not only be diminishing the incalculable bravery of Judah Halevi, who taught that we are not the same as anybody else, but they will run the risk of degenerating into a little Balkan principality, with a forever unrealized potential. While it may difficult for us to comprehend today, Judah Halevi in his age and in his time felt a sense of election, a sense of chooseness, a sense of superiority. This folk-notion was in no way destroyed by the apparent ignominy and torture and difficulty in which the Jews lived, but served as a bulwark of faith which sustained them.

Our final conclusion of the man is that he was one of the great inspirers of his people. Through the words of his poetry, he delighted, charmed, and entertained them, and through the words of his philosophy, in the Kussari, he gave them stature. He forced upon them a kind of noblesse oblige, that they live up to the

pride which he was creating for them. He was a deeply religious and deeply nationalistic lover of his people, which has been constantly inspired and uplifted by what he created. From the time of the unparalleled poetry of the Bible no one emerged like Judah Halevi. And after his star flashed across one horizon of Jewish life, more than 800 years ago, we have had no one equal to him since. In the whole gamut of Jewish poetic experience, he stands as the sweetest, strongest, most challenging and most buttressing - the very refuge, a fortress upon which his people have leaned, one of whom we indeed may always be extremely proud.

Amen

1

You recall the words on the back of the brochure that was sent to you, you see that we operate on the theory that human beings are the dramatic bearers of a people's tradition and that through understanding the warm and friendly personality of great heroes, we come to have a much better insight into our whole long history and experience. Granted that a look at personalities who are spotted over centuries is but an "iber glickt", but a superficial look. Granted that still knowing who the great men were, over the centuries, is perhaps an easier method of coming to understand our history than to wade through all of the many books which have been written. While we picked four, we could have picked any one of a number of 40 or 400 because of the centuries which will be covered in this series, namely the 11th century through the 18th century - in those 800 years of history, there are any number of great, dynamic people who would have been worth our attention to survey their careers. These four then are intended to be merely stimulants who whet your appetites so that you will want to study and learn more about the 400 or the 4000 others.

~~We begin in the first lecture with the personality of~~
~~Judah Halevi. Judah Halevi, who~~ was one of the greatest, sweetest poets the Jewish people ever produced. His verses written in Hebrew, in contrast to his philosophical works which were written in Arabic, ~~his verses~~ were like beautiful pearls in their metrical quality, in the intense emotional ~~and~~ content of the thought which they expressed, and in the sweet love ^{which was the predominant mood of his work.} ~~because that was the theme of all his poetry-~~
~~which they bring to our attention.~~ ^{He wrote with} Love for the land of Zion, love for the God of the people of Israel, ^{for} love ~~to~~ his fellow poets to whom he dedicated many verses and love for ^{love itself} ~~women~~ which he portrayed in some ^{of} ~~beautiful~~ love poetry unparalleled ^{beauty.} ~~and somewhat unexpected~~ for this rather austere person.

In order to understand the life of Judah Halevi, the poet, we must know the times in which he lived. He was born in the year 1080 in Spain, ^{against a background of conflict between Christianity & Mohammedanism.} ~~And in order to have any comprehension of what Spain was like in the 11th century, you have to remember this one fact, that the Moslem religion had been established 400 years earlier - in the 700's.~~ It had run across North Africa with fire, ^{and} with sword in a zestful, lustful ~~prolix~~ proselytizing battle. Its devoted adherents believing ^{ed} that they ^{would} reach ^{the seventh of} their concept of heaven if they slew a sufficiency of infidels. So they carried the religion with the torch and with the sword, and in the course of one short century, Mohammedanism ^{expanded westward} ~~jumped~~ clear across North Africa and then having reached ^{The natural barrier of} ~~its normal limit~~ at the Atlantic ocean, ~~it had no~~ place to go ^{jumped} ~~except~~ northward which it ^{crossed} ~~did up~~ the Strait of Gibraltar and into Spain. ^{Advancing} ~~And it ran~~ north through Spain in a wild fire of enthusiastic, looting and burning, ^{it leaped} ~~Jumped~~ the ^{Pyrenees} ~~Pyranies~~ and went ~~up~~ into France and threatened to strike deep into the heartland of Europe. It was stopped there ^{at} the battle of Tour, ~~under~~ the great French King, Charles Martel. ^{All this occurred within the first} ~~This was only~~ 150 years after the religion was founded. And for the next 400 years, the constant efforts of the Christian Kings of Europe, was to push the Mohammedans ~~or the Moslems or the Moors,~~ back out of Europe across Gibraltar, ^{and} back into North Africa, ^{from whence they had emerged.} ~~At the time of~~ Judah Halevi, ^{born,} ~~was born~~ in Spain in the city of Toledo in the 11th century when the Christian Kings had succeeded in pushing the Moslems about half way down ~~off~~ the ~~Iberian Peninsula~~ L Iberian peninsula. We must further understand that roughly speaking, ~~As a general rule it may fairly be stated that~~ when the Jews lived under Moslem ^{control} ~~domination~~ their lot was a ^{comparatively} ~~fairly~~ good one. ~~Because~~ They had many things in common with the ~~Mohammedians~~ Mohammedans. They had a language which was ~~almost~~ similar. Arabic

and Hebrew stemming from common roots. They had a past cultural heritage in which there were many common denominators, and they ^{such as the dietary laws} had ^{a mutual group of respected ancestors,} religions which were similar in many ways ~~because~~ Abraham, ^{for example,} ~~being revered as~~ Ibraheim, was one of the saints of the Mohammend religion. Under Christianity, on the contrary, they always lived in fear, in torment and in turmoil, so that ^{bloody, relentless} as this process took place, ^{wherein} the Moslems were ^{steadily} pushed out of Spain ^{by} and the ^{advancing} Christian Kings ~~came down~~, the Jews found that their lot was more comfortable if they also retreated southward with their Moslem protectors. ~~To jump way ahead of ourselves,~~ ^{the whole Spanish period was to come} ~~The~~ story ~~came~~ to an end several hundred years later, namely, in 1492 when the last Moslem stronghold of Granada was captured by Ferdinand, and the Christian King, ^{and} the Moslems were pushed back into Africa. That same year the Jews also were definitively expelled from Spain.

~~But back in Judah Halevi's time~~ ^{perhaps} in 1080 - the very year ^{in which J.H.} ~~perhaps~~ that he was born, the City of Toledo in which he lived fell ~~to the Christians,~~ to Alphonso the Sixth of Castile and the persecution of the Jews began just a very few years after the Christians took control. This young lad, Judah Halevi, ~~had become quite proficient in all of the culture of his day.~~ We have no pictures of him. We have a brief description of him in a letter written by one of his elder contemporaries who described him as being rather thin with very intense, burning eyes, a rather wiry figure, dressed in the garb of the middle ^{nothing of the background of young Judah, except that his father's} classes because all ^{He} we know of his father was his name, Samuel. We have no notion of ^{lineage or occupation was} what his father ~~did~~ or what his father's lineage was and so we assume that there was nothing exceptional or outstanding about it, ^{Thus it has been deduced that} and therefore the boy did not come from the luxurious or ~~rich~~ wealthy classes, ^{but that probably his station was} Therefore, his background, his dress were probably middle or average. He must have had an opportunity for ^{an} exceptionally good schooling, however, ^{for he was skilled in} because he knew Arabic, poetry; He knew ^{studied Greek philosophy} Hebrew grammar, ~~and he~~ learned medicine which was to serve him later

as his means of a livelihood. *Forwards he also received a thorough training in Hebrew language & literature.*

When he was a young boy of 15 or 18, apparently the programs were going on in earnest in Toledo, the city of his birth, and he left and went south to that section of Spain called ~~Andalusia~~ Andalusia.

~~And~~ There he was noticed by the primary Hebrew poet of Spain of the day, Moses ^{Ibn Ezra} ~~Ibn Ezra~~, who saw some of the verses which the young boy

wrote and/ apparently impressed by them, ~~and made it his business to~~ ^{into} see that the young poet, Halevi, was introduced ~~around to the intellectual circles under the aegis of the older poet.~~

~~As his career played very little part in his life, so apparently his family played very little part in his life because all~~

^{we have seen} ~~left~~ in his written works are ~~few~~ references to the tragic plight of his people, caught, as he described it in one very apt phrase,

between the ~~Cross~~ ^{Crescent} and the ~~crest~~ - the sign of Christianity and the sign of ~~Mohammedanism~~ Mohammedanism. People who bore the Star

of David, ^{were trapped} ~~caught~~ between the ~~xxx~~ ^{Crescent} Cross and the ~~crest~~ and he had for them such an outpouring of emotional pity that ^{it can be seen} ~~is all we see~~ coming

through the lines of his poetry. ^{This sense of tragedy concerning the future of his people, turned him into an intense lover of Zion.} ~~The predominant mood of his life shaped the one constant emphasis and that was his love for Zion.~~

In these poignant words- ~~this couplet~~ ^{said} - he says "Is there for us in the East or the West ^a place of life, a place of hope in which we may trust?" Life in his native Spain was unsatisfactory and he called his people to leave the West and go to Zion. ~~And~~ In beautiful

poetic language he ^{Spoke} ~~speaks~~ to the Israelites as if they ^{were} ~~are~~ his tender pigeons. He ^{called} ~~calls~~ them doves. " ¹ Doves abandoned in lands

of deserts and pits, ² Arise! This is not your dwelling place!

³ Your habitation is abandoned! Return to your delight. The delight of his doves was ~~the land~~ ^{Palestine - the} the only land in which he felt they could

be secure. ⁴ Having come to ^{himself} ~~that~~ crucial and primary decision ^{that Jews should return to Zion} ~~himself~~,

^{being} ~~it~~ ^{by this thinking in} ~~having~~ motivated all of his writing and ~~thinking~~, it was only logical that Judah Halevi should be consistent in his personal life

XXXXX

and do what he urged others to do. And so he decided, at a rather advanced age, to make the long and perilous journey to the Holy Land.

~~Now stop and think what travel was~~ in the year 1138 or 1140 when he went. ^{was very rude & primitive.} It took many, many weeks on the ocean, and many, many weeks

traveling over land by the ~~rudiest~~, most uncomfortable methods of conveyance possible. It was also extremely dangerous, because the

ships which traveled over the Mediterranean Ocean were a ~~constant~~ ^{constant} source of prey to brigands and ~~pir~~ pirates, and on land ~~you were~~ ^{the traveller was}

immediately vulnerable to ~~any~~ ^{the many} armed bands of robbers which ~~wished~~ ^{frequently} to attack you. Yet, in spite of all the objections of his friends -

~~and they were many~~, because ~~all~~ ^{the many} the great literary ~~lives~~ ^{lights} and

philosophers of Spain, when they heard that he was going to make this

trip ~~xxxx~~ attempted to dissuade him. ~~In spite of all of these efforts,~~ ^{yet} ~~the objections of his~~

In addition to citing the physical difficulties they advanced ~~and in spite of the theological arguments which they advanced, telling~~

him that God no longer dwelt in the Holy Land, - that when the people

of Israel were cast into dispersion, God was cast into dispersion too.

All these arguments ~~worked~~ ^{worked were of} no avail, ~~upon him and apparently~~ ^{and in spite of all objections,} he left

Spain shortly after writing the "Funeral Eulogy" - a gorgeous little poem

to his old friend and mentor, Moses Ibn Ezra, who ~~we know~~ died in 1138.

~~Apparently sometime shortly thereafter, And so we date it~~ ^{was} approximately

1140, ^{that} Judah Halevi left Spain and went to Egypt. ^{He} set forth with

a retinue of ~~many~~ companions, but many of them dropped on the way. In Alexandria,

before ~~he even got to~~ ^{reaching} Cairo, he fell sick with an eye disease which

~~was common in the Middle East - and still is to this day - and it~~

~~looked for awhile as if he would lose his sight. That did not occur,~~ ^{Threatened to deprive him of}

~~however,~~ ^{Fortunately} because he recovered, and continued ~~on his way~~ ^{his voyage} to Cairo, but

~~was forced to hold~~ ^{which was interrupted} again at another intermediary stop called ~~Gometta~~ ^{Damietta},

where we assume that he went into financial difficulty because he

paused in that place for two years. ~~And~~ The only explanation we have
 is that he must have been attempting to earn some money. Finally he
 made his way to Cairo and there ^{encountered} ~~he had~~ a great deal of difficulty
 in obtaining permission to enter the Holy Land because ~~in this tremendous~~
~~struggle which I spoke about before~~, ^{The tremendous world-wide struggle} between ~~the~~ Christians ^{Islam} and Mohammedans
~~the whole world of Europe had by this time gone into the flames of what~~
~~had exploded into~~ ^{That} ~~we call the Crusades.~~ ^{series of} Those ugly, ignoble, ~~mean~~ butcheries and slaughters,
~~which we call the Crusades.~~
~~And~~ The Crusaders had conquered the Holy Land, ~~had~~ beaten the Moslems
 so that entry into Palestine through any one of the ^{Muslim} ~~Arab~~ countries
 such as Egypt was very, very difficult. At this point, ^{his} the story of
Judah Halevi fades out. ^{whether} We don't know ^{Judah Halevi} whether he actually got permission
 to go into the Holy Land, ^{a not} We don't know whether he died poor and
 forgotten in Cairo, ~~We don't know~~ ^{got} if he started and got part way
 and then fell subject to one of the common accidents of his day.
 All that ~~we~~ have to go upon is ^a ~~the~~ legend. The legend says that he
 got to the gates of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was in a shambles, both from
 its natural state of decay, and as a result of the recent fighting
 there in the Crusades. ^{of the city} But as he approached the gates ^{filled} with ~~this~~ ^{his}
^{unfathomable} ~~incredible~~ love for the very dust of the land, he got off his
 animal and started walking barefoot into Jerusalem, singing ^{his} the most
 famous ~~poem~~ ^{poem} ~~he wrote the one called~~ "Ode to Zion" - ^{poem which} the ~~one~~ that has
 been ^{incorporated} ~~taken~~ into the Prayer Book and recited in every orthodox synagogue
 on ^{Tisha B'Av} ~~Tisha B'Av~~, reciting the "Ode to Zion", entering the gates, barefoot,
~~the~~ Legend has it that Judah Halevi, the sweet singer of his people,
 was run down by an irate Arab ~~tribesman~~ ^{tribesman} with a spear through the back
back and died. We have no way of knowing whether this was the ^{actual} ~~logical~~
 end or ~~whether this was a fabulous or~~ ^{the} ~~legendary~~ end of his life.

It is impossible for us to ^{recite} ~~go through~~ and analyze all of
 the poetry which he wrote. I have selected two or three verses which,
 to me, are typical of the different kinds of things he ^{composed} ~~wrote~~. ~~There~~
 His poetry is all love poetry - love for Zion, love for God, love for his
 friends + people.

There is a very fine volume which has been published by the Jewish Publication Society, and has a complete selection of the best things he did. I would like to read to you ~~a few verses of one of the poems which indicated his love for the land of Zion.~~ ^{renowned} ~~The famous one~~ "Ode to Zion" ~~is the most famous on this subject, but all are similar in theme.~~ ~~will be impossible to read - it is too long. But this one is called~~ (Insert here Hebrew translation) ~~"My Heart Is in the East". I'll read it to you in translation although it's here in the Hebrew text and the beat, and the meter and the rhyme~~ *The meter and the rhythm* of the Hebrew ~~xxx~~ are stirring.

~~"My heart is in the West~~

~~My heart is in the East~~

~~and~~

~~I am in the uppermost West~~

(referring to the fact that his heart was in Palestine, and he was living then in Spain)

~~How can I find savor in food~~

~~How shall it be sweet to me~~

~~How shall I render my vows and my bonds~~

~~While yet Zion lyeth beneath the feter
of Christianity~~

~~And I am in Arabic chains?~~

~~A light thing ^{would it} ~~xxxxxx~~ seem to me~~

~~To leave all the good things of Spain~~

~~Seeing how precious in mine eyes it is~~

~~Behold the dust - the desolate sanctuary.~~

(and in the English, of course, all you can get is the strong sense of repulsion. In Hebrew you get the lyric and the beauty).

He wrote many devotional poems, ~~since equal with his love for Zion~~ ~~said, because as much as~~ ~~was his love for God.~~ ~~loving Zion, he loved God.~~ ~~And in one,~~ ^{of one such} ~~The very title, is descriptive~~ ~~of his intoxication with the Lord,~~ ^{who, to him, was very personal & very real.} ~~Adonai etc. "O Lord, before Thee~~ ~~is all the desire I have. I want nothing else. Yea I cannot bring it~~
Type the poem on page 87 (those verses bracketed.)

Type the poem on page 2.

to my lips how much I desire Thee. The favor/^{that} I would ask and then die that I might render up the remnant of my spirit to Thine hands. Then should I ~~xxxxxxx~~ sleep, and sweet my sleep would be". He desires naught else but God.

Then there is a very, very beautiful/^{little} one - an example of his love poetry which was written for a maiden. ~~It's called the "Fair Maiden".~~

"The night when the Fair Maiden
revealed the likeness of her form to me
The warmth of her cheeks, the veil of her hair
gold like a topaze
Covering a brow of smoothest crystal
She was like the sun making red in her rising
Clouds of dawn with the flame of her life".

That's the sort of thing With five or six
lines, he captured the picture of a beautiful maiden and compared
it with the dawn.

His poetry was lush - full of love - Love for life, love for God, love for Zion. These were his three great loves. But in addition to being a poet, Judah Halevi was perhaps one of the greatest philosophers of his time, surpassed, ^{perhaps only by Maimonides,} of course, a century later, ~~by~~

~~And His philosophy of Judaism was expressed in a little volume entitled "Maimonides". The one great dramatic legend which was then very prevalent "The Kuzari". Within the framework of a dramatic legend, he developed his major ideas. The legend itself provides an interesting background.~~

~~Russia, the territory north of the Black Sea, there was a kingdom of~~

~~people called the K Cazars. And the legend had it that Bulon, the~~ ^{king of the Kazars, a people living in the territory north of the Black Sea,}

~~king of the Cazars, was dissatisfied with his own religion of~~

heathenism and ^{desired to select} ~~wanted to look around and pick what was the best religion~~

upon earth to which he would then convert. So Bulon ^{Bulan} called in first

representatives of Christianity, of ~~Mohammedanism~~ Mohammedanism, and

a philosopher - representing no specific religion but ^{not B} just the mind

Type the poem on page 55

and ~~the~~ intellect. ^{Later} Fourthly, and lastly, a representative of Judaism ^{was invited.} ~~He~~ ^{The King} hearkened ^{to} at them all, and still being ~~incapable of~~ ^{understand} decision, he took them one at a time and asked each one this question:

"Aside from your own faith, which do you think is the best? And each one, the Christian, the Mohammedan and the philosopher said? "Aside from my own, I think the best is Judaism from which we all come."

~~But then he decided that Judaism was the best religion~~

Having accumulated that evidence independently and separately, ^{But then} he then decided that Judaism was the best religion and ordered his whole kingdom to be converted to it and ~~had himself~~ ^{He} and 4000 men of his ~~men~~

^{were} kingdom circumcised as an official act of entrance. ^{into the Jewish community.} ~~This was a~~

^{Paraphrasing,} ^{it may be said that this} legend ^{serves} to explain the growth of ~~a~~ ^{The} very large Jewish community around the Black Sea region.

Judah Halevi, ^{some} 300 years later, had heard ^{of} that story, and

knew that one of his predecessors called Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, had been in contact with ^{The Kazzars} ~~that community~~ ^{and converts.} by Mail. So Judah Halevi decided

that he would write a philosophical dialogue based upon ~~that~~ incident, In order to ^{show} ~~prove~~ that the precepts of Judaism were valid

~~and beloved~~ enough to have caused a whole kingdom of people to convert to them free-willingly. ~~And he wrote the little book which is called~~

"The Kusarri" the story of the Caczars or Cuezars. ~~And in this book he states his philosophy of Judaism and it is a very,~~ very strongly

nationalistic one. Judah Halevi believed, first of all, in the ^{incredible} ~~incredible~~ union between Judaism and the Jewish people. ~~When he is~~

~~explaining this because in this book, you see, he reconstructs, the dialogue between the king of the Caczars and the four religious~~

~~leaders he calls in. And Judah Halevi writes the part of the rabbi and imagines what the rabbi must have said to the king to convince~~

~~him 300 years before. He expounded the point of view that without the Jewish people there~~ ^{was} ~~is~~ no Judaism. ~~And Judah Halevi says in the Kusarri~~

"If there were no Israelites, there would be no Torah. They did not derive their high position from Moses, but Moses received his authority from them." He ^{went} goes on to point out that this ^{was} in ~~contrast~~ ^{contrast} distinction to Christianity where the focus of the religion is one person; or Mohammedanism where the prophet ^{is} occupies the central figure. In Judaism it's not true. Moses is not the creator of the Jewish people nor ^{the exclusively} their central figure. He derives his authority from them. This is a very important point which Judah Halevi brings out. Because Without Jews we have no religion. And If we assimilate or we inter-marry or convert then we destroy the ^{very basis} core of what we believe. He made a second ^{point} point. Judaism is a religion of history, not a religion of nature as many others ~~believe~~ are. He elaborated this by analyzing ^{our holidays} to prove it. He shows how Rosh Hashanah, ^{for example,} was originally a festival of agricultural significance ~~and~~ at the time of the fall harvest or Succoth. But that these festivals ^{gradually the fall holiday period} then became invested with a historical significance in ^{contrast} ~~contrast~~ distinction to a merely natural significance. Thus, Succoth ^{grew to be} becomes the occasion to celebrate the wandering ^{40 year} under the booths. And he goes on from the ~~matter~~ ^{A similar analysis was made in regard to} holidays to the matter of circumcision where he shows ^{which was} ~~that~~ ^{how practiced by many people as} originally it was an act connected with puberty and the growth of young men into adolescence ^{which was} ~~which was~~ the natural thing, but that Judaism ^{removed it from} ~~took it out of~~ ^{purely natural} that frame work and ^{made of it the sign of} ~~put in the framework of~~ historical connection, namely a covenant between the people and its God, ^{which was} ~~and it is performed,~~ not at the natural time of the 13th year or the 12th year, but ^{age} ~~performed~~ at the time of eight days ~~which is a religious or historical thing to mark a historic point quite divorced from the natural, phenomenal background.~~ And ^{Not only were the holidays and rituals invested with religious significance, but even God was described.} he makes this point again very strongly. When ~~he says~~ ^{Kazars} he is asked by the King of the ~~Cacars~~ ^{Kazars}: "What God do you believe in?" The Mohammedan had answered, "I believe in the God of Allah, who sent Mohammad as his prophet". And the Christian had answered "I believe in Jesus the son of

"^{said,} And the Jew ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~rabbi,~~ ~~the~~ ~~Judah Halevi~~ ~~book~~ ~~says,~~
"I believe in the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob. The God of
Moses who lead the people out of Egypt. The God who gave them the
Ten Commandments and brought them into the Holy Land. I believe in
a God of history." ~~And the King, the Caccar says: "Don't you believe~~
~~in the God who created the world. Isn't that your beginning, your~~
~~logical point of commencement?"~~ Judah Halevi said: "It makes no
difference to me who created the world. I don't define God as the
primal cause as the philosopher does. The world existed from
eternity for all I know. My God is a God of history who moves in
definite ways toward a goal." The king said: "You shock me, but this
sounds logical." So it went from point to point and that's how the
King of the Caccars became convinced.

The last point which Judah Halevi made ~~which~~ perhaps shocks
many of us today, ^{and} ~~as it must have shocked the King who listened to it.~~
~~A point which is perhaps difficult for us to understand, but~~ ^{the philosopher} ~~which~~
~~Judah Halevi stated~~ ^{it} ~~in unequivocal terms. He doesn't bargain with it,~~
~~he doesn't attempt to compromise it so that you will accept~~ ~~it~~
~~it~~ ~~purely and simply~~ ^{created} He ~~lays~~ ^{very simply} it down as a dictum, ~~and that is~~
~~purely and simply~~ - that of all the peoples on earth, ^{the} Jews are
the chosen ones of God; they are the best ones, they are above any
other people in the same degree that the human being is above any
other animal. To ^{Italian} ~~him~~ ^{was} it ~~is~~ a perfectly natural thing to state that
Israel amidst the nations is like the heart amidst the organs of the
body. It is at one and the same time the sickest of them and the
most healthy of them. And when the King ^{went} ~~goes~~ on to ask him what he
meant ^{said, in effect} by those words, Judah Halevi, ~~in the Kuzarri,~~ says: "The heart
is the most important organ of the body - without it the body would
cease and die, ~~and that is why it is the~~ Without Judaism in the world,

the world would collapse. There would be no morality, no civilization, no decency. ~~And~~ That is why it is the strongest, the most healthy, ^{organ} but at the same time it is the weakest, the sickest." ~~And when the King asked him what he meant by that, Judah Halevi lashes back and says:~~

~~The heart becomes sick because the body in which it lives is constantly whipped and tortured.~~ ^{This heart-nation} ~~And as the Jews go down the centuries, whipped and beaten and hurt, the heart becomes sick, but it is at one and the same time the strongest and the most healthy of all of the nations, though its external surface be whipped and lacerated.~~ ^{it is constantly at}

^{of Judaism} ~~Such strong and~~ ^{is this powerful faith in the} ~~is it strong? It is~~ ^{separateness & distinctiveness} those of ~~is not for/us who would say that Jews are the same as everybody else, that there is no difference. This is not for some of our anti-defamation~~ ^{deformation} ~~league philosophy or/our 20th century Judaism which would preach an equalitarianism and remove the distinctiveness which enabled this Judah Halevi to stand up in the face of the world and call himself the heart of all the nation.~~ ^{his people} ~~It takes a certain kind of bravado. A certain kind of graudeur is attached to it and when we say that we would like to be no better or no ~~worse~~ different from anybody else, And, incidentally,~~ ^{we are diluting the gorgeous strength of a Hebrew.} ~~when the Jews in modern Israel say the same thing, we would like to be a nation like all other nations, they are somewhat diminishing the incalculable bravery of Judah Halevi, who says that we ~~are~~ are not the same as anybody else, I say that while it may difficult for us to comprehend that today, he in his age and in his time felt a sense of election, a sense of chooseness, a sense of superiority.~~ ^{will not only be but they will run the risk of degenerating into}

^{This folk-motion} ~~It was in no way destroyed by the apparent ignominy and torture and difficulty in which they lived, for the moment.~~ ^{the Jews} ~~but served as a bulwark of faith which sustained them.~~

Our final conclusion of the man is that he was one of the great inspirers of his people. Through the words of his poetry, he delighted ~~them~~ ^{and entertained} them, and he provided them with entertain-
~~ment.~~ ^{and} Through the words of his philosophy, ^{in the thirteenth} he gave them ~~such~~ stature,

He forced upon them a kind of noblesse oblige, that they live up to the pride which he was creating for them. ^{He was a deeply religious and} Deeply nationalistic, ^{lover of his people,} ~~deeply religious man and through the various combination of these elements~~ when we ~~read~~ read his poetry and when we study his philosophy, the whole Jewish ^{which} people has been constantly inspired and uplifted by what he created. ~~We have had no one comparable since. We had no one before him~~ ^{From the time of the unparalleled} The poetry of the Bible stand unparalleled. ~~And then for over 1000 years~~ ^{And after his story flashed across the horizon of Jewish life, more than 500 years ago,} there was no one who emerged like Judah Halevi. ~~For nine hundred years~~ ^{since} since we have had no one equal to him. In the whole gamut of Jewish poetic experience, he stands as the sweetest, strongest, most challenging and the most buttressing - the very refuge, a fortress upon which his people have leaned, one of whom we indeed may ^{always be} feel extremely, extremely proud.

Amen

